

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

## Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

### 20- Why There are So Few Miracles in Our Day

Church July 10, 2022

#### **Matthew 4:23-25**

**23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.**

**24 The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.**

**25 Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.**

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

Now verse 23 says that Jesus began His earthly Ministry in Galilee and NOT in Jerusalem. And it also says that He began His Ministry by preaching the “*Gospel of the Kingdom*”. And then Matthew goes on to tell us that Jesus’ Preaching was accompanied with amazing Miracles- most notably- physical Healings of various kinds. The former tax collector tells us at the end of verse 23 that Jesus healed, “**every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.**”

So, the list that we read in verse 24 is NOT meant to be a *comprehensive* List. It is merely *representative* of the various kinds of physical ailments that Jesus miraculously healed.

Now the first thing I want to do- is “zero in” on two things in verse 24. The former tax collector mentions both “**epileptics**” AND “**demoniacs**” in the same verse. So, Jesus healed those who suffered from the disease of Epilepsy AND He also “healed” those who were possessed by demons (demoniacs)- by casting the demon out.

And the first thing we need to know is that demon Possession is real. It is as real as Sickness and Disease. So, fallen Angels literally *inhabit* lost individuals, and torment them severely. So, part of us being a “biblical Church” and being

faithful to Jesus- is that we believe and teach that while some people get sick- others are demon possessed.

But by Matthew listing both “epileptics” and “demoniacs” shows us that he didn’t think the two were the same. So, back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century- even though they didn’t have all the Technology and Medicine that we have today- the Apostle Matthew believed that *some* people contract a “Sickness” or a “Malady” called, “Epilepsy”. And Matthew also believed that other people were demon possessed.

Now the reason I’m making a big deal about this- is because there is a group, who operate within the modern church, who deny ALL of the supernatural Manifestations that the Bible mentions. These people reason away anything they can’t explain with their own carnal, natural mind. So, these people deny ALL physical Healings; ALL Miracles; ALL casting out of demons and anything that even hints of being Supernatural or Miraculous.

And one of the most famous people, who was in this group of unbelievers and skeptics was President Thomas Jefferson- who so rejected the Supernatural- that he actually went to great lengths to re-write the entire Bible- being very careful to remove everything that was Supernatural or Miraculous. Jefferson also did NOT believe in the physical Resurrection of Jesus or His full Deity- which tells me that, unless he later repented- Jefferson probably wasn’t saved.

But one of the main ways that these people attack the Bible is to say things like, *“Those who lived back then didn’t have the advances in Medicine and Technology that we have today. So, in their ignorant and backward Superstitions- they thought that mentally ill people were demon possessed; and those who suffered from Epilepsy needed to have the devil cast out of them.”*

So, in their pompous Arrogance- these people look down their noses at the biblical writers- *assuming* that they operated on Ignorance and Superstition rather than being led by God the Holy Spirit. So, I am grateful that Matthew put both the “**epileptics**” and the “**demoniacs**” in the same verse- *proving* that even back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, Jesus and the Apostle clearly understood that there was a difference between those two groups.

Now because Sickness and Disease was a huge Issue back then- even as it is today- it is no wonder that what Matthew wrote at the beginning of verse 24 and then all of verse 25- was true:

**The news about Him spread throughout all Syria... Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.**

Disease; Sickness; physical Deformities; and demon Possession- was a huge Issue back then- even as it is today. For example, just last year alone- the people of the United States spent \$3.4 trillion dollars on Doctors; Hospitals; Surgeries;

Treatments; and Medicine- trying to fight Disease; and Sickness; and other physical Problems. And that doesn't count the trillions of dollars spent on trying to develop Vaccines for the various Viruses and other physical Problems.

One of the things that is driving up the cost of births in this Country- is the situation concerning babies who test positive for defects. For example, the thought that their child "*might*"<sup>1</sup> be born with Down's Syndrome is so prevalent among modern American couples that upwards of 98% of all unborn babies, who test "positive" for Downs are aborted. And there are so many couples doing that- that the cost of aborting Down's babies is actually "baked into" many of the Hospital's charges.

But the Holy Bible teaches that Disease and Sickness- along with Death itself is caused by Sin. So, before Adam sinned- NOTHING died.<sup>2</sup> But after Adam rebelled against God and God placed a Divine Curse on him- EVERYTHING that lives- now dies. Dirt dies; animals die; stars die; every living thing dies- and, of course, humans die. And the overwhelming *majority* of those who die every year- die because of Disease and NOT through Accidents (which is why "Accident Insurance" is so cheap).

