



April 16, 2021

Friends of God

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

As I've been continuing studying, analyzing, and pondering the history of the people of God from the end of the Days of Unleavened Bread until Pentecost, I've also continued to meditate and reflect upon the members of the early church and how they relate to you and me. Let's again look at more descriptions of the disciples as we've done the last couple of Friday nights....

We have been reviewing the names or descriptors of the members of the early church. We've looked at the use of the terms "disciple", "of the Way", and "brethren."

There's yet another term that is applied to very few people, it is "friend of God."

Over the years I've had acquaintances that would say to me when we saw each other, "my friend!" In some cases it turned out to be true indeed, and we remain friends even today. In other cases it was almost like the kiss of death as the person turned out to be anything but "a friend".

So I ask, are you and I indeed a true friend, in fact are we more importantly a friend of God?

One man who is referred to by God Himself as His friend is Abraham. "But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend." (Isa 41:8) Abraham being God's friend is also referred to in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23. The Hebrew word translated friend above is *'ahab*. It can refer to human love for God and God's love toward man and also the act of being a friend. (Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon).

There are a number of other Hebrew words also translated friend.

The Hebrew word *'ahab* is often translated love or loves. The Greek word translated friend is *philos*. It can refer to a "friend, to be friendly to one, to wish him well." (Online Bible Greek Lexicon). In most cases where the word friend is found in the Greek Scriptures it is *philos*.

Moses was also considered a friend of God. "So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. . ." (Exodus 33:11) Here the Hebrew word translated friend is *rea'*, and can refer to a "friend, companion, fellow." Moses was also faithful in His relationship with God and

the tabernacle responsibilities. "And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant . . ." (Hebrews 3:5).

Jesus connected love, with being a friend and demonstrating actions that actually supported that relationship. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13)

Jesus told His disciples, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." (John 15:14)

Jesus entrusted the disciples with what we might call inside information and special knowledge. "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15).

We also are considered friends of God when we love God as he instructs us as we saw above. We are given insight and understanding including knowledge of the future by the influence of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:26; John 16:13)

Christ's true disciples will have a special relationship with Him based on love and a genuine close friendship. "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him." (John 14:21)

Abraham, known as the friend of God, demonstrated the actions God seeks of one who truly loves Him. "because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Genesis 26:5)

The historian Luke referred to the disciples as "friends" of the apostle Paul. "And the next day we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty to go to his friends and receive care." (Acts 27:3) Felix, governor of Judea, allowed the arrested apostle Paul the freedom to be visited by his friends. "So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let him have liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him." (Acts 24:23).

I would hope if any of us became incarcerated, we would be allowed visits by our friends.

The apostle John also refers to the disciples as friends. "but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name." (3 John 1:14).

There's a proverb that describes the ones who the king considers friends. "He who loves purity

of heart and has grace on his lips, the king will be his friend." (Proverbs 22:11)

What strikes me, is what a blessing that you and I can be a friend of the King of kings, Jesus Christ. We can count on His friendship as being genuine, true, and faithful!

May we also value our friendships with one another, make sure they are genuine, and please not take them for granted...it's when you face life's challenges, you find out indeed who your true friends are.

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

-Scott Hoefker

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