

## Discipler

“The Lord has given Me the tongue of disciples,  
That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word.  
He awakens Me morning by morning,  
He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.” (Isa. 50:4).

The servant song predicts the discipling ministry of the Servant extending His own disciple role from the Lord to others. Jesus fulfills this role with generosity, clarity and severity. Scott Peck reminds us that discipleship is a beginning that follows the mentor through disciplines to become like him.

There are many people I know who possess a vision of [personal] evolution yet seem to lack the will for it. They want, and believe it is possible, to skip over the discipline, to find an easy shortcut to sainthood. Often they attempt to attain it by simply imitating the superficialities of saints, retiring to the desert or taking up carpentry. Some even believe that by such imitation they have really become saints and prophets, and are unable to acknowledge that they are still children and face the painful fact that they must start at the beginning and go through the middle.<sup>1</sup>

Discipleship begins with Jesus call in Matthew 11:29–30 “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”<sup>2</sup> This is a similar appeal that *Ben Sirah* has personified wisdom make to her audience. Normally, in second Temple Judaism, the yoke that is referred to is that of Torah, or the Law.<sup>3</sup> A feature of dissimilarity recognizes that, there is no evidence that another rabbi made this appeal, of “take my yoke.” However, there is some second Temple Jewish sense in which such a yoke would identify one with the Kingdom.<sup>4</sup> By extending this Kingdom order, the *Psalms of Solomon* speak of a yoke of the Messiah.<sup>5</sup> Jesus’ yoke combines that Messianic expectation with that of wisdom’s yoke (to fit into the created order).<sup>6</sup> In *Ben Sirah*, wisdom says “Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits.”<sup>7</sup> However, the most blatant similar second Temple statement to Jesus’ is of lady wisdom as contained within *Ben Sirah* 6.19–31.

Come to her like one who plows and sows. Put your neck into her collar. Bend your shoulders and carry her...Come unto her with all your soul, and keep her ways with all your might...For at last you will find the rest she gives...Then her

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* (New York: A Touchstone Book, 1978), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 90 copies Matthew’s statement but identifies Jesus lordship as gentle or meek.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. 5:5; Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1; 2 Bar. 41.3; 2 En. 48.9; *m’Abot* 3.5; *m. Ber.* 2.2.

<sup>4</sup> 3 En. 35.6; *b. Ber.* 10b; in contrast to yoke of burden, which is a covenant curse (4Q161 2.11–13).

<sup>5</sup> *Ps. Sol.* 7.9; 17.30; cf. *Did.* 6.2.

<sup>6</sup> *Sir.* 6.30, Hebrew; 51.26.

<sup>7</sup> *Sir.* 24.19.

fetters will become for you a strong defense, and her collar a glorious robe. Her yoke is a golden ornament.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, discipleship becomes a discipline to join Jesus in a Kingdom world view and the work of Kingdom ministry. Such identification with the King and Kingdom begets Kingdom blessing of rest.

### Disciples are Followers and Learners

The Jewish concept of disciple is that of a responsive learner. Thus, disciple-making would exclude those who do not accept the message of the discipler. Fernando Segovia develops that discipleship entails “the ‘teacher’/‘disciple’ relationship with all its accompanying and derivative terminology (for example, ‘following’ or ‘on the way’).”<sup>9</sup> Second Temple Judaism thought of following Moses or Torah as within a discipleship relationship.<sup>10</sup> For example, the Pharisees consider the Sadducees’ disbelief of the prophets as calling into question and in some instances actively exclude the Sadducees from being a disciple of the sages and Moses (Jn. 9:28–29).<sup>11</sup> So it is important to listen and follow the disciple-maker, or you are no disciple of his. In this Matthew 11:25 context, Jesus was grateful to God that those who were gathering around Him were simple people, rather than those who thought of themselves as intelligent and wise (also Lk. 10:21). It is to these simple people that He offers the gentle opportunity to learn and rest. This rest extends Moses covenantal blessing in the land as Kingdom (Ex. 33:14) with that of wisely living a blessed life now. For example, wisdom rest is expressed by *Pistis Sophia* 95, “All you who are heavy under your burden, come to me and I will enliven you; for my burden is easy and my yoke is light.” Jesus gave a similar promise to encourage burdened people to come in discipleship. So rest has in view: 1) Kingdom benefit, 2) vitality within a way that fits with creation and Kingdom, and 3) the Gospel of John will include a mystical empowerment.

A disciple is a learner or student (μαθητης). This concept is built off the verb μαθητευω which means to instruct or to teach (Mt. 13:52; 27:57; 28:29; Acts 14:21). The basic pattern of the disciple is to be a student of a living rabbi or group such as John the Baptist or the Pharisees (Mt. 11:2; 22:16; Mk. 2:18; 6:29; Lk. 5:30, 33; 7:18–19; 11:1; Jn. 1:35, 37; 3:25).<sup>12</sup> Martin Hengel underscores that this pattern of a charismatic leader teaching his students is what is meant by “discipleship.”<sup>13</sup> However, John and

---

<sup>8</sup> *Sir.* 6.19–31; cf. *Pr.* 1:20–23; *Sir.* 24.19–22; 51.23–30; *Odes Sol.* 33.6–13; *Ps.-Justin, Or. Graecos* 5.

<sup>9</sup> Fernando Segovia, *Discipleship in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.345; 2.88; *b. Sanh.* 11a, bar.; *Sota* 48b; *Song Rab.* 8.9.3; *ARN* 26.54; *Qoh. Rab.* 11.6.1.

<sup>11</sup> *b. Yoma* 4a.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Meye (*Jesus and the Twelve: Discipleship and Revelation in Mark’s Gospel* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968], pp. 93–99) has a good discussion of the basic discipleship words and their fit in the rabbinic and Markan context.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Hengel (*The Charismatic Leader and His Followers* [New York: Crossroad, 1981] translated by J. Greig from *Nachfolge und Charisma: exegisch-religionsgeschichtliche Studie zu Mt 8, 21f. und Jesu Ruf in die Nachfolge. BZNW 34* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968]) wishes to distance this model from eschatological prophet and established rabbi. Perhaps the closest parallels are Elijah and John the Baptist, with their disciples.

second Temple Judaism permit the use of disciple of Moses to refer to Pharisees who are confident that God has spoken through Moses (Jn. 9:28–29).<sup>14</sup> In second Temple Judaism, this practice of discipleship to Moses evidences “following” God.

Upon this foundation, most of the N.T. references speak of disciples being Jesus’ students. Jesus’ disciples receive instruction in an interactive format asking questions (Mt. 5:1; 9:37; 11:1; 13:10, 36; 19:23; 23:11; 24:3; Mk. 4:34; 7:17; 10:10; Lk. 6:20; 8:9; 11:1; 12:1, 22; 16:1; 17:1, 22; 20:45; Jn. 9:2; 16:17–29). An important aspect of this discipleship relationship to Jesus is to listen to His teaching and not get distracted by worry or felt duty (Lk. 10:38–42). The questions that they would ask served as an indicator of their interest and maturity. Jesus would answer their questions but He would also direct the instruction through His Kingdom teaching. Jesus blessed the disciples, reminding them that prophets and kings wished to see and hear what they were privileged to but did not see and hear like the disciples were able (Lk. 10:23).

The twelve disciples are His primary students, namely<sup>15</sup>: Peter, Andrew, James and John Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas,<sup>16</sup> Matthew, James of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the zealot,<sup>17</sup> and Judas Iscariot<sup>18</sup> (Mt. 10:2–4; Mk. 3:16–19; Lk. 6:14–16; Acts 1:13). These twelve were also called apostles or “sent men,” after the Jewish pattern of a *commissioned agent sent forth in another’s name or authority*.<sup>19</sup> In such a pattern, the one sent is *like* the sender.<sup>20</sup> Of this group of disciples, there was an inner circle of three who are occasionally given special access to Jesus, namely Peter and the Zebedee brothers (e.g., Mt. 17:1; 26:37; Mk. 9:2; 14:33; Lk. 9:28). The inner group of three and Andrew are always listed first in all of the lists. The next group of four disciples are always in the middle positions. However, the privileged status of Jesus’ disciple extends beyond the twelve to a multitude of learners (e.g., Mt. 8:21; Lk. 19:37).

A basic quality of disciples is to follow Christ. Anselm Schultz, Hans Deiter Betz, Fernando Segovia, and James Dunn underscore that discipleship in second Temple Judaism and in Jesus’ ministry is all about following and imitating the discipler.<sup>21</sup> Jesus

---

<sup>14</sup> *Wis.* 1:1; *Jub.* 1.15; 21.2; Mt. 6:33; *IQS* 1.1–2; 5.9, 11; *CD* 1.10; 6.6; *4Q185* frg. 1–2, col. 1, lines 8–12; *4Q416* frg. 2 (with *4Q417*), col. 3, lines 12–14; also of Abraham (*m’ Abot* 5.19).

<sup>15</sup> Lists of disciples were a common Jewish convention (e.g., *m. ’Abot* 2.8). One rabbinic document (*b. Sanh.* 43a) claims “Jesus of Nazareth had five disciples: Mattai, Maqai, Metser, Buni and Todah.” Perhaps this statement corroborates Matthew and Judas as disciples. However, the document does not limit the number to only five disciples. *The Gospel of the Ebionites* 5 as reported by Epiphanius (*Panarion* 30.13.2–3) corroborates that there are twelve apostles and Matthew’s call as a disciple.

<sup>16</sup> Meaning “twin”, also called Didymus (Jn. 11:16; 20:24; 21:2).

<sup>17</sup> “Cananaean” (in Mt. 10:4 and Mk. 3:18) does not derive from Canaanite but from the Aramaic word *qan’ān* meaning “enthusiast” or “zealot” (as *Ζηλωτήν* in Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13), eventually this group developed political opposition to Rome (Josephus, *War* 2.8.1; *Ant.* 18.1.1).

<sup>18</sup> Probably a region in Judea (Josh. 15:25; Jer. 31:24LXX[48:24]; H. K. Luce, *The Gospel According to S. Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 318; H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, vol. 1. *Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* 3 (Freiberg: Herder, 1969), p. 318, n. 51), rather than other options of “false one,” “dagger man,” and “dyer.”

<sup>19</sup> E.g., *m. Qidd.* 2.1; *m. Git.* 3.6. In Matthew, Mark and John, “apostle” (meaning “sent one”) is mentioned once, usually around this list, whereas in Luke and especially Acts the word is amply instanced as they go do their ministry task of being a sent ones.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Jn. 13:14–16; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.11.1; *m. Ber.* 5.5; *m. Ro’s. Haš.* 1.3; 4.9; *m. Yoma’* 1.5; *Mek.* on Ex. 12:41.

<sup>21</sup> Anselm Schultz (*Nachfolgen und Nachahmen. Studien über das Verhältnis der neutestamentlichen Jüngerschaft zur ur christlichen Vorbildethink.* SANT 6. [Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1962]) has a thorough

repeats His calls to discipleship for the disciples, so that they will respond to follow Jesus for a time and eventually for a deeper extended commitment as an adherent (e.g., Jn. 1:41–42; Mt. 4:19).<sup>22</sup> One might claim to be a disciple based on hearing Jesus a few times but unless one follows Jesus in His itinerant ministry one would barely be a disciple (Mt. 8:21). Dallas Willard develops that such discipleship would eventually identify one's total life with that of the discipler.

The secret of the easy yoke, then is to learn from Christ how to live our total lives, how to invest all our time and our energies of mind and body as he did. We must learn how to follow his preparation, the disciplines for life in God's rule that enabled him to receive his Father's constant and effective support while doing his will. We have to discover how to enter into his disciplines from where we stand today—no doubt, how to extend and amplify them to suit our needy cases.<sup>23</sup>

The backdrop for Jesus' disciples is His command to "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19). When Jesus gave this command, Jesus' disciples followed Him (Mt. 8:23; 9:19; 12:1-2; Mk. 2:15; 3:7; 6:1; 8:10; 10:46; Lk. 7:11; Jn. 2:2, 12; 3:22; 18:1). Jesus fleshes out His Kingdom way, so that following Him is following Him into Kingdom salvation.