So, the News that Jesus was healing the Sick and delivering people from Disease and demon Possession spread all through Galilee. And as we found out last time- the "Regions of Galilee" bordered both Lebanon and Syria in the northern part of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Palestine.

Now you can also see that Matthew included a couple of strange terms in verse 25:

1. **the Decapolis**
2. **the Jordan**

Remember last time, I told you that in **Isaiah 9:1** we see the last phrase in that verse as: "**Galilee of the Gentiles.**" But the Hebrew form used in **Isaiah 9:1** is in what is called the "construct state" of the noun. And that makes the Hebrew read: "*G'lil ha-Goyim*" which *literally* means: "*Galilee of the Nations*"- where the term, "*Nations*" refers to the large number of Gentiles, who settled in Galilee at the time that **Isaiah** was written (early 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC), either by their own volition or as a result of being deported there.

So, the "*Decapolis*" had to do with the "ten" (*deca*) "cities" (*poleis*) that contained large numbers of Gentiles *inside* the regions of Galilee. So, by including the cities that had a predominant Gentile population- Matthew is telling his Jewish

<sup>1</sup> [www.downssyndromeprenataltesting.com](http://www.downssyndromeprenataltesting.com) I say, "might" here because the "test" for Down's babies only gives a 50% chance of being accurate.

<sup>2</sup> This is one of the best Arguments against Darwinian Evolution which requires Death in order for the species to supposedly evolve.

readers that the supernatural Manifestations that Jesus performed meant something to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

And this goes back to the common theme that described most Gentiles back in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century: That MOST Gentiles- *especially* those schooled in the Greek Way of Life- *primarily* were constantly seeking after more worldly “Wisdom”; while it was the those schooled in the Jewish Way of Life that always sought after a supernatural Sign. And this is why the Apostle Paul said this in **1Corinthians 1:22-24**:

**22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;  
23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to  
Gentiles foolishness,  
24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of  
God and the wisdom of God.**

Now the term, “**the Jordan**” that Matthew wrote here was the way that first Century Jews labeled the “*Jordan River*”- which fed into the “*Sea of Galilee*”.

So, what Matthew is trying to tell his Jewish readers and us- is that huge crowds of people- from every area in Palestine (even Jerusalem) began to gather around Jesus.

But as we marvel at these large crowds of people that followed Jesus- we must be careful to discern between those who sought Jesus so that He would give them something and those who sought Jesus because they loved Him; because they desired to obey Him; and because they desired to worship Him.

You see, there is a great difference in Jesus being “famous” and “popular”- and Him being worshipped as God. Like as is true today- MOST of the people, who talk about Jesus- want Him to do something for them- like heal their sick bodies; or give them Money; and/or more of this world’s Goods.

So, to them- Jesus is VERY popular. And they are more than willing to follow Him- as long as Jesus does what they want Him to do. But as soon as Jesus begins to make *demands* on their lives; or restricts their Behavior; or once they begin to perceive that Jesus expects and demands EVERYTHING they are; and EVERYTHING they have- these people- who five minutes ago were calling His Name and following Him everywhere- will literally walk off and leave Jesus standing in the middle of the road! And they will walk off- angry at Jesus that He had the audacity to expect them to actually obey Him!

So, yes, these people surrounded Jesus. And yes, they called His Name. And yes, they followed Him. But they only followed Him to a certain extent. Because, as we will see as we continue our Journey through Matthew’s Gospel Record-

MOST of these people do NOT love Jesus. They do NOT find the fullness of their Joy in obeying His Commandments. And the ONLY reason they are near to Jesus to this extent- is NOT because of any deep-seated Love and Devotion. No, those people are there to simply receive the fish and the loaves. And that tells us that they are certainly NOT saved. They have NEVER experienced the Miracle of the New Birth. They are close to Jesus so that they can get something out of Him; so, they can USE Jesus to fulfill their own Desires and Lusts. So, to them, Jesus is NOT Lord- He isn't their Savior. He is simply the "Candy-Man", who can make their lives better right now.

