

# A Child



God's Disguises (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as I continue to share with you on the strange but exciting theme of God's disguises.

In my previous talks I gave you some reasons why God sometimes approaches us in a disguise. There are three things he does not want to do. He does not want to overawe us with his power. He does not want to entice us with his blessings. He does not want to satisfy mere intellectual curiosity.

I've mentioned two specific disguises that God has used. The first was the most important of all but one which God used only once—the carpenter's son, Jesus of Nazareth, who ended his life being executed on a Roman gibbet.

The second was a disguise that God has used many times in history and still continues to use today—God's messengers. I explained how God identifies himself with his messengers who faithfully do his bidding and deliver his message. The way we respond to his messengers is reckoned as the way we respond to God. I gave two examples, one from the Old Testament and one from the New. From the Old Testament the example was the judge Barak. Barak was called of God to lead Israel's army against an invading enemy. After he had done so and the battle had been fought and won, stock was taken of how the various elements of Israel had responded to Barak's challenge. There was one village which hadn't come to help him and on that village, Meroz, was pronounced a curse because they hadn't come to help the Lord. It doesn't say they hadn't come to help Barak but they hadn't come to help the Lord. The Lord identified with Barak. The way people responded to Barak was the way they responded to the Lord.

In the New Testament the example was John the Baptist. Herod the tetrarch had rejected John and eventually had him killed. Then Jesus stood before Herod a little later and Herod expected to see a miracle and hear some wonderful teaching! But Jesus didn't speak one word to Herod. The principle was Herod rejected Jesus' forerunner and representative, John the Baptist. He had no claim to hear from Jesus.

Today I'm going to speak about another disguise that God regularly uses, a child. Many, many times God comes to us in the disguise of a child. Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 18:1–6.

> "At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said, 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name, welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.'"

And then a little further on in verse 10:

> "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."

God sets great value upon children. In fact, as I understand that scripture, every child has an angel appointed to guard it, who has direct access to the presence of Almighty God and has to give God a report on what happens to that child. Jesus says if a child is put in your way by God and you receive that child, you're receiving him. But, if you reject that child, if you refuse to help that child, in reality you're rejecting Jesus. And also he said if you should do something even worse and cause such a little child to sin—and remember, our contemporary society is full of men and women who are doing this—Jesus said it would be better for such a person to have a large millstone hung around his neck and be drawn to the depth of the sea rather than to incur the guilt of causing a child to sin.

So, when Jesus sets a child before us he identifies himself with that child. Our response to the child is our response to Jesus. And God's angel in heaven is watching over that child and watching how we respond to that child. You see, we come back to the same principle. So often God disguises himself in the weak, the unimpressive, the improbable, the unconventional. Don't you take it for granted that you'll know when God comes into your life. He'll come in a disguise and unless your heart is open you'll miss him. And you may be guilty of rejecting God without even knowing that he came to you. The principle that God requires us to care for children in need is very clear throughout the whole Scripture, Old Testament and New.

Let me read some words of James. In James 1:26–27, this speaks about what true religion really is and it says a number of significant things.

> "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless."

That writes off a lot of contemporary religion. A person who does not control his tongue, God will not accept his religion. That means that gossipers and slanderers and tale bearers and people who exaggerate, people who criticize; God does not accept their religion at all.

And then we come onto the positive. What is the kind of religion that God is looking for? The next verse, verse 27:

> "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

There are two aspects to that kind of acceptable religion. One is positive, the other is negative. The positive is stated first. It is to look after orphans and widows in their distress. Then, the negative is to keep ourselves from being polluted by the world. Unfortunately, I see in so much contemporary Christianity such an emphasis on the negative, not being involved with the world, not being polluted by the world, keeping yourself separate, not going here, not going there, not doing this, not doing that—a lot of which is often just human regulations. But such people so often have totally missed the positive, the first part, which is to look after orphans and widows in their distress. And the way we respond to children in need is the way we respond to God.