Luke uses a unique word of "Master" (Ἐπιστάτα) to occasionally describe an aspect of submissive humble honoring of Jesus within this disciple relationship (Lk. 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49; 17:13). The 'would be' disciples submit to rabbi Jesus and fish at His designated location when their expectations are low (Lk. 5:5). The disciples use the term when they are annoyed by Jesus' insistence to find out who in the crowd was healed, so the woman healed from a hemorrhage could give testimony (Lk. 8:45). During which time the synagogue official's daughter died and then Jesus resurrected her. Peter submissively blurts out this word in response to Jesus' transfiguration (Lk. 9:33). Then the disciple band asks Jesus as master (seeking Jesus' affirmation) that it is proper to resist others who exorcize demons in Jesus name (Lk. 9:49). Jesus instead calls them to not resist those who are not against them. However, the most forceful urgent affirmation of Jesus as Master emerges out of the disciples' desire for deliverance from the precariousness of the storm and the ten lepers who request healing (Lk. 8:24; 17:13). No

---

examination of the verb "to follow" and related terminology in the Jewish sources and the N. T., followed by a similar examination of the concept of "imitation" and related terminology in Greek and Jewish sources as well as in the N. T. Likewise, Hans Dieter Betz (*Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament. BHT 37* [Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1967]) divides his discussion into three parts: 1) the concept of "following" Jesus in the Gospels, 2) the concept of "imitation" in the ancient Mediterranean world, and 3) the role of "imitation" in the theology of Paul. Fernando Segovia (*Discipleship in the New Testament*) edited the papers from the 1982 Marquette University symposium "Call and Discipleship: New Testament Perspectives" into a Biblical theology volume underscoring an *imitatio Christi* nuance on discipleship from each Biblical author's perspective. James Dunn, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) unpacks in popular form this commitment to master around the Sermon on the Mount and its implications for the church. N. T. Wright also champions that discipleship is about following Jesus as He especially unpacks an overview survey of the N.T. as the church follows Jesus (*Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994]).

<sup>22</sup> Also literal "following" in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 18.5 and more deeply "adherent" in 6.4.

<sup>23</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1988), p. 9.

one can help them but Jesus; they submit to Jesus as Master because He can and does save them from their precarious need.

The Gospel of John indicates that Jesus' early disciples emerge from those who John the Baptist points to Him (Jn. 1:29–51). John said of Jesus, that He (the Son of God) is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Andrew and another<sup>24</sup> of John's disciples followed Jesus. Jesus asked them, "What do you seek?" They wanted to know where He was staying and stayed with Him that night for it was already 4 p.m. The next day Andrew announced to his brother Simon, "We have found the Messiah" and he brought him to Jesus. Jesus reveals the newcomer's heart, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (in Aramaic) or Peter (in Greek). Here, Peter is seen as a foundational rock disciple. On the next day Jesus called Philip from Bethsaida<sup>25</sup> to follow Him. In a parallel account, Philip found his brother Nathanael, and said, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael responded against Nazareth but followed his brother to see Jesus. Jesus revealed Nathanael's heart, as pure in contrast to guileful Jacob (Israel), "Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no guile!" Nathanael wondered, "How do you know me?" Jesus showed unusual insight in identifying that "Before Philip called you from under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael confessed Jesus' identity as, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." Jesus was a little surprised that Nathanael believed so quickly in His divinely sourced Kingship, prompted only by Jesus knowledge of from where he had been called. Jesus then pointed out that in following Him they would see greater things than these, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." So Nathanael will have a greater privilege of revelational inclusion than Jacob did at his ladder dream at Bethel (the house of God; Gen. 28:12). The ascending and descending of angels on Jesus identifies Jesus as the new Temple, the House of God (Jn. 1:14; 2:19-21; 4:20–24; 7:37–39; 14:2, 23).<sup>26</sup>

Following this encounter, Jesus calls some of the same group again from fishing, and they left their nets, boats and father to follow Him (Mt. 4:18–22; Mk. 1:16–20; Lk. 5:1–11). Luke records that Peter and Andrew had a boat near the Zebedee boat. Jesus asked Simon to put out from shore so that He could teach the crowds. As Jesus finished His sermon, He asked Peter to put out into deep water to let his nets down for a catch of fish. Peter explained to the Master<sup>27</sup> that they had labored all night when one expected to catch fish and did not catch any, but at Jesus bidding, Peter and Andrew in the boat will

---

<sup>24</sup> James Charlesworth (*The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* [Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995], p. 332) considers this anonymous disciple to be John on the basis of an inclusion with ch. 21, and the development of the beloved disciple (Jn. 13:23; 19:26–27; 20:2–8; 21:7, 20, 24).

<sup>25</sup> John develops Andrew and Peter are from Bethsaida also (Jn. 1:44), perhaps indicating origination or where they might have either done some of their fishing or sold their fish, while the synoptics place Peter's home and main fishing port in Capernaum (Mk. 1:16, 21, 29). Bethsaida is a little East of Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Bethsaida would be an unlikely invention for a fellow fisherman fishing out of Capernaum, so it is likely accurate (Mk. 1:19–21).

<sup>26</sup> This point that Jesus becomes a replacement Temple for His followers is developed further in the chapter, "Jesus as Judge," in the section on "Temple Judged."

<sup>27</sup> Master (ἐπιστάτα) is a unique Lukan term parallel to teacher (διδάσκαλε) but especially shows His authority and their submission to Him (Lk. 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49; 17:13).

let down the nets. When they had done this, the catch enclosed so large a quantity of fish that their nets began to break. They signaled to their partners in another boat to come help them. So much fish were pulled into both boats from this catch that both boats gunnels were near the water line. Either this is a miracle of knowledge (Jesus knew where the fish would be) or it is a miracle of creation (Jesus created the fish to be there). The fishermen, Peter, and James and John sons of Zebedee, were so amazed at the extensive catch that Peter fell at Jesus' feet saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Jesus called them to discipleship, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." They brought their boats to land and left everything with father Zebedee and his hired men, and followed Jesus. Probably this is the same event as in Matthew 4:18–22; and Mark 1:16–20, however, these accounts do not supply Jesus' teaching and miracle, which provide the context through which to see this discipleship call. So it could be that they are called again. Either way, they have repeated callings to discipleship that prompt them out of their vocation of fishing, to follow Jesus. In these calls, Jesus said, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." Peter and Andrew leave their nets, boat and follow Him. James and John, left their father Zebedee mending the nets with the hired men, to follow Jesus. In this Matthew and Markan account, without the miracle preceding their being called, Jesus word to call them is presented as powerful and effective.

Directly following a time of Jesus' teaching in which He healed and forgave the paralytic, Jesus calls Matthew from his tax booth to follow Him (Mt. 9:9; Mk. 2:13–14; Lk. 5:27–28). Matthew left everything and followed Jesus.

Another call event occurred after Jesus spent an evening in prayer, when He chose twelve disciples to be in the core of His following (Mt. 10:1–4; Mk. 3:13–19; Lk. 6:12–16). Jesus called the twelve *to be with Him* and that *He might send them out to preach* (Mk. 3:14). This time of calling ushered into extensive healing and the Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6:17–20).

Since Jesus' instruction was at times difficult and required personal engagement, it weeded out those unwilling to follow in true discipleship. True disciples remember what Jesus said and believe Jesus (Jn. 2:11, 17, 22; 12:16). Craig Keener develops that such teaching challenged Jesus' followers to a difficult commitment.

Jesus sometimes made it difficult for would-be disciples to follow him; sometimes he thrust them aside (Q material in Mt. 8:19–22; Lk. 9:57–62), especially if they held high worldly status (Mk. 10:21–22; Mt. 19:21–22; Lk. 18:22–23).<sup>28</sup> In the same way, the Johannine Jesus is particularly hard on Nicodemus and the wealthy official Antipas (3:3, 10; 4:48) and to a lesser extent on members of his family (2:4; 7:6–8)-on those who would be most likely to assume their right of access to him (contrast his inviting treatment toward the Samaritan woman). But Jesus probably thrust aside or made matters difficult for prospective disciples for the reason other ancient popular teachers did: to test the

---

<sup>28</sup> As Shammai, schematically contrasted with the gentle Hillel in rabbinic tradition, is said to have done with prospective converts (the later tradition, dominated by Hillel's followers (e.g., *t. 'Ed. 2.3*), naturally viewed this negatively, though Shammaites earlier predominated (e.g., *t. Šabb. 1.16; b. Beṣah 20a*).

would-be student's real willingness to become a learner, challenging a disciple to recognize the need to sacrifice.<sup>29</sup>

The synoptics portray a similar difficult level of commitment as is evident by Jesus statements to the rich young ruler (Mt. 19:16–30; Mk. 10:17–30; Lk. 18:18–30).

### Disciples Must Internalize Christ (a Johainnine Perspective)

A disciple is one identified with Jesus, so there is no difference from believer and disciple; the two are the same. Fernando Segovia explains, “discipleship would be understood more generally in terms of Christian existence—that is, the self-understanding of the early Christian believers: what such a way of life requires, implies, and entails.”<sup>30</sup> In John this life of discipleship is that of internalizing Christ in on going faith.

The multitude sought Jesus out by sailing across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum, and Jesus presented them with difficult sayings in the synagogue, which forced them to weigh their commitment (Jn. 6:22–71). They wanted to know when Jesus had arrived, since He had come across by walking on the water, while the disciples strained on the oars. He told them that they were seeking signs like miraculously being fed in the wilderness, like Moses had done for Israel. The implication is that they are seeking to make Him King to bring themselves into Kingdom by supernaturally exterminating the occupiers of the Land (the Romans; Jn. 6:15). Part of their motivation is that some Jewish traditions emphasized that the final redeemer would bring down manna like Moses had done.<sup>31</sup> Jesus tried to prompt the multitude to get beyond such perishing food, earned by work,<sup>32</sup> to seek everlasting life given by the Son of Man and the Father. In this sense of seeking nourishment, that is not everlasting, this multitude parallels the confusion of the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn. 4:15; 6:34). The multitude responded Jewishly,<sup>33</sup> “What shall we do to work the works of God?” Jesus responded, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.” Jesus shifts the focus from plural works of Mosaic Covenant faithfulness and blessing to singular work of New Covenant internalization of faith. Such activity goes deeper than the external deed orientation of Charles Sheldon's novel *In His Steps* and the Jewish multitude's perspective, for true discipleship is not merely following Jesus' choices, but it is rooted in

---

<sup>29</sup> Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody: Henderickson, 2003), vol. 1, p. 472.

<sup>30</sup> Fernando Segovia, *Discipleship in the New Testament*, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., early Aramaic tradition in *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5.8; *Num. Rab.* 11.2; *Ruth Rab.* 5.6; *Eccl. Rab.* 1.9; and a revived Moses as eschatological leader of Israel (*Ex. Rab.* 2.6; *Deut. Rab.* 9.9).

<sup>32</sup> Perhaps the phrase “earned by work” is nudging the multitude beyond the desire for the dole. Rome had a dole system against which the people rioted when the supply ran low (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *R. A.* 9.25.2; Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.13; 12.43; *Dio Cassius* 56.47.2; 62.18.5; Aristotle, *Pol.* 5.1.6, 1301b).

<sup>33</sup> Jews were concerned with Covenantal obedience and the ethical works of God's statutes and laws (e.g., Ex. 18:20, the people's work [תַּעֲשֶׂה] has the plural LXX works [ἔργα] for statutes and laws; *Wis.* 9.12; *Bar.* 2.9–10; *CD* 2.14–15; Jesus summons His disciples to His works in Rev. 2:26; cf., Jn. 14:12). However, such Covenantal faithfulness would have ramifications for divinely accomplished (plural) mighty deeds of deliverance from oppressors to bring in Mosaic Covenant blessing (Deut. 32:4 [LXX: ἔργα]; Pss. 92:5 [תַּעֲשֶׂה; LXX: Ps. 91:5, ἔργα]; 104:31 [תַּעֲשֶׂה; LXX: Ps. 103:24, ἔργα, 31, ἔργους]; 107:24 [תַּעֲשֶׂה; LXX: 106:24, ἔργα]; and similar expressions in Pss. 111 [LXX:110]:2, 6–7; 118 [LXX:117]:17; 139 [LXX:138]:14; 145 [LXX:144]:4, 9, 10, 17; *Tob.* 12.6; *IQS* 4.4; *IQM* 13.9; *CD* 13.7–8; Jn. 9:3; Rev. 15:3).

an overall life and worldview of the Master.<sup>34</sup> They did not want to respond, and hoping for more sign evidence, they asked for sign evidence which they claimed would help them to believe. However, they have already had ample evidence,<sup>35</sup> they are seeking Him because of the miraculous feeding. They put Jesus into a comparison with Moses who gave them manna as bread out of heaven (quoting Ex. 16:4, 15 and Ps. 78 [LXX: 77]:24). Jesus refused their comparison and pointed out (as did Moses) that it was the Father who gave the manna (cf. Ex. 16:4, 6–8, 15, 29, 32; Ps. 78:19–20; Neh. 9:15; Jn. 6:32–33) and it is the Father who gives the true bread from heaven now, which coming down from heaven gives life to the world. The multitude asked for this bread. Jesus midrashically<sup>36</sup> explained to them, that He is the sustenance from heaven Whom they must internalize so as to live within the New Covenantal order and wisdom. In such a rabbinic debate, Peder Borgen develops that such a phrase “I am” combines self predication with claims for divinity and personifying wisdom.

