

July 15, 2012

DISCIPLES INDEED

John 8: 31-32

We know that a disciple is a learner and a follower of Christ. **So**, a ðdisciple indeedö is one who is TRULY a learner and follower of Christ. A ðdisciple indeedö IS TRULY, a disciple NOT in NAME (only); or in APPEARANCE (only), but one who is a TRUE learner and a TRUE follower of Christ.

Look at John 8: 31-32, “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

One important rule of interpretation is to understand WHO is being addressed. **Christ** is NOT speaking here to those who (at this time) rejected Him. **He** is speaking to those **ðwhich believed on him**”. **I.e.** **He** is speaking to those who were (at that time) EMBRACING Him as the Promised Messiah, as the Son of David, as that Prophet Moses wrote about. **To ðcontinue** in my wordö presupposes that these to whom He is speaking already had (some) interest in His Word. **They** already had (some) interest in Him.

We can see from these verses three things that will characterize those who will come to be known as ðdisciples indeedö:

1. They will CONTINUE in Christø word.
2. They will KNOW the truth.
3. They will BE SET FREE (by the truth).

FIRST: Those who are ðdisciples indeedö *will CONTINUE in the word of Christ*. **This** does not JUST mean they will CONTINUE to study, CONTINUE to avail themselves of teaching, CONTINUE to learn, CONTINUE to fellowship with believers. “**Disciples** indeedö will (most certainly) CONTINUE to do all these things.

But, to CONTINUE in the word of Christ means MORE. **It means** that minds have been changed and CONTINUE to be changed. **It means** that error (in doctrine) CONTINUES to be corrected. **It means** that interpretations BEGIN to honor (and CONTINUE to honor) God. **It means** that understanding of the scriptures wonø rest until they exalt Christ and honor a Just God and Savior.

Continuing in the WORD of Christ, means that the WORD has become the STANDARD of judgment. **The WORD** is the FINAL authority of ðdisciples indeedö. **I.e.** **They** will adhere to NO doctrine that cannot be (clearly) defended by the WORD. **They** ðabideö in the doctrine of Christ.

And, when men come to them apart from THIS doctrine, they obey God. **They** reject the men and their doctrine. **They** do not become partakers of (sharers in) their evil.

Look at 2 John 9-11 “**Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.**”

10 ¶ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

Do you see here the CRITERIA for identifying and distinguishing preachers that are (truly) sent by God; those whose messages honor God and exalt Christ; those who take away all grounds for boasting in sinners? **They** ABIDE in the doctrine of Christ.

This becomes the CRITERIA of those who are disciples indeed. **What** do men say about Christ? **Do** they preach the Gospel? **Do** they tell their hearers that Christ's Righteousness ALONE makes it RIGHT for God to show mercy to some and withhold it from others? **“Disciples** indeed judge the message they are preaching or supporting by this. **And**, they judge the messages of others by this as well.

The writer of Hebrews said, (Hebrews 3: 14) **“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”**

(Back to the outline.) **The** FIRST characteristic of those who are disciples indeed is: **They** CONTINUE in the Word of Christ. **They** CONTINUE in the Gospel.

The SECOND characteristic of those who are disciples indeed: **They** will KNOW the truth.

Look back at John 8: 32 **“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**

Again, this is MORE than just knowing truthful FACTS. **Why** do disciples indeed CONTINUE in the Word of Christ? **Why** do disciples indeed INSIST that the Gospel be preached EVERY time? **It** is because the Gospel ALONE contains THE truth.

In His High Priestly prayer in John 17, Christ prays to His Father on the behalf of His people. **It** is important for us to understand that His prayer here is NOT for the world (in general). **His** prayer is for SPECIFIC sinners. **Who** are they?

Look at John 17: 1-2 **“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:**

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

The phrase which I have underlined () identifies those Christ is making His prayer for. **In a** Covenant made by the Godhead before time, The Father gave The Son a people. **I.e.** He entrusted the COMPLETE salvation of a people to the Son. **He made** Christ the Surety of that people. **He made** Christ (legally) responsible for the Spiritual and eternal well being of THAT people.

Now, THAT (people) is who Christ is praying for throughout this prayer. **This** is not a (general) prayer for ALL without exception. **It is** (rather) a prayer for SPECIFIC sinners.

Look at John 17: 9 **“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”**

Christ makes His prayer for THEM (whose complete salvation has been entrusted to Him). **He does NOT** make His prayer for the world (in general).

These SPECIFIC sinners, (that Christ makes His prayer for), are separated into two (distinct) parties. **First**, Christ prays for His (immediate) disciples.

Look at John 17: 6-8 **“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.**

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”

These are those that walked with Christ in His incarnation. **They** are those which Christ sent into the world (with the Gospel).

Look at John 17: 18 **“As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.”**

Christ prayed for His (immediate) disciples. **Then**, He prayed for those who would believe on Him through the Gospel (ōthe wordö) delivered to the world **FIRST** by those disciples.

Look at John 17: 20 **“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”**

You might be asking how all these verses in John 17 are connected to our lesson, DISCIPLES INDEED. **And**, more specifically how these verses are connected to *disciples indeed* öknowing THE truthö.

