



Are Disciples Born or Made?

Dr. Charlie Bing
Published: GraceLife
November 2007

Synopsis: Charlie presented this paper at the Evangelical Theological Society's annual meeting in San Diego November 16, 2007. It clarifies the crucial distinctions between how one becomes a Christian and how one becomes a disciple.

Discipleship affects every Christian. Not only are we to be disciples, but we are to make disciples of others. But what is a disciple? The meaning of discipleship has taken on greater significance with the debate over the relationship between salvation and sanctification.

For decades a chorus of voices has been calling for a more precise definition of the biblical concept of discipleship while the Church goes on grappling with fulfilling her great commission to "make disciples." Christians have not lacked for books on how to be a disciple or how to make disciples of others. Too often these books are based on assumptions about what a disciple is while they take the meaning of discipleship for granted. Yet our understanding of biblical discipleship shapes our practice of evangelism, church growth, missions, and personal lifestyle.

When discipleship is clearly defined, there are generally two different views of discipleship in the evangelical church today. Some believe disciples are all Christians and vice versa (disciples are born), while others hold that disciples are those who have made a commitment to Jesus Christ subsequent to salvation (disciples are made). If discipleship is becoming a Christian, then the church must preach a gospel of commitment, surrender, and sacrifice as conditions of salvation, for these are the conditions of discipleship. To do less is to lead people to a false assurance of salvation. On the other hand, if discipleship is a commitment different from the salvation experience, then to teach a "costly" salvation is to pervert the gospel.

This paper is designed to add to our understanding of the concept of disciple and discipleship by examining the words themselves and the relevant passages in the NT. Part 1 examines the key words used to denote discipleship and some important passages where they are found. Then Part 2 examines a biblical model of discipleship, and Part 3 the conditions of discipleship.

Part 1: The Terminology of Discipleship

We will find that etymology is of little help in understanding the theological implications of being a disciple. However, some issues of usage will be very important to our discussion.

I. The Words Used

A. Disciple

The word disciple translates the Greek noun *mathetes*, which is found 264 times in the Gospels and Acts. It is not found in the Epistles. The noun has the basic meaning of "a pupil, apprentice, adherent."¹ The verb form, *matheteuo*, occurs four times in the Gospels and once in Acts. It means to "be or become a pupil or disciple."²

That the meaning of the word disciple is never explained in the NT indicates that the early readers understood it in relation to contemporary rabbinic or Greek practice. It was used of learners who associated themselves with a teacher, philosopher, or rabbi with the assumption that the pupil would become like his teacher (**Matt 10:25; Luke 6:40**)³. The greater the student's submission to his master, the greater is the student's transformation and likelihood that he would become the master's successor. The master's ultimate expectation was that each of his disciples would be proficient in his master's teaching⁴.

In the NT we find followers of various teachers called disciples (of Moses, **John 9:28**; of the Pharisees, **Matt 22:16; Mark 2:18**; of John the Baptist, **Matt 9:14; 14:12; Mark 2:18; Luke 11:1; John 3:25**). Most prevalent in the NT are those called disciples who identified themselves as followers or learners of Christ (e.g., **Matt 5:1; John 4:1; 8:31; 9:27-28**), especially the twelve chosen as apostles (e.g., **Matt 10:1; 11:1; 20:17; Luke 9:1**).

A disciple is one who puts himself in the position of a learner. In relation to those who learned from Jesus, this definition in and of itself does not distinguish between those who are unsaved, simply saved, or saved and having made a deeper commitment. The particular meaning of disciple in any passage must be determined by the context.

B. Follow

The other word which speaks of discipleship in the NT is the verb usually translated "follow" (akoloutheo). It is used over sixty times in the Gospels in reference to following Christ. A parallel thought is expressed by the phrase "to come after" (opiso elthein) in relation to Christ (cf. **Matt 16:24; Luke 9:23**). Like the word disciple, these terms do not indicate the spiritual condition of the person in view. The Gospels speak both of those who follow Christ in general and of those who follow with more commitment. Large crowds followed Jesus (e.g., **Matt 4:25; 8:1; 12:15; 21:9; Mark 10:32**), but there were also individuals called to follow Him in a more intimate relationship (e.g., **Matt 9:9; 10:38; 16:24; Mark 2:14; 8:34; Luke 5:27; 9:23**).

Some consider the invitation of Jesus to "follow Me" an invitation to salvation. They argue not from the meaning of the word, but from incidents where it is used. After citing several encounters where Christ said "follow Me," Boice concludes,

The command to follow Jesus was not understood by Him to be only a mere physical following or even an invitation to learn more about Him and then see if one wanted to be a permanent disciple or not. Jesus understood it as a turning from sin to salvation.⁵

However, it is clear that Jesus sometimes issued the invitation to follow Him to those who were clearly already believers (e.g., **Matt 8:21-22; 16:24; John 12:26; 21:19, 22**). Like the term disciple, the significance of follow or come after must be determined from the context.

II. Discipleship in the Gospels

We will now see how the words disciple and follow are used in relation to those who learned from or followed the Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels. They are used in a number of ways, which shows that those called disciples had varying degrees of the commitment to learn and submit.

A. Curious followers

The broadest meaning of disciple in relation to Jesus Christ comes from those instances where the term may be used of the multitudes who followed Him. For example, in **Matt 5:1** it is unclear whether the multitude is identified synonymously with the disciples or the disciples are a smaller group within the multitude. Likewise, in **Luke 6:13** Jesus chooses the twelve disciples from a larger group of followers also called disciples. In these settings Jesus is teaching and the multitude is willing to be taught, and thus in the general sense they could be called disciples (**Matt 5:2ff.**; **Luke 6:20ff.**).

John 6 contributes an important truth about disciples. While the chapter begins with a distinction between the multitude and the disciples (cf. vv 2-3, 11, 22), we later learn that among the group of disciples are unbelievers (v 65). We are led to assume these unbelievers are a large part of the departing group. However, at least one unbeliever, Judas Iscariot, remains with the twelve disciples (v 67). This interchange with Jesus in John 6 shows that the term disciple in its broadest sense can even refer to unbelievers. They merit the term because outwardly they are followers or learners of Christ, though they may only have the barest personal commitment to Him. In fact, their motivation seems little more than political (v 15), or to obtain free food (vv 26, 34), or simply to satisfy their curiosity. In a comment on this passage, MacArthur admits in a footnote:

It is apparent that not every disciple is necessarily a true Christian (cf. **John 6:66**). The term disciple is sometimes used in Scripture in a general sense, to describe those who, like Judas, outwardly followed Christ.⁶

This footnote is a major admission from one who goes on to rigidly espouse discipleship as a complete and total surrender to Jesus as Master of one's life-and equates this with salvation. MacArthur is acknowledging, though minimally, that the context must inform one's definition of discipleship. We see that even those who believe disciples are born agree that the term disciple is flexible enough to refer to unbelievers.

B. Convinced followers

Those disciples who decided to remain with Jesus in John 6 include the Twelve. Acting as spokesman, Peter confesses their faith in Jesus as the Messiah (**John 6:66-69**). His statement springs more from a logical and settled conclusion than a vow of personal devotion. These men, except Judas, were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior. At this point in the text, however, we see no deep commitment.

Sometimes we note in the Gospels those who were undoubtedly believers in Jesus Christ, but who were reserved in their commitment to Him. Though obviously committed as well as saved, some, like Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, never followed Christ in the sense of leaving their homes and families. John also mentions rulers of the Jews who avoided a full commitment to Jesus Christ as Master (**John 12:42-43**).⁷ Apparently, Joseph of Arimathea is one of the rulers who believed. John describes him as "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews" (**John 19:38**). Though John does not call Nicodemus a believer or a disciple, we get the sense from the night time visit in John 3 and his interest in Jesus' burial, that he was in the same category as Joseph—a secret disciple finally gone public.

Jesus even offered a degree of commendation to those who had less than a full commitment to follow Him as Master (**Mark 9:40-41**; **Luke 9:50**).

C. Committed followers

The preponderance of references to disciples in the Gospels speaks of those who have submitted to Jesus Christ as Master of their lives. They are committed to following Jesus as their Lord and Teacher in the same

sense in which others devotedly followed Moses, the Pharisees, or John the Baptist. In this sense the term disciples is used most frequently in the Gospels to speak of the smaller group of twelve apostles chosen by Christ (e.g., **Matt 10:1**; **Luke 6:13**). In addition to the Twelve, however, a larger group of seventy is also called disciples (**Luke 10:1, 17, 23**). They too appear as those committed to Jesus in a special way since they are sent out by the Lord to preach the Gospel.

The commitment involved in this deeper relationship is seen in the various conditions that Jesus attached to discipleship as His ministry progressed. He said that true disciples, or "disciples indeed" (alethos mathetai), are those who "abide in My word" (**John 8:31**). While a fuller interpretation of this condition will be offered later, it is enough to note here that this condition was stated to those whom the text says had already believed in Christ (**John 8:30-31**). The word "abide" (from meno) denotes the more intimate relationship that Christ desires of those who believe in Him (cf. **John 14:21, 23-24; 15:4-10**).

