

How Does God Draw People To Himself?

By Mark Mayberry
10/4/2009

Introduction

Some mistakenly think they are drawn to God through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. However, the gospel is God's power unto salvation (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 1:16-17).

Acts 10:34-35 ... 34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. (NASB95)

Romans 1:16-17 ... 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." (NASB95)

Some mistakenly think they are drawn to God through human intuition, reason and philosophy. However, divine truth is often hidden from those who are wise and intelligent (Matt. 11:25-26; 1 Cor. 1:18-31).

Matthew 11:25-26 ... 25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. 26 "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 1:18-31 ... 18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 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. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast

before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.” (NASB95)

In contrast with the speculative systems of men (1 Tim. 1:3-7), Christianity is a religion of The Book, rooted in divine revelation (1 Cor. 2:6-16).

1 Timothy 1:3-7 ... 3 As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, 4 nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith. 5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, 7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. (NASB95)

1 Corinthians 2:6-16 ... 6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7 but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; 9 but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ. (NASB95)

In this lesson, let us consider the text of John 6:44-45, where Jesus Christ says, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.”

John 6:44-45 ... 44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. (NASB95)

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

God Draws Men

The word translated “draw” means to drag. Used literally, it means to move an object from one area to another in a pulling motion. Used figuratively, it means to draw or attract a person in the direction of values for inner life. God draws us with his love (Jer. 31:1-6; Hos. 11:1-4), the ultimate expression of which is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross (John 12:27-33; Rom. 5:6-11).

- Thomas defines **helkō** as “to drag” [1670].
- BDAG say it means “(1) to move an object from one area to another in a pulling motion, draw, with implication that the object being moved is incapable of propelling itself or in the case of pers. is unwilling to do so voluntarily, in either case with implication of exertion on the part of the mover; (2) to draw a pers. in the direction of values for inner life, draw, attract, an extended figurative use of meaning 1; (3) to appear to be pulled in a certain direction, flow an ext. fig. use intr. flow along.”

*Jeremiah 31:1-6 ... 1 “At that time,” declares the Lord, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.” 2 Thus says the Lord, “The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness— Israel, when it went to find its rest.” 3 **The Lord appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.** 4 “Again I will build you and you will be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! Again you will take up your tambourines, And go forth to the dances of the merrymakers. 5 “Again you will plant vineyards On the hills of Samaria; The planters will plant And will enjoy them. 6 “For there will be a day when watchmen On the hills of Ephraim call out, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the Lord our God.’ ” (NASB95)*

*Hosea 11:1-4 ... 1 When Israel was a youth I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son. 2 The more they called them, The more they went from them; They kept sacrificing to the Baals And burning incense to idols. 3 Yet it is I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them in My arms; But they did not know that I healed them. 4 **I led them with cords of a man, with bonds of love, And I became to them as one who lifts the yoke from their jaws; And I bent down and fed them.** (NASB95)*

*John 12:27-33 ... 27 “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 “Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” 29 So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.” 30 Jesus answered and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. 31 “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 **And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.**” 33 But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die. (NASB95)*

Romans 5:6-11 ... 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (NASB95)

Christ Raises Men

Depending upon the context, the word translated “I will raise” may have different meanings. Here it refers to the believer’s hope of being brought back to life from the dead (John 6:35-40, 44-45, 53-58). A glorious resurrection awaits the faithful (1 Cor. 15:50-58; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

- Thomas defines **anistēmi** as “to raise up, to rise” [450].
- BDAG say it means “(1) to cause to stand or be erect, raise, erect, raise up; (2) to raise up by bringing back to life, raise, raise up, trans. – esp. of the dead; (3) to cause to be born, raise up; (4) to cause to appear for a role or function, raise up; (5) to erect a structure; (6) to stand up from a recumbent or sitting position, stand up, rise to speak; (7) to come back to life from the dead, rise up, come back from the dead.”

*John 6:35-40 ... 35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. 36 “But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. 37 “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. 38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 “For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and **I Myself will raise him up on the last day.**” (NASB95)*

*John 6:44-45 ... 44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and **I will raise him up on the last day.** 45 “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. (NASB95)*

*John 6:53-58 ... 53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. 54 “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and **I will raise him up on the last day.** 55 “For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 “This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.” (NASB95)*

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 ... 50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. (NASB95)

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ... 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. (NASB95)

It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’

It is Written in the Prophets

The word translated “prophets” refers to a person inspired to proclaim the will of God, a foreteller or forth-teller of divine truth. Foreshadowing the spiritual nature of the Messianic Kingdom, the Old Testament prophets emphasized the importance of knowledge and understanding (Isa. 11:1-9; Jer. 31:31-34).