The midrashic formula of “I am” receives in this context the force of the self predication of wisdom with overtones from God’s theophanic presentation of Himself. By combining ideas about the Torah, the theophany at Sinai and the wisdom, John 6:31–58 follows the lines suggested by the prologue (1:1–18) where the same combination has been made.<sup>37</sup>

Thus Jesus claims to be the sustenance of everlasting life and resurrection.

I am the bread of life,<sup>38</sup> he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.<sup>39</sup> And 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. For this is the will of My Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and believes in Him, may have everlasting life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day (Jn. 6:35–39).

Not that Jesus is offering eucharistic mysticism for salvation but that the disciples need to internalize Him as their deep internal sustenance to identify themselves within everlasting

---

<sup>34</sup> Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps* (Tulsa: Honor Books, 1998); cf., Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> The apleness of evidence is also indicated by Jesus’ aside that these miracles are a seal from the Father that attests to Jesus’ role and authority (Jn. 6:2, 26–27; 5:36).

<sup>36</sup> Midrash shows evidence of Jewish style teaching; cf., Peder Borgen, “Observations on the Midrashic Character of John 6.” *ZNW* 54(1963): 232–40.

<sup>37</sup> Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (Leiden: Brill, 1965). The theophanic presentation is especially reflective of: 1) God as “I am Who I am” (Ex. 3:14), 2) the Law (Deut. 8:3; *Sir.* 24.23; *Pesiq Rab Kah.* Sup. 3.2 [School of R. Ishmael]; *Gen. Rab.* 43.6; 54.1; 70.5; *Ex. Rab.* 47.5; *Lev. Rab.* 30.1; *Sipre Deut.* 48.5b.2), and 3) a wisdom perspective (*Sir.* 15.3; 24.21 and *Wis.* 9.10).

<sup>38</sup> Echoing the Samaritan woman account, “living” bread like “living” water, which theme continues in His teaching at the feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 4:11, 14; 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 7:38).

<sup>39</sup> Also echoing the Samaritan woman account, Jesus food is to do the will of the Father (Jn. 4:32–34; 6:38–40).

life and resurrection. That is, God has a sovereign program to: 1) send Jesus as the true sustenance in life, 2) elect a people to ongoing faith in Him, and 3) that Jesus will keep all who are His in faith and everlasting life, resulting in their resurrection in the last day. The repetition of “raised on the last day” is emphatic to underscore the hope that Jesus is offering (Jn. 6:39, 40). In response, the multitude grumbled about Jesus’ claim that He came down from heaven, since they knew his parents to be Joseph and Mary. Jesus urged them not to grumble, because “If you are not elect and taught of the Father (like Jeremiah 31:34 New Covenant prophecy said), you will not come to Me, and those who come I will raise up on the last day” (Jn. 6:44). Then Jesus addressed their concern about where He came from, “Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God, He has seen the Father” (Jn. 6:46). That is, the multitude needs to see Jesus as come from God. To believe this divine origination of Jesus identifies them as having everlasting life. In contrast to the manna that their fathers received and died, and this multitude seeks, *Jesus is the bread of life, come from heaven* so that those who internalize Him will not die but have everlasting life already. At this point the multitude grumbled even more about the cannibalistic metaphor of eating Jesus’ flesh.<sup>40</sup> Jesus made the difficult statement acute.

Listen up, this is important, unless you munch on the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who munches My flesh and drinks My blood has everlasting life; and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him (Jn. 6:53–56).

That is, to internalize Jesus as the mystical sustenance from God, transforms the person into a mystically interpenetrated covenantal relationship with the Son. “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the manna the fathers ate, and died; he who eats this bread shall live forever” (Jn. 6:57–58). Many of the disciples who heard this cannibalistic statement grumbled at the revolting description. Conscious of the disciples grumbling, Jesus asked them, “Does this cause you to stumble into damnation?” Pressing the origination issue acutely, Jesus said, “What if you should see the Son of Man ascending to heaven where He was before?” This identifies Jesus with the Daniel 7:13 vision of the divine Son of Man come to judge the wicked and establish His Kingdom.<sup>41</sup> Life is sourced in the Spirit and Jesus words, which when believed include His New Covenant people in the Spirit and everlasting life. Jesus said these difficult words because He knew some of the people there did not believe and also the one who would betray Him. So He said, “No one can come to Me, unless the Father chooses him.” These issues (of: divine origination of Jesus, the cannibalistic internalistic metaphors and strong sovereign election) caused many who were Jesus disciples to withdraw from Him and not continue to walk with Him any more.

---

<sup>40</sup> This metaphor should not be taken as encouraging the Jews to bring Jesus to His death on the basis of parallels with *1 En.* 90.2–4, where the nations are wild animals devouring sheep, since those involved in Jesus’ metaphoric cannibalism are gaining everlasting life in contrast to those involved in the killing of Christ who instead are judged (cf. chapter, “Jesus as Judge”).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. chapter on “Jesus as King.”

Turning to the twelve, Jesus asked, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of everlasting life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.” Jesus responds even to the twelve with a difficult saying to make them weigh their commitment, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” He meant Judas who was to betray Him. However the statement, said and not explained, stops each of the twelve to ask themselves, am I the opponent of Christ?

Jesus repeatedly tried to move believers into a deeper level of personal engagement. In the previous passage the issue for the twelve is whether they identify with Jesus as Messiah from God (Jn. 6:67–71). Jesus further redefines “disciple” as “one who remains in His words (Jn. 8:31–32). Such a true disciple who remains in Christ’s word has the privilege of knowing the truth, which brings freedom. So, this whole book unpacks Jesus’ teaching for disciples, which demands an ever growing deeper commitment to Him. Such a disciple bears fruit, such as, constancy with Christ, love, and obedience. All these virtues demonstrate such a fruitful follower as an authentic disciple of Christ (Jn. 15:8).

### The Good Shepherd

Jewish leadership would normally be identified through the metaphor of shepherd over Israel.<sup>42</sup> Unnamed Jewish leaders would usually be identified in this manner as evil shepherds.<sup>43</sup> By contrast, the Messiah was anticipated in second Temple Judaism to be called the good shepherd of Israel.<sup>44</sup>

Jesus is presented in the Gospel of John as the Good Shepherd, on the foundation of a parable<sup>45</sup> about sheep in a sheepfold, similar to that of Ezekiel 34. John folds two events together into a single narrative account: 1) instructing the spiritually blind religious leaders by the sheep fold parable in their exclusion of the healed man born blind (Jn. 9:27–10:5), and 2) a discussion of the receptivity of Jesus’ disciple sheep to hear His voice and be benefited, which occurred at the feast of Hanukkah, celebrating the divine gift of light in the Temple (Jn. 10:22–42).<sup>46</sup> The spiritually blind leaders (who do not believe Jesus to be the Son of Man; Jn. 9:35–47), who have excluded the healed man born blind (Jn. 9:27–34), are trying to inappropriately enter the sheepfold to influence believers (Jn. 10:1). In the same vein as texts that identify the religious leaders as evil

---

<sup>42</sup> Moses: Isa. 63:11; Ps. 77:20; Heb. 13:20; *I En.* 89.35; *L.A.B.* 19.3, 10; *Sipre Deut.* 305.3.1; *p. Sanh.* 10.1.9; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 2.8; *Ex. Rab.* 2.2; 5.20; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen. 40:12 (Moses, Aaron and Miriam); *IQ34*; *IQ34 bis*, 3 2.8. David: 2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chr. 11:2; Ps. 78:70–72; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; *4Q504* 4.6–8; *Gen. Rab.* 59.5. The prophets: *Mek. Pisha* 1.162–3. Ezra: *4 Ez.* 5.18.

<sup>43</sup> Especially unjust leaders of Israel, causing God’s judgment were called evil shepherds: Num. 27:17; 1 Kgs. 22:17; Isa. 56:11; Jer. 3:15; 10:21; 22:22; 23:1–4; 25:34–36; 50:6–7; Ezek. 34:1–12; Zech. 10:3; 11:5, 15–17; 13:4–6; *Mek. Pisha* 1.162–3; *CD* 19.8–9.

<sup>44</sup> Jer. 23:1–6; Ezek. 34:23; Mic. 5:4; Zech. 13:7; *Ps. Sol.* 17.40; *Tg. Neof.* 1 on Ex. 12:42 as a new Moses; perhaps *4Q165* frg. 1–2.

<sup>45</sup> John’s use of *παροιμίαν* (Jn. 10:6) is synonymous to the synoptic use of *παραβολήν* and the Hebrew *לְמַשָּׁל/mashal* which they both translate.

<sup>46</sup> Earle Ellis, *The World of Saint John* (New York: Abingdon, 1965), p. 70 stresses that David as shepherd-king was mentioned in the Hanukkah lection, which might metaphorically extend the shepherd imagery into the context of Jn. 10:22–42.

shepherds, these ones are worse than hirelings; they are thieves and murders. The legitimate shepherd enters by the door (by aid of the doorkeeper) and calls each of his sheep by name (Jn. 10:2–3). The sheep know his voice and he leads them, because the sheep know his voice (Jn. 10:3–4). The sheep will not follow a stranger, because they do not know the stranger’s voice (Jn. 10:5).

Jesus’ unbelieving audience did not understand what Jesus was saying even accusing Him of having a demon (Jn. 10:6, 19–21). The unbelievers demand answers about whether Jesus is Messiah but don’t hear Jesus when He has shown them His answer (such as healing the man born blind, Jn. 9:27–34; 10:24–26, 32).

Jesus announced to the people that He is the door through which salvation life is to be obtained (Jn. 10:7, 9). Jesus identified that previous religious leaders were charlatans to steal and kill, and then flee the responsibility in difficult times (Jn. 10:8, 10, 12–13).

Contrasting to their selfishness, Jesus identified that He is the Good Shepherd as evidenced because He willingly lays down His life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11). Such commitment to lay down His life for His sheep fosters the Father’s love for Jesus (Jn. 10:17).

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus knows His own and His own know Him as Messiah and follow Him (Jn. 10:14, 24–27). This intimate recognition between Jesus and His disciples is enriched by Jesus intimacy with the Father (Jn. 10:14).<sup>47</sup> Jesus gives His sheep everlasting life, such that they will never perish, and no one will ever snatch them out of His hand (Jn. 10:28). Additionally, Jesus announced, “My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (Jn. 10:29; maybe alluding to Ps. 95[LXX 94]:7). The comparison of the Father’s and Son’s hand keeping Jesus’ disciples safe within everlasting life implies both Son as well as Father is divine and able to keep them safe. So the disciple of Jesus is strongly protected within the privilege of everlasting life. At least with this purpose, the Father and the Son are united as One (Jn. 10:30). At this point the crowd understood Him to be making a claim for deity and tried to stone Him. This passage and issue of Jesus’ deity will be developed more within the chapter, “The God-Man.”

As Good Shepherd, Jesus has other sheep from other folds (probably Gentiles who will believe), who He will cultivate to become one unified flock under His shepherding care (Jn. 10:16). This implies that Jesus continues today to be working as Good Shepherd to cultivate His growing flock to be unified.

In the synoptics, Jesus felt compassion on the multitudes in His Kingdom ministry because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd (Mt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34). Such compassion motivated Jesus, like John’s Good Shepherd, to teach them many things about Kingdom.

The other synoptic shepherd imagery works other issues. For example, the plot that brings about Jesus’ death fulfills Zechariah 13:7, “I will strike down the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered” (Mt. 26:31; Mk. 14:27). With Jesus being taken prisoner and crucified, His disciples scatter, only to be collected again by Jesus after His resurrection. Additionally, as an expression of Jesus’ judging role He is described as

---

<sup>47</sup> This reflects O.T. Divine shepherd intimacy with flock Israel (Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:12–16).

accomplishing a shepherd role in His separating the sheep from the goats in effecting the people's inclusion in Kingdom or damnation (Mt. 25:32).<sup>48</sup>

### Disciple's are Sent Ones

Discipleship ministry following Jesus meant that they would be fishing for men in extended itinerant ministry as well (Mt. 10:1–33; Mk. 6:7–13; Lk. 10:1–24). Jesus called out twelve and then later seventy,<sup>49</sup> and gave them authority to cast out demons, heal all diseases and to preach the gospel of the Kingdom (Mt. 10:1, 7–8; Mk. 3:14–15; 6:7, 12–13; Lk. 9:1–2; 10:9). He further urged the disciples to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send out laborers into the harvest because even in sending out the seventy, Jesus view was that the laborers are few (Mt. 9:37–38; Lk. 10:2).<sup>50</sup>

During Jesus' ministry on earth the focus was on Israel, so the twelve disciples were urged to not go to the Gentiles or Samaritans<sup>51</sup> (Mt. 10:5–6). Though Jesus acknowledges that in time that they will come before Gentiles (Mt. 10:18). However, by the time He sends out the seventy, no restriction is placed upon them. Either the Gentile affirming orientation of Luke makes this a non-issue or regions which Jesus has already ministered within (like Samaria and Decapolis) are available for His disciples to minister within as well. Of course, after His resurrection, Jesus urges the disciples to make disciples among all ethnic groups (ἐθνῶν; Mt. 28:19). Thus discipleship to Jesus extends universally to all who will come and learn Jesus' way.

