

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew** 17- The King Calls His Subjects

Church June 19, 2022

Matthew 4:18-22

18 Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

20 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

21 Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.

22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Two different times in this Passage- at the beginning of verses 20&22- the Apostle Matthew- as he was "moved" by God the Holy Spirit- *infallibly* wrote down the Hebrew words, "*taguba maydia*". And much later- those words were translated into Greek as, "*eutheoes*". Around 382AD., Jerome translated that Greek word into Latin as "*autem*". And nearly 900 years later, that Latin word was correctly translated into English as, "**immediately**". And, according to the Dictionary- the word, "**immediately**" means: *without lapse of time; without delay; instantly; at once*.

Now Matthew was NOT physically present when Jesus called those four men to Himself. But, as an Apostle himself- Matthew spent at least 3 years with all four of them. So, evidently, they told Matthew just how they were "called" by the Lord Christ on that day. And no doubt, Matthew believed them- because in **Matthew 9:9**- the Apostle wrote:

As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.

... which is very similar to how those four fishermen responded.

So, Matthew was *personally* aware of *how* Jesus saves sinners and *calls* them to Himself- because he *personally* experienced the Miracle of the New Birth himself.

And Matthew wrote this down- so that his Jewish brethren would understand this as well. And now, 21 Centuries later- we need to grasp this amazing Moment- as it will teach us another important aspect of both Salvation and the Character of God Himself.

So, this is the Passage that illustrates just *how* Conversion happens with Jesus in the New Covenant. It is amazing; astounding; powerful; transformative; supernatural; and miraculous. And it is also “Sovereign”.

Now we need to understand that *everyone* under the Old Covenant had to experience Conversion as well. Nobody was saved by keeping the Law of God- precisely because no human born of woman (besides Jesus) can keep the Law- perfectly. But nobody was ever saved under the Old Covenant by simply being born Jewish either. Everybody who has ever been saved; or who is saved today; or who will ever be saved- is saved the very SAME way: BY Grace and THROUGH Faith. Nobody under the Old Covenant was saved by his own Works- and nobody is saved today by Works. We can't earn or deserve or be entitled to Salvation- because that negates God's Grace. So, we need to realize that nobody was saved under the Old Covenant by circumcising the flesh of their foreskin and nobody was saved by attempting to keep the Ten Commandments- again, because NO human CAN keep them.

But we must also understand that nobody *initiates* or causes the New Birth- even though many teach that. And there is a reason *why* we can't initiate our own Salvation. In **Ephesians 2:1-9** we read:

**1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world,
according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now
working in the sons of disobedience.
3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the
desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath,
even as the rest.
4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He
loved us,
5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with
Christ (by grace you have been saved),**

6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Now there are many Sermons in these 9 verses. But suffice it to say that the Reason we CANNOT initiate our own Salvation is because of what verses 1-3 says:

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

... and this illustrates WHY we MUST be born again.

Notice that the Apostle taught that “we” were in a particular “Condition” or “State of Being” *prior* to our Salvation. He called it,

“dead in your trespasses and sins”

... which is simply another way of understanding what being “*Lost*”; or “*Fallen*”; or “*Unsaved*” is all about.

And then look again at the last phrase in the Passage. Not only were we spiritually dead- we also were:

... by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

So, “BY NATURE” not “by our actions”- we were “children of God’s Wrath”- even as the rest- or in other words- just like everybody else. So, we were NOT innocent. We were guilty and we were underneath the Wrath of God. And then verses 5-7 says,

even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come

He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

So, this says, “*even though it was true that we were spiritually dead in our Sins- God made us alive together with Jesus... ”*

And the point is that we were NOT “*spiritually Sick*”; nor were we “*spiritually Hindered*”. We weren’t merely “*Impaired*” or simply “*Separated from God*”. The Apostle Paul wrote here that, before we were saved- we were “*spiritually DEAD*”. Stone-cold DEAD! We had NO spiritual Life in us! None! And this is why the various Commands of God did NOT produce this new, spiritual Life.

