

Abiding in Christ: The Concept of Discipleship in John

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The story of the disciples of Jesus began, according to John, as disciples of John the Baptist. Two of John's disciples heard John testify to Jesus and followed him (1:35). The others were called from various stations along the way. Much has been written about the importance of the word "disciple" in the New Testament. The essence of the word is that the person so designated is a "learner," one who learns from another in a relationship of commitment and faith. At various points in the Fourth Gospel, that the disciples "believed in him" (2:11) is stated; but their faith seems to have been a growing faith in which the main element was an abiding relationship with him. The aorist may be interpreted to mean, "they came to faith." The structure (using *eis* plus the accusative) indicates that the relationship is more than believing things about him. It involves commitment to a person. This is indicated graphically by the phrase to "believe in his name" (1:12). The relationship of disciple/master in John clearly involves a personal relationship of commitment to a person, not just the process of learning.¹ Perhaps the desire to emphasize such a relationship is the reason that John was so fond of the basic expression of "abiding" to depict the relationship of Jesus to God, God of Jesus, of disciples to Jesus, and of Jesus and God to disciples.

The concept of discipleship in the Fourth Gospel is inevitably intertwined with the great discipleship chapters, 14-16. The Greek word translated often as "abide" occurs fourteen times in these chapters. The noun form of the same root occurs twice in chapter fourteen and nowhere else in the New Testament. The verb occurs

forty times in the whole Gospel. The word itself is obviously a very important part of the writer's concept of discipleship.

THE CONCEPT OF ABIDING

The word group translated "to abide" in John is from the root *men*. The verb form is *meno*. The basic root *men* has the meaning "to stay," "to remain," and "to tarry." The verb form was used to refer to an attribute of God; he remains or he is constant. The word was used in the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) to translate the idea that God "abides into the age" (Daniel 6:26). His Word also "abides" (Isaiah 40:8). The same basic idea is expressed in the New Testament of God, his will, and his attributes. George Caird, in a lecture at Oxford in the fall of 1983, suggested that the question asked by the first disciples (1:38), "Rabbi, where do you live (*meneis*)?" was not answered immediately according to John but only later when Jesus stated, ". . . the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (10:37f).

The verb form *meno* is translated in a variety of ways. In the King James Version it is translated in John as: to abide (1:32, 39; 3:36 [of the wrath of God], 4:40; 5:38; 7:9; 8:35 (used twice); 10:40; 11:6; 12:24, 34, 46; 15:4 (used three times), 5, 6, 7, 10 (used twice), to remain (1:33; 9:41 [of sin]; 15:16; 19:31), to dwell (1:38, 39; 6:56; 14:10, 17), to continue (2:12; 8:31; 11:54; 15:9), to tarry (4:40; 21:22, 23), to endure (6:27), to be present (14:25). The word has both a theological meaning (to abide) and a non-theological meaning (to stay, to remain, and so forth). The interest in this paper is in its theological meaning in the Fourth Gospel.

Clearly the passages about the Spirit abiding in Christ are theological. John the Baptist presented this as the credentials by which he could identify the Christ (1:32). Even the words of the enemies of Jesus taught the truth: "The Messiah abides forever" (12:34). This links him with the God of the Israel who abides forever. The struggle which Jesus' opponents were having was his talk of being the Messiah, the son of Man, and at the same time predicting his death on the cross. This seemed to conflict with the idea that the Messiah would abide into the age. Clearly the real answer to

the disciples' question is that he abides in God and God abides in him. He partakes of God's attribute of abiding into the age.

The concept of abiding in God and God abiding in Jesus, the Messiah, is important to what John recorded about the disciples. The disciples' relationship never attained to the perfection of the relationship of God and Jesus, but the relationship was seen as being similar to that relationship and patterned after it. This is evident in the great discipleship chapters (14-16).

