



Spirit of Grace

Herald

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September, 2025

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God Hides Himself

The prophet Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declared to God, "**Truly You are God, who hide Yourself** O God of Israel, the Savior!" It seems God has created our world as a vast stage for a cosmic game of hide and seek. He has hidden Himself and then invited us to come and look for Him. Paul declared to the skeptics at Athens:

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, **so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him**, though He is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:26).

The concept of seeking God is one of the most fundamental truths in all the Scriptures. Again and again men are charged to seek their Creator and promised amazing benefits to those who do. In Psalms we read: "The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, **who seek God**. (Psalms 14:2)

In His perfect wisdom our Creator has deliberately hidden Himself from His creation, and commands us to make the pursuit of Him the major quest of our life. To find Him is success; to miss Him is utter failure. To fail to look for Him is the greatest indictment that can come upon anyone: "**The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God**; God is in none of his thoughts" (Psalm 10:4).

Those of us who love the Lord often find God far more reserved than we would prefer Him to be. If only He would do more dramatic miracles until the world had no choice but to believe on Him! Our God does do miraculous works, of course. But He seems quite a bit more selective about them that we would like. While there is definitely evidence for His miraculous



hand available for those who seek it, it is not in such preponderance that it smacks the skeptics in the face and forces them to believe. There is enough hiddenness about God to allow agnosticism to flourish if men are so bent in that direction.

The birth of the Savior followed this principle of hiddenness. The night Jesus was born, all the movers and shakers of Israel were utterly clueless. The greatest event since creation was happening right under their noses, and the only ones God saw fit to make aware of it were a few poor shepherds. Life in Israel went on as it always had; there were no newspaper headlines: "**Creator of heaven and earth visits our planet – Messiah of Israel arrives on schedule!**"

Jesus constantly used parables in His teaching, not to make Himself understood but rather to keep ungodly men *from* understanding. When asked why He spoke in such a mysterious fashion, He replied to His disciples, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand'" (Luke 8:10).

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After Jesus sent out His disciples to go all over Israel proclaiming the kingdom of God, they returned with great joy with testimonies of miracles they had done and demons that had been cast out. Jesus was apparently very much gratified to see God's grace working in His disciples like this, for the Scriptures tells us that He prayed, "**I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things** from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes." Jesus was thankful for two things: First that God had hidden His kingdom power and secrets from the intellectuals and philosophers of this world, and secondly that He had revealed them to the simple, poor disciples He had chosen. It is unlikely any of us have ever thanked God for hiding Himself from men, but Jesus did. He seemed to feel this was a very good thing.

The good news is that **God may be found**. The same God who hides Himself is the very One who stirs our hearts to come looking for Him and reveals Himself to those who do. The only condition is wholeheartedness. In Jeremiah we read, "**And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart**" (Jeremiah 29:13). God has revealed Himself to the world through His Son, and when we embrace Christ we discover God. The God who has hidden Himself has in Jesus Christ freely and gladly revealed Himself. In one sense a man or a woman's life quest is accomplished when they are born again; they have found the great prize above all prizes. They have found God.

Preaching and Teaching in South Texas

I ministered at the Gulf Coast 4-Square Church in Hitchcock, TX in early September. It was a blessed time of ministry, and it was great to be with an old friend in the ministry, Pastor John Elliot, whom I have known since around 1994 (How time flies!)

One of the highlights of my time in Hitchcock was the opportunity to minister to a number of prison ministers at the Galveston Jail, and then to go in and do ministry directly with the prisoners. I taught the prison ministers about the importance of making Jesus central in their ministry, and never forgot to share the cross and resurrection of Jesus. I was so blessed to hear one of the ministers who told us later: "I preached Jesus, His cross and resurrection, and seven prisoners received Jesus!" Fantastic! And of course this is exactly what Benedicta and I share through videos in our JESUS CONFERENCE which is shown to African pastors, evangelists, Bible teachers, and church workers.



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