But even though that is true- all through those huge crowds of people- are real, genuine "Disciples"- "Students"; and "Learners". And these people, the Greek word for them is, "*mathetes*"- they truly love Jesus. And they desire to please Jesus; and to honor Him; and to give Him Glory; and to "make Much" of Him!

But the Mystery is that we don't really know who the genuine believers are. The genuine believers are surrounded by "false Believers" or "false Converts." And in **Matthew 13**, Jesus called the false converts, "*Tares*" and He called the genuine believer, "*Wheat*". But to our eyes- the fakers look just like genuine believers. And anytime you have a church or a religious Gathering of any size at all- there will be Tares mixed in with the Wheat.

Yet the Bible teaches that we must NOT fret over the false converts. God will take care of them. And when we get to Chapter 13- we will see just how God will take care of them. So, our Focus; our Concern; our Burden; and our Joy is to do as much as we can, every single day for the Glory of Jesus Christ. And that means we should preach the Gospel to as many people as we can; every day; using every available means that God gives- to His Honor and Glory alone! Now please look again at the last part of **Matthew 4:23** and all of verse 24 again.

**... and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.**

Now when we read the Bible- it seems that we see many Signs; and Wonders; and Miracles- *especially* physical Healings. Yet, for many of us, there is an almost total Absence of these supernatural Manifestations. So, what's that all about? Are we failing God? Is there some form of a Church-wide absence of Faith?

Now there are some within the modern Church, who teach that it is ALWAYS God's Will to physically heal sick bodies. And they go on to teach that the ONLY

reason why there seems to be an Absence of these Manifestations- is because of a lack of Faith.<sup>3</sup> So, is that true?

And to answer that Question- we need to, first of all, acknowledge two things:

1. There were far FEWER supernatural Manifestations during the Days when the Bible was being produced than many people realize
2. There are far MORE Miracles and Healings today than many people realize

Miracles are breathtaking. They stun us. They capture our undivided attention; and they overwhelm our senses- precisely because they are very, very rare. And they were rare even as the Bible was being produced. For example, from Adam to Moses there were very few Miracles. During Moses' Ministry- God performed many more Miracles than He had in the Past- yet, outside of the Miracles as he was initially converted- most of the Miracles that we see during Moses' Ministry was in getting Pharoah to let the children of Israel go and to preserve them in the Wilderness. Joshua saw very few Miracles in his many Battles to overtake the "*Promised Land.*"

And from the Days of the Judges until the Ministry of Elijah- there were hardly any Miracles performed. But with the advent of the Prophet Elijah- there was the first "explosion" of many Miracles. And that continued throughout the Ministry of both Elijah and Elisha. But then things got quiet again after Elisha's death and that dearth of Miracles and Healings continued through the Prophet Malachi.

But things really got quiet after Malachi's Ministry. And there was a span of over 400 years of "Divine Silence"; where there was NO Miracles; NO Prophets; NO Signs; NO Wonders; NO Angels; and NO Word from God. Nothing but Silence.

And then just before Jesus was born- and all through His earthly Ministry up to and including His Death, Resurrection, and Ascension- there was a 2<sup>nd</sup> "explosion" of Miracles that outdid the first. And Healings; and Angels; and Demons; and Sings and Wonders were carried out that were too numerous to count. There was some form of a supernatural Manifestation nearly every single day when Jesus walked the earth.

But then after His Ascension and the Apostles were "*endued with Power from on High*" and the Church was birthed- the manifestation of Miracles; and Signs and Wonders; and Healings continued- but not nearly as much as during the Lord's earthly Ministry. And then by the time of the last phases of Paul's Ministry- in

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<sup>3</sup> In addition to having a lack of Faith- some also teach that the Absence of these supernatural Manifestations is a result of having Unforgiveness in our hearts; or some form of secret Sin (Sin we haven't confessed and turned from); or even a strange animal called, "Generational Curses".

**1 Timothy 5:23**- the Apostle Paul encourages his “Son in the Faith”, Timothy to “drink a little wine” to try to help his stomach ailments.

So, why didn’t Paul simply lay hands on Timothy and pray- so he could be healed? Because the Age of Miracles was coming to an End.

And the big \$64,000 Question is, “*Why?*” Why do Miracles and Healings seem so rare today? Did God lose His Power? Is the visible Church on earth completely void of any Faith? Are we supposed to believe that people today are sovereignly gifted by God with enough Faith to be saved- yet somehow, they lack enough Faith to be healed- even though Salvation is infinitely a more supernatural Miracle than is being healed from Cancer or some other Virus? Really?