- Thomas defines **prophētēs** as “a prophet (an interpreter or forth-teller of the divine will)” [4396].
- BDAG say it refers to “(1) a person inspired to proclaim or reveal divine will or purpose, prophet; (2) by metonymy, the writings of prophets.”

Isaiah 11:1-9 ... 1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the

wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea. (NASB95)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 ... 31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (NASB95)

They Shall All be Taught of God

The word translated "taught" pertains to either the recipients or content of instruction. The New Testament is an authoritative revelation of the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:12-16; Eph. 3:1-5).

- Thomas defines *didaktos* as "instructed, taught" [1318].
- BDAG say it "(1) pertains to being taught, taught, instructed of pers. as recipients of instruction; (2) pertains to being communicated as instruction, imparted, taught."

1 Corinthians 2:12-16 ... 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ. (NASB95)

Ephesians 3:1-5 ... 1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— 2 if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; 3 that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. 4 By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; (NASB95)

Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me

We Must Hear

As used in this context, the word translated “hear” means that one must give careful attention to the inspired message of truth. Christ’s admonition is repeatedly expressed: “He who has ears, let him hear” (Matt. 13:3-17; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; etc.).

- Thomas defines ακουῶ as “to hear, listen” [191].
- BDAG says it means “(1) lit. to have or exercise the faculty of hearing, hear; (2) legal technical term to hear a legal case, grant a hearing to someone; (3) to receive news or information about something, learn about something; (4) to give careful attention to, listen to, heed; (5) to pay attention to by listening, listen to; (6) to be given a nickname or other identifying label, be called; (7) to hear and understand a message, understand.”

*Matthew 13:3-17 ... 3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; 4 and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 “Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. 6 “But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 “Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. 8 “And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. 9 **“He who has ears, let him hear.”** 10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” 11 Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 12 “For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. 13 “Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 “In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; 15 For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.’ 16 “But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. 17 “For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. (NASB95)*

Revelation 2:7 ... 7 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’ (NASB95)

Revelation 2:11 ... 11 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.’ (NASB95)

Revelation 2:17 ... 17 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.' (NASB95)

Revelation 2:29 ... 29 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' (NASB95)

Revelation 3:6 ... 6 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' (NASB95)

Revelation 3:13 ... 13 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' (NASB95)

Revelation 3:22 ... 22 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' (NASB95)

We Must Learn

The word translated “learn” means to gain knowledge or skill by careful instruction. Learning is the essence of discipleship (Matt. 9:12-13; 11:28-30; 24:32-34). Avoiding the perils of false precept or practice (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 4:6), let us remain faithful to the inspired message of truth, the gospel of our salvation (Col. 1:3-7; 2 Tim. 3:13-17).

- Thomas defines **manthanō** as from the root *math-*, meaning “to learn” [3129].
- BDAG say it means “(1) to gain knowledge or skill by instruction, *learn*; (2) make the acquaintance of something, *learn*; (3) to come to a realization, with implication of taking place less through instruction than through experience or practice, *learn, appropriate to oneself*; (4) *hear*.”

*Matthew 9:12-13 ... 12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. 13 “But go and ***learn** what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”* (NASB95)

*Matthew 11:28-30 ... 28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you and ***learn** from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”* (NASB95)

*Matthew 24:32-34 ... 32 “Now ***learn** the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; 33 so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. 34 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”* (NASB95)

*Romans 16:17-18 ... 17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you ***learned**, and turn away from them. 18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. (NASB95)*

*1 Corinthians 4:6 ... 6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may ***learn** not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. (NASB95)*

*Colossians 1:3-7 ... 3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel 6 which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; 7 just as you ***learned** it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, (NASB95)*

*2 Timothy 3:13-17 ... 13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have ***learned** them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NASB95)*

We Must Come

As used in this context, the word translated “come” means to proceed on a course with a destination in view. To be saved, we must respond positively to the Lord’s invitation (Matt. 11:28-30), counting the cost (Luke 6:46-49), with genuine commitment and cross-bearing (Luke 14:25-28).

- Thomas defines *erchomai* as “to come, go” [2064].
- BDAG say it is used “(1) of movement from one point to another, with focus on approach from the narrator’s perspective, come; (2) to proceed on a course, with destination in view, go; (3) to change place or position, with implication of being brought, be brought; (4) to take place, come...”

*Matthew 11:28-30 ... 28 **“Come to Me**, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 **“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me**, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 **“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (NASB95)***

Luke 6:46-49 ... 46 "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? 47 "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 "But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great." (NASB95)

Luke 14:25-28 ... 25 Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? (NASB95)

Conclusion

What must one do to be saved? We must hear. We must believe. We must repent. We must confess. We must be baptized. We must remain faithful.

What must an erring child of God do? We must repent. We must pray. We must bear fruit.