As lost people- we CAN’T obey the Commands of God- like love and obey God. And neither can we obey Instructions from church leaders like “*take the first step*” or “*pray*” or “*believe.*” We can’t hear these Commands and we certainly can’t obey them in our Lost Condition.

So, instead of more Commands or Instructions- what we needed was a new heart and a new spirit. What we needed was new, spiritual LIFE! And that is why we needed to be born again; and why being born again MUST come *first-BEFORE* we are justified; and why God alone MUST initiate this new Birth.

Now many within the modern church teach, “*we must believe in order to be born again.*” And it is this mantra that helps to confuse being “*born again*” with being “*justified*” or even “*saved.*” The New Birth is a Sovereign Act of God alone- as He comes to the lost person- *while the person is dead in Sin-* and He *sovereignly and powerfully* gives that individual- eyes to see; ears to hear; and a heart that is both willing and able to believe.

And with those new eyes- he sees the Beauty and Importance of Jesus. And with those new ears- he hears the Sound of Amazing Grace; and with that new heart- he is granted with the “*Gift of Repentance*” and the Gift of “*saving Faith.*” And so, AFTER he has been born again- this individual repents of his Sin and trusts in Jesus and in His finished Work and he is then “*Justified*”. He is forgiven and made Righteous. But he could not have done any of that- if he hadn’t *already* been born again.

So, how we should understand the New Birth is that it MUST come BEFORE Justification. So, we do NOT believe in order to be born again. We are born again in order that we may believe.

And this new *spiritual* Birth was like our own *natural* Birth- in the sense that we didn’t *initiate* it or *cause* it. We couldn’t- we were dead. So, unless God comes to us FIRST and, by His Grace- *sovereignly, powerfully, supernaturally,* and *miraculously* gives us this new, spiritual Life- we are doomed to stay spiritually dead.

The main difference in Salvation under the New Covenant as opposed to the Old was that they were saved BY the Grace of God and THROUGH the Gift of saving Faith- in God; whereas today, we are saved BY the Grace of God and THROUGH the Gift of saving Faith- in JESUS.

So, it's NOT enough anymore to simply believe in God. Satan and the fallen angels believe very strongly in God- so much so that they shudder (**James 2:19**). Yet they aren't saved. But now that Jesus has brought in the New Covenant through His Life; Death; and Resurrection- whoever will be saved today- MUST believe in Jesus: that He was born of a Virgin; lived a sinless Life; died a vicarious Death; and rose the third day. They MUST confess with their mouths that Jesus is God Almighty in human flesh- and they MUST believe in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead- or they will die in their Sins! And that is true of both Jews and Gentiles.

But do not be so foolish to think that all the New Covenant Salvation is- is a few religious Statements to memorize and repeat. It isn't. Saying these things and truly believing these things is NOT possible outside of a powerful and miraculous Working of God the Holy Spirit in the mind and heart of the individual. Please look at what the Apostle Paul taught about this from **1 Corinthians 12:2&3:**

2 You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led.

3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

So, without a powerful; effectual; supernatural; and miraculous MOVE of God *inside* the lost individual by God the Holy Spirit- to give him that Knowledge and Desire and Ability to believe and confess these things- he would NEVER believe. So, it is the powerful Working of God the Holy Spirit- through the Miracle of the New Birth that *causes* Belief.

Once again, the *further* we travel in the **Gospel of Matthew**- we will see where every issue of Salvation involves a supernatural and miraculous MOVE of God the Holy Spirit- *on, in, through,* and *with* the individual.

Now there are many within the modern church, who understand the "*Call*" of God on their lives to very *narrowly* involve being "called" into the Ministry- either locally as a Pastor or Elder; or into other Nations as a Missionary.

But the Reality is that the Bible illustrates the Concept of God's "Call" on the lives of sinners- to pertain to Salvation- *much more often* than it does to explain how we enter into a particular Ministry.

