



The Vineyard & The Husbandman

Part 2

The Commission of the Church

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The Commission of the Church

Introduction

The point I endeavored to make in Part 1 is this: Many ministries, while ministering good messages (seed), are not operating in sync with Jesus as He builds His Church, and are therefore “bad trees” in the sense that the fruit of these ministries is not producing disciples of Christ, nor co-laboring in building the Church that Jesus is building.

So then, it is in order to ask: What is a “good tree”? What is “good fruit”? What is it to “operate in sync with Jesus as He builds His Church”? What is needed to actually fulfill the apostolic commission to disciple all peoples to Christ? What is needed to be “wise master builders, laying the foundation of Christ and building upon that foundation with gold, silver and precious stones”¹ – “so that everyone can be presented complete in Christ”² – “to the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man,

¹ 1 Corinthians 3:10-12; Matthew 7:24-25

² Colossians 1:28

to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ”³?

After 43 years of being involved in the ministry of discipling, I have found it an absolute prerequisite to look at discipling (as well as, any other biblical subject matter) in light of the New Covenant. Accordingly, I would summarize my answer to the above questions with the term – **“New Covenant Apostolic Discipleship”**. This will be the subject matter of the remainder of this essay, but its essence can be stated as **the CULTIVATION OF CHRIST in others**.⁴

In this Part 2 of “The Vineyard of the Lord”, I would like to begin my response to The Condition of the Church. That response is a re-investigation and re-statement of Jesus’ commission to His disciples and apostles - that is, to disciple all peoples⁵. We’ll begin

³ Ephesians 4:13

⁴ “New Covenant Apostolic Discipleship” has to do with a *ministry relationship* between a disciple and an elder who is equipping minister - an apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, or teacher - whom the ascended Christ has given to the Church “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, to the building up of the body of Christ ... to the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ”. Ephesians 4:11-13.

⁵ The Apostolic Bible Polyglot translation (a Greek-English Interlinear of the Greek Septuagint and New Testament coded to Strong's numbers) translates Matthew 24:14 like this: “**to all** [G3956](#)”

with Another Look at the Great Commission (*In Light of the New Covenant*) – the WHAT, HOW, WHO and FRUIT of Discipleship. And we'll conclude with "Apostolic Discipleship".

the ones G3588 among the nations; G1484 “ But in Matthew 28:19 it translates: “disciple G3100 all G3956 the G3588 nations! G1484”. However, the Greek word which has been translated as “nations” is *ethnos*, which simply means **people groups**. Therefore, throughout this essay, I will use the phrase “**disciple all peoples**” instead of “disciple all nations”. I don't believe attempting to disciple a whole nation is a New Covenant ministry or mission. We are to disciple people (who so ever will) IN all nations.

Another Look at the Great Commission

(In Light of the New Covenant)

Discipling

Discipling people - not planting churches – was the Lord's commission to His apostles. This is the strategy the Lord stated for His kingdom: We disciple people, and He builds His Church. But, generally speaking, instead of discipling people, we have built “churches”. The “churches” we have built are essentially Christian “clubs”.⁶ We have “club members” but very few disciples of Christ. What is a disciple of Christ? What is the essence of discipleship? How are disciples of Christ “made”? Who should we disciple? What is the fruit of faithfully fulfilling the Great Commission?

⁶ I say this with all sincerity: I can appreciate that many Christians enjoy having a Christian social network – particularly for their children. And I can also appreciate that there are some people who are more socially-oriented than others, and therefore feel a need to be active members of a “club”. So, I think this is acceptable for Christians to attend and “belong to” a Christian “club”. I also think it is admirable that Christian parents desire a wholesome Christian environment for the social lives of their children. Attending and belonging to a conventional “church” (club) is fine, if one understands and embraces the reality of what it is and is not. It’s a Christian “club” – it is not the Church Jesus is building.

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

Disciples of the King & His Kingdom

Discipleship to Christ has to do with the King and His Kingdom. Jesus spoke and taught much about His Kingdom. He spoke and taught very little about His Church.⁷ That's because He didn't necessarily need to talk to us about how HE would build His Church. But, He wanted to make clear to us that OUR COMMISSION IS DISCIPLESHIP - discipling all peoples to the King and His Kingdom. The focus must be on the King and His Kingdom because that's the gospel Jesus preached and that's the gospel He told His disciples to preach: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."⁸ I understand that to be essentially the same commission given in Matthew 28:18-20. The commission is to disciple all peoples to the King and His Kingdom.

⁷ Simply two verses: Matthew 16:18 & 18:17

⁸ Matthew 24:14

“The Name”

THE NAME (or “names”) of God speak of His essence. Therefore, the essence of discipleship has to do with THE NAME – of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Not the specific proper word for and spelling of God’s name, but the essence of THE NAME.

The “Onoma”⁹ is a concept which was of much more significance to the Jews and early Christians than to us today. That concept has to do with all that A NAME speaks of – IDENTITY - as well as, one’s nature, character, authority, etc.

