

Is God Calling Everyone Now?

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If Almighty God is calling everyone to understand His way of life now, it would appear that He is not succeeding. On the other hand, if He is not calling everyone right now, why isn't He? There are a number of scriptures dealing with these issues and God's servant, Jesus Christ, made some statements that will help clarify them.

It is taught by some religious organizations that Christ spoke in parables to make God's truth easier to understand, but is this true? Christ's disciples asked him why he spoke to the multitudes in parables,

And the disciples drew near and said to him (Christ), "For what reason do you speak to them (the multitudes) in parables?"¹¹ And he answered and said to them, "**To you it has been given to know the mysteries** (secret or hidden truths) **of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them** (the majority of those who heard Christ's preaching) **it has not** (yet) **been given.**"¹² "**For whoever has** (been given the ability to understand), **to him it shall be given, and in abundance; but whoever does not have** (the ability to understand God's truth at this time), **what he has** (heard) **shall also be taken up from him.**"¹³ "**Therefore I speak to them in parables; because seeing** (the miracles and other acts of Jesus Christ) **they do not see** (understand what these mean), **and hearing** (what Christ taught) **they do not hear, nor understand** (the real meaning)."¹⁴ "**And to them the prophecy of Isaiah is filled up which says, 'Hearing you hear, but you will not understand; and seeing you see, but you will not perceive;'**"¹⁵ "**For the heart of the people has become thick-skinned, and with the ears, they scarcely hear, and they have shut their eyes lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand in their heart and return** (turn around and repent of breaking God's law and commandments), **and I should heal** (forgive) **them'** (Mt. 13:10-15; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses; Bold section denotes OT quote).

In this section of scripture, Christ explained to his disciples that unless someone is given the ability to understand God's truth by God our Father (cf. Rom. 2:4b), they cannot understand it, agree with it, or act upon it. If they are given the ability to understand, they will have to act upon it and the first step requires repentance for all the sins a person has committed (cf. Ac. 2:38). After repentance an individual has to be baptized (see studies on Baptism). Part of the baptismal agreement involves starting a new way of living in accordance with God's will as defined by His law and commandments (cf. Rom. 6:4; 7:6). This entire process is one of the miracles of Almighty God because He is able to bring sinners to the point that they see themselves for who they really are (cf. 1Pt. 4:1-3; Eph. 2:1-5) and yet their freedom of choice is left entirely intact.

The process that leads to understanding the seriousness of sin and the need for repentance is initiated by Almighty God. Jesus Christ explained this truth to his disciples,

No one is able to come toward me, except the Father, the one who sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up in the last day (Jn. 6:44; RNT).

In order to emphasize the importance of this truth, Christ repeated it a second time to his disciples,

And he (Christ) was saying, 'For this reason I have (previously) said to you, that no one is able to come toward me except it is granted to him from the Father' (Jn. 6:65; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The apostle Paul was taught personally by Jesus Christ, and Christ revealed the same truth to him (Heb. 13:8),

Or do you despise the riches of His (Almighty God's) goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. 2:4; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Jesus Christ recognized the action of his Father in heaven because it was clearly evident in the spiritual growth of his twelve disciples,

He (Christ) said to them (his disciples), 'But who do you say I am?'¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the son of the living God.'¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* (truth) to you, but my Father who is in the heavens' (Mt. 16:15-17; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Christ made it abundantly clear that no flesh and blood person can convince another human being about Almighty God's truth. Only God our Father can lead a person to understand His truth. When God is calling someone, His servants can be of assistance in this process but they are not empowered to make someone understand the truth,

Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert (or a deserted place).²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,²⁸ was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.²⁹ Then the Spirit (of Almighty God) said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."³⁰ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.³² The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He (Christ) was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he opened not his mouth."³³ In his humiliation his justice was taken away. And who will declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth."³⁴ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?"³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached (the truth about) Jesus to him (Ac. 8:26-35; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So the power and authority to call someone to understand the truth of Almighty God lies only with Him, and not with any other being in heaven or on earth. If

Almighty God is not calling an individual, it is impossible for anyone else to make them understand God's truth. Again, human beings can be used in this process, but as the apostle Paul pointed out, the actual calling and finished work is entirely Almighty God's doing,

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers (servants) through whom you believed as the Lord gave to each one? ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but (Almighty) God who gives the increase (1Cor. 3:5-7; Ed. note in parentheses, emphasis added).