As Jesus began to teach the significance of His work on the Cross, He also expounded other stringent conditions for those who would continue as disciples in the deeper sense. In these conditions (**Matt 16:24-27; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26; and 14:26-33**), Jesus said a disciple must deny himself, take up his cross, follow Christ, lose his life, not be ashamed of Christ, and hate his family and his own life. The nature of these commitments and the fact that they were directed primarily to those who were already His close followers argue that they are conditions not of salvation, but of a deeper relationship to Jesus as Lord and Master. They represent a progression in the revelation of God's will which must be accepted if a believer would continue on the path of discipleship. By these conditions, discipleship becomes something which is very costly to the Christian.

III. Discipleship in Acts

In Acts the term disciples seems to be equated with Christians in general (6:1-2, 7; 14:20, 22, 28; 15:10; 19:10), especially in 11:26 where we read, "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." Acts has no explicit mention of the deeper commitment or the conditions of discipleship found in the Gospels. Some would argue from this that there is no difference between a disciple and a Christian; believing in Christ encompasses the commitment to surrender all of one's life to Jesus as Lord and Master and to follow Him in sacrifice and obedience.⁸

We must agree that Acts assumes Christians are disciples. Disciple is one of several terms used to refer to Christians and is thus used more technically than in the Gospels. However, the background for Acts cannot be divorced from the Gospels. Whatever conditions for discipleship the Gospel authors recorded must give form to Luke's view of discipleship, especially those recorded by Luke himself. Furthermore, the bridge between discipleship in the Gospels and in Acts is composed of the final missionary commissions of Christ (**Matt 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48**). Acts records the fulfillment of these commissions as the Gospel is carried beyond Jerusalem to the remotest parts of the world (**Acts 1:8**). Discipleship in Acts must be understood in light of Jesus' commission to "make disciples" in **Matt 28:19-20**. Since Acts records the disciples' obedience to this command, it is necessary to understand what Jesus means by "make disciples." Is He equating discipleship with salvation?⁹

In light of the commission in **Matt 28:19-20**, it is natural that Christians should be called disciples in Acts, since Acts is the historical account of the fulfillment of that commission. As a historian writing selectively, Luke describes the early Christians in general as committed followers of Christ who continued in His teaching. He does not concern himself with the few believers who may not have associated with the Church. In Acts the early converts were enthusiastic in their commitment to Christ with but few exceptions.¹⁰ For example, Luke notes how new believers do not hesitate to obey the Lord in baptism (cf. 2:41; 8:13, 36; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 33-34; 18:8; 19:5). His historical perception of the early believers was that of a new community following the Christian Way with diligence and the marks of true discipleship as enunciated by Jesus: They continued in the Word (**Acts 2:42**; cf. **John 8:31**), showed love for one another (**Acts 2:42** and **4:32**; cf. **John 13:34-35**), and were willing to deny themselves worldly gain (**Acts**

2:45 and **4:32-35**; cf. **Luke 9:24-25**). Furthermore, the stringent conditions of discipleship preached by Christ were not preached by the Apostles in Acts. Indeed, it wasn't necessary, for these early believers were generally viewed as committed to Christ in discipleship. Calenburg notes,

The sermons of Acts seemed to reaffirm the distinction between conversion by faith in Christ and committed discipleship. The general use of the term "disciple" for all believers and the practice of many new converts implied [that] committed discipleship to Christ was the common and expected response to His will as taught by the Apostles.¹¹

That the first Christians were committed as disciples is no surprise in light of the hostile Jewish environment. For a Jew to become a publicly confessed Christian was ipso facto to bear the cross of Christ's suffering through certain persecution, ostracism, or even death.

Christians are called disciples in Acts, because as Luke sees it, these early believers are committed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is every indication that as a whole, these believers were meeting the conditions for true discipleship found in the Gospels.

IV. Discipleship in the Epistles

The assumption that Christians were committed disciples in Acts harmonizes with the absence of the word disciple in the Epistles. Conceptually, the idea of discipleship is communicated through the noun "imitator" (mimetes) and the verb "imitate" (mimeomai).¹² Calenburg concludes that "The factors involved in such imitation were similar to the conditions of discipleship, namely, observation, attachment, motivation, submission to authority, and obedience."¹³ When Paul exhorts his readers to "imitate me" (e.g., **1 Cor 4:16**; **11:1**; cf. **Phil 3:17**; **2 Thess 3:7, 9**), he desires a committed response to him as he is committed to and so imitates Christ (**1 Cor 11:1**; cf. **I Thess 1:6**). Imitation is therefore the commitment of a believer to follow Christ as a disciple. Bauder observes, "Imitation" in the NT is consequently not conceived as the reproduction of a given pattern. It is... an attitude of thanks in response to the salvation that has been given to us (cf. H. Conzelmann, *Epheser*, 83). The summons to discipleship can only be fulfilled, when a man is grasped by Christ and undergoes the transformation which existence under the Lordship of Christ involves.¹⁴

To imitate Jesus or Paul is to follow them so as to reproduce their character and behavior. This "Christlikeness" is the goal of discipleship. The Epistles, by implicitly equating discipleship with imitation, affirm that discipleship is the commitment of believers to obey and submit to the authority of Christ. However, since the Epistles never teach that salvation is procured through imitation of Jesus Christ, neither is it procured through discipleship, which is the same thing.

Conclusions from the Terminology

In the NT disciple is a somewhat fluid term. It is used of those who obviously had never believed in Christ, of believers with limited commitment, and of believers with the fullest commitment. The ultimate determination of its meaning in any given passage must be the context. Sometimes, as in Acts, consideration of the context involves the perspective of the whole book.

To be a disciple in the broadest sense is to be a follower or learner of Jesus Christ. In the narrower sense used by Christ later in His ministry, it meant to be fully committed to follow and learn from Him in a life of self-denial and obedience to His Word. This latter idea is the most relevant to the present discussion and to our practice as Christians. The stringent conditions Christ attached to this sense of discipleship are not conditions of salvation, but motivations for us who are Christians to move further into God's will.

Part 2: The Model of Discipleship

In relation to Jesus Christ, "disciple" was used of those unsaved, those saved, and those saved who have made a serious commitment to Jesus as Lord and Master of their lives. What all three groups had in common that merited the designation disciples was that all were following Jesus Christ to some degree. Discipleship is therefore best understood as a journey, a direction, an orientation of one's life toward becoming like Christ. This can only be accomplished by following Christ.

The most common use of the term in the Gospels was in reference to those believers who followed Christ wholeheartedly, especially those who were later called apostles. This fullest sense of discipleship will now be examined. We will look at specific calls to discipleship in the Gospels to see if they are calls to salvation or something more, that is, if they are calls to a life-commitment beyond the issue of one's eternal destiny. The calls we will consider are those that relate to the life of the Apostle Peter, for reasons which will be explained later. First we will summarize the two basic views about the relationship between the call to discipleship and the call to salvation.

I. View 1: Disciples Are Born

This view claims the call to discipleship is the call to salvation. The calls are identical. The conditions of discipleship, hard as they may sound, are also the indispensable conditions of salvation. According to this teaching one cannot merely relate to Jesus as Savior, but one must also give total control of his or her life to Jesus as Lord and Master in order to be saved. The term disciple therefore emphasizes the obedience and "costliness" of salvation in contrast to the "cheap grace" purportedly found in "easy believism," which is the name given the opposing view. Likewise, the term follow denotes a commitment to faithfulness and obedience by which true believers can be identified.

This view is set forth by a number of Bible teachers and theologians. John MacArthur states, "The gospel Jesus proclaimed was a call to discipleship, a call to follow Him in submissive obedience."¹⁵ He adds, "Every Christian is a disciple. . . . Disciples are people who believe, whose faith motivates them to obey all Jesus commanded."¹⁶ James G. Merritt likewise asserts,

The fact is, Jesus sought more than a superficial following; he sought disciples. In short, the evangelistic call of Jesus was essentially a call to repentance and radical discipleship.¹⁷ James Montgomery Boice also argues that

...discipleship is not a supposed second step in Christianity, as if one first becomes a believer in Jesus and then, if he chooses, a disciple. From the beginning, discipleship is involved in what it means to be a Christian.¹⁸

To support their views these proponents of commitment-salvation appeal to the early calls of Jesus to the first disciples, as we shall see.

Neglecting the demands of discipleship is considered by these and other disciples are made proponents to be an error of the contemporary church. Modern evangelism (they claim) should include a call to follow (=submit and obey) in the proclamation of the Gospel.¹⁹

II. View 2: Disciples Are Made

The opposing view, holds that discipleship is a separate issue from salvation. This does not mean that committed discipleship cannot be a continuum originating with one's initial faith in Christ for salvation from sin. Obviously, discipleship should be the logical choice of those who truly understand the issues of salvation, and often it is. However, the call to salvation is distinct from the call to follow Christ in discipleship.

An examination of Christ's calls to discipleship will show that the "Disciples-Are-Made" view is more biblically informed. We will accomplish this by observing how Peter was made a disciple.

A. Peter as a model disciple

When we examine the calls of Christ to discipleship in the Gospels, we find ourselves constantly crossing paths with one character in particular, the Apostle Peter. Though the calls to salvation and discipleship can be separated without focusing on the person of Peter, attention to this prominent disciple is helpful in forming a cohesive picture of the progression of discipleship. But a focus on Peter is motivated by more than pragmatic convenience; there is also a theological basis. Peter is presented by the Gospels as the model disciple with whom readers can identify as disciples themselves.

