

## Heaven is For Disciples Only

Shalom. Today, we're going to explore a topic that may cause you some concern or even shock you.

It is entitled: "Heaven Is For Disciples Only". I am referring to disciples of Jesus Christ. Are you a believer in Jesus Christ? What have you done with your belief? Do you really follow Him? Do you try to imitate Him? Walk in His footsteps? Are you walking in the Spirit? Is your life changing as you walk after Yeshua? Are you beginning to become more and more like Him in His image and likeness? Well, listen to what scripture has to say.

For our first passage, let's turn to John 8:31-32:

***Jhn 8:31*** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him ***if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;***

*Jhn 8:32* And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Another passage is **Luke 14:25-33**

**Luk 14:25** Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,

*Luk 14:26* If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

*Luk 14:27* Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

*Luk 14:28* For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

*Luk 14:29* Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,

*Luk 14:30* saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

*Luk 14:31* Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?

*Luk 14:32* And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

*Luk 14:33* So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

- a. The 2 verses of John's gospel 8:31-32 give us a very clear distinction between disciples and mere believers. A believer believes in Yeshua for what He did for us on the cross and that He paid the penalties for sins, but most believers do not go beyond that acknowledgment; there's no life-changing experience, among other things. The first characteristic of a disciple that we see in John 8:31-32 is that the disciples abide in His word and walk with Him.

### **I. Disciples vs Believers**

- a. Disciples abide in His Word and Walk with Him.

The English word 'abide' is translated from a very important Greek word "**meno**" **G3306** and the word means:

**G3306: menō**

Thayer Definition:

1) to remain, abide

1a) in reference to place

1a1) to sojourn, tarry

1a2) not to depart

1a2a) to continue to be present

1a2b) to be held, kept, continually

1b) in reference to time

1b1) to continue to be, not to perish, to last, endure

1b1a) of persons, to survive, live

1c) in reference to state or condition

1c1) to remain as one, not to become another or different

2) to wait for, await one

There are different shades of meaning, but the primary one is 'to remain in place in a relationship' to 'abide', 'to endure' In **1Jn 2:4-6**:

**1Jn 2:4** *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

*1Jn 2:5* *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him,*

**1Jn 2:6** ***He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.***

There are two very important issues here: are you continuing to obey His commandments, being faithful to His word, enduring all things for the sake of His word and for Him? Are you walking even as Jesus walked? Are you a true follower of Yeshua?

Moreover, lots of people who evangelize have the wrong sense of the mission. Please listen to what scripture has to say in Matthew 28:19-20. I read from the ESV version because it makes it very clear –

b. Commanded to make disciples, not mere believers.

*ESV Mat 28:19* *Go therefore and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

*ESV Mat 28:20* ***teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*** *And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

It doesn't say go and make believers of all nations but make disciples of all the nations. In case you do not understand what a disciple is, let us look at the traditional crafts: e.g. when somebody wanted to learn carpentry, he never went to school to study carpentry. There were no schools but what he did was to go to a Master Carpenter and begin to help him in lots of little ways and watching him very carefully. So, what the master did then over the course of time would be to teach him different facets of carpentry and the process could take years. During all those years, the disciple would be staying with the master, living with him and watching him every day that the master was working until such time when the master would declare that the disciple was worthy enough to become a carpenter. So that's the concept of discipleship, you learn, you walk closely, you watch, you imitate, then you become like the master - that's the picture of discipleship.

That's given to us in the Bible and consider the disciples of Yeshua: they were with him 24 by 7. As He went out to preach, they ate with Him, they drank with Him, listened to Him very carefully in His teachings. He would explain the parables to them, the meaning of which escaped the crowds. So they were privileged, given insights, understanding and information of what the Master was teaching them. They watched Him closely in His lifestyle, in His behavior, how He reached different people in different circumstances. They were learning by example of a Master and He did this for three and a half years until He went to the cross. That's the picture of discipleship in Matthew 28:19-20.