Only Almighty God has the right and authority to call someone to understand His truth. Therefore, any individual or organization that purports to be able to convert others to God's way of life by the power of their ministry, missionary work, or proselytizing, is deceived. In these situations, those who are supposedly converted will actually be led away from God's truth according to Christ's own words,

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you go about the sea and the dried out *places* to make one proselyte, and when it happens, you make him a son of Gehenna (Gehenna – outside the city walls of Jerusalem where garbage, dead animals, and criminals were burned) **twofold more than you** (Mt. 23:15; RNT, Ed. note in parenthesis).

It is only by the action of God's Holy Spirit that people are called to understand God's truth, but those who act on what is revealed to them are in the minority. This is why the credibility of a religious organization cannot be measured by the number of members they have. Jesus Christ affirmed this truth,

For many are called but few are chosen (Mt. 22:14; RNT).

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Lk. 12:32; NKJV; emphasis added).

It is important to note what this scripture does not say. It does not say, "For everyone is called, and everyone is chosen", rather, it says, "many are called but few are chosen." Therefore, although many people might be exposed to God's truth at some point in their life, not everyone has had an opportunity to hear the truth let alone understand everything that is involved in correctly following God's way of life.

Also, the standing or position of a person in society cannot be used as proof they have been called by Almighty God,

For you see your calling brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸and the base (insignificant or lowly) of the world and the things which are despised (by this world's standards) God has chosen, and the things which are not (taken seriously), to bring to nothing the things that are (taken seriously and considered more credible by this world's standards), ²⁹so that no flesh

should glory in His (Almighty God's) presence (1Cor. 1:26-29; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So when many of the mighty and powerful of this present world are exposed to God's truth, other priorities often take precedence including their own self-importance. Jesus Christ addressed this scenario in his parable about the sower,

Now the one sown among the thorns, this is he who hears the word, yet the cares of the age and the deceitfulness of riches, together choke the word and he becomes unfruitful (Mt. 13:22; RNT).

Many individuals respond positively when they first understand some aspect of God's truth, but when they dig a bit deeper and realize that God's way of life requires inconvenience and sacrifice to varying degrees, they quickly lose interest,

But the one sown on the rocky ground, this is the man who hears the word and straightaway receives it with gladness;²¹ but it has no root in him, rather it is temporary, and when pressure or persecution happens because of the word (of God), straightaway he is caused to stumble (Mt. 13:20-21; RNT; Ed. note in parenthesis).

There is an example of this happening during Christ's ministry, and it involved dealing with an aspect of God's truth that was too difficult to accept and understand immediately. So rather than enduring and trusting that Almighty God would eventually reveal the truth, these individuals ceased following Christ. In their minds, if they continued in Christ's doctrine, they would have been persecuted by their friends, family and other associates,

I (Christ) am the bread of life.⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.⁵⁰ This is the bread; the one who comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.⁵¹ I am the living bread, the one having come down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live into the age; but the bread which I will give is my flesh; life – for the sake of the world (cf. Jn. 1:29).⁵² Then the Judeans were arguing with one another, saying, 'How is this one able to give us his flesh to eat?' (Jn. 6:48-52; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore many of his (Christ's) disciples, when they heard this (teaching), said, 'This is a hard (difficult) saying; who can understand?' (Jn. 6:60; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

From this, many of his (Christ's) disciples went off to the former things and were no longer walking with him (Jn. 6:66; RNT; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In contrast, those who patiently wait upon Almighty God to reveal His truth have a habit of holding their thoughts and actions, on any given subject, until God reveals the correct understanding,

And as they (Peter, James and John) were coming down from the mountain, he (Christ) commanded them that they should tell no one what they saw, except when the Son of man rises up from the dead.¹⁰ And they kept the word to themselves, discussing what is the raising up of the dead (Mk. 9:9-10; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The majority of those who have heard an aspect of God's truth at some point in their life, dismiss it quickly,

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way (Mt. 13:19; RNT).

Only Almighty God knows who is going to accept His truth and follow His law and commandments,

But the one sown on good land, this is he who hears the word and understands it; who then bears fruit, and indeed makes sometimes a hundred, and sometimes sixty, and sometimes thirty (Mt. 13:23; RNT).