So, the Bible teaches that lost rebels are "Called" to Salvation by God- even as already saved people are "Called" to become a Pastor or a Missionary. And the Divine Calling to Salvation is also taught in Scripture to be "Effective" or "Effectual" or "Irresistible". So, the "Call" of God on an individual to save them is CERTAIN; it is GOING TO HAPPEN; it is GUARANTEED. And we see here in **Matthew 4**- that ALL who will hear and answer the Call of God to Salvation- MUST then obey and follow Jesus.

Matthew 4:19&20

And He said to them [Andrew and Simon Peter], "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

... and ...

Matthew 4:22

Immediately they [James and John] left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

In both Examples, we have two groups of Fishermen- going about their normal, daily work- with no thought or hint of anything spiritual. And suddenly, Jesus calls to them and in both cases says, "Follow Me"- and then Matthew uses that interesting word, "IMMEDIATELY". So, immediately, these men left their nets; their boats; their livelihood; and, in the case of James and John- even their Father- and they began to follow Jesus.

So, the first thing I want to try to unpack for you today is the concept of "Following Jesus". Twice in this Passage- Jesus issued a Divine Command for sinful human beings to "Follow Me". Now to "Follow" in this sense- is to begin a Life that is *dominated* by an overall Desire and Ability to do three things:

1. To see Jesus
2. To love what we see
3. To respond to that Love- with humble and joyful Obedience

So, in order for us to actually follow Jesus *presupposes* that we have already seen Him; and that we already love what we see. So, the point I am trying to make here is that "following Jesus" is the natural and normal *Response* to having already seen Jesus; and already loving what we see. So, following Jesus is the same thing

as “*bearing godly fruit*”; or “*loving Jesus*”; or “*walking with God*”; or “*obeying the Bible*”. Those phrases all mean the same thing.

In other words, there is no such thing as a person experiencing the Miracle of the New Birth and him *not* following Jesus. There is no such thing as a person being Regenerate and not bearing godly Fruit. There is no such thing as an individual being justified and not loving Jesus; or walking with God; or obeying the Bible. So, the outward, visible, tangible fruit of following Jesus- is the unmistakable Proof that an individual has already experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

But the notion that a person can *initiate* his own Salvation and then choose *not* to follow Jesus is not described in any of the 66 Books of the Holy Bible. The idea that a lost person can walk down an aisle; or raise his hand; or pray a prayer; or sign a card- thereby getting his “ticket punched” without ever following Jesus- is an entirely *manufactured* concept that the Holy Bible does NOT teach. That false Teaching was *invented* by people, who don’t believe that following Jesus is part and parcel to being born from Above.

So, for example, we can say that these four men were born again- precisely *because* they immediately *responded* to the Call of Jesus by obeying Jesus and following Him. So, am I teaching you if these men had *disobeyed* the Call of God to follow Jesus- that this would have proven that they had NOT been born again? Yes, I am. Following Jesus is NOT optional to Salvation. Following Jesus is the outward manifestation that the inward Transformation has already taken place.

So, it isn’t as though *some* born again people follow Jesus; while others, who are equally regenerate, do NOT follow. It is that following Jesus- certainly NOT perfectly- but honestly- is the unarguable Proof that this individual has, in fact, already experienced the Miracle of the New Birth. And this is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote this in

2Corinthians 4:1-6:

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,

2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Now Paul begins this Passage by saying, “**Therefore**”. And that is a legal term that means: “*Since everything I just told you is true- now here is the End of the Matter.*” And the “*everything I just told you*”- is found in the verses that began in **2Corinthians 1:1** and finished at the End of Chapter 3. But for time’s sake- I want to zero in on what Paul said the “*End of the Matter*” is.

One of the “*Fundamental Truths*” or “*Fundamental Doctrines*” of the Christian Faith is found in verse 3 that says,

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

... so, this tells us that ALL Lost people are “spiritually Blind.” They simply *cannot* see the Beauty and Value of Jesus. So, this “spiritual Blindness” *prevents* people from seeing the Glory of God; or the *fullness* of God- IN the Lord Jesus Christ. But even though they can’t see the Glory of God in Christ they CAN see Sin and love what they see. Jesus said that what our main Problem is- is NOT that we sin- but that we LOVE the Darkness of Sin rather than the Glory of God.

