

A Father's Love



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A FATHER'S LOVE

Christians often do not realize the miraculous nature of their calling to God, nor do they personally experience the Father's love on their behalf. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). This text is saying that it is impossible for individuals to come to Jesus with the realization that he is the Savior of the world unless, first, something miraculous has been performed on their behalf. It is *God* who calls the Christian, not Jesus. The Scriptures describe the Christian as being "begotten" of God (James 1:18; 1 John 5:18). On another occasion, when the Master saw the type of individual that the Heavenly Father had drawn to him, he 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" (Matt. 11:25). Later in his ministry, Jesus appreciated more fully the principles underlying the decisions that God had made in selecting individuals to become prospective body members of The Christ class. The Father has revealed these profound truths unto the consecrated. Do not the Scriptures say about Jesus, "Who *of God* is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness [justification], and sanctification, and redemption [or glorification]" (1 Cor. 1:30)?

Now the miracle consists of the following. The Scriptures indicate that Satan, as “the god of this world,” has blinded the minds of men lest they see the glorious light of the gospel in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:4,6). This darkness or ignorance in regard to the things of God is evidenced in the fact that the whole world is benighted in sin and only a relative handful of individuals has responded to the message of salvation. No wonder Jesus, in Luke 12:32, referred to the Church as a “little flock” in comparison to the great mass of humanity.

Those who are called and chosen of God to walk in the narrow way are described in the Scriptures as being honored (Matt. 7:14; John 12:26). When Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter, the first to speak, responded, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Then Jesus gave a startling reply, for he said emphatically that flesh and blood had not revealed this truth to Peter but that *God, his Father*, had revealed it to him (Matt. 16:15-17). Let us repeat the gist of Jesus’ remarks in John 6:44 that it is an utter *impossibility* for an individual to recognize Jesus is the Savior unless that knowledge is miraculously given to him. This statement is true whether or not a person subsequently decides to consecrate and dedicate his or her life to God’s service, for in either case, the impartation of that knowledge is a miracle.

Another point: The call of God is not a command. God is looking for volunteers. He does not compel the Bride of Christ into service but, rather, extends an *invitation* through Jesus: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden” (Matt. 11:28). There are no threats. The Lord does not frighten any into becoming members of the Bride class. God’s truth—the beauty of Jesus’ character and life and the nature of his mission—is disclosed with the intent that we might respond, follow in the path of the Master, and ultimately become united to him in the Kingdom.

Not only did *God* foreknow us, but also Jesus first knew us before we knew him (1 John 4:19). This principle is indicated in many ways in the New Testament. For example, when Simon and Andrew approached Jesus in their initial meeting, the Master looked at Simon and addressed him as “Peter.” Why did Jesus do this? Because *he knew* that Peter would respond to the message of truth and that in responding, Peter would become so activated and energized with enthusiasm on behalf of the cause of Christ that he would be like a pillar in the Church. Thus the name Peter, meaning “*rock*,” was most fitting. Of course at the time Jesus said this, Peter did not realize the full significance of his new name. He simply accepted the name in the acquiescence and recognition of his being a follower of the Master.

Another example showing that Jesus first knew us is the incident with Nathanael (John 1:45-48). News had been rumored that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. After Nathanael had prayed under the fig tree, Philip came to him and said, "We have found the Messiah." Nathanael replied, "How can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" As they were approaching, Jesus recognized Nathanael from a distance and called out to him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" When Nathanael asked, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree."

The miraculous nature of Jesus' first knowing us before we know him is also indicated by the account of Zacchaeus, the rich man who wanted to see Jesus (Luke 19:1-6). Being short of stature, Zacchaeus climbed up into a tree so that he could see Jesus passing by. When Jesus walked under that tree, he looked up and called, "Zacchaeus, come down, for I am going to have supper at your house today." Jesus thus knew *Zacchaeus by name* before he had ever met the man.