Now, I want to say a little on this subject from personal experience. I think I can speak on this subject from personal experience. My first wife Lydia, and I, raised a family of nine adopted girls. Six were Jewish, one was English, one was Arab, the youngest was African, black African. When I married my second wife she brought me three adopted children. So, now between us, we're responsible for twelve adopted children. So you see, I'm not just talking from theory but from experience.

I'd like to tell you very briefly the story of how Lydia and I took that little African girl. We were missionaries in Kenya in East Africa at the time, very busy with educational work. But one night a white lady and a black couple came to our home with this little baby of about six months, very sickly, wrapped in nothing but a dirty towel and they said, "We've heard that you take in children." Well, my wife and I said, "Yes, that was true years ago but we're too old to do that now. And besides,

we're too busy with other things." Well, these people said, "We've been going around for three days to every family: white, black, Asian; looking for somebody to take this little child. We're so tired, would you just let us sit down and rest for about half an hour?" So we said by all means, sit down. We sat there with them.

At the end of half an hour they got up to go and as they carried this little baby past me she just stretched out her hand toward me as if to say, "What are you going to do about me?" And I turned to my wife and I said, I think we'll change our minds. My wife said, "Give me a week to get a baby crib and some baby clothes, and bring her back." So, that's how we took that little African girl. And, I tell you, my life has been much richer for taking that little girl. Today she's grown up, she's a beautiful Christian, serving the Lord. But to think what I could have missed if I'd missed that opportunity when Jesus came to me in the person of that little sick, black, African Baby.

I want to tell you this, friends, our world today is full of children in need, all over the world. And not all outside this country, there are plenty in this country, plenty elsewhere. And it's in our power, in many cases, to help them either directly or indirectly.

For many years now I have systematically provided support for two orphans in India and one in Korea. I don't say this to boast but what's the good of preaching if we don't practice what we preach? It doesn't cost me much and I'm keeping three children alive, giving them opportunity of a Christian education.

Let me close by reading some words of James again. In James 4:17:

> "Anyone then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."

See, sin is not just sins of commitment. So many times it's sins of omission. Perhaps God has come to you in the person of a little child, or is going to come, what are you going to do about it?

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time telling you more about God's disguises.

## Radio Program

Transcript: TS-R045-104-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

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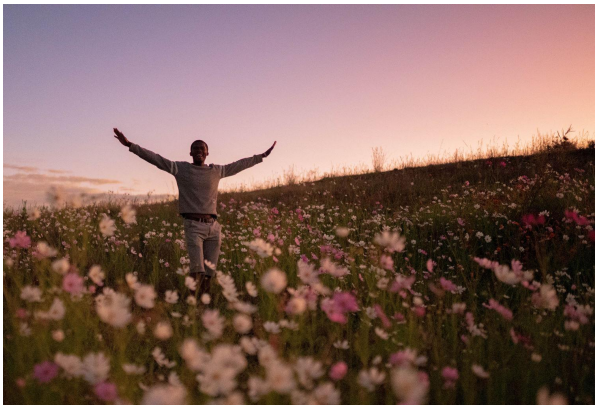

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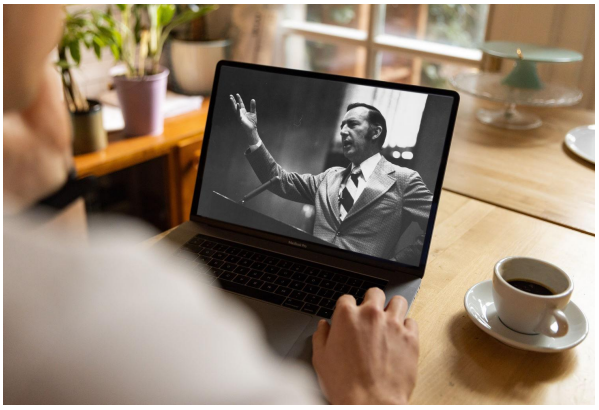

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