

**Advent Reading for Sunday, December 17, 2017**  
***“All True Believers are Taught by God” (Isaiah 54:13)***

Some of Isaiah’s prophecies about the Messiah are so prominent they cannot be missed, and this is the case with the majority we have considered. Others, however, are more obscure, and can easily be passed over, even when they are highly significant. Such is the case with our prophecy for today.

*“All your sons will be taught of the Lord, (Isaiah 54:13). So what do these words have to do with the Advent of Jesus?*

Significantly, it was Jesus Himself who quoted Isaiah’s simple words while interacting with some unbelieving skeptics. Like others Jesus encountered, they had flawed expectations of the Messiah, and of what He could do for them. So Jesus said to them: *“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). Jesus essentially repeats verse 44 in 6:65, but changes the word *draw* to *grant*. His point in using these words is that coming to Him is to be seen as a sovereign gift. Why would Jesus make this point to unbelieving skeptics, or to anyone?

One reason is that skeptics often need to be stripped of their proud self-confidence. Skeptics generally pride themselves in their intellectual ability, often viewing Christians as simpletons. The tendency is to believe that their intellect is sovereign over God. Even if this person would come to God, he would come in pride, and as a result of his own will-power, going against the resolute call of the gospel to repentance. So Jesus simply says to them, *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him”*.

Others with a high view of freewill often argue that God does not force Himself on anyone, and that each person must make his or her own decision to believe in Jesus. They often say that God’s *drawing* means that He woos sinners, much as a young man might woo a woman so she would decide to marry him. But when we look at the word Jesus used for *draw* and examine how it is used in the New Testament, it clearly has a much stronger meaning. It is used of the disciples *dragging* a net full of fish to

shore (John 21:6), of Paul and Silas being *dragged* to jail by the authorities in Philippi (Acts 16:19), and of Paul being *dragged* out of the temple by an angry mob in Jerusalem (Acts 21:30). In his commentary on the Gospel of John, Leon Morris points out, “*There is not one example in the New Testament where the resistance to this drawing was successful*”. From other places in Scripture, we know *God’s drawing* is the power of the Holy Spirit overcoming our self-righteousness as sinners, and convicting us of our lost condition. It is the Holy Spirit overcoming our selfish pride so that we are ready to come to Christ only as empty-handed beggars.

Jesus’ point is that this astounding process of how we come to Christ is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s relatively obscure statement: “*And they shall all be taught of God*”. It is definitely a mystery, but is also a blessed reality! The common theme of Scripture is that “*Salvation is from the Lord*” (Jonah 2:9).

**Giving Thanks – While You work in mysterious ways to *teach* us, thank You for *drawing* us to You, and *granting* us salvation!**