This point can be argued from all the Gospels in their general presentation of Peter. Simon Peter was the prominent disciple. Not only is he always listed first (**Matt 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16**), but as the spokesman for the disciples as a group, he represents the consensus of the group's opinion of Jesus and His teaching (e.g., **Matt 16:15-16; 17:24; Mark 8:29; 16:7; Luke 9:20; 12:41; John 6:67-69**). Peter is also given the privilege of being one of the three in Jesus' inner circle along with James and John (e.g., **Matt 17:1; 26:37; Mark 9:2; 14:33; Luke 9:28**).

We see Peter's role as the representative disciple most clearly in Matthew and Mark's presentation of him. In these Gospels Peter serves as the vehicle for Matthew and Mark's message and the point of identification with the readers in their discipleship.²⁰ His experiences encompass those of a typical believer as his life is presented from the time of initial faith and recognition of Jesus as the Messiah (**John 1:40-42**), through stages of development, to a fuller understanding of what Jesus' ministry encompassed. In the process, he precipitates Jesus' instruction on what it really means to be a committed disciple. Positively, Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ and Son of God (**Mark 8:27-29**) is central to his role as a disciple. But on the negative side, so is his failure to comprehend Jesus' ministry in suffering and death (**Mark 8:31-33**). Peter's experiences of following Christ take all believers through their own failures and successes.

Peter's name change from Simon also has a representative function in the Gospels. Jesus' new name for him, Cephas in Aramaic or Petros in Greek, means "rock." In spite of his failures, Peter the Rock would represent discipleship. Carsten P. Thiede writes:

The early Christians, and this includes the apostles and their pupils, could therefore look to Peter and his experience as a kind of model-Peter was the petros, the rock, not because of his strengths, but in spite of his weaknesses, "deputizing" for the weaknesses of them all.²¹

For these reasons, when we view the life of Peter, we see the life of a typical disciple as designed by God. This informs us about the nature of discipleship, when it begins, how it develops, and the end toward which it is directed. In short, when we study Peter's life we see the making of a disciple.

B. Peter as a progressing disciple

When we study the life and progress of Peter in the Gospels, we find definite stages in his commitment of discipleship based on his responses to Jesus' calls to "follow" Him. As already noted, Jesus' call to "Follow Me" was a call to follow Him in a life of discipleship. The various calls to follow serve as a helpful framework in understanding the progression of discipleship or how a disciple is made.

1. Following in salvation

Peter's first encounter with Christ is described in **John 1:40-42**. Jesus changed his name from Simon to Cephas (=Peter, **John 1:42**). Whether Peter was saved here we do not know. But Jesus knew he would be saved and useful to Him. However, Andrew's faith²² implies Peter's. We know that Peter is at least saved by the time of the wedding in Cana, for there we have the scriptural confirmation that "[Christ's] disciples believed in Him" (**John 2:11**).

In neither John 1 nor 2 is there any call for Peter to follow Christ as a disciple. Neither do we find conditions of commitment required by Christ nor any commitment expressed by Peter.

The encounter with Peter in John 1 clearly happened in the early phase of Jesus' ministry. Timing is important in understanding the significance of Jesus' later calls to follow. The story shows that God's first call to unbelievers is a call to salvation.

2. Following in commitment

The first call to Peter to follow in discipleship is issued in **Matt 4:18-22** and **Mark 1:14-20**, in Galilee (**Matt 4:12, 18,23; Mark 1:14, 16,21**). Jesus calls Peter and Andrew, and James and John, the sons of Zebedee, to become "fishers of men." Is this episode also a call to salvation?

Some believe it is. Boice assumes this interpretation to support his argument for commitment-salvation.²³ There is no dispute that in these passages Jesus is calling Peter and the others to a further commitment of discipleship. The command "Follow Me" and the promise that they will become "fishers of men" correctly denote the obedience and submission essential to discipleship. However, there is no support for Boice's assumption that this encounter is either chronologically or theologically parallel with the first encounter of Jesus with Peter and the other disciples in John 1.

Matthew 4:18-22 and **Mark 1:14-20** could not possibly be the same event described in **John 1:35-42**, which is clearly Jesus' first encounter with Peter and the other disciples. In John 1 the setting is Bethany beyond the Jordan (**John 1:28**), not Galilee, as in Matthew and Mark (cf. **John 1:43**). In John there is no mention of a seaside setting nor of fishing for men. Furthermore, Peter is brought to Jesus (1:41-42) rather than being already present as Jesus walked by (**Matt 4:18; Mark 1:16**). Finally, in the first chapter of John, Peter is obviously introduced to Jesus for the first time, while Matthew and Mark's accounts report no introduction of the men to Jesus, and appear to assume a degree of familiarity with Jesus.

Many commentators agree that Matthew and Mark's accounts of Jesus' call to follow and become fishers of men presuppose the facts of the John 1 encounter.²⁴ Since Peter was saved in John 1 or at latest by John 2 (see v11), then the call to follow in Matthew and Mark cannot be a call to salvation. A number of commentators agree.²⁵ After salvation, Jesus calls those who have believed to a life of evangelism.

3. Following in obedience

Another time we find Peter following Christ is in the seaside account described in **Luke 5:1-11**. After a lesson in obedience, Jesus tells Peter, "From now on you will catch men" (5:10), and the text notes that Peter and his companions "forsook all and followed Him" (5:11).

The story has many similarities to the seaside call in Matthew 4 and Mark 1, and not surprisingly, some have interpreted it as a parallel account. Some who believe disciples are born argue that Christ is calling Peter to salvation in such a way that it includes Christ's lordship over him (v 8) and

the forsaking of everything. Merritt argues from **Luke 5:1-11** that part of obedience is the evangelistic task and that if one is not fishing for men, he is not following, i.e., he is not saved.²⁶ Merritt's equation of this episode with Matthew 4 and Mark 1 and his interpretation of them as a call to salvation virtually forces him to include evangelism as a condition of salvation.

Just as John 1 was shown to be different from Matthew 4 and Mark 1, so also Luke 5 can be shown to be different from Matthew 4 and Mark 1. Admittedly, there are some similarities, such as the seaside setting in Galilee, the context of fishing, and the immediate response of the fishermen who follow Jesus. However, there are many differences.²⁷

The model of a disciple who is made displays a progression of commitment requiring continual challenges or calls to become more of a disciple. This progression is seen in some of the details of Luke's account. For example, Jesus does not actually call Peter to follow here, yet Peter follows. Evidently Peter already knew the Lord's will, for earlier Jesus did actually call him to follow (**Matt 4:18-22; Mark 1:14-20**). For Peter, the question was one of total submission to that call. Indeed, Luke notes that in this instance he "forsook all," while Matthew and Mark both note that he only left the boat and his father. Jesus' words also seem to mark a progression, for while in Matthew the promise is "I will make you fishers of men" (**Matt 4:19**) and in Mark "I will make you become fishers of men" (**Mark 1:17**), in Luke Jesus moves from the future promise to the initiation of a present fulfillment when He says, "From now on you will catch men" (**Luke 5:10**). Jesus could say this now that Peter had learned the lesson of submission and obedience. A number of commentators have noted this obvious progression in discipleship in the Gospels.²⁸

As we examine the calls of Christ to discipleship in Matthew 4 and Mark 1, and later in Luke 5, we find no mention of the Gospel, no call to believe unto salvation. The calls were, after all, to become fishers of men as they followed Christ in obedience. Peter initially followed with some enthusiasm (Matthew 4; Mark 1), but not with the submission and obedience he finally manifests in **Luke 5:1-11**. Jesus calls those who are his disciples to submissive obedience.

4. Following in sacrifice

Now that Peter has learned his first lesson in submission and obedience, Jesus advances him in the school of discipleship with a lesson on what it really means to be a disciple. On the occasion of Peter's climactic confession (**Matt 16:13f.; Mark 8:27f.; Luke 9:18f.**), Jesus instructs all the disciples in the conditions or cost of continuing in discipleship. Though all the disciples are addressed, Peter becomes the principal character in precipitating this instruction.

The interesting juxtaposition of Jesus addressing Peter as "Blessed" (**Matt 16:17**) and then as "Satan" (**Matt 16:23**) shows that, though Peter was saved, he was limited in his understanding of suffering in relation to discipleship. He is praised for his proper understanding of who Jesus is, but rebuked for his lack of understanding about what Jesus must do in following the Father's will. Peter's incomplete comprehension of Christ's submission to God's will indicates a parallel deficient comprehension about what it means to be a disciple submitted to God's will in the fullest sense. This prepares the way for Christ's well-known instructions about the cost of discipleship.

The many conditions listed in **Matt 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-38; and Luke 9:23-27** (cf. also **Luke 14:25-33**) are considered conditions for salvation by those of the "disciples are born" view.²⁹

Much can be said about how each of the specific conditions cannot refer to salvation. Here we make only some general observations in relation to Peter. First, the conditions are spoken to him

as a believer. As shown, his faith is affirmed by the Scripture (**John 2:11**), and he has received the approbation of Jesus for his confession of faith (**Matt 16:17-19**). Peter has been following Jesus since the two seaside calls and is included in the "disciples" whom Jesus addresses (**Matt 16:21, 24; Mark 8:33-34**). What sense does it make to have Jesus telling Peter and the disciples-men who were already believers-how to be saved?