John 3:19-21

19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

20 "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

... and even though we are conceived in our mother’s womb- as being spiritually Blind- the *first* part of **2Corinthians 4:4** tells us that satan has a hand in this Blindness *after* we are born.

in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving

...

So, the devil has blinded the minds of ALL Lost people- so they

will NOT see something. So, what is it that satan does NOT want anyone to see? The *last* part of verse 4 tells us:

... so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

So, it is the “*Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Jesus Christ*” (Who is the Image of God the Father) that satan does NOT want lost people to see. And if the word, “*Gospel*” means, “*Good News*”- then, according to this verse- the “*Good*” of the Good News- is NOT: “*God loves me and has a Plan for my Life.*” The *ultimate; best; highest; and decisive* “*Good*” of the Good News is God graciously giving us the ability to see “*The Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Jesus Christ*”!

And even though MOST people today don’t know this- satan knows it. And so, Paul taught here that the devil works hard to “*blind the minds*” of the Lost- so they will NOT see the “*Glory of Jesus- Who is the Image of God.*”

And so, verse 4 says that the Good News is NOT: “*Come to Jesus so you can feel better about yourself; or so you can be an important person; or so you can hit more home runs.*” The Good News in verse 4 is all about “*the Glory of Jesus- Who is the perfect Image of God the Father*”; or as verse 6 says,

... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

... which is the SAME as verse 4- only coming from God the Father’s perspective.

So, satan does NOT want anyone to see; or behold; or understand; or comprehend either the “*Glory of Jesus Christ, Who is the Image of God the Father*”; or the “*Glory of God the Father- that is BEST revealed in the Person of Jesus*”. So, why doesn’t satan want Lost people to see or behold that Glory? Because when they do- they will IMMEDIATELY follow Jesus!

So, I would suggest to you that the Miracle of the New Birth is God the Spirit- coming to that Lost individual- WHILE HE IS STILL LOST- and *powerfully; decisively; effectually; and sovereignly* giving him eyes to see; ears to hear; and a soft heart that has both the Ability and Desire to believe. And what God wants that individual to see- is:

The Light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ- Who is the Image of God

... or ...

The Light of the knowledge of the Glory of God- in the Face of Christ

... and this is what being born again- is all about.

And that tells us that the primary Goal of the New Birth is NOT that you start obeying the Commands of God. That does NOT come first. The *first* thing that happens when you have received new, spiritual Life- is that you then SEE Jesus as the very Glory of God! That is what satan blinded you from seeing in the first place.

So, your *first* Priority after receiving the Miracle of the New Birth- is SEEING Jesus as Glorious! You see Jesus as the Treasure of the Universe. He is more Beautiful; more Wise; more Important; more Necessary than anything else- including your Wife; your Children; your possessions; even your own Life! And the New Birth *causes* us to see that.

And it is this “Seeing Jesus as glorious” that sovereignly *creates* a deep and profound Love for God that *supersedes* any other form of Love on earth. And as this Love for God begins to consume you- you begin to see Jesus as:

- The Lilly of your Valley
- The Bright and Morning Star
- The Beautiful Rose of Sharon

... and the fairest of 10,000 to your soul!

We need to remember that ALL of the Commandments of God are summed up in two Statements:

1. Love God with ALL your heart, soul, mind, and strength
2. Love your Neighbor as yourself

These two Statements contain the *fullness* of ALL of God’s Commandments. And so, we can see then- that our great Sin- is that we do NOT love God like that; and we do NOT love our Neighbor like that. So, every wrong thing we ever imagined or spoke or did- is summed up in a lack of Love for God and our Neighbor.

So, the #1 main Attribute about what it means to be “Fallen” and “lost” is that we don’t love God and we don’t love our Neighbor. And that means then that this Miracle of the New Birth gives us the Ability and the Desire to begin to love like this.

And it is from this God-given; God-orchestrated; God- engineered; and God-initiated Love- where ALL of our Desire to follow and to obey is birthed. But the Love for God MUST come first- BEFORE the Obedience.

