



## [Matthew 13:45-46](#)

(45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, (46) who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

*New King James Version*

The merchant was common in Palestine because it has always been a crossroads. It was the crossroads of the Roman world. To get anywhere, it seems, one had to go through Palestine. Ships often sailed along the coast and stopped in the ports of Palestine.

The particular merchant Jesus speaks about was a very uncommon merchant. He was special because he filled a narrow niche in the market: He bought and sold only pearls. This indicates just what kind of person this merchant was. If he could devote all his time to seeking just pearls, he must have been rich and highly placed. He was not a common caravan master. We would call him "a specialist."

He may even have been a buyer for a particular type of person, like royalty. In the ancient world, pearls were so rare that usually only monarchs could afford them, using them in their crowns and on their clothing to show off their royal splendor and say, "Look at me - I can afford pearls."

Some have thought that the merchant is a person like us who goes seeking after Christ, after [the gospel](#), or after the Kingdom. However, the Bible itself makes these ideas absolutely impossible. For instance, Paul writes in [Romans 3:11](#), "There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after [God](#)." No ordinary person - nobody at all - seeks after God. In agreement, Jesus Himself says, "No man can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" ([John 6:44](#)).

[Isaiah 55:1](#) adds, "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Matthew 13:45-46 (<http://www.theberean.org>) price." We cannot buy anything from God, so how could any human being be the merchant who seeks and buys the pearl? It is impossible.

[Luke 7:42](#) is part of the [Parable of the Two Debtors](#). One phrase applies to this: "And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both." The creditor here is God, and we are the debtors. God freely forgives us even though we have nothing to buy [forgiveness](#) with, so a person cannot be the merchant. First, humanly, we cannot seek Him. Second, we have to be called so that we can seek Him. Third, we cannot buy [salvation](#), and even if it were for sale, we do not have the money to buy it. On all counts, it is impossible for a sinful human being to be the merchant.

That leaves only one person that it could be - [Jesus Christ](#) Himself. He is the only One who has what it takes to buy this pearl. Notice these confirming scriptures:

- For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. ([Luke 19:10](#))
- You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit. ([John 15:16](#))
- To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ([John 10:3](#))

Only Christ can do it.

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O [Jacob](#), and He who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for *I* have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. ([Isaiah 43:1](#))

This tells us who the merchant is. Without a doubt, it is Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

**To learn more, see:**

[Parables of Matthew 13 \(Part 3\): Hidden Treasure](#)



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