Second, the language Jesus uses to speak of the ultimate goal of the conditions is language not used of salvation. We have already seen that in the progression of Peter's relationship to Christ, the call to "follow" is a call to discipleship, not salvation. In giving the conditions of discipleship, Jesus again uses the term "Follow Me" (**Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23**). Jesus also says that anyone who does not meet His conditions "cannot be My disciple" (**Luke 14:26-33**). Clearly the issue is discipleship and following, not faith and salvation. Another important term used in these passages is "come after Me" (erchomai plus opiso) found in all three Synoptic Gospels for those who would meet the conditions of discipleship (**Matt 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27**). This term is significant because it is seen here as essentially equivalent to "follow" and the idea of discipleship. Perhaps more significant is that it is different from the language Jesus uses to invite people to salvation, which is "come to Me" (erchomai plus pros).³⁰

Jesus was not telling Peter how to be saved, but what it means to be a disciple in the fullest sense. Peter was already a disciple, but every disciple is challenged to a fuller commitment in his walk with the Lord. If the challenge is rejected, the believer has, in effect, ceased following. For Peter, who does not fully comprehend Jesus' obedience to the Father, it is time to challenge his incomplete comprehension of discipleship with specific conditions. Obedient disciples can expect Jesus to challenge them with a call to the deepest sacrificial commitment.

5. Following in failure

The next stage of Peter's discipleship finds him faltering in following the Lord. During the final Passover meal with His disciples, Jesus told Peter, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward" (**John 13:36**). Peter, who still trusted in his own strength to enable him to follow Christ, objected to the pronouncement (13:35). Jesus, of course, was predicting Peter's infamous three-fold denial during His arrest (13:38). The "now... afterward" contrast shows this to be a temporary interruption due to impending and difficult circumstances. But Jesus also promised him, "You shall follow Me afterward" (13:36).

The fulfillment of our Lord's prediction is in **John 18:15-27**. In this account, there is positive identification of Peter as still a disciple. The one accompanying Peter to the courtyard of the High Priest, usually assumed to be the disciple John, is called "another disciple" (18:15) or "the other disciple" (18:16), thus identifying Peter as a disciple to the reader. Not only that, but it is said that Peter "followed Jesus" (18:15).

The denial itself also makes Peter's discipleship the issue. The servant girl, the servants, and the officers all ask him if he is one of Jesus' disciples. (18:17, 25). Meanwhile, the reader is told that the high priest was asking Jesus "about His disciples" (18:19). While Peter is denying the fact that he is a disciple of Jesus, the reader is shown that, to a certain degree, Peter really is following. After all, he did follow Christ thus far, in contrast to most of the other disciples.

Even Peter's failure shows progression in his following. Though he ceases to follow for a short time, he does not really cease to be a disciple. It was not his discipleship that failed, but his courage. The disciple who is progressing may falter during tests of his faith. Jesus allows His followers to fail in

order to show them their weaknesses and so that "afterward" they will trust in His power instead of their own.

6. Following in service

The last stage in the progression of Peter's discipleship occurs after the resurrection when Jesus appears to Peter and six other "disciples" in Galilee (**John 21:1-2**). Peter had returned to his familiar activity of fishing. It is certainly no coincidence that Peter's activity of fishing forms the backdrop for a further challenge to discipleship. In contrast to Luke 5, however, Peter does not object to the Lord's command to let down the net on the right side of the boat (21:6), demonstrating that he has learned the lesson of obedience.

Jesus' calls to "Follow Me" (21:19,22) come both after the three-fold commissioning of Peter to a shepherding ministry and after a description of how Peter would die (21:18). The dialogue shows that Peter is now restored in his relationship with the Lord. Now that Peter is resigned to God's will to the fullest degree and has forsaken self-reliance, Jesus is free to tell Peter how he will die. Peter now understands that discipleship means laying down one's life. When Jesus concludes the revelation and says to Peter, "Follow Me," He is calling him to minister and to die in his service to others. Surely to Peter the words had more significance than ever. At each stage in the life of a disciple the call to follow has progressively deeper significance.

Jesus called Peter to follow a second time in this interchange (21:22). This second time emphasizes the single-minded devotion necessary to follow Christ in ministry. Jesus wants each disciple to follow in his own way regardless of what others do.

It should now be obvious that the call to follow cannot be the same as a call to salvation. Such a thought is foreign to this last segment of the Gospels' record of Peter's life. Peter was called to follow throughout his life and all the calls were after he had believed.

Conclusions from the Model of Discipleship

The biblical model of discipleship shows that it is a progressive journey subsequent to salvation. In Peter's life after he believes in Jesus Christ for salvation, we see a funnel effect. The progressive calls to follow begin with a general direction and commitment, but become more and more specific in what that commitment entails. Each time the disciple is called to follow, new significance is attached. With each call, the disciple is challenged to a deeper commitment and a greater sacrifice. This supports the understanding of discipleship as a direction or orientation, not a state. It is a committed and progressive following of Jesus Christ as Master. Anywhere on one's journey toward becoming like Christ one can be called a disciple, even in the midst of a temporary failure. It seems reasonable to state that anyone who rejects the challenge to commit himself to Christ ceases to follow and removes himself from the path of discipleship.

Part 3: The Cost of Discipleship

If the conditions of discipleship are also conditions of salvation, then every Christian is, by definition, a disciple, and salvation, by definition, is costly. If these conditions are not conditions for salvation, then the issue of discipleship must be distinguished from the issue of salvation so that discipleship is truly costly and salvation, truly free. We will now survey the two opposing views of these conditions.

I. The Two Views

A. Disciples are born: The "Costly Grace" view

The concept of "costly grace" has appealed to many who think it is the answer to the apathy and worldliness of contemporary Christians. Poe states, "The concern for discipleship did not emerge as a theoretical concept in an academic setting, rather it resulted from the phenomenon of people claiming to be Christians who have no interest in the things of Christ."³¹ They believe that this problem is solved by demanding that sinners pay a price for their salvation, the price of submission and obedience. J. I. Packer's statement exemplifies this position:

In our own presentation of Christ's gospel, therefore, we need to lay a similar stress on the cost of following Christ, and make sinners face it soberly before we urge them to respond to the message of free forgiveness. In common honesty, we must not conceal the fact that free forgiveness in one sense will cost everything.³²

In their thinking, the cost of salvation includes the many conditions laid down by Christ for becoming a disciple, since in their opinion, salvation and discipleship are one and the same.³³ Though they are willing to call salvation costly, they maintain adamantly that salvation is not of works, but a free gift.

B. Disciples are made: The "Free Grace" view

This position holds that salvation and discipleship are separate issues. Salvation concerns the sinner's acceptance of the free gift of eternal life and the forgiveness of sins through faith alone. Discipleship concerns the believer's response to the grace received by offering himself to God in submission, obedience, and sacrifice. In salvation, Christ paid the price; in discipleship, the believer pays the price. Therefore, salvation is free, but discipleship is costly. Because they are separate issues, there is no contradiction.

We can now look at the conditions for becoming a disciple in the Gospels to see if they should be taken as conditions for salvation.

II. The Conditions of Discipleship

The teachings of Jesus Christ make it plain that discipleship is costly. The matter to be determined is whether the passages which specify the cost of discipleship speak of the requirements for salvation or of a post-salvation commitment to our Lord. The basic conditions of discipleship were given by Christ after Peter's well-known confession and Christ's prediction of His death and resurrection and the story of His transfiguration. The focus of this section will be largely upon the parallel passages **Matt 16:24-27**, **Mark 8:34-38**, and **Luke 9:23-26**. Other conditions discussed are those found in **Matt 10:37//Luke 14:26**; **Luke 14:33**; and **John 8:30-31**.

A. The conditions at Peter's confession, **Matthew 16:24-27//Mark 8:34-38//Luke 9:23-26**

Those who take the disciples are born position assume these conditions are given in an evangelistic occasion.³⁴ The context shows that the occasion of these sayings is significantly linked to the prediction of Christ's passion and resurrection and His rebuke of Peter which demonstrates to the disciples that He must suffer and be killed as part of God's will for Him (**Matt 16:21//Mark 8:31//Luke 9:22**). There was, for Christ, a price to be paid in following God's will to completion and His own glorification. Peter's rebuke of Christ essentially denies that God's will requires such a price. The conditions of discipleship then follow contextually ("Then" [Tote], **Matt 16:24**) as the price which must be paid to follow the will of God to completion and share in Christ's glory.³⁵ In view of the Lord's imminent death, departure, and glorification, these conditions show the way by which the will of God can be fully realized in Christ's absence.