I have taught you that dead, dry, joyless Obedience does NOT glorify God. Seeing the Command to “Follow Jesus” as a Duty or an Obligation and nothing

more than “what we are supposed to do”- empowered by our own willpower and humanly engineered Choices- brings God no Honor. God is ONLY glorified to the extent that you DELIGHT yourself in Him. God is honored ONLY when you see that following Jesus is the Path to the fullness of your own Joy. And God looks magnificent ONLY when we struggle against the lusts of our flesh (by the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit) to be found HUMBLY and JOYFULLY submitted to the Authority of Scripture in our daily life- all to the Glory of God!

And this is why there is such a disconnect today in the lives of the average church-goer. Their eyes have NEVER been miraculously unveiled; they have NEVER seen Jesus in His Glory; and therefore, they do not love Him more than Life itself. Because once your eyes are open and you see the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ- you are ruined. You can't ever go back and “unsee” Him. And so, you copy what these four fishermen did- and you Follow Him!

In **Matthew 4**- we see no discussion; no debate; no hesitation; no arguing; and no dithering. Jesus simply calls them- and they came. And it didn't matter what they were doing. Both groups of unsaved men were engaged in their normal daily livelihood. They weren't in church; they weren't listening to Gospel music; and they weren't watching Christian TV. So, to them, this was just another day. Andrew and Peter were casting a net into the Sea of Galilee- which, no doubt, they had done a thousand times before. And James and John were repairing their nets with their father, Zebedee- which, no doubt, was very common for them. And Jesus walks by both groups and simply says,

“Follow Me”

... and verse 20 says that Andrew and Peter,

Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

... while in verse 22, Matthew says that James and John responded,

Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

So, Jesus called, and BOOM! They IMMEDIATELY followed Him! In mere seconds- lost and fallen fishermen experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; saw Jesus as more valuable than Life itself; left EVERYTHING behind; and began to obey and follow Him. And that is what being born again looks like.

Now I don't believe for a second that this Experience with Andrew and Peter and James and John was unique to only them. Yes, God used

them mightily and, yes, all four of them were called to be Apostles. But I believe that Matthew put this in his Gospel Record to teach the 1st Century Jews- and us- NOT how unique these men were- but rather how *effectual* the Call of God is- IN THE NEW COVENANT- when God calls sinners to Salvation.

But we have not only been told to “Follow”- but we have also been told HOW to follow. We are NEVER told to psyche ourselves up. We are NEVER told to *force* ourselves to live counter to what we truly want. And we have NEVER been told to *artificially* lay the templet of a godly life over our own unconverted Flesh. Here is what Jesus Himself said in **John 14:15**:

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Now people read that and then begin to teach how we should obey. But that’s NOT what Jesus said. He said that loving Him MUST come FIRST- and that Obedience is nothing more than the normal and natural Response to already loving Him. Look what the Apostle John wrote in **1John 4:19**:

We love, because He first loved us.

So, the Origination; the Initiation; the Catalyst for our Love for God- is God’s Love for us- FIRST. In other words, Our Love FOR God is a Gift FROM God.

So, it is important for us to finish the famous Statement that everybody says when they go to Church,

God saved me because He loved me.

... which is a wonderfully put “Man-centered Statement” that glorifies our own Importance to God.

So, even though it is a true Statement- we need to know that it is woefully *inadequate* to fully describe why God grants guilty rebels the Miracle of the New Birth. So, we need to finish that Statement by saying,

God saved me because He loved me- so that by saving me- I will love Him!

... which is a wonderful “God-centered Statement” that illustrates God’s Importance to us- brought about by our eyes being opened to the Glory of Jesus!

So, *ultimately*- God’s Goal in Salvation is NOT merely that we

miss Hell; or that we pass through pearly gates; or walk on streets of gold; or that we are re-united with loved ones that went before us. All of that is true and all of that is wonderful. But God's primary Goal in Salvation- is God!