JESUS' DISCIPLESHIP DISCOURSE

The three discipleship chapters cannot be considered in isolation to their context in the Gospel.² In the preceding chapter Jesus was with the disciples teaching them and warning them. He washed their feet and then explained that they should be willing to serve one another. After the departure of Judas, Jesus announced that he had been glorified and that God had been glorified (or perhaps not a true passive—had manifest his glory) in Jesus (13:31-32). In spite of the difficulty in translating the sayings of Jesus in 13:31-32, all agree that his being glorified is related to his cross and what resulted from it.³ Jesus spoke of his cross as his "going away." Peter questioned him about this, and he predicted two things: Peter would be able also to follow him in the future (probably not a prediction of Peter's own death), and Peter would deny Jesus. Peter's responses according to John were at that time still from ignorance. Jesus then began the farewell discourses which have as their basic burden to instruct disciples on what to do during the interim after the crucifixion and resurrection, and on the time when they also would be glorified.

The three discipleship chapters are followed by the prayer of Jesus in which he prayed for himself and for his disciples. For himself, that he would bring glory and honor to the Father. This was fulfilled in his death and resurrection by which he gives eternal life, which is the ability to know the only true God and the one whom he sent. He prayed that the disciples may be one as God and Christ were one. He had kept them from the evil one; now they would be kept by the Father in the power of the Spirit. Jesus in turn prayed for all others who would become believers. He prayed that

all those persons whom the Father had given to him (to his charge) may be with him (verse 24) beyond the events that they faced immediately. Hence, the discourse on discipleship is surrounded by the emphasis on the abiding relationship with Christ.

John 14:1-4—Jesus' discipleship discourse in John 14-16 is filled with the emphasis on "abiding" in Christ and Christ "abiding" in his disciples. The verb occurs fourteen times and the noun twice. The first paragraph begins with the famous "Let not your heart be troubled" and ends with, "If you ask anything in my name I will do it" (14:1-14). Few commentators doubt that the next paragraph promises the Spirit to the disciples to be with them after the crucifixion as they go out to witness to Christ. However, many see the first paragraph of chapter fourteen as referring to the time when the disciples would dwell with Christ in heaven forever. Is that correct? The statement, "In my father's house are many *monai*," is taken to refer to the provision of God for the heavenly home prepared for saints after death.⁴ The only other place where this same noun is used in the Bible is in 14:23, "We (Christ and the Father) will come to him and we will make an abode (*mone*) with him." Clearly the latter refers to the presence of God with the believer. It is not necessary or desirable to translate the same Greek word the same way every time it occurs, but in this case the two contexts seem to demand it. All of the paragraph except verses 1-4 seem much more to be talking about what the disciples will be doing in their ministry to the world (especially, verses 6-7, 12-14). John may have wanted his readers to see the first four verses that way also.

What then do the opening statements of the discourse say to the disciples, and what did the Gospel writer want them to say to his readers? Clearly, the first statement is a warning against anxiety. This warning is the opening statement of the discourse which the writer presented as Jesus' preparation of the disciples for the coming events and their ministry. The two occurrences of the word "believe" in verse 1 are probably both imperatives.⁵ Therefore they mean, "Continue to believe both in God and in me!"⁶ In verse 2, the statement, "In my Father's house are many abiding places" (*monai*, plural) when combined with his promise to go away and prepare a place (topos) for them, is most difficult to interpret.

There is a passage in the Septuagint⁷ important to the meaning of these statements. In I Maccabees 7:33-38 the writer told of the threats of Nicanor, the Syrian general, who was seeking to get the Jewish leaders to surrender Judas, the leader of the revolt. He reviled the priests and threatened to burn the temple unless Judas was delivered to him. He then went away, and the priests went into the temple, wept, and said to God,

You chose this house to be called by your name, and to be for your people a house of prayer and supplication. Take vengeance on this man and on his army, and let them fall by the sword: remember their blasphemies, and do not give to them an abiding place (*mone*) (I Maccabees 7:37-38).

The Revised Standard Version translated the last clause, “and let them live no longer.” This passage is important because of the convergence of two ideas; the temple is clearly the abiding place for the priests and Jews, and the absence of an abiding place for the Syrians would mean their death.

Another passage that seems important to the meaning here is another Johannine writing, the Revelation. In the dramatic picture of the Incarnation of the Savior, John depicted the persecution of the woman by the dragon. The woman was given two wings with which she flew to the desert to her place (*topos*), where she was cared for for three and a half times (a temporary period of persecution, 12:14). The dragon then went off to persecute her other offspring (the church). The *place* represented the protection of abiding in God. Interestingly in the Gospel of John, Jesus identified himself with the temple (2:19-21), which is for the Jews the abiding place.