And remember the Samaritan woman by the well (John 4:5-26). Jesus disclosed to her that she had already had five husbands. These incidents prove Jesus first knew us, but *even earlier* the Father knew us, for it is the *Father* who draws us to Jesus.

The Master assured us by saying, "All those whom the Father draws to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37 paraphrase). In other words, Jesus is perfectly satisfied with those individuals whom God calls to be his footstep followers. He has full confidence in the wisdom and character of his Father. Therefore, the selection of the Bride of Christ is not predicated upon an earlier personal relationship with Jesus, for *God* is the One who makes the *original* selection. Moreover, the selection is not based on emotion but upon an individual's being attracted to a message in God's Word.

In Psalm 45:10,11, the Heavenly Father is speaking: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear.... So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." God desires that we might ultimately become members of the Bride of Christ. He is talking about His Son and saying that in the new arrangement in the Kingdom when Jesus is King, his Bride will be Queen. And so He addresses this class, "Hearken, O daughter, ... and incline thine ear [to my Word and counsel and to the Master's voice]."

On one occasion when Jesus was talking with his disciples and the crowd was in a ring about him, two of the disciples broke into this inner circle and said that his mother wanted to speak with him. Jesus responded, "Who is my mother? and who are my

brethren? ... whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:48-50). The Master's words show that being part of the Bride class is not based on personality but on love for God and on responding to His Word. Even Jesus had the spirit of love and obedience, as revealed in the incident with the woman of Samaria at the well. When the disciples marveled that he was speaking to a Samaritan woman, he replied that his "meat" was to do the will of his Father (John 4:27,34). Furthermore, if we obey the commandments of the Lord, both the Father and the Son will abide in us (John 15:10; 1 John 3:24).

After some of the Master's sermons, the disciples went to Jesus for further enlightenment. On a particular occasion, they wished to have more information about the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, and he explained the parable in great length. As a result, they were able to grasp the significance of the parable to a fairly deep extent, but then they asked, "Why didn't you speak to the public the way you are explaining the parable to us now?" The Master answered, "Because it is given unto *you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to *them* it is not given" (Matt. 13:11). In other words, the Lord is not trying to convert the world at present, and to think otherwise is a misconception. The gospel message is to be preached in all the world for a *witness*,

and any response is to be voluntary. He is seeking the class who, of their own volition, inquire further. Indeed very few people go back to ask any questions. They might hear something that momentarily interests them, but to respond further requires a certain degree of humility as well as a certain degree of hunger and honesty. The three H's seem to be the basic requirement of Christian character that the Lord is looking for in His people: *humility, hunger, and honesty*. Therefore, when the disciples went to Jesus afterwards and wanted to know further particulars, their interest in and desire to understand the Word were commendable in God's sight. Recognizing this, Jesus encouraged them with the statement "It is given unto *you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."

In other pictures in the Bible, Jesus is presented as the Caretaker of the Church and as the High Priest of our profession. He is a merciful High Priest who has been touched with a feeling of sympathy for the afflictions of his followers because, to a certain extent, he experienced some of their infirmities during his earthly ministry (Heb. 4:15). While Jesus is our High Priest, we sometimes overlook the fact that he is *God's* priest on our behalf. In back of the arrangement is God, the Father, who has the chief honor. It is He who is the Revealer, and it is He who draws the Church to the Son. He draws us to Jesus, and if we respond to the

invitation and call, we come into the divine arrangement and into the divine family.

The Scriptures tell us that *God* sets the members in the body as it pleases *Him* (1 Cor. 12:18; Matt. 20:23). Jesus does not have that prerogative, but he is more than happy to acquiesce to his Father's wishes. "As my Father hath taught me" is the spirit of the Master—he does the will of the Father, who sent him (John 8:28). And we find that while the Master gave the apostles their new names, it was only after communion, consultation, and fellowship with God that Jesus selected the Twelve.