God's Goal is that wicked sinners are so radically changed (by what God alone does for them) that they genuinely and truthfully and completely love God (with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength) and that they love their Neighbor as themselves. And then, empowered by that Gift of Love- these people strive to obey the Commands of God. Another way of putting this is to say that God's Goal in Salvation is that we achieve the highest degree of Joy and Satisfaction in following Jesus. And this All begins right here with the Divine Call that brings about the Wonder of the New Birth.

And this is why I have tried to teach you that Love *precedes* Obedience. Loving Jesus comes BEFORE following Him. So, genuinely falling in Love with Jesus MUST come BEFORE we try to obey. And that is illustrated in the way these four men *immediately* obeyed.

So, what caused their Response? Duty? Obligation? The Fear of Damnation? The Promise of Heaven? Miracles? No. All four men would have been *intimately* aware of what the Old Testament taught as to *how* the Jews entered the Promised Land.

They walked between two mountains. On Mt. Gerizim, six men¹ were constantly heralding the Divine Blessings of **Deuteronomy 28** as the Jews entered the Land that God had given them. And on Mt. Ebal- six men² were constantly heralding the Curses of that same Chapter. So, they were given that Choice. Obey and be Blessed; or disobey and be Cursed. So, what happened? The Jews broke the Covenant with God; disobeyed the Lord- and fell into the hands of one pagan Gentile Nation after another. So much for human Choice, right? But why didn't they simply obey?

The frightening Reality of the impact of the Fall is that the fallen Nature of all humans is so deep-seated; so pervasive; so all-encompassing- that neither the Divine Promise of unspeakable Joy nor the Threat of frightening and eternal Damnation has the Power to convert a single soul. The Sin-Nature of each man, woman, and child on earth is so much a part of our make-up that seeing Miracles; Signs; Wonders; and Gifts of the Holy Spirit manifested right in front of our eyes- will NOT save a single soul. Angelic visitations can't cause genuine Repentance. And Jesus Himself said in **Luke 16:31**, if Lost people,

¹ **Deuteronomy 27:12b**: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin

² **Deuteronomy 27:13b**: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

... do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.

... so, unless they hear the Gospel as it is preached and believe the Gospel- they will die in their Sins. But why is that?

Being Lost is WHO WE ARE- not WHAT WE DO. And unless and until God the Spirit comes to us first- in our Lost Condition- and unless He *forcefully* and *sovereignly* and *supernaturally* and *miraculously* gives us eyes to see; and ears to hear; and a takes out of us a stony heart and gives us a heart of flesh- not a single soul would ever be convicted; not a single soul would ever repent; and not single soul would ever be saved. We MUST be born again!

So, Jesus did NOT hypnotize these men. And Jesus also did NOT *make* them or *force* them to do something they didn't want to do. But God DID do something to all four of these men- that *caused* them to *want* to follow Jesus. Hundreds of years before this Moment, the Prophet Ezekiel had foretold of the magnificence of God's Grace in the New Birth when he said this in **Ezekiel 36: 25-27:**

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Because *inherent* in the Call to Salvation in the New Covenant- is the sovereign Work of God the Holy Spirit- *inside* the lost person to radically; and supernaturally; and miraculously; *transform* their "Nature".

Now I use the word, "Nature" here to distinguish "*WHAT WE DO*"- from "*WHO WE ARE*." What WE DO- is our outward, visible Acts- while WHO WE ARE- is the internal, invisible *essence of our Being*. The New Birth does NOT change what we do. It *facilitates* what we do- but the New Birth radically changes WHO WE ARE- and WHO WE ARE- transform WHAT WE DO.

So, the Miracle of the New Birth transforms our Nature from being "*Fallen*" to being "*Regenerate*". You see, every soul is conceived in his mother's womb as "Fallen". And this "*fallen Nature*" is transferred from one Generation to the next- through the Seed of the Father.

And this is why we MUST be born again. And this is also why

God has to initiate our Salvation and why we can't. We must not only get a new "Nature"- but we must also be forgiven of the Sin of Adam as well. And that is done for us through the Miracle of the New Birth! And this shows us an exponential increase in the Activity by the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant that simply didn't exist in the Old.