The audience is also significant. Matthew indicates that Jesus addressed His sayings to none other than the twelve disciples (**Matt 16:24**). Mark says that Jesus "called the people (ochlos) to Him, with His disciples also" (**Mark 8:34**). The crowd is not specifically identified, but in Mark's use of ochlos, when there is enough evidence to determine their disposition, the crowd with Jesus is presented as at least curious enough to follow Him. More often, they are characterized as enthusiastic followers, teachable, exhibiting faith in their midst, and sometimes seeming totally sympathetic to Christ as if they were believers.³⁶ Luke records that Jesus spoke "to them all" (**Luke 9:23**), the nearest antecedent of which is the Twelve (**Luke 9:18**),³⁷ but possibly He spoke to the Twelve and the multitudes.³⁸ In **Luke 12:1** Jesus is described as teaching His disciples "first" in the presence of an "innumerable multitude." It is therefore reasonable to assume that in the Synoptics, when Jesus spoke to the multitudes (who to various degrees were followers), He was first teaching His twelve disciples, and secondarily His other followers.

If Jesus addressed primarily His twelve disciples, who (except for Judas) were definitely saved,³⁹ and the crowds who were at least sympathetic or at most contained many followers whose exact commitment to Christ is left undefined, then it is reasonable to assume these sayings should apply to the issues of a deeper relationship with Him and not to salvation. It would be pointless for the Synoptic authors (especially Matthew) to focus on the disciples if these were conditions of salvation. We would expect such conditions to be announced when the disciples first met Jesus. A brief examination of each of these conditions will demonstrate whether they apply more appropriately to the Christian life or to salvation.

B. The conditions

The conditions for discipleship must be interpreted in light of the preceding prediction of Jesus' suffering and death. As it cost Jesus to follow the Father's will, so it would cost His disciples to do the same. As we shall see, sometimes there is agreement about the substance of the condition, but the focus of the debate is on whether these are conditions for salvation or for a deeper commitment of discipleship. Also, it should be noted that the requirements are for anyone who desires to "come after" Christ (**Matt 16:24//Mark 8:34//Luke 9:23**). As noted earlier, "come after" (opiso elthein) denotes discipleship. It clearly describes a process, not an event; a committed life of following after Jesus rather than coming to (proselthein) Him for salvation.

"**Deny himself.**" This is best interpreted by what the disciples have just heard about Christ's fate. Jesus was about to submit Himself and His own desires to the desire of the Father for Him, which was suffering and death. To deny oneself refers contextually to being mindful of the things of God, not the things of man (**Matt 16:23//Mark 8:33**). In Stott's understanding, one "must repudiate himself and his right to organize his own life."⁴⁰ Gentry argues the significance in relation to salvation: "A person who truly receives Christ as Savior is in effect denying himself and his wants as nothing and Christ as everything."⁴¹ MacArthur states, "Anyone who wants to become a Christian-has to face three commands: 1) deny himself, 2) take up his cross daily, and 3) follow Him."⁴²

While Stott and Gentry understand the substance of the saying, their application of this condition to salvation does not coincide with the real issue in salvation, which is the forgiveness of sin and justification of the sinner. But in harmony with the context, Jesus is not addressing these issues here. He speaks of denying oneself that which would obstruct the fulfillment of God's will in the course of following Him. In the passages that deal unquestionably with eternal salvation, there is no mention of self-denial, or one's "right to organize his own life," or one's "denying himself his wants" as a requirement for salvation. 3

"Take up his cross." Stott argues that to take up the cross is to make oneself as a condemned man, apparently in the sense of living for Christ instead of self.⁴³ Boice sees cross-bearing as "saying yes to something for Jesus' sake." Specifically, Boice declares that cross-bearing involves prayer, Bible study, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, receiving strangers, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, and witnessing.⁴⁴ In light of the context, it appears that Jesus is expecting the disciples to suffer hardships in order to do God's will just as He does by submitting to the Cross. For Him and for the disciples, it meant they were like men condemned to die, who carry their cross-beams to the place of execution in submission to a higher authority.⁴⁵ If this is applied to unbelievers, then the Gospel message is a demand to be willing to die for Jesus.

Stott's interpretation and the practical considerations may be correct, but that they refer to a condition of salvation for unbelievers is untenable, for then salvation would be by suffering, by a willingness to die for Christ, and thus by works, as Boice's particulars demonstrate. This contradicts the Scriptures which speak of the necessity of Jesus Christ suffering so that sinners could be saved apart from works.⁴⁶ The sinner's willingness to suffer is not a condition of justification. Also, the unbeliever has no cross in the sense of self-mortification (contra Stott), for he is already dead in sins (**Eph. 2:1-2**); nor do unbelievers, by definition, have a cross in the sense of Christian duties (contra Boice).

Furthermore, Luke adds the qualifier "daily," which shows this could not refer to salvation because it refers to something that is done repeatedly. If this characterizes saving faith and is a condition for salvation, one must repeatedly place his faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord through daily surrender. In other words, salvation would not occur at a point in time. Such a condition is not found elsewhere in the Bible and makes both salvation and assurance impossible.

"Follow Me." As discussed earlier, this phrase speaks of discipleship and denotes the pupil/master relationship. Here Jesus invests the term with the significance of following Him by obeying God's will, that is, by self-denial and taking up the cross, as Stott agrees.⁴⁷ Because following another person is a process, a progression, and requires time, this condition cannot speak of entrance into salvation. This would promote salvation by the imitation of Christ or by adherence to His example, which would be a salvation of works. It is best taken as a term that describes a continuously committed lifestyle.

"Loses his life." An explanatory statement ("For") follows the three conditions. Jesus says, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it" (**Luke 9:24**; cf. **Matt 16:25**//**Mark 8:35**; and **Matt 10:39**). To lose one's life explains in summary form what it means to deny oneself, take up one's cross, and follow Jesus Christ in submission to God's will. The background of Jesus losing His life physically (on the Cross) and thus metaphorically (to the will of God) has been observed in the previous context (**Matt 16:21**//**Mark 8:31**//**Luke 9:22**). Therefore, those who are to be disciples must also lose their lives to the will of God. If a man chose not to deny himself and not to pursue the will of God, but to pursue his own selfish and worldly desires, he would lose his soul (i.e., his life; **Matt 16:26**; cf. **Mark 8:36**// **Luke 9:25**).

Here some point to the phrase "save his life" and "loses his own soul," and the consequence "destroyed" or "lost" (in Luke) to say that the passage speaks of eternal salvation.⁴⁸ However, the verb save (sozo) often does not refer to eternal salvation. It is probably used here in the general sense of "rescue, preserve from danger"⁴⁹ or "deliver,"⁵⁰ i.e., save from a life of self-denial and cross-bearing,⁵¹ for this thought explains ("For," gar) the impact of the previous conditions.

Likewise, "life" (psyche) does not automatically refer to the eternal soul only. The parallel in **Luke 9:25** replaces Matthew and Mark's "life" with "himself" (heauton). The noun psyche is frequently used in Scripture in the sense of the essential life of man.⁵²

Furthermore, unless the context is clearly proved to be soteriological, the verbs "destroyed" (apollymi in Matthew) and "lost" (zemioo, in Matthew and Luke) should retain their respective general meanings of "ruin, destroy, lose"⁵³ and "suffer damage or loss, forfeit, sustain injury."⁵⁴ When Jesus says "whoever loses his life for My sake," the sense is certainly not eternal destruction, for He says this one will then "find it," which is something good. Conversely, it fits well that what one may lose when he tries to save his life (preserve himself from the hardships of self-denial and cross-bearing) is life in the essential qualitative sense (i.e., experiencing God's life in this life, **John 17:3**), not the eternal soul. The paradox Jesus used has great meaning. What He appears to be saying is this: "Whoever desires to preserve himself from the hardships of God's will of self-denial and cross-bearing will in fact forfeit the essential quality (= true spiritual value) of the present life he is trying to preserve. On the other hand, whoever forfeits himself to God's will of self-denial and hardships will discover the greater essential quality (spiritual value) of the present life he was willing to forfeit." This interpretation would therefore not describe eternal salvation, but a higher quality of experience with God in this life, with implications for the eschatological life, as the next section will show.

"Whoever is ashamed of Me." Mark and Luke state a negative condition that if anyone is ashamed of Christ and His words, Christ will also be ashamed of that person at His coming (**Mark 8:38/Luke 9:26**). **Matthew 16:27** does not mention shame, but can be correlated with **Matt 10:32-33**,⁵⁵ where the condition is stated in terms of confessing and denying Christ,⁵⁶ and is claimed to be a condition of salvation by some of the "disciples are born" perspective.⁵⁷

The idea of being ashamed of Christ or denying Christ is clarified in some contexts more than in others. In Luke this saying follows a warning about one who positions himself with the world for the sake of gain (**Luke 9:25**). It thus explains ("For," gar) the eschatological consequences which face those who desire the world. The same could be said of this saying in **Mark 8:38**, with the exception that Jesus adds the helpful phrase "in this adulterous and sinful generation." The shame therefore seems to imply a denial of one's identification with Christ in the face of the pressure to live for and identify with the world. In Mark the "For" appears to connect v 38 with v 35, expanding the idea of one's relation to this world and its consequences.

Perhaps the greatest clarification comes from the parallel thought of **Matt 10:32-33**, where the context is developed more fully. There Jesus is giving instructions to the Twelve before sending them out to preach the Gospel (**Matt 10:5ff.**). He warns of rejection and persecution (vv 16-25) and encourages them not to fear (vv 26-31). Verses 32-33 are also followed by similar warnings about rejection (vv 34-36). In vv 32-33 Jesus is both encouraging and warning in the face of the fear of persecution. He wants the disciples to know that anyone who identifies with Him will be rewarded, while anyone who shrinks from this will be denied by Christ before the Father (explained below). Matthew's context seems a close parallel to that which is signified by Mark's phrase "in this adulterous and sinful generation" (**Mark 8:38**).

