

NICK GUY & THE HIDDEN TREASURE AFFAIR

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THEME: Salvation is to be desired above any treasure the world has to offer. Yet, its value is not obvious in the same way worldly treasures are.

NOTES: In Matthew 13:44 Jesus made this comparison: He said, "The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

The Kingdom of God, which men can only attain through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, is more valuable than anything the world has to offer. That is why a man, when he recognizes its value, is willing to lose everything he has to possess it.

In this installment of the Nick Guy Series, Nick Guy is called upon to help solve the mysterious will of the wealthy and eccentric Oswald Jamison. Along the way he discovers some interesting aspects of the greatest inheritance of all: Eternal Life through the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ.

SALVATION IS NOT ATTAINED THROUGH A FLESH AND BLOOD

INHERITANCE: Romans 9:6-8 reads: "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but 'Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.'"

In this verse, Paul makes reference to Genesis 21:12 where God confirms to Abraham that the promised great nation that would proceed from Abraham and would be a blessing to the whole world would not come from Ishmael, the child of the flesh, but from Isaac, the child of the promise.

What this means to us is this: We cannot inherit the Kingdom of God through the flesh. We cannot acquire salvation through the faith of another. We will not enter the Kingdom of God simply because we are the child or spouse of a born-again believer. Salvation must be secured individually.

The inheritance cannot be secured through an earthly relationship (as a child of the flesh), but through a spiritual one with Jesus Christ (as a child of the promise).

The Hidden Treasure that is salvation must be personally appropriated. Salvation does not come through the flesh, but through the Spirit. It must be appropriated by faith. By those who believe by the Spirit in the promise of God.

John 6:63 reads: "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing."

SALVATION IS KEPT SECURE BY GOD: I Peter 1:3,4 reads: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."

There are many things in this world that are regarded as treasures. Some things, like precious stones are able to hold their value pretty well. Other things, like wine or items that are rare, actually become more valuable with time.

But, of course, their value is dependant upon how much someone is willing to pay for them. Other items will have their value rise and fall.

But salvation and the hope of resurrection through the blood of Jesus, has a value that never drops, and never will drop.

It will never be subject to decay. It will never spoil or lose its purity. And its value will never fade.

And it is kept secure by God in heaven. Treasures on earth, even those that consistently hold their value, can be lost or stolen. But, salvation can never be taken from us, nor can we ever misplace it.

THE VALUE OF SALVATION IS NOT NECESSARILY OBVIOUS: In Luke 17:20, 21 we read this: "Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he [Jesus] answered them, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.'"

Salvation, which makes us children of God and heirs to His Kingdom, is not observable in a way we might expect. Certainly not in a way an unregenerate man would expect.

The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 1:18 wrote that the "message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

So what appears to be of little value, is actually more valuable than anything in the whole world.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO ACQUIRE SALVATION, BUT THE SITUATION SURROUNDING ITS ACQUISITION MAY BE DIFFERENT: Salvation is only possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus is not merely one way to become a child of God and to gain eternal life, He is the only way.

Yet, the stories behind how a man or woman comes to Jesus are as varied as the people involved in them.

Two particular salvation stories from Scripture involve water. John 4 tells of a Samaritan woman who met Jesus at a well. Jesus asked her for a drink. Then He said to her: "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water." That living water was a reference to salvation.

In Acts 8:26-39 we read of an early disciple named Philip who met an Ethiopian on a road going down from Jerusalem to Gaza. The Ethiopian had been reading the prophet Isaiah. Philip explained to him that what he was reading was referring to Jesus. The Ethiopian accepted Jesus as his Savior. Along the road they were on they found some water and the Ethiopian was baptized on the spot. Baptism a representation of salvation cleansing a man or woman of their sins.

The Samaritan woman wasn't looking for salvation, and the Ethiopian was. But both found it anyway.

SALVATION INVOLVES TWO TRANSACTIONS: To gain the Kingdom of God, one transaction is necessary. Another transaction results from that first one. You are given and you give. One transaction causes the other.

I Corinthians 6:20 reads: "For you were bought with a price."

This refers to the first transaction. Jesus bought our salvation through His death on the cross.

In Philippians 3:7 Paul wrote: "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

Here is the second transaction. The one receiving salvation turns from all he has gained in this world for the sake of Christ and for the benefits of salvation.

RESOURCES: R.C. Sproul, in his useful and accessible book, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*, answers many questions surrounding the doctrine of salvation (along with many more essential truths). And he does it in a very precise and easy-to-comprehend way.