

A Glimpse of God's Amazing Treasure

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I was not looking for it, but I found it. The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated to the Jews that He was their king by performing many miracles. He made water into wine, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dead to rise again. The Jews considered His miracles and His words, and they rejected Him. Jesus Christ came to His own people (the Jews), and His own did not receive Him (John 1:12; Matthew 12:24).

Following their rejection, He began to speak in parables (Matthew 13). A parable is like a riddle. It is casting a familiar truth or object beside an unknown truth or object in order to teach. It was designed by our Lord to hide the truth of His identity from those who really did not want to know it.

One story that He told is about a man who dug in a field and found a valuable treasure. It was not unusual for people to bury their wealth in fields because they never knew when an attack would come and they would be captured. There may not be time to hide their valuables. The man was so thrilled at the discovery of his treasure that he bought the entire field. This is a great illustration of what happened to me.

As mentioned often, I learned early the value of studying the Bible word-by-word. Through this method of study, I discovered that God provided, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a work sufficient to give me forever life by faith alone in Him alone. This was indeed of eternal value to me. When I saw that, my treasure of grace became bigger than I could ever imagine.

I have always been awed by and drawn to the words of Jesus Christ recorded in the Bible. I realize that God inspired all Scripture, but I am fascinated by His words (2 Timothy 3:16-17). My adventure into the immeasurable depths of grace began shortly after reading and meditating on the Lord's miracle of feeding thousands from a boy's small lunch.

Thousands of people had followed the Christ and His disciples as He walked through the hillsides. He suddenly stopped and asked the disciples where one could find food enough to feed this massive crowd. The disciples' response was understandable. That would be impossible! There was no food anywhere in the vicinity to feed such a crowd. Andrew just happened to spy a small boy's lunch. He had two little fish and five pieces of bread.

The Lord motioned the people to sit down. He then prayed and began to fill baskets with food. Fill baskets with food? Coming from where? Coming from this small boy's fish and bread. One can just chuckle, imagining the disciples who had been standing around minutes before suddenly becoming waiters running back and forth frantically carrying basket after basket of food to the

people. When everyone had been satisfied, there were twelve baskets of food left over. Miraculous! Unbelievable! Incredible! The disciples responded, “This is truly the Prophet who has come into the world” (John 6:14). Yes! Obviously!

Jesus then spoke of Himself as God’s bread of life that came down from heaven. He said that those who come to Him would never hunger nor thirst. The people, however, did not respond to this miracle that had happened right in front of them. They did not believe in Him. Jesus said that they had seen Him and yet did not believe (John 6:35-36). Why didn’t they believe in Him?

The answer came through His incredible words.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:37-40, italics mine)

Here is the truth that God used to shake my theological world to its very foundation. Here was my treasure. This truth sneaked up on me. I did not see it coming. Conspicuously missing were the anxiety-producing words *chosen, election, or predestination*.

To be exceedingly truthful, I wasn’t mentally prepared for what Jesus said. The Holy Spirit simply and quietly placed His words into my mind. One line played over and over in my thoughts. “All that the Father gives to Me will come to me!” That was it!

Questions quickly surfaced. Was Jesus saying that only those that the Father gives Him will come to Him? That is exactly what He said. It seemed to me by His use of the word “all” that He had a definite number in mind! This appeared to be election.

Jesus also said that He had come down from heaven to do the will of His Father. I knew that a will was a decision, a choice. Christ had come to earth to do exactly what His heavenly Father had chosen for Him to do. So what is the will of the Father? The choice of the Father is that all those that He has given to the Son will come to the Son and not one of those who come to the Son will ever be lost.

This meant that God would never forget even one of those whom He had given to Christ, and they would be forever secure. This is the very reason that He came down from heaven.

Again, many people saw the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and were amazed. They ate the food and were filled. They looked at Him but didn’t see Him for who He is. But those whom the Father had given Him *did see Him*, and to those He gave eternal life. These were obviously the given ones. The “gifts” would see and believe in Him.

Why did some not believe? The Father had not given them to the Son. The plain, common-sense meaning of Christ’s words is that God has chosen people and chosen them for eternity. Wow!

Only those whom the Father gives to the Son come to the Son. Jesus said in this same chapter, “No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father” (John 6:65). The word *grant* is from the Greek word *didomi* which means “to give.” The word *can* implies ability. Only the ones that God the Father gives to the Son will have the ability to come to the Son. The rest will not come.