The consequence facing someone who is ashamed of or denies Christ is more enigmatic. Does Christ's reciprocal shame and denial of that person at His coming denote a denial of salvation? In correlating **Matt 10:32-33** with 16:27, it is clear that the issue is some kind of recompense for one's works. Matthew takes care to state that at His coming, Christ "will reward (apodosei) each according to his works" (16:27). That Jesus makes works the basis of the recompense demands that salvation not be the issue (**Eph 2:8-9**). Also, the verb apodosei carries the idea of "recompense" with no inherent sense of whether it is good or bad, so it could speak of positive reward or negative judgment.⁵⁸ In Mark and Luke a negative recompense is suggested: Those who were too ashamed to identify with Christ will experience Christ's shame. The effect of Christ's

shame is not specified, but one could surmise that for a redeemed and now fully-enlightened believer, this would at least produce agonizing regret. In the parallel passage, **Matt 10:32-33**, the idea of recompense is good (v 32) or bad (v 33) accordingly.⁵⁹ Christ's confession (or lack of it) in heaven would not relate to the judgment of our salvation, but to an acknowledgment (or lack of it) before the Father of the disciples' unity or fellowship with Christ⁶⁰ which is recompensed in an unspecified but appropriate way. (However, one might compare **2 Tim 2:12**, where reigning with Christ is the specific reward.)

Conclusions from these conditions

Collectively, all the conditions studied thus far in this section are summarized by the "disciples are born" advocates as demands for submission to Christ as Lord for salvation.⁶¹ There is little disagreement with the interpretations of the demands themselves, only with the application of them to salvation instead of the Christian life. But their interpretation of the conditions cannot evade the charge of salvation by merit. It makes no sense to demand from unbelieving sinners a decision that assumes an understanding of the full significance of Christ's sacrifice, especially at this point in the Gospel narratives before His death (Would Jesus ask an unbeliever to be willing to die for Him?) This would practically preclude anyone from being saved unless he understood the meanings of these conditions-meanings which can best be appreciated in light of salvation, not in prospect of it.

Jesus' teaching on discipleship took place well into His ministry and was addressed primarily to His disciples as a further revelation of the kind of commitment He desired of His already saved followers. He explained these conditions against the background of His own commitment that would lead to His death in order to invest them with the fullest significance for those who also desired to follow God's will.

C. Other conditions

Some other conditions will be considered briefly. Again, the main issue is not usually the interpretation of the condition itself, but whether it applies to Christians or non-Christians.

1. Hate Your Family (Matt 10:37//Luke 14:26)

In another setting, Matthew and Luke add another condition to those who are already considered disciples. In Matthew's account, Jesus says the one who "loves" family more than Him is "not worthy" of Him. In Luke, Jesus says no one can be His disciple who does not "hate" his family and his own life. This condition is troublesome for many whether it speaks of salvation or of a deeper commitment.

As Beare asserts, Jesus was probably using a Semitic figure of speech for hate that means "love less."⁶² Jesus must be the object of one's supreme love and devotion if one is to be His disciple. But in both Matthew and Luke, the words are applied to believers only. In Matthew, the saying is in the context of a warning about family members who will be divided over Christ (10:34-35). In such a situation, a person who is convinced that Jesus is the Messiah will have his ongoing loyalty tested by those in the family who disagree. This would present a great temptation to choose family ties and harmony over one's identity with Christ. In Luke, the saying is applied to anyone who "comes to" Jesus, which denotes those who believe in Him, as noted earlier.

Therefore, MacArthur rightly interprets the meaning of the idiom itself, "We must be unquestionably loyal to Him."⁶³ However, this interpretation does not apply to the unsaved, for one more naturally learns love and loyalty on the basis of what Jesus has done in redemption and forgiveness. The Bible teaches that God offers salvation to people as sinners, that is, apart from their love and

loyalty to Christ (**Rom 5:6-8; I John 4:10**). Even thus softened (as a Semitic figure of speech), such a devoted love for God over blood relationships would be an extraordinary demand for sinners who have had no experience of Christ's redeeming love. It is better understood as truth which brings believers into a deeper relationship with Jesus as Lord through their loyalty to Him.

2. Forsake All (Luke 14:33)

Another condition that Jesus gives is that "Whoever does not forsake all... cannot be My disciple." It shares the same context as the condition discussed above (**Luke 14:27**) and is therefore addressed to believers. Following the illustrations of a builder and of a king who did not make the necessary provision to finish their commitments, this condition demands that a believer commit or surrender whatever possessions are necessary in order for him to follow God's will. "All that he has" translates *pasi tois heautou hyparchousin* which speaks of one's property or possessions.⁶⁵

The condition is in absolute terms. Perhaps realizing the difficulty of making this a demand for unbelievers who wish to be saved, disciples are born proponents sometimes soften this and other conditions to a willingness to forsake all.

But Jesus did not say one must only be willing. Even if one only had to be willing to do these things for salvation, salvation would be just as conditional and meritorious as if they were actual works. This negates the concept of grace (**Rom 4:4**). Furthermore, the subjectivity of willingness makes salvation elusive.

3. Abide in His Word (John 8:30-31)

This passage will be considered because it is usually thought to be a condition of discipleship spoken to unbelievers. Speaking of Jesus' ministry, John writes, "As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed.'" Many commentators assign Jesus' words to those who had a counterfeit or spurious faith.⁶⁶

However, the passage is best understood as a condition of discipleship directed to true believers. It is argued that "believed Him" in v 31 indicates inadequate faith by the use of *pisteuo* ("believe") without the preposition *eis* ("in"). But it is obvious that those addressed in v 31 are the same as those in v 30 who "believed in Him" (*pisteuo eis auton*), which is a strong term denoting salvation.⁶⁷ Also, there is overwhelming evidence that *pisteuo* without the preposition does not prove that faith is inadequate for salvation.⁶⁸ Salvation is clearly meant in v 24 where *pisteuo* with no preposition is used when Jesus states, "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

It is also argued that the hostility of these believers continues (vv 33ff.), and Jesus calls them children of the devil (v 44). This continuing hostility reflects the opposition of the Jews, which is a major motif of this section. Jesus briefly directing His attention to those Jews who were saved as He taught in the temple.⁶⁹

This interpretation is most reasonable because it prevents Christ, who says in v 45 "you do not believe Me," from contradicting John, who said they "believed in Him" and "believed Him" (vv 30-31). It also has greater exegetical and theological consistency than that view which would say these are "believers who did not really believe."

The condition for becoming disciples in v 31 should not be construed as an admonition to unbelievers. In fact, the opposite is indicated by the emphatic plural pronoun "you" (*hymeis*) which distinguishes the new believers from the rest of the Jews.⁷⁰ Also, Jesus' admonition is not to enter His word, but to abide (*meno*) or continue in it. The assumption that they are already in His word indicates that abiding is a condition for further knowledge of the truth and freedom in Christ.

Discipleship, as abiding in intimacy with Christ, is elsewhere in John made conditional on love and obedience (e.g., 13:35; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:4, 7, 10, 14).

Conclusions from the cost of discipleship

Our examination of the conditions of discipleship given in the Gospels show that they are directed toward challenging believers to live lives of obedience, surrender, sacrifice, and self-denial. There is not the slightest evidence that they are intended for unbelievers.

Discipleship is indeed costly, but the cost can only be paid in response to the grace received at salvation. As a believer understands the sacrifice of God for his redemption, he will want to respond to the grace given with a reciprocal commitment. As he learns to also sacrifice, obey, and deny himself, he will become more like the Savior who exemplifies these things. Salvation is by grace; discipleship is costly. The popularized term "costly grace" does not present a paradox, but an absurdity. It is as much a misnomer as "cheap grace."

There is only one kind of grace, and by definition it is absolutely free! The only sense in which salvation is costly is in the fact that Jesus Christ paid the supreme price, His life, for the sinner's redemption. It is unfortunate that some demand of the sinner costly conditions for salvation. To the sinner, salvation is absolutely free. If it were costly to him in any sense, then it could no longer be of grace and Christianity would take its place alongside the rest of the world's religions

Final Conclusion

After examining the terminology of discipleship, the model of discipleship, and the conditions of discipleship, we cannot ignore the various degrees of discipleship presented in the NT. Whether as a minimal commitment or full surrender, discipleship denotes a direction or an orientation more than a state. It is a journey, not an arrival. Anywhere on one's journey toward Christ, one can be called a disciple. Though all disciples find themselves at different points on the journey, the committed disciple is seen as well on the way with his destination clearly in view. Therefore, we must regard with suspicion those who make absolute statements about what a disciple is or those who make the simplistic charge that some teach that there are two classes of Christians: ordinary Christians and super-Christians.⁷¹ Though sometimes used to refer to Christians in general (as explained in relation to Acts), the majority of uses by the Lord Jesus indicates that full-fledged discipleship is when a believer fully submits to Christ's Word and Christ's will in all areas of life.