Such a command to make disciples of all ethnic groups is informed by 1) Jesus having all authority in heaven and in earth, and 2) Jesus being with the disciples wherever they serve Him in this ministry (Mt. 28:18–20). The process of reproducing themselves in disciples entails beginning the disciples' journey by identifying with the Trinity in baptism.<sup>52</sup> However, discipleship is substantially contained in *teaching them to observe all that Jesus had commanded them to do*. Thus discipleship instruction is not merely to inform but attempts to reproduce obedience to Jesus' way. This of course means that all the chapters of this book explore different aspects of Jesus' contributions to this discipleship process.

The manner of the itinerant disciple ministry is to travel light and to depend upon the generosity of those to whom you minister. “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Lk. 9:58).<sup>53</sup> In such

---

<sup>48</sup> This is reminiscent of the story of blind sheep that could not follow their master's voice and were judged by being thrown into the abyss of fire (*1 En.* 90.26–27).

<sup>49</sup> Some good manuscripts identify seventy two as the number in Luke 10:1 (cf. Darrel Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 2:1014–6).

<sup>50</sup> *m.* 'Abot 2.15; *Gos. Thom.* 73.

<sup>51</sup> The Samaritans were a racially mixed group (Josephus, *Ant.* 9.277–91; *b. Qidd.* 75a–6a) mostly caused by Jewish ancestry (*Par. Jer.* 8) and the Assyrians importing Gentiles to marry among them. As such their spiritual ancestry was considered uncertain by Jews (*m. Qidd.* 4.3).

<sup>52</sup> Baptism into Christ or the name of Christ demarcates Christian baptism off from Jewish baptism of proselytes or sects or John the Baptist (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; Rom. 6:3; Gal.3:27; *Did.* 9:5). The Matthew 28:19 Trinitarian baptism command is expressed in this baptism in Christ pattern. However, such a baptism in Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 19:5; Gal. 3:27; *Did.* 9.5) continues to be done through a Trinitarian baptism pattern (e.g., *Did.* 7.1, 3).

<sup>53</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 86.

itinerancy, His disciples are not to acquire wealth, bags<sup>54</sup> or extra clothes, for the worker is worthy of his support (Mt. 10:9–10; Mk. 6:8–9; Lk. 9:3; 10:4, 7). So when the disciples come into a city or village, they should inquire who is worthy and they should stay with them (Mt. 10:11–14, 40; Mk. 6:10–11; Lk. 9:4–5; 10:5–16). If the place is worthy, give a blessing of peace to the place and people with whom you stay. Receive and eat whatever they give you to eat. The one who listens to a disciple, listens to Jesus. The one who receives a disciple receives Jesus and the Father Who sent Jesus.

Whenever someone does not receive you, nor heed your words, then shake off the dust of that place from your feet, which is a public demonstration of breaking off communion and removing self from responsibility. All this is done, realizing that the Kingdom of God has come near. The rejected disciple is to allow their peace to return, as Davies and Allison say, “The disciples do not lose their peace if they give it to an unworthy house. When the message of the kingdom is rejected, it is not the proclaimers that suffer loss but those who do not believe.”<sup>55</sup> When the Kingdom comes in judgment it will be more tolerable for judged places like Sodom and Gomorrah that never had an opportunity with the gospel than for those places that having heard it reject this Kingdom message. The one who rejects a disciple, rejects Jesus and the Father, Who sent Jesus.

Jesus sent His disciples out as vulnerable as sheep among wolves but encouraged them to be as shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves (Mt. 10:16; Lk. 10:3). Jesus was already getting threatened by those who reject His message (Mt. 2:13–18; 9:3, 12–13; 12:2–45; Mk. 2:6–7, 24; 3:21–30; Lk. 4:29; 5:21, 30; 6:2, 11). Therefore, He warns them that they will be taken to courts and brought before Kings and Gentiles for Christ’s sake (Mt. 10:17–23, 35–37; Mk. 13:11–13; Lk. 21:12–17). Others will deliver Jesus’ disciples over to courts and synagogues will cause disciples to be flogged. Even family members will deliver the disciples up on account of Jesus. When this happens, do not worry about what to say at that time for the Spirit from the Father will give the words. However, if they persecute disciples in one location, flee to another location. The disciple who endures to the end in tribulation will be saved (Mt. 10:22; 24:13).<sup>56</sup> The disciples shall not finish going through all the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes (Mt. 10:23), maybe to collect them back into the twelve, though some take this as an indication of a preterist coming of the Daniel 7:13–14 sort to judge and establish the Kingdom.<sup>57</sup> Of course, it could not mean that Jesus would come in Kingdom in the next

---

<sup>54</sup> In contrast to Hellenistic philosophers and Cynics who carried such bags (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.24.11; Crates, *Ep.* 16; 23; 28; Diogenes, *Ep.* 7; 13; 46; Diogenes Laertius 6.13; Tatian, *Or. Graec.* 25.1. Also the absence of a staff may distinguish from a Cynic (Epictetus, *Diss.* 3.22.50; Diogenes, *Ep.* 7), and maybe even rabbis (*SB* 1, p. 569).

<sup>55</sup> W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 2:176.

<sup>56</sup> Those who endure in tribulation (2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 10:32–33; Jas. 5:11; 4 *Macc.* 1.11; *Did.* 16.5) until the end or the coming of the Kingdom (1 Cor. 1.8; Josephus, *Ant.* 19.96; Ignatius, *Eph.* 14.2) will be saved within Kingdom (Hab. 2:3; Mic. 7:7; Dan. 12:12–13; 4 *Ezra* 6.25).

<sup>57</sup> E.g., Albert Schweitzer (*The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* [London: A. & C. Black, 1901, 1925]) makes Mt. 10:23 the corner stone for Jesus program to bring in the Kingdom in His “failed attempt” that crushed Jesus instead. In contrast, N. T. Wright (*Jesus and the Victory of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996], pp. 198–202, 303, 365 and chaps. 8 and 11) sees Jesus as profoundly successful in judging Judaism (following Josephus interpretation of the destruction of Jerusalem [*War* 6.312–15]), and in bringing in new covenant Christianity. For Wright, the judgment of the Temple in 70 and 135 A.D. vindicates Jesus and His community here.

few days of discipleship ministry, because at the Olivet discourse 'His coming' is still taught by Him to be future (Mt. 24:9–31). Many of these predicted events of persecution and trial were lived out by the disciples through the book of Acts (e.g., Acts 4:1–8–12; 5:17–18, 25–40; 7:1–8:4; 9:23–25; 12:1–11; 14:19; 16:19–28; 22:1–26:32).

Jesus warns the disciples that they will be treated in the same way that the Jews are treating Him (Mt. 10:24–39). Therefore, He has not brought peace on earth but His message will be reacted to with the sword. They have already called Jesus Beelzebul (Mt. 12:24–45; Mk. 3:22–30), so they will do the same to His disciples (Mt. 10:25). Don't fear them, who are able to kill the body, fear God who is able to destroy the soul. So just be faithful to proclaim what Jesus says.<sup>58</sup> Everyone who is faithful to confess Jesus before men, Jesus will be faithful to confess before the Father in heaven. However, whoever shall deny Jesus before men, Jesus will also deny him before the Father who is in heaven. Such a public confession is considered by some to be blasphemous (Mt. 26:65–6; Acts 7:54–8). Unfortunately, such a message divides families (Mt. 10:34–37; Mk. 13:12).<sup>59</sup> If a person loves his family members more than he loves Jesus then such a person is not worthy of Jesus (Mt. 10:37; Lk. 14:26).<sup>60</sup> In such a hostile situation he who does not follow Jesus with the possibility of shame and death is not worthy of Jesus. Someone who wishes to hold onto his life and not follow Christ is not a disciple. If a disciple allows his life to be lost for Jesus sake, then He will find it.

Likewise, everyone who receives Jesus' disciple, receives Jesus, and the One Who sent Him (Mt. 10:40–42; Jn. 13:20).<sup>61</sup> The one who receives a disciple, a prophet, or a righteous man will receive his reward. Whoever receives a disciple and encourages him, even with just a drink, will not lose his reward.

When Jesus finished giving the disciples instructions, He sent them out in pairs and Himself went about preaching and healing as well (Mt. 11:1; Mk. 6:7–13; Lk. 9:2–6). The multiplied ministry of meeting needs in mass was so pervasive that even Herod thought John the Baptist was revived from the dead (Mk. 6:14–16; Lk. 9:7–9) and the crowd followed Jesus with anticipation in His Kingdom ministry (Mk. 6:33–34; Lk. 9:10–11). The disciples shared what they had done (Mk. 6:30–32). The seventy were amazed that even the demons were subject to them in Jesus' name (Lk. 10:17–20). Jesus acknowledged that their ministry had significant impact even to cause Satan to fall, but He encouraged them that they will do even greater miracles than these (see the end of each section of the chapter on Miracle Worker, where the disciples do the same miracles as Jesus). Even more than this, Jesus encouraged them to rejoice that their names are recorded in heaven, for Kingdom.

At this point, Jesus broke out in praise to the Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, Who hides the gospel of the Kingdom from those who think of themselves as wise and reveals it to those simple people He wishes (Lk. 10:21–24). Then Jesus blessed the disciples for they had the privilege to hear and see these things about Kingdom that prophets and kings had wished to but never heard them (Lk. 10:23–24; Mt. 13:16–17).<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 33 follows Mt. 10:27.

<sup>59</sup> Mic. 7:6; *Jub.* 23.16, 19; *1 En.* 56.7; 100.1–2; *4 Ezra* 5.9; 6.24; *2 Bar.* 70.3, 7; *LAB* 6.1; *b. Sanh.* 97a; *Gos. Thom.* 16.

<sup>60</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 55.

<sup>61</sup> Reception of the sent indicates reception of the sender (*Mek.* on Ex. 14:31; *Sipre* on Num. 12:8; Ignatius, *Eph.* 6.1–2; Justin, *1 Apol.* 63).

<sup>62</sup> Similar to *Ps. Sol.* 17.44.

## The Privilege and Cost of Discipleship

Peter exemplifies the disciple's commitment confessing Jesus as the Christ (Mt. 16:16–20; Lk. 9:20).<sup>63</sup> Jesus asked who the people thought the Son of Man to be and the disciples respond with revived prophets like John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah. However, Peter identified that Jesus was the anointed One to be King, the Son of the living God. Eduard Schweizer affirms such Christological commitments and confession is the core of discipleship in his volume *Lordship and Discipleship*.<sup>64</sup> In Peter's statement of Jesus' lordship, Peter became a symbol of the personal commitment of a disciple. Jesus calls Simon blessed as a son of Jonah,<sup>65</sup> perhaps because he could see the Messianic outcome after the Jonah sign miracle (Mt. 16:4, 17). Simon is blessed with a personal beatitude<sup>66</sup> in that this insight defines him here as informed from the Father, rather than his own human agency.<sup>67</sup> Simon and his insight<sup>68</sup> becomes foundational and thus Jesus changes his name to Peter (Πέτρος) and explains that it is he with his insight that will become foundational rock (πέτρα) upon which Jesus will build His church. Other disciples following Jesus should likewise affirm Jesus as the Messiah. This assembly of people already begun and being built up by Jesus is probably the disciple band, which will universally grow as Jesus' church. This very group (as church) will take the aggressive charge of attacking the gates of Hades (the place of the dead). Hades gates will fall, so that the dead will be rescued from its clutches. With the Jonah resurrection sign in view, this aggressive rescue from Hades extends beyond evangelism and Kingdom miracles to resurrections from Hades, which Jesus leads the way and Peter's insight shows the way to resurrect unto Kingdom. Peter becomes a scribe of Kingdom, complete with the scribal sign of keys to the Kingdom. Thus from this insight of Jesus' Kingship, Peter is here granted a scribal role that the whole disciple band, as church, is later also granted (Mt. 16:19; 18:18; Jn. 20:23). If Peter and the disciples 'bind' a practice or a person as excluded from Kingdom it is excluded with reference to heavenly salvation and practice.<sup>69</sup> Whereas, if Peter and the disciples 'loose' a practice

---

<sup>63</sup> Remember Nathanael had made this claim before in John 1:49.

