

## GO AND LEARN

**“But go and learn what this means . . .” (Matt 9:13)**

Christianity has always had a strong emphasis on teaching, learning, and thinking. The primary command of Christ in the Great Commission is to “make disciples”. Going, baptizing, and teaching are Greek participles. Making disciples (mathateusate) is an imperative. It comes from “manthano” which means “to learn”. It is the basis of our English word “math”. The Apostles of Christ were commanded to “make disciples” not “plant churches”. One emphasizes “learning” and the other does not.

In our text Jesus challenged His critics to “go and learn”. Hosea said something significant and they needed to understand it. Jesus said to “go and learn” what it means for God to desire “mercy and not sacrifice”. They were not to merely parrot, like children, what someone else had said. They were to think like men and ponder the matter for themselves.

In this regard, let us apply similar diligence to another subject worthy of careful scrutiny and investigation. Jesus said: **“Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' ” (Matt 7:22-23)** Dare we ask how it is possible for people to “prophesy” in the name of Jesus and not be known by Him? Dare we ask how “many” will show up at Judgement who have driven out demons and performed miracles in the name of Jesus but still were never saved? Let’s “go and learn”. Let’s focus our mental and spiritual energies on this subject and seek to understand the very essence of salvation. Certainly in this short study we will not answer every question, but perhaps we can at least get started.

First, it is important to remember that all life, both physical and spiritual, comes from God. The women in Abimelech’s household didn’t have babies until God opened their wombs (Gen. 20:17 - 18). Sarah didn’t have a baby until God opened her womb (Gen. 21:1 - 2). Rebekah didn’t have a baby until God opened her womb (Gen. 25:21). No matter what human beings may say, little babies are not born by accident. There is no life in the womb until God places it there (Eccl. 11:5). This is, of course, also true with regard to spiritual life. We are saved by faith, but demons are not saved even though they believe and tremble. Esau did not receive God’s blessing even though he sought it diligently with tears (Heb. 12:17). Your name will not be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life until God decides to put it there!

In the second place, it seems obvious that salvation occurs on a deeper level than merely working miracles. How else can you explain the words of Jesus about Judgement? Based on Matt. 10:8 it seems likely that even Judas Iscariot had supernatural powers. While these Apostles could heal the sick and even raise the dead, they obviously lacked the power to love one another. There had been constant strife among them for three years and it manifested itself again in the upper room the night before Calvary. That’s why Jesus commanded them to “wait” for power. They already had the power to work miracles, but not to love. Remember, the fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22), and it obviously involves a deeper level of reality than merely working miracles.

In the third place we must remember that God is a Jealous God and will not reveal Himself to us until we seek Him with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This truth is stated in many passages of Scripture (See Matt. 22:37 - 40; Deut. 4:29; 6:5; 2 Chron. 16:9; Jer. 29:13; etc.)

In the fourth place, we must remember that we have been created in the image of God and therefore have the right to open, or close, the secret inner chambers of our heart. The devil could not enter into the heart of Judas Iscariot unless Judas opened the door. Neither does Jesus enter into the secret chambers of our heart until we open the door (Rev. 3:20). If you do not open your heart to Jesus, it is your own fault!

Finally, we need to honestly face the question of what we really want in life. Jesus said that if you really wanted to do the will of God, then you would know whether His teaching truly came from God, or whether He was speaking on His own (Jn. 7:17). WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?