From our observations, we find a clear distinction between committed discipleship and salvation which can not be ignored: Salvation is a free gift; intimate discipleship is costly. Salvation relates primarily to Christ as Savior; discipleship relates primarily to Christ as Lord. Salvation involves the will of God in redemption and reconciliation; discipleship involves the whole will of God. Salvation's sole condition is "believe"; discipleship's conditions are abide, obey, love, deny oneself, take up the cross, follow, lose one's life, "hate" one's family, etc. Salvation is a new birth; discipleship is a lifetime of growth. Salvation depends on Christ's work on the Cross for all people; discipleship depends on a believer carrying his or her cross for Christ. Salvation is a response to Christ's death and resurrection; discipleship is a response to Christ's life. Salvation determines eternal destiny; discipleship determines eternal and temporal rewards. Salvation is obtained by faith; discipleship is obtained by faith through works.

The difference is the same as that between justification and sanctification. These realities are related, but we do not encourage sanctification before justification. Justification is through faith alone; sanctification is through a life of progressive faithful obedience. Justification can take place apart from sanctification, but sanctification cannot take place apart from justification. With justification comes the Spirit and His power to accomplish sanctification. The sequence of justification before sanctification, salvation before discipleship, or faith before commitment is clearly

taught in the Bible. Many verses appeal for commitment on the basis of grace already received (e.g., **Rom 12:1**; **Eph 4:1**; **Col 2:6**; **Titus 2:11-12**). The grace received in salvation is the basis of further Christian commitment, not vice versa. It is significant that in **Titus 2:12** Paul uses a verb to express the idea of how grace trains the believer that is different from the idea usually related to discipleship expressed by *matheteuo*. The verb he chooses (*paideuo*, "teach") is rooted in the Greek idea of training a child (*paidion*).⁷² Grace, when received, takes an immature person and trains him toward godliness. This and other NT admonitions to commit one's life to godly principles on the basis of grace received would seem superfluous if such a commitment was understood and made before salvation. The commitment of discipleship is expected of Christians only, therefore, disciples are made, not born.

► **References:**

¹ A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, compiled by Walter Bauer, trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd ed. rev. and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. 'mathetes,' 486-87.

² *Ibid.*, s.v. "matheteuo," 486. This is the intransitive meaning.

³ See also K. H. Rengstorff, s.v. "mathetes," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 4:415-41; and Richard D. Calenburg, "The New Testament Doctrine of Discipleship" (Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981), 20-40.

⁴ Shmuel Safrai, "Master and Disciple," *Jerusalem Perspective* 3 (November-December 1990): 5, 13.

⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 17.

⁶ John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988, 196, n. 2).

⁷ While some might argue circularly that because the rulers did not confess Christ publicly they never truly believed, this would ignore the context and the details of the text itself. Verse 42 begins with a strong adversative (*homos mentoi*) showing that from among the Jewish nation and leadership which did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah (vv 37-41), there were individual exceptions who truly believed. If they were not true believers in Christ, John's contrast is muted and meaningless. John clearly declares that they "believed in Him.

⁸ MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 196; Kenneth L. Gentry, "The Great Option: A Study of the Lordship Controversy," *Baptist Reformation Review* 5 (Spring 1976): 49-79; Charles Price, *Real Christians* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1987), 54.

⁹ Gentry insists that **Matt 28:19** is simply a "fuller account" of the commission in **Mark 16:15**, which says, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." He says, "The preaching of the gospel summarized in Mark is the making of disciples in Matthew" (Gentry, "The Great Option," 70; See also Boice, *Discipleship*, 159-169; Kent, "Review Article," 75). But we must take issue with Gentry's equating of the two commissions. If "preach the gospel" in Mark is a summary of Matthew's "make disciples," then preaching the Gospel includes baptizing and teaching obedience as elements that define the Gospel. However, it is clear that Paul did not consider baptism and obedience to "all things" which Christ commanded part of the saving Gospel (cf. **1 Cor 1:17**; **15:1-4**; **Eph 2:8-9**). The parallel between the two commissions is found in the participle *proeuthentes*, translated in both passages as "go." In both places it should be understood as "having gone or "as you go," which denotes a presupposed or simultaneous activity (Robert D. Culver, "What Is the Church's Commission?: Some Exegetical Issues in **Matthew 28:16-20**," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 [July-September 1968]: 243-53; D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol.8, 595). For Mark, the main activity is denoted by the finite verb "preach" (*keryxate*), but in Matthew by the finite verb "make disciples" (*matheteusate*). Matthew's "go" equals Mark's "go...preach the gospel" as the first step in making disciples. While Mark's commission stops with gospel proclamation, Matthew speaks optimally in making discipleship the ultimate goal, which harmonizes with his emphasis on discipleship in his Gospel. The other participles in Matthew, "baptizing" and "teaching," tell how to "make disciples." After the Gospel is believed, baptism is the first step of

obedient discipleship, and teaching obedience to the commands of Christ is the means by which believers develop as disciples.

¹⁰ Exceptions would be Ananias and Sapphira (**Acts 5:1-11**), Simon the sorcerer (8:13ff.), and the Ephesian sorcerers (19:10-19). Even so, the latter two accounts lead us to believe that these believers would probably continue in Christ's teachings.

¹¹ Calenburg, "Discipleship," 238-39. See also 197-200.

¹² So W. Michaelis, s.v. "mimeomai," in TDNT 4:673; W. Bauder, s.v. "mimeomai," in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (NIDNTT)* 1:492.

¹³ Calenburg, "Discipleship," 239.

¹⁴ Bauder, *Ibid.*

¹⁵ MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 21. See also 29-31, 196-98.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁷ James G. Merritt, "Evangelism and the Call of Christ," in *Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century: The Critical Issues*, ed. Thomas S. Ranier (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1989), 145. Also, see Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Lord of the Saved: Getting to the heart of the Lordship Debate* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P. & R. Publishing, 1992), 67-82.; Robert Lescelius, *Lordship Salvation: Some Crucial Questions and Answers* (Asheville, NC: Revival Literature, 1992), 62-66.

¹⁸ Boice, *Discipleship*, 16.

¹⁹ E.g., Richard P. Belcher, *A Layman's Guide to the Lordship Salvation Controversy* (Southbridge, MA: Crowne Publications, 1990), 94-95; Boice, *Discipleship*, 13-16; MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 15-17; John R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1958), 108.

²⁰ Michael J. Wilkins, *Following the Master: Discipleship in the Steps of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 185. See also his study, *The Concept of Disciple in Matthew's Gospel: As Reflected in the Use of the Term Mathetes*, *Novum Testamentum Supplement* 59 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988); and Paul J. Achtemeier, "Peter in the Gospel of Mark" in *Peter in the New Testament*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann (London: Geoffrey Chapman Publishers, 1974), 62; Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple-Apostle-Martyr. A Historical and Theological Essay*, trans. Floyd Filson, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 25-33; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), 332,334; Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Figure of Peter in Matthew's Gospel as a Theological Problem," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979): 72, 80. See also W. S. Vorster, "Characterization of Peter in the Gospel of Mark" *Neotestamentica* 21(1987): 74.

²¹ Carsten P. Thiede, *Simon Peter: From Galilee to Rome* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988; first published in 1986 by The Paternoster Press), 36. See also Gundry, *Matthew*, 334.

²² The account of John 1 leads us to believe that Andrew believed in Christ: (1) He followed John the Baptist (**John 1:35**) and evidently believed John's witness about Christ (1:36-37); (2) He followed Christ (1:37, 39-40); (3) He believed Jesus was the Messiah (1:41; cf. 20:30-31); (4) In the following story, Philip and Nathaniel obviously believe (1:45, 49-50); (5) Andrew's faith is confirmed in **John 2:11**.

²³ Boice, *Discipleship*, 16-17.

²⁴ See William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 245-46; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), 169-70; Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (London: Robert Scott, Paternoster Row, 1909), 48; Herman N. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, trans. Ray

Togtman, *The Bible Student's Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 77; Frederick Louis Godet, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), 1:330.

²⁵ Hans Conzelmann, *Jesus*, trans. J. Raymond Lord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 35; James Donaldson, "Called to Follow: A Twofold Experience of Discipleship in Mark," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 5 (February 1975), 69; A. W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John*, 4 vols. (Ohio: Cleveland Bible Truth Depot, 1929), 1:62-63; Ridderbos, *Matthew*, 77.

²⁶ Merritt, "Call of Christ," *Evangelism*, 145-46.

²⁷ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, *The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), 147. In agreement, see Lenski, *Matthew*, 168-72, and *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 276-77; William F. Arndt, *Luke*, *Concordia Classic Commentary Series* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 155-56; Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, revised ed., *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 124; Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), 181; William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 279-80.

²⁸ Arndt, *Luke*, 156; Calenburg, "Discipleship," 121; Hendriksen, *Matthew*, 245-47; Geldenhuys, *Luke*, 181; Lenski, *Luke*, 277.

²⁹ E.g., Boice, *Discipleship*, 35-44, 117; Kenneth L. Gentry, "The Great Option: A Study of the Lordship Controversy," *Baptist Reformation Review* 5 (Spring 1976), 73-75; John H. Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1991), 253; MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 196-202; J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961), 72-73; John R. W. Stott, "Must Christ Be Lord to Be Savior?-Yes," *Eternity* 10 (September 1959), 18.