<sup>64</sup> Eduard Schweizer, *Lordship and Discipleship*. SBT 28 (London: SCM Press, 1960) translated from the German original *Erniedrigung und Erhöhung bei Jesus und seinen nachfolgern* (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1955).

<sup>65</sup> Remember biologically that John is his father (Jn. 1:43; 21:15–17; *Gos. Heb.* frag. 9).

<sup>66</sup> Other personal beatitudes toward recipients include: Mt. 13:16=Lk. 10:23; Jn. 20:29; 4 *Ez.* 10.57 and *Jos. Ase.* 16.14.

<sup>67</sup> "Flesh and blood" reflects the rabbinic sense of human agency (cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:623).

<sup>68</sup> Peter's declaration is likely included within the feminine foundation rock (πέτρα) because it is referred to as "this rock" with the feminine pronoun (ταύτη), rather than second person singular masculine "you" referring to Peter, who was described as rock in the masculine (Πέτρος), or first person masculine "Me" referring to Christ (Mt. 16:18), Who is not in this context described as a rock but is only elsewhere described as a rock (which in those other contexts makes good sense) without reference to this text.

<sup>69</sup> I realize that these verses can grammatically be treated as future perfect paraphrastics (i.e. what you bind shall have been bound) but the contexts emphasis on privilege and responsibility makes it more natural to read it as indicating real scribal privilege and responsibility of issuing authoritative halakah (teaching), as I have indicated above and this is the second Temple Jewish pattern elsewhere (e.g., *Charter of a Jewish Sectarian Association* 5.24–25; 4Q477 frag. 2.1–2; *m. Naz.* 5.1–4; *b. Hag.* 10a).

as permitted or a person as included in Kingdom, then it is included with reference to heavenly salvation. If these scribal actions entail forgiving, then as the disciples forgive, divine forgiveness will be meted out unto Kingdom.

With the disciple's realization that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus begins to predict His coming death and resurrection. Peter responds with a comment that rejects Jesus predictions so much so that he becomes emblematic of Satan's interests and puts Jesus at risk for damnation, with Peter as a stumbling block (σκάνδαλον; Mt. 16:23). Such a context raises the cost of discipleship.

With the risk of Jesus impending death, the cost of discipleship stiffens. Jesus began to instruct the disciples that He was going to be killed and that would put their own lives at risk through mimetic or imitative atonement (Mt. 16:15–28; Mk. 8:33–38; Lk. 9:20–27, 57–58).<sup>70</sup> With the stakes increasing on each side for and against Christ, the cost of discipleship stiffens further. Jesus will be killed by elders, chief priests and scribes. “If anyone wishes to come after Me (a synonym for following in discipleship), let him deny Himself and take up his cross and follow Me.” Since discipleship to Christ is following Christ and Christ is heading toward His death, disciples in this time of persecution must head for their deaths as well. As Bonhoeffer tell us, “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.”<sup>71</sup> To follow Jesus on the level that He is identifying has become the essence of discipleship. Thus, carrying one's cross brings shame of rejection and death. Since Jesus is heading for this shame rejection and death, the disciple must as well. Discipleship is not trying to affirm, hold onto or save your own life, for such a tactic of control wastes one's life and it is then lost, leaving the Kingdom way for damnation. True discipleship is zealously living full out for Christ.<sup>72</sup>

Discipleship is spending out your life for Christ's sake, for in such an identification of your life with Christ you find your life. Discipleship is not being ashamed of Christ and His words, even if this commitment would result in the world shaming the disciples. This has implications that, all of Christ's disciples will not die in such a heinous death as on the cross. However, the disciple does not have a choice in the matter; if they are to be Jesus' disciples in such an extreme time then their lives must be lived under the foreboding shadow of the possibility of their own persecution and death on a cross. There is no profit in gaining even the whole world materially only to lose one's life as damned. Real profit is not in material gain but in the rewards which the Son of Man gives recompensing every man according to his deeds. Some of the disciples were encouraged as they saw the transfiguration expression of the Kingdom, reassuring them that Kingdom rewards will come.

Jesus repeated the stiffened cost of discipleship, pressing difficult implications of loyalty into the lives of His disciples (Lk. 14:15–35). Excuses of family and material gain that keep one from zealously involving oneself with the Kingdom, damn the reticent. The Kingdom will be filled with the willing needy ones who enter without excuse. Which means Jesus must be placed first in one's life to the extent that disciples must hate

---

<sup>70</sup> Cf. discussion of the cup of wrath in the chapter on “Jesus' Death.”

<sup>71</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 7, 89.

<sup>72</sup> A helpful tract that explores this zealous living is: William MacDonald's *True Discipleship* (Kansas City: Walterick Publishers, 1962), especially the zeal of a communist on p. 28 and missionaries on pp. 26–27.

all their family members in order to be a disciple of Christ (Mt. 10:37; Lk. 14:26).<sup>73</sup> Jesus exemplified this commitment by not being dissuaded by His family when they tried to collect Him (considering Him mentally off) when in reality Jesus was passionate toward Kingdom (Mt. 12:46–50; Mk. 3:31–35; Lk. 8:19–21). Instead, Jesus considered that His disciples are His family.<sup>74</sup> That is, no family member can be permitted to persuade you from Kingdom involvement, as Jesus did not let His own family dissuade Him from His Kingdom ministry.<sup>75</sup> Matthew develops that publicly confessing Christ before men will bring family hostility (Mt. 10:32–36). In such hostility over Christ, no man can hold more love for a family member than the love and loyalty he holds towards Christ (Mt. 10:37). Said either way (hatred of a family member who tries to dissuade one from following Christ or giving Christ priority) the issue is clear, we must love Christ supremely so that we follow Him even to death on a cross or we are not worthy of Him (Mt. 10:38). The cost is steep; calculate it and buy into it or suffer ridicule and destruction (Lk. 14:27–32). But such a priority of love for Christ is included in losing your life for Christ. For those who refuse to follow into this priority, threaten their lives with damnation loss. Whereas, those who receive Christ in this way receive God, and those who receive: prophets, righteous, disciples or children will be rewarded (Mt. 10:40–42). Such reception is revelational inclusion into one's life in a way that prefers them over one's own felt needs. So Christ is the supreme priority and others are prioritized over our own felt needs. Jesus continues to press the issue of Christ first into the issue of material possessions. “No one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions” (Lk. 14:33). The sacrifice of following an itinerant teacher like Jesus could be difficult. In the context, it was also excuses about possessions that kept people from coming into the Kingdom (Lk. 14:18–19). In Jesus' itinerant ministry the disciples had to give up their possessions. This is a live issue connecting with real life and not just stories. Jesus tells a rich man who desires to follow Christ that the cost is “go and sell your possessions and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me” (Mt. 19:21).<sup>76</sup> The cost was too great for him to pay, because in his riches he grieved and left. Jesus explained that it is nearly impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom (Mt. 19:23–26). Such a failure in light of the cost of holding to possessions makes one as worthless as tasteless salt, which is discarded (Lk. 14:34–35).

Whereas, rallying to the cost, as Peter claims for the disciples, nets big rewards. “We have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?” (Mt. 19:27). Jesus responds to the disciples, encouraging them that the gain is increased privilege, responsibility, and everlasting life in the resurrection.

Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers

---

<sup>73</sup> Mk. 6:3 lists Jesus family as mother and brothers: James, Joses, Judas, and Simon; *Gos. Thom.* 55; 101:1–2.

<sup>74</sup> Mt. 12:46–50; Mk. 3:31–35; Lk. 8:19–21 corroborated by each other and *The Gospel of the Ebionites* 6 as reported by Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.14.5.

<sup>75</sup> This is similar to rabbinic thought which ranked the master above family, next to that of heaven itself (*m Ab.* 4.12).

<sup>76</sup> *Gos. Thom.* 110 would affirm such a renouncing of wealth.

or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My sake shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit everlasting life (Mt. 19:28–29).

### Discipleship Entails Consistent Relationship and Service

Jesus final Passover and upper room discourse provides a level of relationship between Jesus and the disciples that indicates the Master is allowing His disciples to be intimately included (Mt. 26:20–29; Mk. 14:17–31; Lk. 22:14–34; Jn. 13:1–16:33). While the meal had begun, Jesus rose from reclining at the table to lay aside His garments and gird Himself with a towel (Jn. 13:4–20). Those preparing the meal should have arranged for this foot washing service, to remove the dust and refuse from their feet, for dining comfort.<sup>77</sup> Normally it was provided by the lowest servant. However, Jesus poured water into a bowl and began to wash the disciples' feet. When Jesus came to Peter, he protested, "Lord, never shall You wash my feet. Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." To which Peter overreacted, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and head." Jesus responded, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you-all<sup>78</sup> are clean, but not all," meaning Judas, the betrayer is not clean. After washing their feet, He reminded them that if He their Lord, Teacher, Master and Sender washed their feet, then they ought to wash one another's feet, "for I gave you-all an example that you also should do as I did to you-all." By serving in this way you are blessed if you do them.

Returning to the table Jesus told His disciples that He earnestly desired to eat this Passover with His disciples (Mt. 26:26–29; Mk. 14:22–25; Lk. 22:14–22; 1 Cor. 11:23–26). While they were eating,<sup>79</sup> Jesus took some bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying "Take, eat this is My body."<sup>80</sup> Jesus then took the fourth cup (or a second third cup) of the Passover.<sup>81</sup> Jesus gave thanks and gave it to His disciples to

---

<sup>77</sup> John Thomas, *Footwashing in John 13 and the Johannine Community. JSNTSup 61.* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), pp. 27–40, 115; tradition has it that Jerusalem's streets were swept daily (*b. Pesah*. 7a); but footwashing was still of benefit: Richard Rohrbach, "The Pre-industrial City in Luke-Acts: Urban Social Relations," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation.* edited by Jerome Neyrey (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), p. 135; Michael Avi-Yonah, *Hellenism and the East: Contacts and Interrelations from Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (Jerusalem: Institute of Languages, Literature and the Arts, Hebrew University, University Microfilms International, 1978), p. 124.

<sup>78</sup> The southern "you-all" indicates a second person plural in this context, meaning the disciple band is addressed.

<sup>79</sup> Passover had four cups (*m. Pesah*. 10; I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text. International Greek Testament Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], pp. 797–98; G. J. Bahr, "The Seder of Passover and the Eucharistic Words." *Novum Testamentum* 12 [1970]: 181–202). The third cup would be preceded by the paschal lamb and discussion of the exodus events recounted, then after the third cup there would be dessert of bread and sometimes salty items which was open to tailor the conversation to particulars like this novel appropriation by Jesus.

<sup>80</sup> Most accounts have bread first then cup, but Luke 22:17–20 has the meal begin with a cup, bread then cup again, which 1 Cor. 10:16 and *Did.* 9:1–4 takes as the order of cup then bread. Historically, the likely order is the bread then cup, which is a second third cup, or a fourth cup (Lk. 22:20 "after dining") with the kind of blessings of the third cup.

<sup>81</sup> After this cup He does not drink again, so likely the fourth cup (Lk. 22:19 mentions "after eating") or a second third cup, on the basis of the blessing (Lk. 22:18) and the parallel of vows in Lk. 22:15 and 17; A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke. International Critical Commentary.* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896], p. 495; D. Bock, *Luke*, 2:1722]. The use of a

drink saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.” Each gospel is enigmatic but when these statements are combined they add to this covenantal atonement model: Luke adds “the new covenant,” Mark adds “for the many,” and Matthew “for the forgiveness of sins.” The statement of “covenant in blood” is reminiscent of Exodus 24:8 (especially in Matthew and Mark, commemorated in discussions from especially the second until the third cup). Luke provides the lens of the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 (Luke 22:20), with its forgiveness (themes common to the fourth cup, which sometimes looks toward the Kingdom), and perhaps a hint of Isaiah 53:12 death “for many.”<sup>82</sup> Jesus then identified that He would not drink wine again until He did so in the Kingdom of God, which would likely be the final (or fourth) cup of the Passover, unless He left Passover unfinished.

Jesus then raised the issue that one would betray Him (Mt. 26:14–16, 20–25; Mk. 14:10–11, 17–21; Lk. 22:3–6, 21–23; Jn. 13:21–30).<sup>83</sup> The fact that Jesus had just washed all their feet and eaten with them serves as irony to the Scripture fulfilling quote, “He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me” (Ps. 41:9; LXX 40:10; Jn. 13:18; 17:12).<sup>84</sup> He identified His betrayer discretely by dipping bread with him and giving it to him in the fashion one might do as a favor for a guest, but perhaps the bitter herbs in the sauce might indicate curse.<sup>85</sup> Jesus identified that Judas was not one He had chosen for Kingdom, for Jesus knew from the beginning of His ministry that it was he who fulfills Scripture in his Satan motivated betrayal (Jn. 6:64). Unlike the synoptics which has Satan repeatedly around exorcism passages, John excludes exorcisms and primarily develops Satan empowering the betrayer, to the extent that Judas becomes a “devil” (Jn. 6:70–71), replacing Peter in that role (trying to dissuade Jesus from the cross, Mt. 16:23). As a “son of destruction,” Judas is an apostate destined for damnation (Jn. 17:12; cf. 2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 17:8).<sup>86</sup> It would have been better if he had not been born further indicating his damnation. Peter later concurred that Judas left his place of apostleship service, home and lot desolate (Acts 1:17–21, 25). Satan entered Judas and Judas left to betray Jesus.