Moreover, preachers have to teach their hearers to observe all that Yeshua commanded. The word 'observe' really means to obey. In the Old Testament, it was Jesus Christ Who gave the commandments to us. From the first page of the Old Testament until the last He was the one who actively interacted with human beings; He was the one who gave the commandments [the Torah] in the Bible. So, throughout the Bible, the exhortation is to obey Him. Remember always that the sin of Adam and Eve was about disobeying one commandment and look at a sorry state that all of us are in! Without Yeshua we are all condemned to suffer eternally in hell: to die what the Bible calls **the second death**. Physical death is still with us until the creation of the New Heaven and the New Earth. The Bible also says he came to save us from our sins: that means not only to spare us the eternal penalty but also, **to enable us to sin no more**. When we become born from above, we receive a new heart, a new spirit with which we can then begin to learn to obey Him. However, we still have to put to death the carnal nature that we inherited from the earthly Adam. We have dealt with this important issue in the Video entitled: "Born of Water & Holy Spirit". Let me recap: disciples abide in Him; disciples are taught to obey Him, to walk together with Him, to walk even as He walked. The next important point is that only disciples are on the way to Heaven because they are on the Highway of Holiness. If you look at the Book of Acts, the early Christians were described as **people on the way**.

Let's turn to the book of **Isaiah 55:7-9** –

## II. **Disciples Are on The Way**

***Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.***

*Isa 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

*Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Another important verse from Proverbs 14:12. and here I quote with the Septuagint version because it makes it very abundantly clear -

***Sep [LXX] Pro 14:12 There is a way which seems right to be right with men, but the ends of it reach to the depths of hell.***

So we have to consider our way of living, our ways of behavior, our ways of interacting with people, our ways of relating to YAHWEH Himself and to His son Yeshua: to make sure that we are on the right way. Remember what Yeshua said of Himself: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father except by Me'. We'll come back to this verse again. The next important point is that, only disciples bear fruit: listen to John's gospel 15:5-6 -

## III. **Only Disciples Bear Fruit**

***Jhn 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.***

***Jhn 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.***

## Note

- a. Only disciples are able to bear fruit because they abide in Him. Here again you see the word abide: abide in Him and He in us for us to be able to bear fruit. Think of bud-grafting: you cut a small branch of a good tree and you graft it onto another wild tree of the same kind. Now you've got to watch it very carefully so that the leaves come out the right places. Eventually you get good fruit. In Roman 11, however, the grafting of us into Yeshua is contrary to nature: we are the wild branches being grafted onto the good tree. Such trees will bear bad fruit. Hence, by ourselves, we can never bear good fruit. What Yeshua must do is to flush out the bad sap from us and then inject His own life-giving sap into us to enable us to bear good fruit. This is impossible in nature, as any farmer can tell you. So you can see that it takes the supernatural power of God to graft us, the wild olive branches, onto the good Olive Tree and to enable us to bear good fruit. Moreover, if we cannot bear good fruit, the Father will come around one day: He will notice it and then cut off the branches and throw them into the fires of Hell. Therefore, those who are mere believers in Jesus that have no good fruit will eventually be cut off and cast into the fires of hell. Many Christians think that when they sit in their churches and listen to the pastors, they will know the truth. Far from it: you can sit and listen to the best teachers of the Bible and you can read the Bible for yourself many times over, but you will never know the truth unless you are a disciple of Christ. We learn that, only if you abide in Him, will you have access to the truth: I quote from John 8:31-32

**Joh 8:31** *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

**Joh 8:32** *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

### **IV. Only Disciples Know the Truth**

Jhn 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

The words "I am" is the very name of YAHWEH: so Yeshua is the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except by Yeshua. Pontius Pilate asked Yeshua: 'what is truth?' People in the world, especially in this terrible age that we live in, do not believe in absolute truth. They believe in relative truth: truth conditioned by events, times and seasons. Such are changeable truths but there are eternal truths in God that we must walk in, absolute truths that we must believe and abide in. John 8:32 says those who continue in His Word are His disciples indeed, and they shall know the truth and the truth shall make them free.

**Point number two:** and this is equally important- only disciples experience the true freedom in Christ, all others are slaves. Do you know that we're all slaves of sin and, unless Yeshua delivers us from our slavery we will continue in slavery to sin. We can never break the habits of sin ourselves. The Book of Romans chapter 6 tells us that we are to break away from slavery to sin and become slaves of Yahweh. There is nothing in between: either we are servants of sin [Satan] or servants of God. The choice is yours; the choice is mine. I have made my choice. Come experience your freedom in Christ. Moreover, only disciples partake of His eternal life. I refer you to John 5:38-40 –