Well, here is the answer. **What** Christ **DECLARES** of ödisciples indeedö in John 8, He **PRAYS FOR** in John 17. **In John 8** He **DECLARED** that ödisciples indeedö would öKNOW the truthö. **In John 17** He **PRAYS** that they be given that knowledge. **And**, not only that they be **GIVEN** that knowledge, but that they be **SET APART** by it.

Look at John 17: 17&19 **“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

One meaning of ösanctifyö is to ömake holyö, (which is not the meaning in this context). **“Sanctify”** also means to öset apartö; to separate; to distinguish, (which is the meaning here). **Christ** is asking His Father to set His people apart; to separate and distinguish them from the world.

Christ is praying for those who would in time in each successive generation become known as ödisciples indeedö. **He is** asking for those who would öknow the truthö. And, this is **NOT** just a request for them to know öthe truthö (in an intellectual way).

Christ is asking that EVERY sinner His Father ðgaveö Him be SANCTIFIED by THE truth. **He** is asking that they be SET APART by ðthe truthö; that they be DISTINGUISHED by it; that they be SEPARATED from the religious world in their generations by ðTHE truthö.

What is THE truth that DISTINGUISHES (true) believers from the world in every generation? **THE truth** that God is Just (doing right) to show mercy to (save) sinners on the basis of Christø finished work ALONE; THE truth that sinners are saved by Christø R imputed EXCLUSIVELY, without any contribution (whatsoever) from the sinner.

God has a SPECIFIC people. **They** are born into the world in each generation. **And**, they are MADE KNOWN by THE truth. **They** are DISTINGUISHED from their religious family, friends and co-workers by the Gospel they believe, support, and preach. **They** are SET APART from the religious world they live in by their knowledge that God is RIGHT (He is Just) to justify ungodly sinners on the basis of Christø imputed Righteousness ALONE.

(**Back** to the outline.) **The** second characteristic of ðdisciples indeedö: **They** will ðKNOW the truthö.

Then, the last characteristic of those sinners who will be identified as ðdisciples indeedö: **They** will be ðset freeö. **They** will be ðmade freeö by THE truth they hear from the Word (the Gospel) they CONTINUE in.

Look back at John 8: 32 ðAnd ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

The idea of being ðmade freeö is one of LIBERATION (of deliverance). **What** do sinners need to be LIBERATED from? **First**, sinners need to be LIBERATED; (delivered) from a BONDAGE they are not even aware of.

Look at John 8: 33 “**They** answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?”

The BONDAGE Christ is speaking of here is not one that any unconverted sinner will ever admit to. **It** is a Spiritual BONDAGE that is hidden to the natural mind. **None** of us by nature sees ourselves as servants of THE sin that holds all of us in its BONDAGE.

We won’t acknowledge it. **We** won’t admit to it: **Because** HONESTLY we DO NOT see either this sin or its BONDAGE. **It** is the REALITY of ALL. **But**, NONE (by nature) will ADMIT it BECAUSE none (by nature) see it. **The** ONLY way to see this sin and its BONDAGE is to believe Godø Testimony.

Look at Ephesians 2: 1-3 “**And** you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** **Wherein** in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 **Among** whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

Paul is writing to converted sinners. **He** uses the PAST tense. “**In time** past you walkedí ö ð**We all HAD** our conversation in times pastí ö **You WERE** aligned with ðthe children of disobedienceö. **We WERE** (by nature) ðchildren of wrathö.

Unlike those in John 8, these Paul writes to would recognize the BONDAGE they WERE in until God regenerated and converted them. **They** would know they WERE in BONDAGE because they have been delivered from that BONDAGE. **It is BONDAGE!** **And**, every sinner whom God delivers from it recognizes and admits this (former) BONDAGE. Have YOU seen this BONDAGE? You have if you have been delivered.

That is the first thing sinners need to be LIBERATED from (a BONDAGE we ..).

Second, sinners need to be LIBERATED from a sin they do not recognize as sin. **They** need to be LIBERATED from “**committing sin**”.

Look at John 8: 34 “**Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**”

“**Committing** sinö is what keeps sinners in BONDAGE. **What** is ð**committing sin**ö? “**Committing** sinö is NOT finding ALL of salvation in the doing and dying of Christ ALONE. A **sinner** ðcommits sinö who imagines that (anything) IN THEM (even faith, even repentance, even reformation) makes up ANY PART of the CAUSE of God saving them. ð**Committing** sinö is failing to ðabideö in Christ.

Now, who does that? **EVERY** sinner who is ignorant of the COMPLETE salvation Christ has accomplished for EVERY sinner He died for. **To be** ignorant of Christ (Person and work); **to be** ignorant of His Righteousness; **to be** ignorant that God is just to justify sinners on the basis of His imputed R ALONE; **to think** that ANY sinner Christ died for could end up under the eternal wrath of God; **to imagine** that you could be favored of God, blessed of God, or saved by God on any basis but Christø R. imputed alone is to ðcommit sinö.

And, ðwhoever commits sinö is in BONDAGE to sin. ð**Whoever** commits sin is the servant of sinö. **Sinners** need to be LIBERATED from ðcommitting sinö.