Thus there is a lot to consider in connection with the development of the Church. And this development is a very personal matter, for the Heavenly Father knew us inside and out before we ever accepted the Lord Jesus as our Savior. This thorough knowledge of our down sittings and uprisings is disclosed to Jesus, for they no doubt talk about us, the One with the other (Psa. 139:2). Jesus tell us, "The Father himself loveth you," and tries to encourage us by saying that the very hairs of our head are numbered (John 16:27; Matt. 10:30). The thought or lesson is not that the Lord knows exactly how many thousands of hairs we have on our head but that *nothing* can happen to the consecrated child of God without knowledge or permission from on high, not

even the dropping of a hair, as it were. In other words, God is so carefully watching out for our welfare along natural and spiritual lines that absolutely nothing can occur without His first giving permission. For example, an accident cannot happen unless God sees that through the experience, we would have the opportunity to learn helpful lessons. In that sense, the very hairs of our head are numbered, and we are the apple of the Father's eye (Psa. 17:8).

The "apple" of the eye is the eyeball, which is very sensitive to dust, and anyone who does injury to any of God's children, to the called of this age—anyone who slanders or maligns them unjustly or improperly in any manner—will have to answer to God. The Heavenly Father is very sensitive on this issue. While He might not injure such a person or speak audibly from heaven voicing His displeasure, He does take cognition of the words or acts, and some kind of retribution will take place either now or in the promised Kingdom Age soon to come.

If the injury is of a more serious nature, if anyone causes one of God's little ones to fall—that is, to give up the Christian race or to give up following Jesus for some reason—there will be a requiting. If *God* sees that a person is responsible for the failure of a Christian to be faithful, the matter is serious. Sometimes people mistakenly or erroneously accuse another of being responsible,

but if *God* accredits one as being responsible for the downfall of another individual who ultimately falls from the way, that party will be punished accordingly. And those who are *fully* responsible for the spiritual destruction of another individual must pay the *full* penalty. Hear the Master's words in Matthew 18:6, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." For one to literally have a millstone tied around his neck and then be thrown into the depths of the sea would be a terrible and shameful type of death. The attitude resulting in the perpetration of such a death would be very hateful indeed, for those who would cast a body into the sea in such a manner would not want to see that body come up to the surface. They would want to destroy all remembrance of the individual forever. In Matthew 18:6, Jesus is making the strong point that as dreadful as this type of death would be, it is more pleasant than the death of those who cause injury to even one of the least of his little ones.

The Father has much affection and concern for those who have responded to His message, and He tells us that not a sparrow can fall without His being aware of it (Matt. 10:29,31). This does not mean that God has an account book for every single sparrow in the world and that these birds will get a resurrection

and be preserved in the Kingdom. No, for we are told that the natural beasts perish (Psa. 49:12). The thought is that *absolutely nothing* can happen in this earth—whether it is the hair falling off a saint’s head or a sparrow falling to the ground—without God or His agencies being cognizant of it. Wherever one goes or whatever condition or state one is in does not matter, for God is there; that is, He has agencies who are fully aware of all that is going on. His hand is not shortened; He can give aid to the saints as they have need.

Another vital relationship that Christians have with the Father is the custodial care they receive from the guardian angels. The Scriptures infer that every one of the saints of God has appointed to him a separate guardian angel responsible for his welfare. Should anything happen to the one under this charge, the guardian angel has to answer to God. In addition, Matthew 18:10 says, “Their angels [that is, the angels of these little ones, of Christians] do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” If the guardian angels have access to the Divine Presence and can go in there anytime, we can also be sure, by natural inference and indirect reasoning, that they would not leave those under their charge unguarded. In other words, when the guardian angels go to heaven in connection with a particular petition or for wisdom and instruction as to what to do on our

behalf in some crisis of life, we are not left unguarded down here. Therefore, the inference is that all of God's children have more than one angel—in fact, they have several guardian angels—but one of the several is charged with a separate responsibility for our welfare. He is in charge of the providences in our lives and is looking out for us. In that sense, he could be called “*the*” guardian angel over other angels who are enlisted on our behalf.