According to 14:2-4, Jesus talked about his death as a going away and a preparation of a place (*topos*) where the disciples could share his fellowship (*mone*) and find sustenance and protection for the task of the ministry of witnessing to him in the world.⁸ Thus the meaning of abiding place in this statement is the same as the evident meaning in the later paragraph where Jesus said, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make an abode (*mone*) with

him.” Clearly Jesus was preparing the disciples for what they would face beyond the cross in their ministry of witnessing. The place where Jesus would be was in the church, that is, in the work of the disciples. W. Michaelis stated,

He is speaking about these many dwellings, not because His return to God is to be interpreted as a homecoming to the Father’s house (and because one of these dwellings is reserved for Him), but solely and simply because these many dwellings will be at the disposal of His disciples.⁹

14:5-14—The basic truth of the rest of the opening paragraph of the discourse is that God abides in Jesus and Jesus abides in God. Thomas’s question concerning the way led to Jesus’ answer, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” All three of these words describe, not three things, but aspects of the same thing, namely that, God is seen in Christ.¹⁰ The more practical interpretation of what this statement means is found in 2 John 9: “Every one who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God: He who abides in the teaching has the Father and the Son.” Philip’s request that Jesus show them the Father led to the same assertion, “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (verse 9b). Then the disciples were told to believe “that *I* am the Father and the Father is in me.” The future work of the disciples would be determined by this relationship, for the works that Jesus did were the works that God did in him (verse 10b). Consequently, the one who believed in him also would do the works which he did and even greater because Jesus was going to the Father (verse 12). Thus his going away (the crucifixion/resurrection) enabled his disciples to do the work of witness in the same way that Jesus was able to do the work the Father gave him to do because of his abiding relationship. The promise of verses 13-14 is that the disciples would have access to God in Christ and in him have the resources needed to do the work of the Father. The assumption in the relationship between verses 12 and 13 is that that which disciples ask for is that which enables them to do the will of him who sent Jesus.¹¹ This meant that the Father would be glorified in the Son.

14:15-31—The centerpiece of this section is the promise of the Spirit. The exact relationship between verses 15 and 16 is ambiguous, partly because of a textual variation. The UBS Greek New Testament reads, “If you love me, you will keep (future) my commandments: I also will ask. . . .” The text behind the King James Version has, “If you love me, keep (imperative) my commandments: I also will ask. . . .” The earliest extensive copy of John in Greek (about A.D. 200) and the earliest complete Greek New Testament (about A.D. 350) have, “If you love me and keep (subjunctive) my commandments, I indeed will ask. . . .” The difference between the three involves one letter and could have been made easily as an accident. In the last reading both the loving and the keeping are conditions to the requesting and sending of the Paraclete. This is the more difficult reading since in two other verses the idea expressed in the first reading is repeated (verse 21 and 23). The idea is that the person who loves Christ will keep his word. The second reading, the use of the imperative, is very close to that.

In all three places in this paragraph where John records Jesus’ words about keeping his commandments, Jesus speaks also about loving him and also gives a promise that will be fulfilled by the Father. 1) The Father will give to him the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth (16). 2) The Father will love him and Jesus will love him and reveal himself to him (21). 3) The Father will love him, and we will come to him and make an abode with him (23).

The first promise is the giving of the Spirit. This was fulfilled according to John in a resurrection appearance of Christ: “Having said this he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ ” (20:22). The Spirit is called the “Spirit of truth.” The term Paraclete was used, giving the sense of one who helps. He is called “another” Paraclete, emphasizing that Jesus has performed the role of Paraclete. In fact in 1 John, in the event of sin, the Christian has a Paraclete with the Father, “Jesus Christ the righteous One” (2:1); the risen Christ is performing in heaven the role of Paraclete at the same time that the Holy Spirit is the Paraclete on earth with the disciples. This shows that in the Johannine writings, there is no radical tri-theism but a tri-unity of ministry in which the disciples are aided in doing the work of the one

