

Discipleship in the NT ***A Biblical-Theological Approach***

Topic: Discipleship
Subject: The characteristics of the disciples in the gospels
Complement: involves sacrifice to become like Christ to reach the nations
Purpose: The listeners will imitate Christ

Introduction

1. The following is a collaborative approach with input from Gilbert, David, and Brian.
2. Approach to the study
 - a) Search the word for “disciple” to see that it appears only in the Gospels and Acts.
 - b) Describe how it is used in each Gospel and Acts.
 - c) Infer the theology of the Evangelist.
 - d) Synthesize the NT as a whole.
 - e) Contemplate how it is normative.

I. The term “Disciple”

- A. General sense: a “learner”
- B. Technical sense: an “adherent” to the teachings of a great teacher or master
- C. Matthew 28:19, therefore, means that making disciples means helping people obey what Jesus taught.

II. Jesus’ teaching about being his disciples

- A. *Called*: Jesus gave a personal call to follow him (Peter, Andrew, James & John, Matthew, etc.).
- B. *Self-denial* and taking up the cross means losing and saving one’s life.
- C. *Cost and condition* of being a disciple is to put him above everyone and everything else (Matt. 10:37-38; Luke 14)
- D. *Commissioned* by Jesus to reach all nations
 1. Proclaim the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins (Luke 14:47).
 2. Those who believed the message were called disciples.
 3. Matthew 28:18-20 is an *inclusio* in Matthew’s gospel as it indicates Jesus as the one who fulfills the true son of David by blessing all nations as the true Israelite king with all authority.

E. *Imitation*: Jesus said that we will become like him.

1. Matthew 10:24-25 notes that the followers of Jesus will suffer like he did.
2. Luke 6:39-40 notes that students will be like their teachers, so our students will fall into a pit if we lead them there!

III. Characterization of the disciples

A. Matthew

1. The disciples seemed to understand Jesus' teachings (cf. similar Markan pericopes).
2. Nevertheless, they still have little faith compared to the lilies of the field, during the storm, with an inability to walk on water, and misunderstanding the Pharisee "yeast" as bread.

B. Luke highlights the cost of being Jesus' disciple

C. John contrasts two types of disciples:

1. Some disciples desert him (6:66).
2. Other disciples love him and others (13:34-35).

D. Mark

1. Disciples don't understand Jesus' teachings or his divine power, such as the parable of the sower (4:13; cf. 6:52; 8:17-21; 9:32).
2. The less important characters are the very ones who exemplify faith—the woman with the issue of blood, etc.
3. The way of the cross on the way to Jerusalem has a pattern (source: Strauss based on Mark 8:22–10:52):
 - a) Three times Jesus predicts his death.
 - b) Each time the disciples respond with pride and misunderstanding.
 - c) Each time Jesus affirms that true disciples respond humbly.
4. Patterning on the way to Jerusalem
 - a) Beginning to see who Jesus is (8:22-30)
 - b) Foretelling his death and resurrection (8:31–10:45)
 - c) Seeing and following Jesus (10:46-52)

Conclusion

1. Discipleship in the gospels involves sacrifice to become like Christ to reach the nations (MI).
2. Exhortation
 - a) Individually: Which of the disciples do I identify with?
 - b) Corporately:
 - (1) How do we fare in terms of the various components of the Great Commission?
 - (2) What opportunities and threats are there for SBC to teach what Jesus taught? (b) to obey all that Jesus taught? (c) to preach the message of repentance and forgiveness fo sin to those who are not yet disciples of Jesus?
 - (3) How do we help students grow as disciples of Christ?