We recall the incident where the Master was asleep in a boat on the Sea of Galilee and such a fierce storm arose that waves started coming into the boat and threatened to sink it. The disciples awakened the Master and said, “Carest thou not that we perish?” (Mark 4:38). And what did Jesus do? He rebuked them with the words “O ye of little faith” (Matt. 8:26). The lesson is that we must develop faith in God and in His watch-care over our lives. We should pray to God that He will increase our faith in obedience and response to Him and His Word.

In another illustration, the Master likened himself to a vine: “I am the vine, ye are the branches” (John 15:5). Only as we abide in Jesus can we bring forth any fruit that is pleasing to God. But note that when it comes to pruning the branches of this vine, the *Father* is the Husbandman, not Jesus; that is, the Father is even more important than the Vine (John 15:1,2). The Father is our

Head, and Jesus is our Master and more immediate and closer Lord (1 Cor. 11:3). We are Jesus' prospective Bride and the Father's children. And thus we are encouraged by the Apostle Paul's asking, "Who shall separate us ... from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" (Rom. 8:35,39). *Nothing*, he concludes.

Hebrews 1:14 states that the angels in heaven have a specific charge on behalf of the saints: "Are they not *all* ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" This verse indicates that God has rested from His physical creative works and now is thoroughly employed and interested in the development of the new creation. All attention in heaven is concentrated upon this new spiritual creation. It is as if everything is arrested or stayed in its course of development *until this Church class is developed in the present age*. Thus verse 14 tells us that *all of the angels in heaven* are ministering spirits sent forth to minister on behalf of the heirs of God, the children of salvation down here.

This lesson is reinforced by the incident in 2 Kings 6:15-17 where the Prophet Elisha helped his fearful servant by praying that the servant's eyes would be opened. And what did the servant behold? He saw the mountain *filled* with horses and chariots

of fire—the lesson being that the ministering spirits, the holy angels, who are for us, are more in number or greater than those who are against us.

The Scriptures inform us that in the next life, the Lord Jesus will not be ashamed to confess the names of faithful Christians before his Father and the angels in heaven (Heb. 2:11,12). Jesus has nothing to do with the original selection of the Bride class, but after they have been drawn to him by God and been faithful soldiers to his cause, his personal attachment and endearment on their behalf increase, so that he is not ashamed to be called one of their brethren. The Lord Jesus identifies himself with us as being our elder brother.

With regard to the coming Kingdom on earth, an incident occurred during our Lord's earthly ministry in which the mother of James and John desired that one or both of her sons might be seated on the right and left hand of the Master in Kingdom honor (Matt. 6:10; 20:20-23). But the Master told them that it was not his prerogative to place his faithful followers in official positions of honor in the Kingdom, for the prerogative to grant such honor belonged to the Father. Whoever the Father would choose to place in such a rank of distinction was His own selection. And so we find that all the way down the line with regard to the call and

the development of the Church—and even after the marriage of the Lamb has taken place—the future distinctive honors to be given to the Church in Kingdom glory will be granted by the Father.

In review, then, we see that God is the One who has called the Church to Christ. He is the Caretaker of the Church in the *highest sense* of the word, for the Church is called the “church of God” (Acts 20:28). Moreover, God is anxious to have us with Him in the Kingdom so that He may shower us with His love and affection when we are in personal union with Him. As the hymn goes, “What more can He say than to you He hath [already] said? You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled.”

Frank Shallieu

The Keys of Revelation



**END TIME
PROPHECIES
REVEALED**

The curious symbols and visions of the Book of Revelation mystify scholar and layman alike. *The Keys of Revelation* unlocks the secret code

language by presenting a solid flow of interpretation never before captured in any written treatise on the Book of Revelation. Every verse is explained without compromise to politics or organized religion, differentiating between “churchianity” and Christianity.

This 723-page book contains knowledge that will astound the honest reader and cause the humble Christian, seeking after righteousness and truth, to bow down before the Great Creator in thanksgiving . . . for “the time is at hand” to unseal “the sayings of the prophecy” of the Book of Revelation (Rev. 22:10).