THE NAME, “Jesus”, is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, Yeshua, and is etymologically related to the name, Joshua, which expresses the IDENTITY of the Deliverer and Savior of the people¹⁰. And this Savior is also the Anointed One - the King of a

⁹ Strong’s # 3686

¹⁰ Matthew 1:21

Kingdom. Therefore, His name, “Christ”, expresses the recognition of His POWER and AUTHORITY.¹¹

In the Book of Revelation, there is a proclamation of the POWER and AUTHORITY of Christ: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”¹² But even before He left this earth Jesus made a very similar proclamation about His POWER and AUTHORITY: At the beginning of the Great Commission, Jesus said, “All AUTHORITY has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”¹³ Then, He said “**THEREFORE**”¹⁴, and proceeded with the rest of the commission – that is, **to disciple all peoples**. These proclamations of Christ’s POWER and AUTHORITY point to the essence of discipleship – the AUTHORITY of THE KING and HIS KINGDOM.

¹¹ I recommend an article by Kenny Burchard: “What’s the ‘Therefore’ There For?” <https://thinktheology.org/2016/01/06/whats-the-therefore-there-for-in-matthews-great-commission/>

¹² Revelation 11:15

¹³ Matthew 28:18

¹⁴ Matthew 28:19

Jesus is recorded as giving the Great Commission two times in Matthew's gospel. In Matthew 24:14 He said we are **to preach the King and His Kingdom**: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness to all peoples." And in Matthew 28:20 He said we are **to disciple all peoples to this King and His Kingdom**.

In Matthew 13:52, after relating a series of Parables of the Kingdom, Jesus made a reference to "**disciples of the Kingdom**" - *not* disciples of the Church. As I said previously: Planting churches produces Christian club members, not disciples of Christ. Like Jesus and His apostles, our focus needs to be on the Kingdom – not on the Church. The Church is HIS business. **Discipling all peoples to the King and His Kingdom is our commission.**

HOW TO DISCIPLE

The HOW of discipleship is found in Matthew 28:19-20:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Here is the literal translation:

Mat 28:19 Going G4198 then, G3767 disciple G3100 all G3956 the G3588 nations! G1484 immersing G907 them G1473 in G1519 the G3588 name G3686 of the G3588 father, G3962 and G2532 of the G3588 son, G5207 and G2532 of the G3588 holy G39 spirit. G4151

Mat 28:20 Teaching G1321 them G1473 to give heed to G5083 all G3956 as much as G3745 I gave charge G1781 to you. G1473 And G2532 behold, G2400 I G1473 [²with G3326 ³you G1473 ¹am] ^{G1510.2.1} all G3956 the G3588 days G2250 until G2193 the G3588 completion G4930 of the G3588 age. G165 Amen. G281¹⁵

I would like to offer the following literal translation of Matthew 28:19-20a:

¹⁵ The Apostolic Bible Polyglot translation.

“*Going*, disciple all peoples, *baptizing* them IN THE NAME of the father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, *teaching* them to observe all that I have commanded you.”¹⁶

In the Greek text, there is one imperative verb (without a noun) and three participles. The imperative verb is the word that tells us what to do. The three participles tell us how to do it. The imperative verb is “disciple”; and the three participles are “going”, “baptizing” and “teaching”.¹⁷

“disciple”:

Again, this is not a noun, nor an object. It is an imperative verb without a noun or an object. It is not a result of our “making” something. It is a command – “disciple”. This is the imperative verb telling us what to do – “disciple”. But how?

¹⁶ I recommend another article by Kenny Burchard: “Greek-Geeking the Great Commission”.
<http://thinktheology.org/2013/11/07/greek-geeking-the-great-commission-in-matthew/>

¹⁷ “disciple”: mathayteusatay - μαθητεύσατε. 1. “going”: poreuthentes – πορευθέντες 2. “baptizing”: baptidzontes – βαπτίζοντες 3. “teaching”: didaskontes – διδάσκοντες

Matthew wrote his gospel to a Jewish audience who, like Jesus Himself, were grounded in the “Shema” found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them *when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.* 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

“going”:

“Go”, in the Greek text is not a verb but a participle. “Going” is the more literal and accurate translation. As is clearly depicted in the “Shema”, the Lord intended that the discipling of His people was to take place “as you go” - “as you go about the various activities of your life”.

“baptizing” & “teaching”:

“Baptizing” and “teaching” in the Greek text are not verbs, but are participles. The combined meaning is: **being immersed into Christ and His teaching**. Again, from the Shema, which Jesus certainly wholeheartedly embraced, we can see that God’s intention was that His people would be “baptized” or immersed in Himself through a baptism, as it were, and an immersion in His word.¹⁸

To be baptized in THE NAME (or “names”) of God is to be immersed in His CHARACTER, and to be overwhelmed in the experience of His POWER and AUTHORITY – to have one’s life totally bathed in the personal experience of Almighty God – experiencing the reality of His POWER and AUTHORITY in the spirit realm, earthly realm and within the realm of one’s own being, and to intimately experience the beauty of His NATURE and CHARACTER. Namely – TO KNOW GOD and live here and now in His Kingdom! “Eternal Life – the Life of the Eternal One - is KNOWING GOD.”¹⁹ Authentic Christianity is receiving the “Word

¹⁸ With the New Covenant a baptism in His Spirit is also given.