The last thing sinners need to be ðset freeö from (This is the bottom line.): **Sinners** need to be ðset freeö from the MENTALITY (the dependence) of a SERVANT. **This** is the MENTALITY of one who is “**committing sin**”; the one who is in BONDAGE and does not know it.

Look at John 8: 35 ö **And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.**”

What is the DEPENDENCE of a servant? **What** is a servantø MENTALITY? A **servant** knows that his place in the household DEPENDS upon CONTINUED service. **His** place in the household is not FIXED. **It is** not PERMANENT. It is not UNCHANGEABLE. A **servant** can stay ONLY as long as they CONTINUE to serve. **If they STOP** serving, they wonø be allowed to stay. **If they STOP** serving, theyøll be kicked out of the household.

That is the *place*; it is the *standing* of a servant. **Sinners** need to be *made free* from thinking that their place in the household is dependent upon THEIR (continued) efforts (THEIR works; THEIR obedience; THEIR reformation). **ALL** need to be *set free* from this thinking because that is where we ALL are by nature. **We THINK** we got INTO the kingdom of God by OUR efforts. **And**, we THINK we stay there by OUR efforts. **This** is BONDAGE! **But**, it is BONDAGE none of us recognize by nature.

How is this MENTALITY (this DEPENDENCE) of a servant overcome? **It is** overcome by the Son.

Look at John 8: 35b-36 “...**but the Son abideth ever.** 36 **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.**”

The Son has an ABIDING place in the household. **His** place is FIXED. **It is** PERMANENT. **It is** UNCHANGEABLE.

And, how did the Son get His place in the household? **He EARNED** it. **He** acted as a Representative. **He** offered Himself as a Substitute. **He** fulfilled His duties as the Surety of His sheep. **He** humbled Himself to become a SERVANT in order that His people could be SONS.

Look at Philippians 2: 5-8 “**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

By **His** obedience, sufferings, and death Christ EARNED His place as the Head of God's household. **That** is why His Father exalted Him.

Look at Philippians 2: 9-11 “**Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:**

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Christ EARNED His place as the Head of God's household. **And**, He did not just earn HIS place. **He also** earned the place of EVERY sinner who is in God's household. **No sinner** has a place in the household of God because of THEIR service. **Every** sinner who is in the household of God is there because of CHRIST'S service on their behalf.

Disciples indeed are those who have been given eyes to see this. **They** are those whose hearts have embraced this. *Disciples* indeed are NOT those who have worked in order to be adopted into God's family. **But**, rather, *disciples* indeed are those who have *received* the adoption of sons.

Look at Galatians 4: 4-5 “**But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,**

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Sinners are not adopted (not saved) WHEN they believe. **On the** contrary, believing sinners RECEIVE an adoption that took place in eternity based on Christ's finished work ALONE. **That** is why the Spirit is sent to them in Regeneration.

Look at Galatians 4: 6 **“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.**

The Holy Spirit's work in the sinner does not MAKE them sons. His work REVEALS them TO (already) BE sons.

“Disciples indeed are those whom the Son (in each generation) makes free INDEED (i.e. makes TRULY free). **They** are those whom the Son LIBERATES from a servant's MENTALITY. **They** are those who are made free from thinking they are in God's household because of THEIR efforts and obedience. **They** are those who are given the liberty of sons.

Look at Galatians 4: 7 **“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”**

Sons are ALWAYS sons. **But**, sons start out thinking and acting as SERVANTS. **ALL** (by nature) have a servant's MENTALITY (a servant's DEPENDENCE). **The** Spirit LIBERATES us from that sin (that BONDAGE) by convincing us we are in God's household and are certain for final glory because of Christ's work ALONE (our obedience and efforts totally excluded).

Paul, the Apostle, wrote on this same subject in Romans.

Look at Romans 6:17-18 **“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.**

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

Paul here writes of the same LIBERATION as John. **Those** who become known as disciples indeed in each generation do not start out as servants of righteousness. They start out in BONDAGE. **They** start out as servants of sin. They start out IGNORANT of (and unconcerned about) how God can RIGHTLY (Justly) show mercy to a sinner who by nature and by practice deserves nothing but His eternal wrath.

But, the Spirit of God delivers them to the Gospel and sets them free from the MENTALITY and DEPENDENCE of servants. **He** sets them free from thinking that anything IN THEM makes up any part of God saving them or keeping them saved. **He** sets them free to the LIBERTY of sons.

Look back at the outline and I will close. **DISCIPLES INDEED** are known in each generation by these characteristics:

1. **They** CONTINUE in Christ's word (Standard of J).
2. **They** KNOW the truth. (They will be SET APART by the knowledge that God can be just and show mercy to sinners on the basis of Christ's R. imp ALONE.)

3. **They** are SET FREE (From the BONDAGE they did not see; **from** ðcommitting the sinö they did not recognize; **from** thinking they were saved or kept by something found it them. **They** are ðset freeö by Christø finished work ALONE).

In the light of Godø Word judge yourself: a ðdiscipleö in name/appearance ONLY, or a DISCIPLE INDEED?

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