No, the Truth is that, other than during the earthly Ministry of Jesus and, to a lesser extent, during the Ministry of Elijah and Elisha- Miracles and Healings and supernatural Manifestations have ALWAYS been rare. So, the Reality is that these amazing and breathtaking Manifestations were not nearly as prevalent during the Bible Times as most people assume.

And the flip side is also true. Miracles and Signs and Wonders and Healings are MORE prevalent today than most people realize. And people in every generation have wondered about these things in the SAME way.

For example, please read **Psalm 77:11** that says,

**I shall remember the deeds of the Lord; Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.**

Now the Bible says Asaph wrote **Psalm 77**. And Asaph lived during the days when Hezekiah was the 13<sup>th</sup> King over Judah- so, he lived about 700 years before Jesus was born. And here in verse 11- he is trying to remember the “*Wonders of God*”- that were performed BEFORE his time. Now the Wonders of God include Miracles; Signs and Wonders; and Healings. And Asaph called them, “*God’s Wonders of Old*”. And the reason Asaph is remembering the Wonders that God did BEFORE he was alive- is because he didn’t see that God was still performing Wonders in his day.

So, when you read the Old Testament, you realize that *most* of the saints, who lived during most of those Centuries that the Old Testament pertains to- talked like that. They would say, “*The Wonders of old. Oh, God help us to remember Your Wonders of old.*”

The believers, who lived back then had the same Questions that we do: “*Why were there more miracles in the days of Elijah, or in the days of Moses, than there are today in the days of the Prophets, or in the days of the Kings?*”

Dear friends, it's simply a mistake to *assume* that Miracles and Healings were prevalent all through the History of God's people as the Bible records it. There weren't. They periodically sprang up around certain periods of time. But they were NOT wholesale

Most of the time, the saints of the Old Testament were living by Faith in the Promises of God for the Future, which were rooted in the past Wonders of God that He had worked. And that is *exactly* the way we are told to live our lives today- by Faith in the Promises of God, for a Kingdom that began 2,000 years ago- but which has not yet come into its fullness- by looking back to the decisive Work of Jesus Christ in the Bible.

Now when it comes to the New Testament, it is gloriously true that Jesus did Miracles perfectly and consistently, even though He raised only three people from the dead; and didn't heal people in many places where He traveled. For example, at the Pool of Bethesda in **John 5**- the Apostle said in verse 3 that there was:

**... a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters ...**

... so, there were many, many people there.

And yet, Jesus went to only 1 man. And there is no Record that He even spoke to any of the rest. So, why was that? If the Purpose of Jesus performing Miracles and Signs and Wonders and Healings was to heal all who had Faith- then this scene was a terrible failure. But Jesus never fails. So, that teaches us that the Purpose of Jesus performing Miracles was NOT to simply heal all who had Faith.

The Miracles of Jesus were clearly to show that the Kingdom of Heaven had come to them. Yet we also know that the Kingdom had not been *consummated* or *finalized* during Jesus' earthly Ministry.

So, the Kingdom had broken into the world, pointing to a future day when *everybody* would be raised from the dead- some to everlasting Life and others to everlasting Torment. And in the fullness of that Kingdom- those who believe in Jesus will NEVER be sick again! And that tells us that the main Purpose behind ALL of Jesus' supernatural Manifestations was to display WHO HE WAS. So, the Miracles that Jesus performed pointed to His full Divinity. In other words, there was something about those Miracles that attached to Him- even though you wouldn't expect them to attach to other people in the same way.

For example, Jesus said in **John 10:37&38**:

**37 "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;  
38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."**



In other words, Jesus was saying,

“These Works are good Evidence that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me. And that means that I am unique. I am the Son of God- the long-awaited Messiah!”

So, even though Jesus gave His Apostles the SAME Authority to perform Miracles- they knew that there was something utterly *unique* about this Man and the way He did miracles. Because nobody ever confused Peter or John with being God. And none of the Apostles ever said that or wanted that. The Authority and Power *uniquely* resided in Jesus as being the very Son of God.