Anyone who claims to know God, but refuses to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (1Pt. 2:1-3; 2Pt. 3:18), will eventually lose the understanding they once had,

Therefore he (Christ) said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return (referring to Christ's resurrection and eventual return to earth).¹³ So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come (cf. Lk. 2:49; Jn. 4:34).' ¹⁴But his citizens (Satan and the fallen host) hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man reign over us.' ¹⁵And so it was when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. ¹⁶Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷And he (the Master) said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' ²⁰And another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ²¹For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' ²²And he (the Master) said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. ²³Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest? (i.e. this unworthy servant did absolutely nothing with what had been entrusted to him). ²⁴And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas' (Lk. 19:12-24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

For I say to you, that to everyone who has (grown in grace and knowledge) will be given (more); and from him who does not have (any spiritual growth), even what (understanding) he has will be taken away from him (Lk. 19:26; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In the book of Hebrews, God's people are warned that a lack of spiritual growth can occur by neglecting those things that were once clearly understood as being a requirement of living in accordance with God's will,

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. ²For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward (retribution or penalty), ³how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...? (Heb. 2:1-3a; Ed. not in parenthesis).

Therefore, even those who have been called by Almighty God, have repented of their sins, and been baptized, can fall away if they are negligent. If this were not the case, then God would be forcing them to do everything in accordance with His will, and everyone entering God's kingdom would have been manipulated into it. This is why the false doctrine that people are "once saved always saved" is a lie. Thankfully, God allows freedom of choice. The downside to this is that people can make foolish decisions which are harmful to them.

The following section of scripture is another example showing that the potential of going astray is always present, and that no one is guaranteed a position in God's kingdom if they insist on breaking His law and commandments when they know better,

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened (understood God's truth, repented of sin, and started obeying His way of life), ⁵and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted (understood and believed in) the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:4-6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked (2Pet. 3:17).

After an individual clearly understands their responsibility to Almighty God and they make a vow to Him when they repent and are baptized, God expects them to live up to the promise they made. If they turn and go back to their former sinful way of living, God regards them as being unfit for the kingdom of God,

But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God' (Lk. 9:62).

For if , after they (those who understood God's way of life) have escaped the pollutions (sins) of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. ²¹For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness (cf. Ps. 119:172), than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²²But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire" (2Pt. 2:20-22).

The figurative language using both a dog and a pig is no coincidence. Both animals are unclean illustrating a rebellious condition prior to repentance of sin and the cleansing waters of baptism. Having been cleansed of sin and then going back to a way of life that was supposedly repented of, is compared to a dog going back to its vomit (spiritual sickness) and a pig that was cleansed going back to the mud (filthy spiritual condition) it previously lived in.

Jesus Christ also used an analogy comparing God's way of living to a narrow gate and Satan's way of living to a wide gate,

Enter through the narrow gate; because [the gate is] wide and spacious is the way leading to destruction, there are many who are entering through it. ¹⁴Now because [the gate is] narrow and filled with tribulation is the way that leads to life, they are few who find it (Mt. 7:13-14; RNT; Bracketed words absent in early Gk. MSS).

If very few find the narrow gate it means that there are those who seek it, but don't find it. They are aware that they haven't found it. This would mean they knew what to look for and where to go, and presumably should have found it. If you know you can't find something, that means you know what you're looking for, therefore it is possible to find it. But if Almighty God's truth is not found, it's because it remains unrecognized. It's like the saying, "you don't know what you don't know" or "if you're deceived about something you don't know that you are". That leaves only one conclusion, if the narrow gate that leads to life is not found, there is only one other way and that is through the wide gate and the broad way. If the narrow gate is difficult to find, it is unlikely anyone is going to stumble upon it, and it's not going to be easily recognized or in plain sight. Using another analogy, the narrow gate could be hidden behind shrubs, tall grass, weeds, or large trees – not just any trees, but trees with an evil intention (see the study: Which Tree Did Eve Eat From?). These rebellious trees are those who want to hide the gate from individuals seeking the way that leads to everlasting life. These trees could attempt to hide the narrow gate with their branches and leaves, making the surrounding area as dark as possible and hard to find. This bleak description may give the impression that it's impossible to recognize or find the narrow gate. However, this is not the case for everyone that Almighty God is calling,

