

GOD: REVEALER AND CONCEALER

January 14, 2018

Matthew 11:1-30

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Matthew 11:25, 26

Jesus prayed this prayer when seventy men whom He had sent forth preaching returned reporting to Him the ministry they had conducted (Luke 10:17-22). But Matthew reports Christ’s prayer in conjunction with His rebuke of those who refused to repent (11:16-24). In that rebuke, four truths are prominent: 1) Repentance is necessary; 2) Rejecting divine truth brings condemnation; 3) Judgement is certain; and 4) God is sovereign in dispensing truth (11:20-24).

Christ knew what was needed to persuade Tyre and Sidon to repent, but did not provide it for them. Instead, He provided it for Chorazin and Bethsaida who refused to repent; whose refusal ensured a judgment greater than Tyre’s and Sidon’s. In exalted self-righteousness, Capernaum rejected Christ, securing a judgment greater than Sodom’s. Sodom would have been spared had Christ’s works been done there.

In these actions God sovereignly gave or withheld the works that would have resulted in repentance. For this divine revealing and concealing, Matthew reports that Christ gave thanks to God because it “seemed good in thy sight” (26). His prayer continued, “no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*” (11:27). God’s self-revelation to man is entirely within the prerogative of His power and His will.

For the same reason that Christ gave thanks, we should also. His thanksgiving affirms the virtue of submission to this truth, and our heavenly Father’s worthiness to be praised for it. But submission to this truth, and thanksgiving for it, require submission to other biblical truths:

1. Mankind is universally sinful, worthy only of judgment and wrath, and undeserving of God’s favor. (Psalm 14:2, 3; 51:5; Isaiah 53:6, 64:4; Romans 3:10-18, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2: 1-3)
2. Yet God graciously saves (Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is amazing that any sinner is saved from sin. But He saves a “multitude, which no man could number” (Revelation 7:9). Those who live when/where the gospel is proclaimed receive immense favor from God.
3. That innumerable multitude is but a tiny segment of humanity. Those saved from their sins are very few by comparison to the multitudes of humanity. Christ taught, “Fear not, *little* flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). “Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few there be that find it*” (Matthew 7:14).
4. Greatest gratitude is owed to God, by whom this salvation is given in Christ (Romans 12:1).
5. Every person must make certain that he/she is one of that tiny number. “Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, strive to enter in at the strait gate:

for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able” (Luke 13:23, 24).