Then when you turn to **The Book of the Acts of the Apostles** and the rest of the New Testament, it's obvious that the Apostles did some astonishing Miracles. But it's also true that the connection between them and the Miracles did NOT usually cause anyone to think they were God. So, the Miracles of the followers of Jesus were carried out to give Divine Credibility to the radical Teachings they gave.

But even though the Miracles were fairly plentiful at the beginning of the “Church Age”- it is a fact of Scripture that those who worked alongside of the Apostles periodically got sick. And the Apostle Paul even had a medical doctor “on staff” during his Ministry.

So, even though there were “*Gifts of Miracles*” and “*Gifts of Healing*” and “*Gifts of Exorcism*” that are spoken of in **1 Corinthians 12**, it would be a huge stretch to think that the Christians, who operated in those Gifts back in the first Century were performing Miracles the way Jesus did. They weren't. At best- Miracles and Healings came “by-times” and “on occasion”. And as the years after Jesus' Ascension continued to mount- everyone knew that things had obviously changed.

So, we shouldn't think of the Bible times, either Old or New Testament, as being times when the saints of God consistently performed Miracles. That would be a distortion of the biblical Record. Miracles have ALWAYS been few and far between- and that is one reason they are so amazing.

So, as true as it is that Miracles were uniquely concentrated in Jesus and the Apostles in a very special, Christ-exalting Way. It is also true that as the Gospel spread throughout the world- the emphasis of Christianity shifted from astounding supernatural Miracles of physical Healings to the astounding supernatural Miracle of Redemption. So, we need to understand:

There were far FEWER supernatural Manifestations during the Days when the Bible was being produced than many people realize

Secondly,

There are far MORE Miracles and Healings today than many people realize

If we could collect all the authentic Testimonies from all over the world- from all the Missionaries; and all the saints; in the all the countries of the world; and all the cultures of the world- if we could collect all the millions of encounters between Christians and demons; and Christians and sickness; and all the so-called “Coincidences” of the world- I genuinely believe that we would all be stunned. We would think that, surely, we are living at one of the greatest Moments of Miracles that has ever been and ever will be.

So, what I would say to the unbeliever and scoffer, who would challenge what I just said- based on the fact that there is still horrendous Diseases and Sicknesses; and Suffering all over the world; is that the Heart of Christianity is that Jesus Christ, Who is God Almighty in human flesh- came into the world at a specific point in History; in the Past; to reveal what God is like; and to accomplish Salvation for all whom God has chosen to save- by Him dying and rising again.

And Miracles cluster around that Appearance in history in Jesus and in the Ministry of the Apostles to *vindicate* What Jesus did and Who Jesus is.

So, Christianity is basically a Life lived by looking back with Confidence in the Work of Jesus; and looking forward in Hope, because of that Past, to a Consummation that’s *absolutely* coming. And that makes millions of ordinary people to be willing to suffer and to love people and to call them to believe that.

Dear friends, you and I live in a period of Time when some people are experiencing *unprecedented* Prosperity at the same time that others experience *unprecedented* Pain. It is truly a Mystery. Because the ones who prosper are NOT *better* people nor are they more- godly. And the ones who eat and drink and sleep Pain- are NOT *worse* people. Some of those, who suffer the most are the most- godly people on earth. And the Bible says these people are NOT embarrassments to the Church because they have no Faith. The Bible says in **Hebrews 11:38**- that the world is NOT worthy of these “suffering saints” and they are God’s Gifts to the Church!

So, as we witness the world-wide phenomenon of Suffering- we are periodically tempted to ask, “*Where is God in all of that?*” And as we witness evil men becoming fantastically wealthy- we are also tempted to ask, “*Where is God in all of that?*”

But in spite of our Confusion- and in spite of the seemingly “unfair” and “unequal” distribution of God’s Grace and Mercy- God does “now and then” (and sometimes regularly in periods of Awakening)- use His Power to perform,

according to His sovereign Will, Miracles for His people. But why He doesn't do it more now than He does- has infinitely MORE to do with His Own sovereign Decree than it does any lack of Faith on our part.

When we call people to repent and believe, we're not calling them to do this on the basis of a Miracle they saw yesterday, even if we DID see a Miracle yesterday. We are calling them to repent and believe on the Basis of the Glory of Jesus Christ- revealed in His Death and Resurrection through the Scriptures. That's the Basis. So, even if Miracles were happening more today than ever before- that's where the Foundation of our Faith; and the Faith of those to whom we preach needs to be.