Who shall separate us (those being called by Almighty God) from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' ³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers (phrase used to describe the fallen host; cf. Eph. 6:12) nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God (Almighty) which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:35-39; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As Almighty God and His way of living is compared to "light", His son Jesus Christ is also associated with that light (Mt. 4:16; Lk. 2:32; Jn. 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5). Because of the sacrifice of Christ, human beings have the potential to become sons of light (Heb. 2:10). As the law and commandments of Almighty God are an integral part of God's light (Ps. 119:105; Pro. 6:23), it is inconceivable that those entering the narrow gate would not be seeking to follow the same law and commandments. The light of Christ and the law leads God's servants to the narrow gate by the power of God's Holy Spirit. Consequently, the way to the narrow gate will be clearly seen in spite of the fallen host who try to overshadow it with darkness because the light of truth shines upon the narrow gate for those who no longer want to live in darkness and rebellion against Almighty God and His law. When the narrow gate is seen, the decision to enter must be taken very

seriously because Christ said living in accordance to God's will is not easy in this present world,

If anyone comes to me, and forsakes not his father or mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, indeed, and even one's own life, is not able to be my disciple (Lk. 14:26; RNT).

For whom from *among* you, wanting to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has *enough* to complete it. ²⁹So that having set his foundation and not being able to finish, all those watching might not begin to mock him, ³⁰saying that this man began to build (entered the narrow gate) and is not able to finish (Lk. 14:28-30; RNT; Ed. note in parenthesis).

But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens is forced (entered with great difficulty), and those using force (those determined to fight against evil and temptation) **seize it** (overcome until the end and obtain the kingdom; Mt. 11:12; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is much easier to be in the wide gate because the majority of people are unknowingly there. This is the broad way that does not require as much sacrifice and resistance. It is the way of living that is more comfortable because so many people are going in pretty much the same direction, and it does not require obedience to God's law and commandments. Unfortunately, as Christ stated that direction leads to destruction (Mt. 7:13),

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Pro. 16:25).

Because Almighty God can foresee the end of matters before they even occur, He knows who will make the right choices under the guidance of His Holy Spirit,

Remember the former things of old, for I am God (Almighty), and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, ¹⁰declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do My pleasure (Isa. 46:9-10; Ed. note in parenthesis).

This is why Almighty God knows who will be in the first and second resurrections (Rev. 20:4-6),

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God (cf. 1Jn. 5:2-3), to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His son (cf. Phil. 2:5), that he (Christ) might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified (through the blood of Christ); and whom He justified, these He also glorified (Rom. 8:28-30; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In this last scripture God is describing the process that occurs when an individual recognizes that they have been living in the wide gate and broad way of this present evil world (cf. Gal. 1:4). Once they repent of living contrary to His will as defined by His law and commandments, He will adopt them because they need to come away from the influence of their father the devil (Jn. 8:44),

Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself (Almighty God), according to the good pleasure of His will (Eph. 1:5).

As Almighty God is not willing that anyone perish, in the sense of losing everlasting life (cf. 2Pet. 3:9), and as the majority of mankind has been living in the wide gate and broad way, God's calling must be progressive in accordance with His will. Therefore, although many have been called throughout man's history, only a few have been chosen to be in the first resurrection. This truth is reflected in God's Holy Day sequence, which the majority of this world's Christianity refuses to obey. Only those having entered the narrow gate and walking the difficult way, observe these appointed times (see God's Holy Days). Those who have entered the wide gate and are living the broad and easy way, either know nothing about these holy days, believe they were done away upon Christ's death, or look upon them as Jewish days of worship. The latter two positions are incorrect. It is only by obedience to God's Holy Days that one can come to understand the truth about God's method of calling people and His entire plan of salvation. For those who have entered the narrow gate and are living in accordance with the more difficult way, which requires obedience to God's law and commandments, it is incumbent upon them to pray that Almighty God call more to repentance,

Then he (Christ) said to his disciples, 'The harvest indeed is plentiful, but the workers are few.³⁸ Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest (Almighty God) so that He might send out workers into His harvest' (Mt. 9:37-38; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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