### **V. Only Disciples Partake of His Life**

**Jhn 5:38** *And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.*

**Jhn 5:39** **Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eaten life: and they are they which testify of me.**

**Jhn 5:40** **And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.**

The Pharisees, the scribes and their followers until today study the scriptures thinking that by so doing they will gain eternal life. Instead, we must come to Yeshua to have life: He is the second person of the Trinity. He wants us to have a personal relationship with Him; He wants to be our Master. We must become His servants, His apprentices, His disciples, to have Life. Look at what John 17:1-3 has to say -

*Jhn 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*

*Jhn 17:2 **As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.***

*Jhn 17:3 **And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast send.***

The words are crystal clear: this is life eternal. Knowing God is life eternal. It is life-giving eternal life imparted to us. The next important point is that those who refuse to take up their own cross are not worthy of Him. On Good Friday in certain parts of the world, people who profess believe in Him will take a heavy wooden cross and carry it and get tied upright. That's not what the Bible is referring to. The cross you have to carry is the crucifixion of your own fleshly desires.

Turn to Matthew 10:38-39 –

#### **VI. Refusal To Take Up Own Cross: Not Worthy of Me**

*Mat 10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, **is not worthy of me.***

*Mat 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

**Number one:** we're to take up **our own** cross. It is a unique cross to each one of us .

**Number two:** in Roman times the cross was an instrument of punishment and death. The criminal had to carry his own cross to the hilltop: there he was crucified. That was exactly what happened to Yeshua after he was falsely accused and judged by Pontius Pilate. The cross is an instrument of death for the old man of sin-the carnal nature for our flesh. I have another video on this: if we do not put our own flesh to death, we will not have eternal life. A carnal mind is at enmity with God; so, take up your cross then follow after Christ. If you don't want to crucify your carnal life, you shall never attain unto eternal life. Look at **my previous video on self-control**.

**Number three:** I found in the course of many years of ministry that, whenever I mention doing the will of God in somebody's life, most so-called Christians turn away. They run away; they leave the church. They did not want to do the will of God. They are very willful people: they want to do their own thing, make their own decisions, live their own lives, marry whoever they want to marry, study whatever they want to study, live wherever they want to live without reference to Yahweh at all. However, a true disciple will do His will.

Look at these awesome verses Matthew 7:21-23 –

#### **VII. A Disciple Does His Will**

*Mat 7:21 **Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.***

*Mat 7:22 On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?*

*Mat 7:23 And then will I declare to them, I never knew you: depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.*

**Point number one:** you can have a glorious ministry in His name, miracles casting demons, bring many believers to Him but you will not get into His Kingdom unless you are doing His will and only those who do His will are His real brethren. Look at what Matthew 12:46-50 said –

**Mat 12:46** *While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.*

**Mat 12:47** *Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.*

**Mat 12:48** *But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*

**Mat 12:49** *And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!*

**Mat 12:50** *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

Awesome thought- that's right: doing His will. Remember what is called the Lord's Prayer where Yeshua taught His disciples how to pray: "Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven" In Heaven everyone does His will. You want to go to heaven but you don't want to do His will? Too bad for you: if want to do your own thing there's another place where you'll be more comfortable- Hell down below. It's waiting for you. So wake up, find His will in your life and begin to walk in it. You'll find it's a very costly choice: it may cost you your very life. Yeshua used us very strong words like 'hating father hating mother, hating close relatives". In Luke 14:26 –

### **VIII. Hating Father, Mother etc**

**Luk 14:26** *If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.*

Wow! Do you mean Yeshua is teaching us to hate people, especially our close relatives? No, He is using this extreme language to tell us that He must be first in our lives and that life in Christ is more important than our own lives. So He must be above all our relationships. In the course of many years of ministry, I've come across people who profess belief in Yeshua but will not get baptized or get into a church. Why? They wanted to have their spouses with them, they wanted the approval of their parents, their children, or close relatives. Sadly, they died without Christ. I saw a highly important couple die this way.