³⁰ Cf. **John 5:40; 6:35, 37, 44-45, 65; 7:37**.

³¹ Harry L. Poe, "Evangelism and Discipleship," in *Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Thom. S. Rainer, 133-44 (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1989), 136. It is disturbing that this view appears to originate more from pragmatics than from biblical and theological inquiry. Books by disciples are made teachers consistently begin with a statement of the problem of worldly Christians as a justification for a costly Gospel (e.g., Boice, *Discipleship*, 13; Walter J. Chantry, *Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?* [Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970; Reprint, 1985], 13-14; MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 16). If the majority of Christians were living committed lives, one wonders if there would be a "problem" with the Gospel message at all.

³² J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961), 73.

³³ E.g., James Montgomery Boice, *Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 144; MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 29-30, 196-98; Boice, *Discipleship*, 13-23; Kenneth L. Gentry, "The Great Option: A Study of the Lordship Controversy," *Baptist Reformation Review* 5 (Spring 1976), 76.

³⁴ E.g., see MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 30.

³⁵ See Herman N. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, transl. Ray Togtman, *The Bible Student's Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 312.

³⁶ For further discussion on the significance of *ochlos*, see Charles C. Bing, "Lordship Salvation: A Biblical Evaluation and Response" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1991), 247-48. William L. Lane comments on **Mark 8:34**: "By calling the crowd Jesus indicates that the conditions for following him are relevant for all believers, and not for the disciples alone." William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 306.

³⁷ The parallel conditions of Matthew 10 are stated to the Twelve (**Matt 10:5**), while a different passage, **Luke 14:26ff.**, is addressed to the "great multitudes" who "went with Him" (**Luke 14:25**).

³⁸ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*. The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), 248. The portrayal of the multitudes in general in Luke is very similar to Mark's, although a few times Luke shows Christ's antagonists associated with the term ochlos (cf. 3:7 [but see v. 10]; 5:29; 11:14-15; 12:54-56). Interestingly, Luke sometimes shows that there was a large number (ochlos) of "disciples" (6:17; 7:11).

³⁹ **John 2:11** confirms that the early disciples had believed in Christ. More contextually relevant, the vicarious confession of Peter, which precedes the pericope under consideration, represents the disciples' faith in Jesus as the messianic Savior and the divine Son of God (**Matt 16:16/Mark 8:29/Luke 9:20**).

⁴⁰ Stott, "Must Christ Be Lord?" 18.

⁴¹ Gentry, "The Great Option," BRR 5:174.

⁴² John MacArthur, *Hard to Believe* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), 6.

⁴³ Stott, "Yes," *Eternity* 10, 18

⁴⁴ Boice, *Discipleship*, 40.

⁴⁵ Lane, *Mark*, 307-308.

⁴⁶ Cf. **Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23; Rom 5:6-10; Col 1:21-22; Heb 13:12**; 1 Petl: 18-19; 3:18.

⁴⁷ Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 114. Also, I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1978), 374.

⁴⁸ Gentry, "The Great Option," BRR 5,75; Boice, *Discipleship*, 38; MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 201-202.

⁴⁹ So R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), 645.

⁵⁰ See the discussion in Zane C. Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege*, 2nd ed. revised and enlarged (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1992), 96-101.

⁵¹ So M. F. Sadler, *The Gospel According to Mark* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1899), 175; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), 350.

⁵² John R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1958), 114. See also the NIV translation "self" in **Luke 9:25**.

⁵³ BAGD, s.v. "apollymi," 94-95. A majority of uses in the NT are clearly not soteriological.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, s.v. "zemioo," 339. Instances of its use in other passages never speak of eternal destruction. One eschatological use refers to a believer who "suffers loss" yet is "saved" eternally (**1 Cor 3:15**).

⁵⁵ As Stott (*Basic Christianity*, 117) suggests.

⁵⁶ Matthew's use of arneomai, "deny," basically conveys little different meaning from Mark and Luke's use of epaischynomai, "be ashamed." See Marshall, *Luke*, 377.

⁵⁷ Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 117; Boice, *Discipleship*, 117; MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 198-200.

⁵⁸ *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "apodidomi," 89-90. For clear examples of a good reward, see **Matt 6:4, 6, 18**.

⁵⁹ Recompense, and not salvation specifically, seems to be the context for Matthew's mention of confessing Christ in 10:32-33. As discussed, the context warns of persecution and rejection (**Matt. 10:16-31; 34-36**). In such persecution, those who shrink from confessing Christ will be denied the reward of Christ confessing them before the Father in heaven (10:32-33). Furthermore, the issue of one's worthiness (10:37-39) implies the idea of merit, which implies either reward or lack of reward. Jesus then spoke of rewards for those who were not ashamed of identifying with Him and His disciples (10:40-42; cf. 5:11-12). In vv 41 and 42 Jesus uses the word *misthos*, which in the majority of its NT usages denotes a positive "wage" or "reward" (A Greek-English Lexicon, s.v. "misthos," 525).

⁶⁰ For this idea see Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), 1:83; Alexander Balmain Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1980), 1:167.

⁶¹ Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 114. MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 202.

⁶² Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 250. See also, C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 577; William F. Arndt, *Luke*, *Concordia Classic Commentary Series* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 344; D. A. Carson, "Matthew," 257.

⁶³ MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 201. Stott and Boice have similar interpretations (Stott, "Yes," *Eternity* 10, 18; Boice, *Discipleship*, 117).

⁶⁴ Greek English Lexicon, s.v. "hyparcho," 845.

⁶⁵ MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 84. MacArthur is commenting on the lesson learned from the example of the rich young ruler (**Matt 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23**), which he believes is summarized by **Luke 14:33** (p. 78). This story is preeminently used by Lordship teachers to argue that salvation is costly. E.g., MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 77ff.; Gentry, "The Great Option," *BRR* 5:61,75; Arens J. ten Pas, *The Lordship of Christ* (n.p.: Ross House Books, 1978), 5; Elmer R. Enlow, "Eternal Life: On What Conditions?," *Alliance Witness* (January 19, 1972), 4; Paul Fromer, "The Real Issue in Evangelism," *His 18* (June 1958), 5; Homer A. Kent, "Review Article: The Gospel According to Jesus," *Grace Theological Journal* 10 (1989), 71; J. Wallis, "Many to Belief, But Few to Obedience" *Sojourners* (March 1976), 21-22; Poe, "Evangelism and Discipleship," *Evangelism*, 138. Chantry structures his whole Lordship presentation around the rich young ruler in his book, *Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?* I believe that the demand Jesus made of the rich young ruler was not a condition of eternal life. However, the argument deserves more space than this article can afford.

⁶⁶ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1971), 454. Nearly all commentators who argue for a spurious faith in 2:23-24 will also argue for it here.

⁶⁷ Gentry agrees this is a strong term for salvation (Gentry, "The Great Option," *BRR* 5:56).

⁶⁸ Note the absence of the preposition in these soteriological passages: **Matt 9:28; John 5:24; 8:24; 11:42; 13:19; 14:10; 17:8, 21; 20:31; Acts 16:34; 18:8; Rom 4:3; 10:9; Gal 3:6; 1 Thess 4:14; 2 Tim 1:12; Titus 3:8; 1 John 5:1,5, 10**. That *pisteuo* alone or *pisteuo* with *hoti* ("believe that") can denote salvation as easily as the *pisteuo eis* construction is the conclusion of a number of scholars. See Rudolph Bultmann, s.v. "pisteuo," *TDNT*, 203; Richard Christianson, "The Soteriological Significance of *Pisteuo* in the Gospel of John" (Th.M. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1987), 86-87; Gordon H. Clark, *Faith and Saving Faith* (Jefferson, MO: Trinity Foundation, 1983), 101; Elizabeth Jarvis, "The Key Term 'Believe' in the Gospel of John," *Notes on Translation* 2 (1988), 46-51; Morris, *John*, 337; E. Herbert Nygren, "Faith and Experience," *The Covenant Quarterly* 41 (August 1983), 41-42; M. F. Sadler, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883), 221; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 1:561.

⁶⁹ In light of what has been argued thus far, vv 31-32 show that Jesus is challenging believers to become true disciples. John's commentary in v 30 is inserted before Jesus' remarks to direct the reader to a change of focus by Christ before the opposition resumes in v 33 as a reaction to Christ's remarks. As soon as He finishes His remarks to these believers, the Jews raise another objection, just as they have been doing from the start of the dialogue (cf. 8:13, 19,22,25). The objection of v 33, being totally out of character with the inclination of those mentioned in vv 31 and 32, shows that the identity of those in v 33 is assumed to be the antagonistic unbelieving Jews, not the new believers. This Johannine technique of editorial explanation is further discussed in Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege*, 2nd.

ed., 43-44. See also R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), 627-28.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 628.

⁷¹ For example, see Gentry, *Lord of the Saved*, 60; Dallas Willard, "Discipleship: For Super-Christians Only?" *Christianity Today* 24 (October 10, 1980), 24 25, 27.

⁷² Dieter Fürst, s.v. "paideuo," in *NIDNTT*, 3:775-79. He comments on **Titus 2:11-12**: "Here too education is an outworking of grace... what is being said here is that man is justified by grace and led by it into sanctification" (p. 779).