who sent Jesus. Another emphasis is that the world cannot recognize him (verse 17). In that regard, John said, “in a little while the world will not see me any more; but you will see me because I have life, and you will have life” (verse 19). All of these statements focus attention upon the resources that the disciples have as they are sent out to do the works of him who sent Jesus. The result of these experiences is that they would recognize that Jesus was in the Father, that Jesus was in them, and that they were in him (verse 20). Thus the basic resource for discipleship is the mutual abiding which enables them to know and to serve. These experiences surely are centered in the Easter event and in the experience of the living Christ through faith (which the world cannot have, verse 19).¹²

The departure theme is continued through the last part of the chapter. The purpose of the last discourse is made clear. He spoke these things while he was with them so that, when he was not there, they would know that they were true. They were prepared for his departure (the cross) and would not be defeated by it. This would be meaningful in a situation where the most difficult thing they had to do was to explain the cross (see 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23). The role of the Spirit would be to remind them of these things and to give them peace. The paragraph is closed with still another emphasis on the love and obedience theme: “. . . I love the Father, and as he has commanded me thus I do” (verse 31). He is the greatest example of a faithful son. Because of his faithfulness, the Father will bless the disciples of his son—a theme found in John 3:16. The Paraclete was sent at Jesus’ request (verse 16) and in his name (verse 26). The key to discipleship is clearly in the relationship of disciples to Jesus who abides in God.

15:1-7—The relationship of abiding is explained in this section by the use of the analogy of the vine and the branches and then by the application of that analogy to the readers. Themes already expressed occur again: abiding in, asking, bearing fruit (doing God’s will), loving God and Jesus, and obedience. The goal is to produce fruit, the works which the Father gave them to do. The means is the abiding relationship. The analogy builds upon the work of the farmer in tending the vine in such a way as to enable it to produce maximum fruit.

The basic message of the paragraph is the message of the vine and the branches. The vine had long been a symbol for Israel, God's chosen people (Psalm 80:8; Jeremiah 2:21). The disciple can be what he was chosen to be (verse 16) only by abiding in Christ. His abiding means especially loving God, Jesus, and one another. The Father's work is pruning, that is, enabling through the power of the Spirit the branches to be fruitful. All that happens is to God's glory (his influence in the world which he loves, verse 8). The basic meaning of abiding in him is to abide in his love (verse 9). His commandment is, "Love one another" (verse 12). The relationship of abiding emphasizes the relationship of love in which disciples are called not slaves but friends (*philous*) (verse 15). Contrast this with the many times in the Old Testament when the vine was used by the prophets to pronounce God's judgment upon Israel (Hosea 10:1-2; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:21; Ezekiel 15:1-5, 17:1-21; 19:10-15). Yet there is a note of judgment in this paragraph, with the emphasis on the pruning work done by of the Father. However, that emphasis is not strong when compared with the note of producing fruit and with the assumption that the disciples will love one another as they are commanded. The fact that the church is the branches and not the vine itself, as was Israel, emphasizes the necessity for the branches to abide in the vine. The emphasis seems not to be so much on the feeding of the branches from the vine as on the abiding (love, obedience, and so forth) relationship that enables disciples to be what they were chosen to be. The obedience theme is again linked with love in the closing statement of the paragraph (verse 17): "I command you to love one another."

15:18-16:4a—The basic theme of this section is the hatred of the world directed toward the Christians. The passage falls naturally into three parts: 1) the warning about the world's hatred, 2) the third promise of the Spirit, and 3) the warning about the coming persecution. The message is for the church after the cross/resurrection. The fact of the hatred of the world toward the church was for John evidence that the disciples were not of the world (verse 19). The example of the suffering of Jesus should serve to warn the disciple that he also faces a hostile world (verse 20). The attitude of the world toward the church is rooted also in the

hatred of the world for God (verse 21-25). Their hatred of the works of Jesus is itself a judgment upon them, for it separates them from God.