Remember the Event when John the Baptist baptized Jesus. God the Father had told John that when he saw the Spirit of God come down on a particular Man- *like a dove*- and REMAIN- John would know that this Man was the long-awaited Messiah.

Now the Bible teaches that Angels are *created* Beings that are *above* humans- but *lower* than God. But, even though Angels are *supernatural*- they are NOT now; they *never* have been; and they *never* will be- Deity. So, it is Evil to worship Angels. The worship of Angels is classic Idolatry and is offensive to God. So, while we are amazed at Angels and stand in awe of their Power and Ministry- we do not worship them. In fact, after Jesus returns- God will arrange things in such a way that human beings, who were saved and who were *inferior* to Angels in both Power and Glory- will actually stand in Judgment of them. The Apostle Paul wrote this in **1Corinthians 6:1-3:**

1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?

2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?

3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

And God used Angels mightily during the Age of the Old or First Covenant. But there was a marked *increase* in both the *number* of Angels and the *frequency* of their manifestation as the Age of the Old Covenant was coming to a close; and the Age that is to come (New Covenant)- was beginning.

John the Baptist's father, Zacharias and Mary, the mother of Jesus saw and spoke with an Angel. Joseph was visited by Angels in dreams. The Shepherds saw and heard the heavenly Host- probably a collection of Angels- when they announced the Birth of Jesus; and the Magi followed a "star" which could have very well been an Angel. And Jesus was comforted by Angels after His Fast in the Wilderness. So, as the Old Covenant is being replaced by the New Covenant- there is an *explosion* of angelic Visitations.

Now it should be said here that as Mankind was entering the 1st Century- the Jews had developed a very sinful and unbiblical "*Appreciation*" of Angels. And, in many cases, Angels were actually being worshipped by the Jews. And that is

why the writer of **Hebrews** went to great lengths to teach that Jesus was superior to Angels, in the first few Chapters of that Epistle.

So, unlike Angels, God the Holy Spirit is fully Deity. He is of the very SAME “*Substance*” (*homoousia*); “*Essence*”; or “*Nature*” of the one, true, and living God. And also, unlike the Angels- God the Holy Spirit was NEVER created. He always was; is now; and always will be. But, as we have already studied, God the Spirit was NOT intimate; or close; or constant- under the present Age (Old Covenant) as He is during the Age of the New Covenant.

So, one thing that is so radically different in the “Age” of the New Covenant (the Church Age)- as opposed to the “Age” of the Old Covenant- is the *ongoing; pervasive; powerful; personal; and effectual* “WORKING” of God the Holy Spirit upon the chosen elect. He will no longer simply be around them or come down on occasion and then go back up. But now the 3rd Person of the Godhead will actually dwell INSIDE each genuine believer- *leading* them; and *empowering* them to love and obey and follow Jesus.

But it is a sad Commentary that the very “Movement”, that began in the mid 1800’s and that exists today, that “hangs their hat” on the Holy Spirit and His Gifts (*Pentecostalism*)- has an unbiblical and warped understanding of His fundamental Purpose. The Main Purpose of the entire Ministry of God the Holy Spirit is to exalt Jesus- NOT Himself. He exists to bring people to Jesus and to empower people to obey Him. And God the Spirit exists to cause human beings to see Jesus in His Glory; to love what they see; and to be changed into what they see.

So, ALL His Gifts; ALL His Power; All His entire Ministry- is to help people SEE and ENJOY and OBEY Jesus! He NEVER brings attention to Himself.

So, as we continue to “journey” through the **Gospel of Matthew** and as we see the New Covenant totally and permanently replace the Old Covenant- we will see the imprint of God the Holy Spirit in every area.

And it began as Jesus was led by God the Spirit to go into the Wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And now we see the Holy Spirit involved in the lives of these four fishermen, who were empowered and enabled to first, hear the Call of God to them; and then to see Jesus as Worth everything; which caused them to immediately obey. Truly God the Holy Spirit was at work in their lives!

Amen. Let’s pray.

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of a verse- by- verse “Journey” through the **Gospel of Matthew**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this Transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete Copyright Statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.