

Does God hide Himself from His people?

There are aspects of God which remain hidden from our eyes because we are finite beings. God is infinite and we cannot possibly understand everything about Him. However, God does reveal Himself in His own time and in His own way. And strangely enough, God does not reveal Himself to everyone. Probably, the number of people He does not reveal Himself to is far greater than to those He does.

So why does God like to remain hidden? Why doesn't He do everything right out in the open for all to see? Someone may say, *"I do not believe God is hidden. I believe He does reveal Himself to everyone."* Therefore, the first thing to do is prove from the Scriptures that we are all dealing with a hidden God, and then to show that this God does not reveal Himself to everyone.

The first Scripture to look at is **Matthew 11:25-28**. It states, ***"At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so Father, for it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*** Jesus' words are poignant, yet troubling. At a first glance it almost seems that the beginning verses contradicts the ending verse.

But let us look closely at the point Jesus is making here. Jesus thanks the Father for hiding things from some people, the wise and prudent and then the word carries over to thank the Father, in the same sense, for revealing them to the babes. The wise and prudent are those people who think they can learn and know about God simply through studying, and through worldly wisdom. But we know from reading texts such as **1 Corinthians 1:26-31**, **John 3:3**, and others, that this is impossible. God sovereignly bestows the knowledge of salvation on whom He wills as our text states. Jesus' whole discourse concerns salvation and repentance. It begins in **Matthew 11:1** and continues all the way to **11:30**. All of it concerns three things: (a) the Kingdom coming, (b) a response to the Kingdom, and (c) the salvation that accompanies the Messiah.

The emphasis is really on the "why" of the situation. Why did God hide these things from people? Doesn't God want to show all people His salvation? Didn't He send His Son for each and every individual? The word hidden, in Greek "*kruptos*" means, "to conceal or hide." And this particular usage of the word is in a tense that signifies that this is something God began to do at a specific point in time in the past, and continues it into the future. God doesn't reveal everything all at once, and to any particular generation. The particular starting point of hiding God's Word from people can be seen with Adam and Eve. After the Fall of man and the expulsion from the garden for His disobedience, God only revealed a portion of His Word to Adam (just like He did before the Fall because God did not give him all revelation).

He revealed more of His plan to Noah, concerning the flood; He revealed more to Abram (Abraham) concerning the coming Seed, of which Abram would be a blessing; He revealed more to Moses, concerning the Law; He revealed more to Joshua concerning the Land; He revealed more to David concerning the temple, and etc. - all the way up to Christ. Each time, God revealed more of His plan to each individual. It is like turning pages in a book; the more you turn and read, the more information you receive about a specific subject. God was revealing bits and pieces to each of His chosen people, and each time He did this it built upon the former and established the Covenant of Grace progressively. And this revelation was completely revealed when Jesus came.

But even when Christ came, God was *still* hiding other things as well. He chose Mary and Joseph to watch over the babe - them and them alone. The shepherds were informed in the fields, and they were only able to witness to a few people in the city about what had happened. A few Magi came from the East and worshipped the child in secret. There was no cosmic billboard. There was no huge advertisement. Just a glimmer here and there to a few chosen people. Even when Jesus Christ began His ministry He repeatedly told people to keep quiet about Him (**Mark 1:44**). Even the demons, who knew who Jesus was, were commanded by Him to keep silent (**Mark 1:23-25**). God was still hiding things for a reason.

When Jesus taught, He commonly taught with those theological masterpieces called parables. Many times people will tell us that parables were "aids" in teaching. But a careful study of the parable shows that Jesus is teaching profound theological ideas before people delved inside the parables.

And these parables were always a mystery to many. **Matthew 13:10** (and **Mark 4:1-11**) tells us specifically why Jesus taught in parables. ***"And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do you speak in parables?' He said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given... Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says, 'hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive'."***

Jesus speaks to people in parables so they cannot fully understand. A parable serves two purposes: 1) it helps those to whom salvation is given to understand the things of the kingdom of God, and 2) it condemns and hardens the hearts of those who are not willing to receive salvation. Parables save and parables condemn, depending upon who is listening. God is a God who is often hidden in the mystery of salvation and in the cryptic messages of Jesus' parables.

To finish, **Matthew 11**, we come to see how someone can understand the Kingdom of God. There are two prerequisites: 1) the Son must reveal the Father to the person, and 2) these people must "come" to Jesus. When Jesus says ***"Come to me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest,"*** He is not saying, *"all you who have figured these things out come to me."* What the context of the text shows us that no one will come to Jesus unless Jesus reveals the Father to that person (Jesus' words are *"the one whom the Son wills to reveal Him..."*).

People must be "able" to come to Jesus before they *can* come to Him. **Jesus makes them able**. He reveals the Father to them and then they are able. From the Father and the Son the Holy Spirit is sent (**John 14:26; John 3:1-8**). When the Father is revealed to a person, these elect people are enlightened by the power of the Spirit to understand.

God is hidden until He reveals Himself to you. He opens your mind by the Spirit, changes your heart, and enlightens your understanding about Himself. The Son wills to reveal the Father in a special and personal way in which it will not always be the same. Paul's experience in **Acts 9** on the Damascus road was far different than Lydia's conversion in **Acts 16**. The belief of some of the Jews on the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2** was radically different than the outpouring upon Cornelius' house in **Acts 10**. The arguments about Paul's conversion which hardened Felix, almost convinced Agrippa to be saved. God reveals Himself personally and specially to each person.

God is the God who shrouds Himself in that hidden place and reveals Himself only to those the Son wills to reveal Him to. He surrounds Himself in His cloud of glory and He allows only a the "elect" to enter in to see Him. **Psalm 91:1, "He who dwells in the secret (hidden) place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."**

God is the hidden God who may have already revealed Himself to you. If He has, how much are you thanking Him for showing Himself to you? For God has no obligation to reveal Himself to anyone. If He has not revealed Himself to you, do you cry out to Him? Do you cry out like the leper of **Mark 1:40** and say, **"if you are willing Jesus You can make me clean."**

Are you needing Jesus to make you clean? The Bible says you are! Do you want to be washed? The Bible says you need to be (**Titus 3:5**). If you desire this, then God has already begun working in your heart. If you desire this, know that God has already sent His Spirit to call you, and His Son to reveal Himself to you. Call on Him and throw yourself upon His mercy, and the dark clouds of concealment will disperse, and His ever revealing light will commence.

"Arise, shine, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon you, For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you. And His glory will be seen upon you" (Isaiah 60:1). Not only will His glory be seen upon you, but you will be able to behold His glory! You will be able to see the light of the Word, the living Word who is Jesus. And He will say back to you, *"I am willing to make you whole."*

Every time two or three are gathered in His name Jesus manifests Himself. And where He is - there you will find resurrection power! The hidden God is revealed through His might deeds of power!