In 14:16, 26, the Paraclete was promised to the disciples to be with them permanently and to teach and remind them of all that Jesus had said. In 15:26 the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, is said to “proceed” (present tense, “is going out from”) from the Father. His task was described as “witnessing concerning me.” To that statement Jesus added, “And *you* bear witness, for you were with me from the beginning” (verse 27). The basic implication of John’s emphasis on the Spirit is that he will come from God, especially in time of trouble, to enable the disciple to be faithful in witnessing to the Christ and interpreting his meaning for the world. The emphasis on the Spirit is clearly an emphasis on Jesus, the Christ, and his saving message.

The opening paragraph of chapter 16 warns against persecution of a particular Jewish variety: they would be “expelled from the synagogue” (verse 2). The word translated “expelled” is used also in 9:22 and 12:42. The purpose for the warning was stated in verse 1. It was so that disciples might not be caused to stumble (verse 1), or a possible meaning might be, “caused to give up their faith.”¹⁴ The warning continued with a very strong statement for the last part of verse 2. It begins with a word that normally means “but” or “on the other hand.” In this context it probably should be translated as emphatic (as in the King James Version, “yea”). “Indeed, the time is coming when some will consider that they are serving God by killing you.” This anticipates a severe persecution such as the killing of Stephen; James, the Apostle; James, leader of the Jerusalem Church (about A.D. 62); the Roman Christians under Nero; or the Christians put on trial by Pliny, the Younger (A.D. 112). Such a threat was known throughout the early church. The Jewish flavor of the persecution does not necessarily mean that it happened in Palestine, for there is some evidence that controversy between Jews and Christians happened as far away as Rome (Acts 18:1-3). Against a persecution that involved Jews, the statement in verse 3 would have been especially poignant: “They do these things because they do not know (or perhaps, have never known [aorist]) the Father or me.”

The warning in verse 4 again emphasizes the need to remember. This was a way that John pulled his readers into the story itself. "Remember" was a very important word in Old Testament theology. They were continually called to remember what God had done and the words of God (Exodus 13:3; Deuteronomy 7:18; Malachi 4:4; and so on).

16:4b-33—The rest of chapter 16 has three main divisions: 1) another section on the work of the Spirit, 2) a section dealing with his departure, and 3) a passage about overcoming the world in the love of the Father. The paragraph from verses 4b-11 is in preparation for what he says next about the work of the Spirit enabling them to do the work of ministry. The difficulty in the verses is the statement, "No one is asking me, 'Where are you going?'" This is exactly the question asked by Peter (13:36) and by Thomas (14:5). Many commentators rearrange the Gospel at this point for this and other reasons.¹⁵ Dodd's answer to this problem answers such objections and also points to the meaning of Jesus' statement.

It is in this order that the revelation is given: first the way, then the goal; not vice versa. At xvi. 5, on the other hand, the disciples are in full possession of Christ's disclosure of His (and their) goal (xiv. 12). Consequently, they are no longer puzzling themselves about the destination, and that is as it should be; but that being so, it is quite unreasonable to be sad about it. Jesus is reproaching them not because they are not enquiring about His destination, but because in spite of knowing that He is going to the Father they are dismayed about the future.¹⁶

Surely John's major concern is to warn and encourage disciples who are his readers. The ultimate goal is the focus of attention here. It is to their advantage that he goes away. That is the point of the rest of this paragraph.

The point is made in the statement, "If I do not go away the Paraclete will not come to you" (verse 7b). This statement reveals the need for the disciples to make the transition from walking with him bodily to the place where they could walk with him in Spirit. In a sense this is the function of the ascension narrative in Acts.

That process of his absence from them was necessary for them to go anywhere in the world without looking back to Jerusalem or Palestine. It was not, from all accounts, something they necessarily wanted to do.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is stated as “convicting the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment” (verse 8). The writer then comments on the reason for this ministry (verses 9-11). He convicts of sin, because the world did not believe, that is, rejected Christ, the ultimate sin; of righteousness, because he is about to be crucified (go to the Father) and the world will no longer see him (not just the cross but cross/resurrection is the revelation of the righteousness of God); and of judgment, because his cross/resurrection is the judgment of the ruler of the world, on all that is opposed to God’s righteousness. The cross/resurrection seen from the vantage point of the later church is the victory over the world of sin and rebellion.