The disciples responded strangely to this news of betrayal, for a repeated dispute arose among the disciples concerning which one of them would be the greatest (Lk. 22:24; 9:46; Mt. 18:1; 20:20–24; Mk. 9:33–34; 10:35–41). Jesus responded as He characteristically did (except without placing a child before them), “Kings of the Gentiles

---

common cup is unusual for Passover but not unprecedented (*t. Ber.* 5.9; *m. Ber.* 8.8; J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Translated by N. Perin (London: SCM, 1966), p. 69; SB 4:58–59, 62).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. discussions of chapters: “Jesus’ Death” for possible mimetic atonement and “Jesus as Sacrifice” for vicarious atonement.

<sup>83</sup> Luke, who claims chronological order (Lk. 1:3) places the last supper before Judas the betrayer leaves (Lk. 22:14–23), and John has the meal occurring during the time the betrayer is identified, whereas Matthew and Mark develop that the betrayer leaves before the Lord’s Supper. As such, this could be part of Paul’s concern, since even at the first Lord’s Supper there was a betrayer present who should have judged himself rightly, instead of leading the judged into death and condemnation (1 Cor. 11:27–33).

<sup>84</sup> The same quote was used by Qumran’s Teacher of Righteousness to complain of his suffering (*IQH* 5.22–24).

<sup>85</sup> As a favor: Archibald Hunter, *The Gospel according to John. Cambridge Bible Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 137; as a curse citing Deut. 29:18–19: Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story*. trans. by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Knopf, 1960), p. 116.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *Jub.* 10.3; 15.26; *Sib.* 16.9; *CD* 6.15; 8.14.

lord it over them, but among you all, let the greatest be as the servant. For who is greater, the one who serves or the one who reclines? I am among you-all as the one who serves. Just as My Father has granted Me a Kingdom, I grant that you-all may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and that you all may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Lk. 22:25–30).

Peter protested that he would be faithful and die if needed, to which Jesus responded that instead before morning due to the sifting of Satan, Peter would deny Jesus three times (Mt. 26:30–34; Mk. 14:27–31; Lk. 22:31–34; Jn. 13:36–38). Matthew and Mark have this comment coming in response to Jesus predicting, on the basis of Zechariah 13:7, that with Shepherd Jesus killed, they will all flee. Matthew adds that they were all insisting that they would not deny Jesus. John has these comments coming out of Jesus statements that He was going away and that they could not follow Him. Whereas, Luke comments about this from Jesus compassion to inform them that Satan had demanded to sift Peter but Jesus had prayed that Peter’s faith would not fail and that after he had turned that he should strengthen His brethren.

Undoing these denials, Peter is reminded after Jesus’ resurrection that love for Christ should motivate feeding Jesus’ followers (Jn. 21:15–17). After breakfast Jesus questioned Peter to help him articulate his supreme love. Jesus repeated Simon’s name in a very formal pattern reiterating that what followed was significant. The question was aimed at discerning Peter’s supreme loyalty.<sup>87</sup> This question was asked three times. Each time Peter answered in the affirmative. With the third time, Peter is annoyed probably because it becomes clear that this parallels Peter’s three denials before men, and thus serves as a time of Peter’s recovery. Jesus responded to each answer with a command reiterating Peter’s responsibility to care for the flock owned by Jesus, the Great Shepherd.<sup>88</sup> Jesus did not give the flock over to Peter but He delegated to Peter the task of shepherding His flock.

At this point, Luke adds some redundant instruction on what to take in their sent role and the extent of the cost of discipleship (Lk. 22:35–38), but we have already developed this theme.

Only John continues the discourse of the evening.

---

<sup>87</sup> The question “Do you love Me more than these?” has three possible meanings. Perhaps, because Peter had previously professed a greater loyalty than the others (Mt. 26:33; Mk. 14:29; Jn. 13:37; 15:12), Jesus asked are you really more loyal than they. Maybe Jesus asked if Peter loved Jesus more than he loved these other disciples. That is, Peter had remained with his friends when they all forsook Christ. Perhaps Jesus asked Peter if he was more loyal to Jesus than to these things of fishing (his old occupation). The text appears to be ambiguous in discerning between these, but the commonality between them all is a discernment of Peter’s supreme loyalty for Christ. Cf. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 870–871.

<sup>88</sup> The different ways of speaking in this passage are probably not significant. For example, Jesus asks whether Peter loves Him with ἀγαπᾶς the first two times and φιλεῖς the third time. To each of the questions Peter answered “Yes” and then added that he loved (φιλω) Jesus. The result of this is that Peter loves Jesus with both ἀγαπᾶω and φιλενω. Likewise, the reiteration of “feed” or “tend” and “lambs” or “sheep” is also not significant except that Peter is given the shepherding responsibility over Jesus’ whole flock. Cf. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (xiii–xxi)* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), vol. 29A, pp. 1102–1106.

## John's Upper Room Discourse

John continues the discourse for the evening, perhaps after a final “testament” pattern, with warnings and stipulations of the covenant, mention of a successor and a prayer.<sup>89</sup> John’s discussion of Jesus discourse travels in overlapping circles, making progress breaking new ground and then reiterating the material again that Jesus had previously covered, then moving the topic forward again, thus repeatedly traversing the topics that follow.

Unlike the synoptics, John does not develop this meal as a Passover, but identifies that at least for those who live in Jerusalem, the Passover was celebrated after Jesus died (Jn. 18:28). That is, visitors to Jerusalem needed to fit in the Passover meal close to the date, whenever a room was available.

With the betrayer and denier announced, Jesus death was set on its trajectory to be soon, so Jesus began to identify that He was going away to return to the Father (Jn. 13:31–33; 14:18–19, 28; 15:26; 16:4–7, 10–11, 16–19, 27–28; 17:12). This telescoping of His death together with His departure (in death and ascension), permits John to uniquely develop this time of suffering as Jesus’ glorification in His return to pre-incarnate conditions of glorification (Jn. 13:31–32; 16:14; 17:1, 4–5; 7:39; 12:16, 23), whereas, the synoptic tradition reserves glorification for the ascension proper.<sup>90</sup> Thus, where Jesus is going they can not come (Jn. 13:33).

This impending departure, betrayal and denial has left the disciples troubled and sorrowful, but Jesus encourages them that they need to trust Him and the Father, for Jesus leaves them with peace (Jn. 14:1, 27; 16:6, 20–22). The fact that Jesus tells the disciples these things before they happen is to encourage them to believe and rejoice (Jn. 14:29; 15:11; 16:20–24; 17:10, 13). One of the gains of this glorification is that Jesus lives the resurrection life, so they also will presently live in everlasting life. Additionally, with His departure, He can prepare storage rooms in the heavenly Temple for their residence, so that they will always be close to Jesus and God in their afterlife (Jn. 14:2–3).<sup>91</sup> Though they can not join him now, the disciples can follow Him, because Jesus is “the way, and the Truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (Jn. 14:6; 10:7, 9; Acts 9:2; 13:10; 16:17; 18:25–6; 19:9; 22:4; 24:14, 22).<sup>92</sup> Which idea takes

---

<sup>89</sup> Mk. 13; Acts 20:28–31; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.177–193; cf. Ernst Käsemann, *The Testament of Jesus*, trans. by Gerhard Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), p. 4; Vernon Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), pp. 174–5; Gail R. O’Day, “The Gospel of John: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections.” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*. 12 vols. edited by Leander Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 9:737–8.

<sup>90</sup> In second Temple Judaism wisdom is the exact representation of God’s glory (*Wis.* 7:24–27; Philo, *Confusion* 97, 147; *Dreams* 1.239; 2.45; *Drunkness* 133; *Eternity* 15; *Flight* 101; *Heir* 230; *Planting* 18; *Spec. Laws* 1.81) of which Jesus fulfills this wisdom role (Jn. 1:1–18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3).

<sup>91</sup> This is similar to *1 En.* 39.5; 41.2; 45.1; 91:13 (texts B and C), which indicate that the deceased will receive “houses” as rewards in the afterlife, though John locates their dwelling places within the Father’s House or Temple. Perhaps, it is also hinted at by the Kingdom as celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles (Mt. 17:4; Mk. 9:5; Lk. 9:33; *Lev. Rab.* 27.1), which might be analogous to the ranks of canopies in the Kingdom due to merit (*1 En.* 39.4; 41.2; *2 En.* 62.2; *B. B. Bat.* 75a; *Ruth Rab.* 3.4; *Pesiq. Rab.* 31.6).

<sup>92</sup> In second Temple Judaism, Torah was the “way” (Ps. 119:1, 3, 5, 14, , 27, 30, 32, 33, 37; *IQS* 8.15–16; *m. ’Abot* 6.4), which as the truth (Ps. 119:30, 43, 142, 151; *B. ’Abod. Zar.* 4b citing Pr. 23:23; additionally since God is Truth [*4Q416* frg. 1, line 14; *p. Sanh.* 1.1; *Gen. Rab.* 81.2] anything He would say is truth) provides the “path of life” (*Lev. Rab.* 29.5 citing Pr. 3:18; 15:24; *Ex. Rab.* 30.12; *Lev. Rab.* 30.2). Whereas,

second Temple Judaism's view of God and Torah, and extends it to Jesus. So to follow Jesus is to emulate what He excels in.

Jesus is mystically mutually interpenetrated by the Father and Jesus is in the Father. Therefore to see Jesus is to see God (Jn. 14:7–11). Fernando Segovia identifies that in Johannine thought this mystical interpenetration is central for discipleship.<sup>93</sup> Because the Father and the Son are mutually interpenetrated then this mystical interpenetration also involves the Trinity within Jesus' disciples as well (Jn. 17:21–23). Stephen Smalley charts this mystical inter-penetration of the Trinity in Paul and John as follows:<sup>94</sup>

You in God	Col. 3:3	John 17:21
You in Christ	2 Cor. 5:17	John 15:4–5
You in Spirit	Rom. 8:9	John 4:23–24
God in you	Phil. 2:13	John 14:23
Christ in you	Col. 1:27	John 14:18–20
Spirit in you	1 Cor. 3:16	John 14:16–17

In the day of their resurrection the disciples will even more know the Father and Jesus in this inter-penetrated way because we will then know Jesus' resurrected glory as before the foundation of the world (Jn. 14:20; 17:24–26). The Father has given the disciples to the Son and the Son has given them the relationship with the Father, which results in everlasting life (Jn. 17:2–3, 6–7). Therefore, they need to believe in Jesus and the Father (Jn. 14:1, 11–12). Because of this deep interpenetration, to ask in prayer for the greater works that Jesus has left us to do, glorifies Jesus and the Father (Jn. 14:13–14). The fruit we bear is to remain that whatever we ask of the Father in Christ's name may be given to you-all and their joy may be made full (Jn. 15:16; 16:23–27).

Jesus describes the implications of this mutual interpenetration in the disciples through a metaphor of a vine (Jn. 15:1–8). Jesus is the true vine, in contrast to second Temple Judaism's use of the vine metaphor to describe Israel (Jn. 15:1; Ezek. 19:10–14; Ps. 80:8–13).<sup>95</sup> As such, the faithful in Israel now need to identify with Jesus, to remain in the true vine. The disciples are the branches of the vine. The Father is the cultivator of the vine. Every branch is to bear moral fruit, as evidenced by good deeds (Hos. 14:8; Mt. 3:8, 10; 7:16–20; 12:33; Mk. 11:14; 12:2; Lk. 3:8–9; 6:43–44; 13:6–9; Gal. 5:22;

---

sectarian Judaism considered their way as the normative "perfect way" (*IQM* 14.7), for eschatologically other Jews were viewed as not saved, having ignored the more "perfect way" (*I Macc.* 1.51–53; *4QpNah* 4.3; *T. Iss.* 6.1). Jesus can be seen here as consistent with a Kingdom sectarian approach of sectarian Judaism that has Himself as the Messianic distinctive: way, truth and life.

<sup>93</sup> Fernando Segovia, *Discipleship in the New Testament*, pp. 76–77.

<sup>94</sup> Stephen Smalley, "The Christ-Christian Relationship in Paul and John." in *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F. F. Bruce on His 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday*. edited by Donald Hagner and Murray Harris (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), p. 98.

