



April 02, 2021

Disciples, the Few

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

One week ago, we observed the annual Passover Memorial Service shortly after sunset. As I do every year, I've been studying and analyzing the historical events up until the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ our Savior, and also have been thinking about the members of the early church.

We find a number of names or descriptors of the members of the early church.

The foundational members were of course the apostles. The followers and supporters of John the Baptist and his message were called disciples. "Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples." (John 1:35)

Some of John's disciples became known as disciples of Jesus. "One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him [Jesus], was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." (John 1:40, 43)

Once they arrived in Galilee, those who have followed Jesus are referred to as His disciples. "Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding." (John 2:2) The Greek word *mathetes* (translated disciple or disciples) is found over 200 times in the Gospels. The word continues to be found in the book of Acts and is applied to both the original group of disciples and to the expanding church of God. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon comments on # 3101 *mathetes*: "a learner, pupil, disciple" from # 3129 *manthano* 1) to learn, be appraised 1a) to increase one's knowledge, to be increased in knowledge 1b) to hear, be informed 1c) to learn by use and practice.

As I mentioned recently in a sermon, and we discussed in our recent Bible Basics midweek study, there is a message in this for all of us as His disciples or students. We need to continue to be a learner, increase our knowledge, and continue to learn by using the knowledge in our daily lives of repenting, overcoming, and simply living with what we are acquiring. This is a process that we'll need to continue throughout our lives.

The apostles were a select group of disciples. "And when it was day, He called His disciples to

Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles." (Luke 6:13)

The apostles and other administrative offices were appointed by Christ to serve the church and the rest of the disciples. "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-12)

The disciples were also described as "the Way" or "of the Way." I plan to discuss this more as we get closer to the Feast of Pentecost.

Saul, (before his conversion) was intent on finding and persecuting those "who were of the Way, whether men or women." (Acts 9:2)

Paul addressed the high priest and elders while under arrest at Caesarea. "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." (Acts 24:14) The word translated "way" is the Greek word *hodos*. The Online Bible Greek Lexicon comments on *hodos*: "a travelled way, road, a course of conduct."

Christ taught about the road or way. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14) This way is based on living by the Scriptures as Paul affirmed when he was on trial. It is indeed a way of life that must be revealed to a disciple (as opposed to the way of living that most of humanity is travelling along). It is a way that requires discipline, endurance, humility and faith. This way of life is also described as "the way of truth" (2 Peter 2:2) and the way of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:21).

What strikes me clearly, is, how many today are willing to learn truth and unlearn error? How many are willing to be a disciple of Christ and reflect the Way?

How many are willing to "swim upstream" and "go against the crowd" in living by laws and instructions that go against human nature? Does it matter to many that God's Laws are His, and have not been done away with, and should be still kept?

Jesus said it was "the few". We will look at more attributes and descriptions of His disciples next time. It will give us much to consider, reflect upon, and change, as we see His instructions to His disciples.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

(Pastor, Church of God Ministries)

Church of God Ministries

(Ministerios de la Iglesia de Dios)

tshoefker@cogministries.org

www.cogministries.org

P.O. Box 983

Daphne, AL 36526-0983

251-930-1797 Offices / 402-250-2389 Cell