¹⁹ John 17:3

of Life”, being born of “the living and abiding Word of God”²⁰, and being immersed into the kingdom of God here and now, which will continue into the age to come.

Indeed, when the apostles John and Paul write of their personal and collective experience of **the Word of Life** and “the Word of Christ”, would not the picture they are depicting with their words be best described as being “baptized in His Name and Teaching – i.e. totally immersed in Christ and His Body?!²¹

*“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the **Word of Life** - and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us - what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is*

²⁰ 1 Peter 1:23 ESV

²¹ For a more complete discussion of this view of “baptism in Christ”, I highly recommend “The Papal and Hierarchical System compared with the Religion of the New Testament” by John Gurney (1843).

*with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ". These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete."*²²

*"Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."*²³

Matthew 28:20b:

"to observe (things) all that I have commanded". NASB, NKJV, ESV, AMP

I think that most translations rightly communicate that the goal of discipleship is that disciples of Christ would observe - obey, do - what Jesus has commanded.

But, let's consider other or additional meanings within Jesus' words:

²² 1 John 1:1-4

²³ Colossians 3:16

“to give heed to G5083 all G3956 as much as G3745 I gave charge G1781 to you.”²⁴

“... to **watch over, keep and guard**²⁵ all that I have put in your **charge**²⁶”.

This adds a sense of the Lord giving His disciples a responsibility of preserving the heritage He had entrusted to them – His teachings – “the faith once delivered to the saints” – i.e. authentic Christianity. This verse brings to mind other verses which also speak of discipleship:

This is what the apostle Paul wrote to one of his disciples:

“O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you.”²⁷ Disciples of Christ are to watch over, keep and guard what the Lord has entrusted to them and put in their charge.

Also, this is what the Spirit of the Lord said to Isaiah and the disciples the Lord had given him: “Bind up the testimony, seal the

²⁴ The Apostolic Bible Polyglot translation.

²⁵ Greek: *tereo*, Strong’s # 5083.

²⁶ Strong’s # 1781

²⁷ 1 Timothy 6:20

law among My disciples".²⁸ Regarding this verse, I offer this commentary taken from my essay, "*A Remnant Will Return*"²⁹:

"Among My Disciples"

The Holy Spirit directed that the word be "bound and sealed" "**among My disciples**". Why? While the Lord desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth",³⁰ He *entrusts* His "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" to His true disciples as curators of His word, while His knowledge and truth are "bound and sealed" *away from* others.

In His *Parable of the Pearl* the Lord depicted His true disciples in this way: "Upon finding one pearl of great value, (they) sell all that (they) have and buy it."³¹ Those who are truly disciples of Christ recognize and revere the "great value of the pearl". This is what Jesus said to His disciples: "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.... blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear."³² In this way, the word of God is "bound and sealed" "**among His disciples**", and "bound and sealed" *away from* others. The difference has to do with

²⁸ Isaiah 8:16

²⁹ Part 4: "Bind the Testimony, Seal the Law", pp.9-10.

³⁰ 1 Timothy 2:4

³¹ Matthew 13:46)

³² Cf. Matthew 13:10-17

recognizing and believing⁴ the precious value of what God has to say and give. As Peter said: "This precious value, then, is for you who believe."³³ So, "the teaching"⁵ is "bound and sealed" "**among My disciples**" **because it is precious to them.**

Those who "continue in the word of Christ, are truly disciples of Christ; they will know the truth, and the truth will make them free."³⁴ In comparison to the majority in the conventional churches, the true disciples of Christ have a spiritual abundance with regards to authentic knowledge of God, His word and His ways. Yet, their "glory" is not in flaunting their spiritual "wisdom", or their spiritual "power", or their spiritual "riches". They are deeply mindful that the preciousness and privilege which have been given to them is that **they "know and understand" God.**³⁵

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³³ 1 Peter 2:7

³⁴ John 8:31-32

³⁵ Jeremiah 9:23-24

~ At Christ's Table ~



Just a little bit about ourselves ...

We have been married for 37 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Being an avid student by nature, I have done formal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology.

We served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years helping to establish churches and train church leaders. Our Bible teaching ministry has also taken us to other countries like Zimbabwe, Brazil, and England, as well as, throughout the United States.

We have pastored several churches, and as an itinerant Bible teacher, I have ministered in hundreds of churches on four continents. As a writer, I've authored many publications which are distributed to church leaders worldwide.

We minister together speaking in churches, leading spiritual formation seminars, personal mentoring, and administrating an international partnership of church leaders, which includes occasional overseas missions.

ACT publications

“... combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”

1 Corinthians 2:13

A teaching ministry from Bill and Frances Furioso

At Christ's Table

Disciples of the King and His Kingdom eating and drinking of Jesus

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of Biblical Christianity
with a view to

REVELATION of Christ

RELATIONSHIP with Christ

REFLECTION of Christ

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