But dear friends, if we truly believe in the Doctrine of Original Sin- then part of that Doctrine says that we all are conceived in our Mother's womb with the SAME "*Sin-Nature*" that Adam had AFTER he fell. And so, ALL who are born of Women WILL personally rebel against the Truth of God's Word; and we will all personally love the Darkness rather than the Light; and we will enjoy our Sin. And because we are all sinners- we WILL all die.

But the other part of Original Sin is even *worse*. And it says that all who are conceived in their mother's womb are PERSONALLY GUILTY of the Sin of Adam. Why? Because we were in the loins of Adam when he sinned. And so, because we are all guilty of the Sin of Adam- we WILL all die. And so, we will all die as a consequence of our own Sins; or the Sin of Adam; or both.

And so, Death is the great Equalizer of all men- precisely because ALL have sinned and ALL die. So, whether you are rich or poor; educated or uneducated; cultured or uncultured; male or female; Jew or Gentile; circumcised or uncircumcised; old or young- you have sinned and so, you WILL die. And after you die- you WILL stand before God; and you WILL give an account of what you did with the Life God gave you.

And so, Matthew knows that *whoever* the Messiah is- He MUST be able to deliver God's people out from the Disaster that Sin brings to all of us. And so, he was careful to include some of the most astounding Miracles that have ever been recorded. Because the true Messiah will have the Authority and the Power to forgive Sin- both our own and Adam's. And that means that the true Messiah will also have the Authority and Power to destroy Death itself!

And by being able to perform fantastic Miracles that were attached to Sickness and Disease- Jesus was proving that He also had the Power and Authority to forgive the Sin that caused the Disease. Now please look again at verse 25:

**Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.**

Matthew wrote, “*Large crowds followed Him*”. Jesus told Andrew and Peter, “*Follow me!*” Jesus told James and John, “*Follow Me!*” The disciples followed Jesus. And 2,000 years later- people still follow Him. So, it isn’t unusual for people to follow Jesus. Every single saved person in the 2,000 year- history of Christianity has followed Jesus. All of them. All who are saved- follow Him. All who have been smitten with Love for Jesus- respond to that Love and they follow Him. Those who have been so blessed to behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ- respond to what they see- by following Him.

Matthew wrote that people from Galilee- even the largest ten cities of Galilee (the Decapolis)- followed Him. And people from Judea and Jerusalem and those who lived on the other side of the Jordan river followed Him. Large crowds; calling His Name; bringing Him their Needs and Wants; Fathers carrying their dying children; Mothers weeping and begging Him to touch their Children; Rich people; poor people; educated; uneducated; those schooled in the Old Testament; and those who didn’t know there was an Old Testament- they all followed Him. Matthew tells his Jewish readers that it was “Large crowds”. And in the parlance of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Judaism- the word, “large” *could* have meant *thousands*; or *tens* of thousands; or even *hundreds* of thousands or people. They filled the roads and the pathways of Israel- mostly walking; some riding; making the Journey from where they lived- to a Man, Who they heard could heal them; and deliver them; and rescue them; and save them.

And yet, many of these same people, who called out, “*Son of David, have Mercy on Me!*” would later cry out and say, “*Crucify Him!*” And when the chips were down; and Jesus needed others to watch with Him just one hour- they all went to sleep.

Now normally, we are impressed with great numbers- whether those numbers are in our bank account or if those numbers reveal how many people believe what we teach. But Jesus was never impressed with large crowds. Later in His Ministry- the Apostle John wrote about Jesus and crowds in **John 2:23-25** that says:

**23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.**

**24 But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,**

**25 and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.**

So, even though large crowds followed Jesus- many of them were NOT saved. So, *whatever* was the reason they followed Him- it wasn’t powerful enough

to cause them to genuinely love Him. So, these were what we call, “false Converts”- or people, who lay claim to be saved and yet aren’t. And there are many books written about false converts and how to recognize them- but I want to simply offer all of us a very simple Suggestion that I pray will at least reduce the number of “false Converts” that come out from the Covenant of Peace Church. And that Suggestion is this:

### **Teach Converts What Happened to Them**

... and we need to do this- because everyone who is converted to Jesus- is converted through “*Partial Knowledge*.” Now it is “*Real Knowledge*”- absolutely- because if it weren’t- there would be no true Conversion. But it is *partial*. And to prove that- many of us, who have been saved for decades have recently understood some Truths better than ever or for the first time. How could that be? Because we have been operating on “Partial Truth” for the entire time we have been saved.

