

Matthew 11:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Analysis

'At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' Following severe judgments on rejecting cities, Jesus breaks into prayer—a prayer of thanksgiving revealing profound theological truth. He addresses God as 'Father' (Πάτερ/Pater), demonstrating intimate relationship, and 'Lord of heaven and earth' (κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς/kyrie tou ouranou kai tēs gēs), acknowledging absolute sovereignty. The thanksgiving centers on divine election: God has 'hid these things from the wise and prudent' (ἀπέκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν/apekrypsas tauta apo sophōn kai synetōn) and 'revealed them unto babes' (ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις/apekalypsas auta nēpiois). 'These things' refers to kingdom mysteries—truth about Jesus's identity and mission. The 'wise and prudent' are the educated religious elite; 'babes' are simple, humble, teachable. God actively hides truth from some and reveals it to others—sovereign election in salvation. Reformed theology sees this as explicit biblical support for predestination: God chooses whom to illuminate, not based on human merit but His sovereign will.

Historical Context

This prayer occurs after pronouncing judgment on cities that witnessed Jesus's miracles but refused repentance. The contrast is stark: cities with greatest evidence rejected; simple disciples received revelation. The 'wise and prudent' included Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees—Israel's theological experts, trained in Torah, respected for learning. Yet they missed Messiah standing before them. The 'babes' (*νήπιοι/nēpīoi*, infants) were Jesus's disciples—fishermen, tax collectors, ordinary people without rabbinic training. This pattern fulfilled Isaiah 29:14 (quoted in 1 Corinthians 1:19): 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.' God consistently chooses weak, foolish, lowly things to shame the strong, wise, and noble (1 Corinthians 1:26-29). Early church reflected this: Christianity spread among slaves, women, lower classes initially; Roman aristocracy largely rejected it for centuries. This divine pattern ensures no one boasts in themselves—salvation is entirely God's gracious work.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's thanksgiving for divine hiddenness and revelation challenge egalitarian assumptions that everyone deserves equal understanding?
2. What does it mean practically that you must become like a 'babe' to receive kingdom revelation—how is childlike faith different from scholarly investigation?
3. How do you respond to the reality that God sovereignly chooses to whom He reveals truth—does this seem unfair, or does it magnify grace?

Interlinear Text

Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν
At that time answered Jesus and said
G1722 G1565 G3588 G2540 G611 G3588 G2424 G2036

Ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι πάτερ κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς
I thank thee O Father Lord of heaven and G3588
G1843 G4671 G3962 G2962 G3772 G2532 G3588

γῆς ὅτι απέκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ
earth because thou hast hid these things from the wise and
G1093 G3754 G613 G5023 G575 G4680 G2532

συνετῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις·
prudent and hast revealed them unto babes
G4908 G2532 G601 G846 G3516

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 21:16 (References Jesus): And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

Psalms 8:2 (Parallel theme): Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

Matthew 16:17 (References Jesus): And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Acts 17:24 (References Lord): God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

2 Corinthians 3:14 (Parallel theme): But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

John 11:41 (References Jesus): Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

Isaiah 66:1 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

Luke 22:42 (Parallel theme): Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

Daniel 2:23 (Parallel theme): I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Daniel 4:35 (Parallel theme): And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?