<sup>95</sup> *4 Ezra* 5.23; *2 Bar.* 39.7; *L.A.B.* 12.8–9; 23:12; 28:4; *b. Hul.* 92a; *Gen. Rab.* 88.5; 98.9; *Ex. Rab.* 44.1; *Num. Rab.* 8.9; *Esth. Rab.* 9.2; the elect in Israel as vine: *4QHodayot-like* frg. 2, line 3; or maybe even the Temple, which sported golden vine annually: Josephus, *War* 5.210, which some conjecture Jesus has left the upper room in John 14:31 and is passing the Temple as He makes this vine comment, Leonard Pass, *The Glory of the Father: A Study in S. John XIII–XVII* (London: Mowbray, 1935), p. 165; Israel as vineyard: *Isa.* 5:1–7; *Ps.* 80:15–16; *3 Bar.* 1.2; *Ex. Rab.* 30.17; 34.3; *Song Rab.* 2.16.1; 7.13.1; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 16.9.

Phil. 1:11; Eph. 5:9; Col. 1:10; Heb. 12:11; Jas. 3:18; Jude 12).<sup>96</sup> This is only possible by abiding in Jesus as the true vine. Such abiding implies relationship, continuance and perseverance (Jn. 6:27; 8:31, 35; 15:16; 19:31). Any branch that does not abide in Christ, does not bear fruit in line with the consistency of Christ. This would be analogous to Judas who has just departed from their midst (Jn. 13:30) and thus a warning against falling away (Jn. 2:23–25; 8:30–31; 16:1; 1 Jn. 2:18–19, 5:16). These individuals God removes from the vine as apostates, so they dry up and will be burned in judgment (Jn. 15:6; as in Ezek. 15:6; 19:12; Ps. 80:16).<sup>97</sup> Such fire judgment is likely eschatological judgment, analogous to hell (Isa. 26:11; 66:15–16, 24; Mt. 3:10–12; 13:30, 50; 2 Thess. 1:6–7).<sup>98</sup> However, every branch that bears fruit (showing consistency with Jesus in relationship with Him) will be pruned so that he will bear more fruit. Jesus’ word spoken to disciples has cleansed them, so their responsibility is to remain in this mutual penetration of mystically being in Christ and Christ in them. Only in this way can they grow and bear fruit. Through bearing fruit (i.e., moral fruit evidenced in good deeds) the Father is glorified and we prove to be His disciples.

When Jesus leaves, He will ask the Father and Jesus, Himself will also send the Spirit of Truth to come along side to help the disciples as Jesus had done (παράκλητος; Jn. 14:16–18, 26; 15:26–27; 16:7–14; Acts 2:33; 1 Jn. 2:1; 4:6; 5:6).<sup>99</sup> The Paraclete role refers to a representative, mediator, or helper, or comforter.<sup>100</sup> So, it is to the disciples’ advantage that Jesus will send the Spirit to them when He goes away. Thus the role performed is not primarily consolation and comfort, though that is strongly emphasized in the LXX (e.g., Gen. 24:67; Job 2:11; Isa. 21:2; 22:4; 35; 38:16; 40:1–2, 11). The Spirit will come to them and Jesus will also come to them, so that they will be family (Jn. 14:18, 28). The Spirit will take of Jesus’ message and disclose it to the disciples in the same way as Jesus has disclosed the message from the Father to foster disciples faith in this divine sourcing (Jn. 14:9–10; 16:15; 17:8–10). This disclosure process is inspiration, like the prophets exhorting (e.g., LXX: Isa. 10:32).<sup>101</sup> So for the disciples, this representative revealer role of the Spirit is primarily emphasized. Thus the Paraclete role is not primarily legal in John. The Holy Spirit will fulfill personal roles to teach these specific disciples about all the things that they will need (bearing witness of Jesus), that which Jesus can not tell them at this point, because they can not handle it, especially to remind them of “all that I said to you-all” when Jesus was with the disciples, and prediction of the future that glorifies the Son (Jn. 14:26; 16:12–14). The witness that the Spirit bears concerning Jesus will show itself by the disciples also bearing witness of Jesus (Jn. 15:26–27). The Spirit will also corroborate this witness with convicting the

<sup>96</sup> 4 Ezra 3.20; Num. Rab. 3.1.

<sup>97</sup> m. Sanh. 10.1; b. Sanh. 103a.

<sup>98</sup> CD 2.4–6; 1 En. 103.8; Sib. Or. 4.43, 161, 176–8; Ex. Rab. 15.27; Herm. Vis. 3.2.

<sup>99</sup> This is a similar sentiment to Jubilee 25:14; Testament of Judah 20.1; Qumran’s Com. Rule, column 3, 4.21; IQS 2.3; 3.13–26; 4Q381 frag. 69, line 4.

<sup>100</sup> George Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John. SNTSMS 12* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 120.

<sup>101</sup> E.g., 2 Macc. 2.3; I argue in several places that this is not a promise of Christian illumination but of Apostolic inspiration: e.g. Doug Kennard, “Evangelical Views on Illumination of Scripture and Critique,” JETS 49(2006): 797–806; *The Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization* (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 1999), pp. 139–40; similar phrases of divine help to recall to memory in Homer (*Il.* 2.492) identify inspiration.

world concerning sin,<sup>102</sup> righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8–11). This role is not a legal prosecutor (the Roman *delatores*, which would go beyond the normal Greek defender advocate [παράκλητος]), this role is more prophetic in the common LXX sense of παράκλητος as entreating a message, hopefully for the listener’s humble response (e.g., Isa. 13:2; 33:7).<sup>103</sup> So the Spirit becomes a prophetic replacement for Jesus on earth. The conviction of sin is especially acute in the world’s refusal to believe in Jesus. So the Spirit carries on this prophetic voice which Jesus had done, exposing the world’s sin (Jn. 3:20; 7:7; 15:22). However, the world tends to not acknowledge its sin as the Christian should (1 Jn. 1:8–10). The conviction concerning righteousness from the Holy Spirit is critical because they will no longer behold Jesus, the model Who fleshes out righteousness. The Holy Spirit will also convict the world concerning their judgment because the ruler of this world has been judged.

The primary commandment Jesus leaves His disciples is to follow Him in emulating love for one another (Jn. 13:34; 15:9, 12). Biblically literate Jews would recognize a strong connection with obeying God’s commandments and loving God (Ex. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 19:9; 30:16; Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4; 1 Jn. 5:3).<sup>104</sup> Obviously such love for one another is an old commandment even though it is the commandment of the hour (Lev. 19:18; Jn. 13:34; 14:15; 15:10, 12, 17; 1 Jn. 2:7; 2 Jn. 5). This love is rooted in a love from God, the Father, to Jesus to the disciples that should be responded to as a love of the Father (Deut. 4:37; 6:5; Jn. 15:9; 17:23, 26). Jesus initiated this love by choosing His disciples out of the world to remain and bear fruit (Jn. 4:37; 7:6–7; 10:15; 14:2; 15:16). Jesus epitomizes this love for His disciples by laying down His own life for them (Jn. 11:5; 13:1; 15:13). The disciples are to imitate Christ’s love for them in loving one another (Jn. 13:34; 15:12). Such disciple’s love is obedience to Jesus and keeping the Father’s word. It is rewarded by greater revelational intimacy with Christ and the Father because They will reveal Themselves to this kind of disciple, making the disciples His friends (Jn. 14:21–23; 15:13–15; 17:6).<sup>105</sup> Such is a privilege to remain in Christ’s love (Jn. 15:9). This love rejoices in entering into the relationship of Jesus rejoining with the Father. Such love emphasizes unity (Jn. 14:28; 17:21–23). Without such love and unity, the world will not see the character of Jesus, now that He has gone, so we must love (Jn. 13:35). These things Jesus spoke to the disciples so that His joy may be in them and that their joy may be made full (Jn. 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 12). Such joy is part of the fruit of God’s presence and an indication of the present reign of God (Gal. 5:22; Rom. 14:17).

Discipleship is the reverse of the commitment of those secessionists who lack such love (1 Jn. 2:19; 3:14). Like Qumran, John’s worldview is sectarian with the “world” arrayed against the community. The world will not have Jesus’ disclosure of Himself (Jn. 12:31; 14:22; 16:11). Instead the world is ruled by Satan, who provides his spirit(s) of falsehood and deception (Jn. 14:30; 1 Jn. 4:1, 3, 6).<sup>106</sup> The Johannine

<sup>102</sup> A similar thought in the pre-Christian, *Testament of Judah* 20.5.

<sup>103</sup> E.g., *2 Macc.* 6:12.

<sup>104</sup> *Sir.* 2:15; *4Q176* frg. 16, line 4.

<sup>105</sup> Second Temple Judaism saw the love for God more than things, rewarded by God (*1 En.* 108.8; *Sir.* 1:10; 31:16; *Pss. Sol.* 4:25; *1 Macc.* 4:33; *T. Ab.* 3:3; 17.7a).

<sup>106</sup> *Jub.* 25:14; *T. Sol.* 8.3, 9; *T. Judah* 14.8; 20.1; *T. Reub.* 2.1; 2.3–4; *T. Issachar* 4.4; *T. Sim.* 3.1; Qumran’s *Com. Rule*, column 3, 4.21; *IQS* 3.13–26. Likewise, in second Temple Judaism and Christianity,

community was familiar with the tradition of a coming “antichrist,” whose spirit the author of 1 John argued was already in the world to deceive and foster denials of Christ (1 Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3). Judas embodied this impulse (Jn. 13:27). Likewise, the world can be identified by their lack of love for and obedience to Jesus (Jn. 14:24). In fact, the world’s commitment is a predicted hatred of Jesus, the Father, and those who are His (Pss. 35:19; 69:4; 109:3; Jn. 15:18–19, 23–25; 17:14). Specifically, the Jewish synagogues are mentioned as in a future time casting out Christians and pursuing them to death as what they take to be offering service to God but they do not know the Father (Jn. 9:22; 16:2–3; Acts 9:1–2).<sup>107</sup> Because the world persecuted Jesus it will also persecute His disciples (Jn. 15:20). Their persecution of Jesus identifies the world’s rebellious sin (Jn. 15:21–22). Such an orientation demands cohesion of the family because in the world they will have tribulation (Jn. 15:12–25; 16:33). However, there is reassurance in this that if the family has kept Jesus’ word, they will also keep the disciples’ word (Jn. 15:20). Jesus includes these statements, and especially the reminder that He has overcome the world, to help His disciples to be kept from stumbling and to be of courage (Jn. 16:1, 33). Such overcoming of the world, transfers what for second Temple Judaism was an eschatological hope into a feature of Jesus’ realized eschatology.<sup>108</sup> But it also raises the urgency of Jesus petition to the Father to keep His disciples protected from the evil one and within the divine name sanctified in truth so that they and we might remain unified in love as the trinity is (Jn. 17:11, 15, 17–21). Becoming strong in Christ is indicted in a person’s life by overcoming the evil one with Christ’s word that dwells within (1 Jn. 2:13–14).

After singing a hymn, they went out to retire near the Mount of Olives (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Jn. 18:1).

### Disciples are to Follow Christ and Make Disciples

After Jesus’ resurrection, He meets Peter to help him articulate his supreme love (Jn. 21:15–17). Jesus repeated Simon’s name in a very formal pattern reiterating that what followed was significant. The question was aimed at discerning Peter’s supreme loyalty.<sup>109</sup> This question was asked three times. Each time Peter answered in the

---

evil angels ruled nations hostile toward God’s people (Deut. LXX 32:8; Dan. 10:13, 20–21; Rom. 8:38; Eph. 1:21; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:19:22; *Jub.* 15.31–32; 35.17; 49. 2–4; *IQM* 14.15–16; 15.13–14; 17. 5–8; *T Sol.* 6.4; 8.10; *3 En.* 26.12; 29.1; 30.1–2; *Sipre Deut.* 315.2.1; *Mek. Sir.* 2.112–115; *b. Ber.* 16b–17a; *Yoma* 77a; *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 23.2; *Gen. Rab.* 77.3; *Ex. Rab.* 21.5; 32.3; *Lev. Rab.* 21.4; 29.2; *Deut. Rab.* 1.22–23; *Ruth Rab.* proem 1; *Song Rab.* 2.1.3; 8.8.1; *Pesiq. Rab.* 17.4.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. further discussion of this in the chapter of “Jesus as Prophet,” within the “Olivet Discourse.” There I discuss Jews killing Christians (e.g., Bar Kokhba ordered Christians executed [*I Apol.* 31.6]).