If you want to be His disciple, think about it carefully: consider whether you're able to complete the journey. I refer you to Luke 14:28-30 –

### **IX. Counting the Cost**

**Luk 14:28** *For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and **count the cost**, whether he has enough to complete it?*

**Luk 14:29** *Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,*

**Luk 14:30** *saying, **This man begin to build and was not able to finish.***

I've seen Christians who started off well, but they didn't have endurance. When trials tribulations, and persecutions came along they gave up. Discipleship is costly and we must have endurance until the end: this is confirmed by Yeshua in Matthew 24:11-13 –

*Mat 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise and shall receive many.*

*Mat 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

*Mat 24:13 But **he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.***

You look at the state of Christianity in America, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand: the so-called Christian countries where less than one-third of people believe in the Bible and very few among them are real disciples of Christ. Moreover, there's a great falling away in these end times. The love of many has become very cold but you must endure to the end to be saved. Next, and this is where it deters a lot of people: we must renounce all we have to follow Christ. What does it mean? Look at Luke 14 33--

#### **X. Renouncing All We Have**

*Luk 14:33 So therefore, **any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.***

We'll look at what it really means to renounce. In Mark 10:21-23, the rich young ruler who came to talk to Yeshua and tried to find eternal life -

*Mar 10:21 **Then Jesus beholding him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go they way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.***

*Mar 10:22 And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

*Mat 10:23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, **How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!***

**Point number one:** our relationships, our careers, our possessions can impede our entrance into His kingdom.

**Point number two:** wealthy people who love money and possessions will not be able to enter into His kingdom. It is not impossible because with God, all things are possible. The love of money is a tremendous barrier to entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Paul wrote that the **love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.** Obviously loving money, Judas Iscariot betrayed his Master, and he went to perdition.

**The next point:** are you able to endure suffering and tribulation. Look at 1 Peter 2:21-23 –

#### **XI. Enduring Suffering & Tribulation**

***1Pe 2:21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:*

*1Pe 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*

*1Pe 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*

Yeshua suffered to redeem us without complaining or threatening revenge. As Christians, we are expected to suffer unjustly without murmuring or revenge. However, lots of Christians will say this is not fair. Yeshua warned us that the world hated Him and will hate His followers. Look at Act 14:21-22 -

*Act 14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,*

*Act 14:22 **Confirming the souls of disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.***

Have you been suffering as a Christian? Have you suffered delayed proportion. lack of promotion because you are a Christian? Have you suffered discrimination because you are a Christian? Well, you should expect these things. However, I know many Christians who cannot take suffering, and they want to pray away the suffering. They want to bind and cast out the person or the demons causing the suffering. It doesn't work that way because, through suffering, we will learn to be like Christ as part of character building. We learn to conform to the image and likeness of Christ. Learn to endure persecution as in John 15:18-21 –

## **XII. Enduring Persecution**

***Jhn 15:18*** *If the world hates you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

*Jhn 15:19* *If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

*Jhn 15:20* *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept by saying, they will keep yours also.*

Look at the persecution that Yeshua endured when He came preaching the Kingdom of Heaven and healed and delivered a lot of people from demonic oppression. He came telling people they ought to repent of their sins. He came, forgiving people of their sins. Most rejected Him and they crucified Him, accusing Him falsely. Likewise, the apostles like Paul endured so much suffering: lashings of the whip, false accusations and imprisonment.

The next important point, perhaps **the most important point about discipleship**, is to love the brethren. Listen to what Yeshua has to say in John 13:34-5 -

## **XIII. Loving the Brethren**

***Jhn 13:34*** *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love for another.*

***Jhn 13:35*** ***By this shall all men know that ye are by disciples, if ye have love one to another.***

It is the mark of discipleship to love the brethren, the disciples of Christ. In 1 Jhn 3:16 we are instructed that, just as our Master laid down His life for us, we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Let me end this video with some important quotes from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German pastor and theologian who was anti-nazi during the World War II and who got executed by Hitler. He is best remembered for authoring the Christian Classic: **The Cost of Discipleship**. I have several quotes to share with you: **one** “salvation is free, but discipleship is costly” **two**: “being a Christian is less about cautiously avoiding sin than about courageously and actively doing God's will”; **three**: Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. **Four**: “cheap Grace is preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession”; **Five**: cheap Grace is the idea that Grace did it all for me so I do not need to change my lifestyle. Joseph Prince teaches this all the time he says: yes, He did it all for us so there's nothing more for us to do: just rest in Him, and take it all in, enjoy it; nothing more for you to do. Prince has a total misunderstanding: yes, Grace is free and salvation is free. However, Grace is the life-changing power of God [The Holy Spirit] that enables us to follow after Christ, to pay the price of obedience, to pay the price of discipleship. What Prince preaches is cheap grace. The followers of Joseph Prince are queuing up at a wide gate and, the way for them is made very easy by this false teacher. They will all end up in Hell. The choice is yours; the choice is mine. I have chosen to follow after Jesus; what about you? Shalom.