In verses 12-15, further statements are made about the need of the Spirit of truth and his ministry in the disciples. He will supply needs that Jesus was not able to fill due to the disciples’ limited understanding by leading them into “all truth.” John assumes that disciples learned the truth in stages. He deals with their spiritual growth and thus encourages his own readers to continue this growth in the power of the Holy Spirit. Like Jesus (3:34; 7:26-28, 38), the Spirit speaks what he has heard from God and receives from God through Christ. Twice Jesus stated that he will announce these things to the disciples.

In the second part of this section (16-24), Jesus returned to the theme of his departure. His opening statement caused a misunderstanding and, as before, led to a discourse to clarify what was meant. The basic theme of the passage is that their sorrow will turn to joy. Most commentators see the focus of this passage as Jesus’ death and resurrection. His death, which foreshadows the disciples’ own suffering, will bring great sorrow; his resurrection will bring great joy. The resurrection was the vindication of all that he claimed and the victory over the forces of evil. A parable is used in verse 21 to explain their experience. They are compared to a woman who gives birth. The joy of the birth of the child causes the woman to forget the pain of travail.

“In that day they will ask him nothing” (verse 23). The interpretation depends upon what they are asking about or asking for. If they are asking for information, their understanding will be complete because of the resurrection and no further information will be necessary. The emphasis on the Messianic secret in Mark is comparable to this emphasis. Mark recorded that as they came down from the mountain of transfiguration, Jesus told them not to tell anyone about it “until *after* the Son of Man had risen from the dead” (Mark 9:9). The emphasis here is that the resurrection gave meaning to all that God did in Christ. If they were asking for things or help in the task of witnessing, then the contrast is between the time when Jesus is still with them and meets their needs and the time when they will ask directly from God. In light of the promise made with the assurance of the “truly, truly” and verse 24, the latter seems to be the best interpretation. Beyond that victory, they were to pray directly to the Father in the Name.¹⁷ The assumption is that they will ask in the context of what is necessary to carry out their ministry. They will receive it, and their joy will be complete (verse 24).

The last paragraph of this section (25-33) again focuses upon the victory promised through Christ beyond the resurrection. Jesus was teaching in parables (*paroimia* not *parabole*) the contrast between the situation of the disciples before the cross/resurrection and their situation after those events. This is different from Mark 4:11 where the contrast is between the crowds and the group around Jesus who were hearing with faith. The word used here for “parable” may also be translated as “riddle” or “proverb.” In the book of Sirach in the Apocrypha (39:2-3), there is the statement, “He will preserve the discourse of notable men and penetrate the subtleties of parables (*parabole*); he will seek out the hidden meanings of proverbs (*paroimia*) and be at home with the obscurities of parables (*parabole*).” The words are used interchangeably in Sirach and may have no difference of meaning in the gospels. The emphasis is clearly on the promise of complete understanding beyond these events so that they may do the work given them to accomplish.

This understanding concerning God beyond the cross will help them to know that “the Father himself loves (*phileo*) you, because

you have loved (*phileo*) me and have believed that I came from God'' (verse 27). The statement that he came from God leads to the statement that he is going to the Father. The disciples responded that now they understood because he was speaking plainly and not in proverbs (*paroimia*). They stated that now they knew that he knew all things, and, because of that, they believed that he had come from God. They appear to have been confident that even before the cross/resurrection, they already had full understanding. This appears to be Johannine irony in which the failure of disciples when Christ was arrested (especially Peter's denial) is contrasted with their present confidence. Even in the face of their failure, Jesus assured them of the love of the Father and of the presence of the Spirit beyond the cross/resurrection. Though there is not as much emphasis in John upon the aloneness of Jesus' suffering, it is clearly there. Also, the writer is aware of the fact that the resurrection and the experience of the Spirit are the foundations of true discipleship.

Jesus responded to their over-confidence by again predicting their failure. His question and prediction may be translated, "So you now believe! The time is surely coming and has come that you will be scattered to your own affairs, and you leave me alone. But I am not alone! For the Father is with me" (verses 31-32). The message is not that they would suffer in exactly the same way as he (after all, he was going to the Father and they were not), but that his suffering and going to the Father would enable them to face what they had to in order to fulfill the role of the disciples of Christ in a hostile world. Once again he predicted their tribulation and also their victory in himself, because he had overcome the world.