And that shouldn’t be surprising, since that’s the only kind of Knowledge we have- as finite creatures- *especially* in this fallen world. The Apostle Paul said this in **1Corinthians 13:12**:

**For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.**

But even though it is obvious that ALL we have- is “partial Knowledge”- speaking the obvious can be very useful. For example, it may be obvious that the blue sky is glorious today- but simply because it is obvious does NOT mean it is not pointless to say to your friend,

*“Look at the sky! Isn’t it gorgeous?”*

... because until you said something- he may have been so burdened down with Cares- he might not have looked up to see it himself. But because you said the obvious- you inspired Joy and Encouragement to wrap their arms around him- at the moment he needed it the most!

The point is that when a person is saved- they have no idea about all the glorious things God has done for them so they could be saved. It’s like the patient, who wakes up from the surgery- he needs to be told that they got it all. He must be told.

So, we should NEVER assume that people understand how God saved them. And the Burden and Joy of Parents and Teachers and Pastors and Elders and

Deacons and Fellow-believers- is to teach people what happened to them. Many will have some understanding of what happened- but NOBODY will have it all.

So, please allow me to give several keys that might help us to go ahead and NOT assume that people know how they were saved- and go ahead and teach them what God did in their Salvation.

1. Many people experience the Miracle of the New Birth- yet they don't really understand it. So, we MUST teach them.
2. Every genuine Christian has been "called" by God to Salvation. Yet most don't know the Language of "Divine Calling". We must teach them that language.
3. All true Christians have been chosen by God before the Foundation of the world. But MOST do not know that God chose them from Eternity. They need to be taught this Truth
4. All Christians have died with Christ. But thousands have never taken note of that way of thinking about their Conversion. Even if those words were spoken over them at their Baptism- the words simply did not register. They need to be taught that they are dead.
5. All who are saved- have been saved by "Faith alone"- apart from Works of the Law. But many came to Christ without the word *Justification* ever being used. At some point along the way, they need to be taught that this glorious thing has happened to them.
6. Everybody, who has experienced the Miracle of the new Birth have been transferred out of the Dominion of Darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet many have never heard that they were under the Dominion of Darkness, or what that is, let alone that they have been transferred to another Kingdom. They must be taught.
7. All genuine Believers have been set free from the decisive Control of the devil. But many Christians didn't even know they were under the Control of the devil, let alone that they are freed from him. They need to be taught.
8. All Christians have been sealed by the Spirit for the Day of Redemption. But thousands are not aware that there is such a "sealing" or what it means. They must be taught.
9. All Christians have been legally adopted into God's Family and are children of God. But many have never heard this Truth about Adoption. They must be taught.
10. All Christians are indwelt by the living Christ. But not all know this. They must be taught.

Our *Experience*- NOT just *Knowledge*- but our *Experience* of who we are and what God has done in us and for us- is profoundly determined by what we *know* about the Miracle of our Conversion. And what we know about this that is true- comes from Scripture.

God has ordained that the Miracle of the Christian Life be empowered by His sovereign Grace in the soul- but guided and shaped by His Word in the Bible.

We might think God would cause us to enjoy all the Glories of Conversion just because we are, in fact, miraculously converted. It was, after all, a Miracle! Do you have to be told you just experienced a Miracle? Yes! Yes! Yes!- if we are to know the many-faceted Wonder of the Miracle.

We must understand that God does not give the Joys of Conversion through the Conversion alone. We *experience* the Fullness of our Conversion when the new *Life* within- intersects with the old *Word* from without. For example, the Spirit of Adoption within (which every Christian has) intersects with the biblical Teaching on Adoption, and when the Knowledge from God's Word intersects with the Reality of the Experience- it explodes with the Joy-giving Awareness and Assurance that we really are the children of God.

So, Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons; Parents and Fellow-Believers: teach the believers in your charge what happened to them in the Miracle of Conversion. And we will not merely follow Jesus simply because we want Him to do something for us- but so we may love Him and enjoy our Fellowship with Him- forever!

Amen. Let's pray.

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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.