<sup>108</sup> This claim by Jesus realizes what second Temple Judaism took to be a future eschatological phenomena: while the world judges Jews, God eschatologically judges the world (*‘Abot R. Nat.* 32A; *b. ‘Abot. Zar.* 36a; *B. Meši’a* 75a; 85b; 86a; *Giṭ* 68a; *Mak.* 13b; *Pesaḥ* 53b; *Šabb.* 129b; *p. Sanh.* 1.1.4; 11.5.1; *Gen. Rab.* 49.2; 64.4; *Ex. Rab.* 12.4; 30.18; *Lev. Rab.* 11.8; 24.2; 29.1, 4; *Num. Rab.* 3.4; 18.4; 19.3; *Ruth Rab.* 4.3, 5; *Eccl. Rab.* 1.11.1; 2.12.1; 5.11.5; *Song Rab.* 3.11.2; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 23.4; 24.11; *Pesiq. Rab.* 15.19).

<sup>109</sup> The question “Do you love Me more than these?” has three possible meanings. Perhaps, because Peter had previously professed a greater loyalty than the others (Mt. 26:33; Mk. 14:29; Jn. 13:37; 15:12), Jesus asked are you really more loyal than they. Maybe Jesus asked if Peter loved Jesus more than he loved these other disciples. That is, Peter had remained with his friends when they all forsook Christ. Perhaps Jesus asked Peter if he was more loyal to Jesus than to these things of fishing (his old occupation). The text

affirmative. Jesus responded to each answer with a command reiterating Peter's responsibility to care for the flock owned by Jesus, the Great Shepherd.<sup>110</sup> Jesus did not give the flock over to Peter but He delegated to Peter the task of shepherding His flock.

With the third question, Peter is grieved perhaps because the repetition called to mind his three denials of Jesus (Jn. 18:17–18, 25–27). With each of these questions though there was also the reminder that Peter had a significant leadership role in shepherding Christ's flock.

Jesus also went further than reiterating Peter as a leader among the disciples. With Peter's loyalty firmly declared again and in a dramatic way his three denials undone, Jesus prophesies of Peter that he will be called upon to be the martyr he previously claimed he could be. The imagery of stretching forth the hands and having them gird or bound picks up on the same kind of conditions that Jesus was in during His arrest (Jn. 18:12, 24; 21:18). The binding comes before the leading in directions where Peter does not want to go, the process of Peter's death.<sup>111</sup> Maybe Jesus indicated it but certainly John concluded that in Peter's death Peter would glorify God.

Jesus attempted to end the conversation with the pointed exhortation ringing in Peter's ears, "Follow Me!" In this context this exhortation calls for a commitment of loyalty to Christ all the way to death, with Christ being Peter's example. Peter tried to relieve the pressure with, "What about this other disciple?" Perhaps Peter wondered why he was being singled out or was groping for encouragement that he would not be the only martyr. Jesus does not relieve the pressure, "If I want him to remain until I come what is that to you? You follow Me!" (Jn. 21:22).

In another resurrection encounter the disciples worshipped Him and He sent them out to make disciples (Mt. 28:17–20). Jesus claimed all authority in heaven and earth, commissioning the disciples with the coming Spirit empowerment to be witnesses proclaiming the Kingdom message of repentance for forgiveness of sins to all nations beginning in Jerusalem and to make disciples of all people groups baptizing and teaching

---

appears to be ambiguous in discerning between these, but the commonality between them all is a discernment of Peter's supreme loyalty for Christ. Cf. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 870–871.

<sup>110</sup> The different ways of speaking in this passage are probably not significant. For example, Jesus asks whether Peter loves Him with ἀγαπᾶς the first two times and φιλεῖς the third time. To each of the questions Peter answered "Yes" and then added that he loved (φιλῶ) Jesus. The result of this is that Peter loves Jesus with both ἀγαπᾶω and φιλεῖω. Likewise, the reiteration of "feed" or "tend" and "lambs" or "sheep" is also not significant except that Peter is given the shepherding responsibility over Jesus' whole flock. Cf. Brown, *John xiii–xxi*, vol. 29A (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1966), pp. 1102–1106.

<sup>111</sup> There are many ideas of what stretching forth the hands and binding means including crucifixion or prayer. Prayer seems to be a rather odd way to die and is not attested to in any early accounts. If it meant crucifixion the order appears to be wrong; the binding occurs before the being led where he does not want to go. Bauer tried to solve this problem by proposing that the stretching out the hands is not the actual crucifixion but the extending of the prisoner's hands to be tied to the crossbeam that had to be carried to the place of execution. This explanation fits with many first century crucifixions. However, tradition has it that Peter was crucified upside down on a unique cross, so a ready made crossbeam would not fit a stationary upright in that novel manner ("Hippolytus on the Twelve Apostles" a fragment in *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. Roberts and Donaldson, 24 volumes [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1866-72, vol. 2: 1870], vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 130; Eusebius, *De theophania* 5.31; *Demonstrationis evangelicae* 3.5.65; *Ecclesiastical History* 2.25.5). In the author's opinion it is far simpler to refer to the visual binding involved in the procedure of arrest (e.g., Jn. 18:12, 24; Acts. 21:11–12). Cf. Brown, *John xiii–xxi*, vol. 29A, pp. 1107–1108.

them to observe all that Jesus commanded them (Mt. 28:18–20; Lk. 24:47–53; Acts 1:5–8). This discipleship has more than the conversion activities and the communicating activities in view. Discipleship reproduces people who apply what Jesus' teaching has demanded. Discipleship is thus a repetitive process multiplying more disciples for Christ. After reassuring them that He would be with them until the end of the age Jesus lifted His hands to bless them and then bodily ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9–11). That is, bodily He left but spiritually He remained to empower their disciple-making of others.

### Discipleship Continues in Service

In the book of Acts the concept of disciple continues to be a committed follower of Christ in His Kingdom way. The disciples are committed believers (Acts 1:15; 9:19; 9:38; 14:20, 22, 28; 16:1; 18:23, 27; 19:1; 20:1, 30; 21:4, 16). The disciples are following Christ's way (Acts 9:2; 13:10; 16:17; 18:25–6; 19:9; 22:4; 24:14, 22). The disciples are called Christians because they live like Christ (Acts 11:26). The disciples are filled with joy and the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52). These disciples sometimes have conflict but they work it out for the furtherance of the gospel (Acts 6:1–7; 15:10; 19:30). These disciples are persecuted and die for their faith in Christ (Acts 4:1–22; 5:17–42; 6:9–8:3; 9:1; 11:19; 14:19; 16:19–34; 21:30–26:32). These disciples remain obedient to Christ in the face of the threat of persecution (Acts 9:10, 19, 25–26). Additionally, the disciples were generous to meet needs of others (Acts 2:44; 4:32–37; 11:29).

Apostleship then becomes a sub-category of discipleship associated with the twelve and a very few others who have been directly called by Christ and have seen Him in the resurrection. For example, Peter held to a definition that apostle was a sent one with the personal experience of Jesus ministry from Jesus' baptism to the resurrection (Acts 1:21–22). Because Judas had vacated his portion of this ministry there was a felt need to replace him to make twelve again. However, Paul is later also added to the apostolic band on the basis that Jesus called him to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:5–6, 15–16; 22:21; 26:15–1). As such, Paul begins many of his letters claiming to be an apostle (e.g., Rom. 1:1). Furthermore, Luke and Paul present Paul as parallel to Jesus' and Peter's pattern, in that he was enabled by the Spirit and ministering in similar ways (Luke–Acts; 2 Cor.).

So discipleship in the N.T. is a learner that follows Christ into His Kingdom way with continuing obedience. To really be Christ's disciple one needs to keep Christ first in all relationships and decisions. Such discipleship is deeply relational with Christ. As such, discipleship to Christ may be very costly even to martyrdom but it is profoundly rewarding in everlasting life.

### Reflected in the Arts:

The oddity of discipleship is especially portrayed by David Greene's 1973 movie of the classic rock opera and play *Godspell* by John-Michael Tebelak. This play is based on the gospel of Matthew but expresses the oddity of discipleship by having those who come to Jesus (Victor Garber) all take on the clown dress and face paint that Jesus also wears. Jesus and his disciples, as clowns, act out and sing the parables of Matthew in

contemporary New York streets and landmarks. The populous perceives Jesus message and discipleship as so absurd, that they are distanced from embracing Him.

The zeal for disciple making is marvelously portrayed by Robert Duvall through the deeply flawed Sonny in the 1998 Universal movie *The Apostle*. His zeal is evident in his comments: “I would rather die today and go to heaven than live to be a hundred and go to hell,” and “I love this church more than I love myself.” The character he plays is a deeply flawed individual with a passion for praying, telling people about Jesus, worship, and following Jesus every step of the way. Likewise, his deep flaws evidence that he really knew God’s grace. The movie treats the subject of a holiness preacher with respect and authenticity. His humility to keep on preaching Jesus and continue as a holy fool without being dissuaded from what he thinks is right and helpful. Sonny’s life for Jesus makes an impact on those who get close to him. For example, Pastor Blackwell is returned to the joy of ministry after his heart attacks. Furthermore, Sammy his roommate is drawn to accepting Jesus. Additionally, two rival sisters in church are drawn from their backbiting to love each other. With a power encounter, he convinced a bulldozer operator who was trying to destroy the church to give his life to Jesus. Likewise, to his own loss, he convinced a woman separated from her family to get back with them.

The good shepherd has become a repeated theme within discipleship art. This art extends the image of Orpheus from mythology to capture the Biblical imagery of Christ as the Good Shepherd. For example, a painting of Christ can be found on the ceiling of a crypt in the catacombs of Saint Priscilla in Rome. Additionally, a Vatican statue from 290 A.D. portrays a young Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Both views focus on the Good Shepherd’s rescue for His vulnerable sheep.



A similar sentiment of Jesus as the Good Shepherd carrying for the whole flock of God is reflected in the fifth century mosaic in the church of Ravenna.



Roland Joffé's 1986 award winning epic *The Mission* portrays Jesuit missions and their disciple making relationship in South America in the sixteenth century situation of the redrawing of the line between Spanish and Portuguese governance. The movie opens with a river flowing through a dense rain forest which bears a Jesuit, Julian, tied to a rough hewn cross over a 200 foot falls, martyred by the savage tribe he was trying to reach. Disciple making may cost one's life. Jeremy Irons, the Father who had sent Julian, visits his gravesite and takes up Julian's cross necklace before he climbs the waterfall to take his' place in trying to reach the natives. As a discipler, Irons attracted the Indians by playing his oboe and letting the notes waft through the primeval forest. Irons is befriended by a band of natives who appreciate the spirituality of his music and pictures of Christ. They convert to a simple Christianity and begin to build a mission. More of the tribe joins the mission fleeing the slavers who seek their bondage.

Captain Rodrigo Mendosa (Robert deNiro) returns from capturing slaves from among these natives, to find that his girl friend had dumped him and designated his brother, Philippe, as her fiancée. In a fit of rage Rodrigo kills his brother and then takes up refuge in the Catholic mission. Jeremy Irons challenged Rodrigo to try to do the penance appropriate to permit God's redemption and to show his repentance. Rodrigo begins the penance of dragging his weaponry up the falls into the territory of those he has previously enslaved. Rodrigo does not accept freedom from his bondage provided by other priests, however when the native chief realized that Rodrigo's penance was essentially asking for forgiveness from his sin then an Indian is sent to cut Rodrigo out of

his bondage and roll it away, redeeming him. Weeping Rodrigo is accepted among the joyful native Christians. Later, given the opportunity to kill a wild pig, he opts not to, showing he is a changed man. He reads the Bible and then accepts the Jesuit order as his context of belonging in Christ. His fellow Jesuits greet him into the order with, “welcome home brother.”

The Cardinal came to judge this strange world and demands obedience from the Jesuit priests. Rodrigo is forced to apologize. Later, the Cardinal demands that the Jesuits return and give up the mission above the falls.

Irons as a committed discipler is unwilling to banish the native kids to the forest because they perceive that the devil lives there. He tells the Cardinal that he will stay with them. That is, he commits to spiritually protect the children. He explains his action to Rodrigo, that God is love and that he is not willing to live in a world which excludes this God of love.

Instead, Rodrigo and other Jesuits take up arms to defend their mission tribe from the military that is trying to destroy the mission. Trying to protect the mission people, Rodrigo is shot by a volley from the soldiers. The movie comes to an end with Rodrigo raising his head slightly to see if Irons’ pacifist love approach fares any better. Then Rodrigo dies.

Set up for communion, Irons celebrates with his people. As the army sets the village afire, Irons takes up the glorious shimmering cross to lead the people forth. The soldiers picked off individual parishioners and then also Irons is martyred. The cross falls to the ground. One of Irons’ disciples takes up the cross and the procession proceeds on. All in the procession are martyred.

At the end of the movie, a few children who had fled to the forest, picked through the ruins and head off into the forest to start a new life further removed from the slavers. A final text informs the viewer that the struggle for liberation theology continues today.