THE CONCEPT OF DISCIPLESHIP IN JOHN

Discipleship in John involves a concept of a suffering Messiah who through his suffering and resurrection brought glory to God and eternal life to men. The above interpretations involve passages about which people who have spent a lifetime studying the Scripture disagree. Certainly the positions taken cannot be held to the exclusion of all other positions. Being wrong on the meaning of a word or group of words does not necessarily jeopardize the overall

message seen in John's view of what disciples ought to be. The concept of discipleship as an abiding relationship with the risen Christ seems clearly to have been a part of John's thinking. That relationship is revealed and enabled by the relationship between Jesus and the Father. Further, the relationship is informed and inspired by the Spirit who proceeds from both. The time element is important: abiding in Christ and God is done in one's life in the world where the disciple is charged with being obedient to the call of God to do the works of the one who sent Jesus into the world. By focusing upon this aspect which has been referred to as realized eschatology, John has not ruled out future eschatology. The great need of his readers was to be faithful in that which was given to them to do and to be, in the belief that their relationship with Christ was eternal. For John, when the disciple has a proper relationship with the eternal, he can focus on the work of him who called all disciples.

NOTES

¹The Elder in II John (9) used the expression "abide in the teaching of Christ." For him there was a problem of certain persons who taught that which he saw as contrary to the tradition being handed down from the disciples.

²This writer is aware of the many problems in interpreting these passages. These include problems of order (J. H. Bernard, *The Gospel according to St. John* in the I. C. C. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1926, pp. xx, 476-530), punctuation (Is all or part of verse 2 a question? Where should the commas and periods be placed? The original had no punctuation, *The Greek New Testament*, UBS third edition, p. 388); and text (Is the word "that" present in verse 2? If not, it changes the reading of the whole verse; UBS, p. 388).

³Floyd V. Filson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Layman's Bible Commentary (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 110.

⁴Bernard, *St. John*, pp. 531-533, cited Pausanias (X. 41) who used the mone as "stopping places" along a journey. He then

argued against the idea of temporary abodes along the way to heaven or degrees of reward in heaven by citing the *Secrets of Enoch* (LSI. 2) where the word is used for the permanent place in heaven prepared for the righteous. In this he is followed by R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, SIII-XXI in *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970), 618-619, 625-627; and G. R. Beasley-Murray, *John in the Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, Texas: Word Inc., 1987), pp. 248-250, 263-264.

⁵Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 249, though one or both could be indicatives and be translated, "You believe in God, believe also in me;" or, "You believe both in God and me." This would be a reason for not being anxious.

⁶They are both present imperatives and most naturally apply to the period in which the disciples would be serving God in the world.

⁷The Greek Old Testament plus other books that were used by some Jews in Egypt and later by the Christians. The books in the Septuagint not found in the Hebrew Old Testament plus II Esdras make up what is called today the Apocrypha.

⁸R. H. Gundry, "'In my Father's House Are Many Monai' (John 14:2)," *Zeitschrift für neuen testamentliche Wissenschaft* 58 (1967), 68-72.

⁹W. Michaelis, "Hodos," TDNT, V, 78.

¹⁰See the discussion in which "truth and life" are seen as explanations of "the way" in Michaelis, *op. cit.*, 80-82.

¹¹Beasley-Murray, *John*, pp. 254-255.

¹²Beasley-Murray, *John*, p. 258.

¹³The word for friend is built on the stem of the word *phileo* which many, in commenting on chapter 21, have maligned falsely.

Compare the interchange of the two words *agapao* (3:35; 10:17; 11:5; 13:1; 13:34; 15:12) and *phileo* (5:20; 11:3; 36; 16:27; 20:2).

¹⁴See the discussion in C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to John* (London: SPCK, 1955), pp. 299-300.

¹⁵See Bernard, *St. John*, vol. II, pp. 476-524, 530-557.

¹⁶C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1968), pp. 412-413 note 1.

¹⁷Barrett, *John*, p. 412.



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