Jesus said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44). Again, the word “can” is used. This word means that no one on his own chooses to come to Christ unless the Father draws that person. The word “draw” in the original language is a strong word. It does not mean to gently nudge. It means literally “to drag.” I know that sounds strong, but that is what it means.

The exact Greek word *elkuo* is used in two other places in the New Testament, Acts 16:19 and James 2:6. In the Acts passage, Paul had just cast a demon from a young slave girl, putting a halt on some large profits others had made from her. Her owners angrily seized Paul and Silas and dragged them (*elkuo*) into the market place. Here the word is translated “dragged.” James also used the word when he spoke of the rich oppressing the poor and dragging them (*elkuo*) into the courts.

It may also be translated “to compel.” *Compel* is a strong word also. When one is compelled to do something, he will do it. The amazing gifts given by God the Father will be compelled to come to Jesus Christ, and come to Him they will.

I remember vividly that moment when I made the conscious decision to trust Jesus Christ as my Savior. I had heard the gospel some months before, and several times since, and mulled it over in my mind at various times. Then came that day! I was attending a youth camp at Bibletown in Boca Raton, Florida. I stopped on the edge of a field by a small fishpond.

I was compelled to come to the Savior. At first, I thought the words, “Lord I know I have sinned against you and I want you to save me.” I think at that point I was probably saved. But then I whispered them silently to God. “Lord, I know I have sinned against you and I want you to save me.” That was it. I knew instantly that God’s salvation had come to me.

The Florida sky had been blue before, but now it was even bluer. The grass had been green, but now it was greener. I was already looking through different eyes at the world around me. I realized my life had come together in some wonderful, inexplicable way. I was not the same person that I had been, and I would never be the same again. The gift given by the Father to the Son had come to the Son.

Jesus Prays for the Gifts

A friend of mine recently spent some quality time eavesdropping on a private prayer meeting. It was a most unusual prayer meeting. He was reading and meditating on a prayer of Jesus Christ, God the Son, to His Father in heaven in John 17. As my friend put it, “God is praying to God.” There were no disciples present. It was a private prayer meeting just between the two of them. My

friend said that he felt like a fly on the wall listening to the private words of Jesus Christ. Let's take a look at what He said.

When Jesus said, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world," He was speaking of His disciples, saying that they were gifts given to Him by the Father. "They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word" (John 17:6). These men had at first belonged to the Father. The thought of this absolutely blows me away. The disciples (and those of us who know Him) had always been the Father's possession.

The familiar words of David come to mind. Speaking of God, he said:

Your eyes saw my substance being yet unformed. And in your book they all were written. The days fashioned for me when as yet there were none of them. How precious are your thoughts to me, oh God. How great is the sum of them. (Psalm 139:16-17)

Jesus continued to pray to the Father:

Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. (John 17:7-9)

Jesus' words, "I do not pray for the world but for those You have given Me, for they are Yours" are amazing words. They tell us without question that there is a definite number of the elect chosen out of the world.

Later in the prayer, Jesus prayed, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21). Jesus was speaking of God's called out ones, the church.

Wow! I am a gift given to the Son from the Father. This is precisely what Jesus Christ said.

After months turned into years of meditation and searching this passage, the truth of it just grew until I was overwhelmed. I realized that I had gone as high as I could go in attempting to find another view that would explain the meaning of this passage in another way.

Maybe others had been given more insight. So I read commentary after commentary. Some attempted to twist or read into the text their biased personal ideas to make it say what they desired. But no one could change its clear meaning. Jesus said what He meant to say. And it was all that needed to be said.

It caused me to think about eternity and the bigness of God. When I reflected again upon the words of Christ "will come to me," I realized that I came to Him because He first came to me. I

came to Jesus Christ because the Father had given me to Him. No giving, no coming! I knew that my coming to Him was not because of anything that I had done or not done. God had set His love upon me before I was ever born. My mind truly began to race. The thought that reverberated in me was, "*I am a gift.*"

Moses may have given the only explanation as to the reason for this amazing grace. "The secret things belong to the Lord" (Deuteronomy 29:29). I concluded that the Father had chosen to give me to His Son for a reason all His own. It pleased Him (Ephesians 1:5). He is God, and He has the right to do as He pleases. I am an amazing gift given by God the Father to Jesus Christ.