

Our position is that a change of thinking about what saves a person is involved in believing on Jesus Christ. If one is going to connect “repentance” to grace salvation, this is how it connects. At the moment one believes on Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit convicts a person so that he changes his mind and thinking about trusting anything else other than Christ for salvation.

As repentance relates to grace salvation it is not a separate work to be performed by change of life; it is a faith in Jesus Christ which is a changing of mind or thinking about what will save a person from sin. Biblical salvation is changing one’s mind to totally and completely rely upon Jesus Christ for salvation from sin.

It is an attitude that turns from trusting in self, dead works, human merit or dead religion to placing faith in the Living, Resurrected Savior. As Dr. Chafer said, “It is asserted that repentance, a change of mind, enters of necessity into the very act of believing on Christ, since one cannot turn to Christ from other objects of confidence without that change of mind” (*The Terms of Salvation*, pp. 124-125).

When one turns by faith to trusting Jesus Christ for salvation, from all other trusts and confidences, it is a major act of repentance because it is a major change of thinking.

QUESTION #11 – What about the idea of discipleship in grace salvation?

Those who hold to a Lordship salvation concept typically throw the word “disciple” or “discipleship” into their concept of salvation. Again MacArthur states, “The call to Calvary must be recognized for what it is: a call to discipleship under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. To respond to that call is to become a believer. Anything less is simply unbelief” (p. 30).

So it isn’t enough to invite people to believe on Jesus Christ, you must also inform them they must be willing to commit themselves to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Christian Temple accurately summed up the matter when he said: “Perhaps the greatest error in the Lordship Salvation view is the apparent call to discipleship for those who are yet unsaved. If one must believe the Gospel, have faith, and make Christ Lord in order to be saved, this is a condition that must be met by someone who does not yet know what the Lordship of Christ means. This results in a Catch 22 which inevitably leads to eternal death. You must make Christ Lord in order to be saved, **but you must first be saved in order to make Christ Lord”** (*Lordship Salvation: Is it Biblical*, p. 4).

Having read much material about “discipleship” it is apparent to me that those who throw discipleship into a presentation of the grace Gospel don’t know much about discipleship and they know even less about grace.

It is extremely important to observe that the word “disciple” does not show up one time in the church epistles. When Jesus addressed the seven churches of Revelation (Rev. 2-3), He does not remind any church about the theme of discipleship or being His disciples.

One would think that a little bulb would go off in the brain of a Lordship proponent and they would at least admit that seems to be a little odd. If part of the grace Gospel actually includes a call to discipleship, one would think Paul wouldn't have missed that when he revealed the grace Gospel in Romans, Galatians or any of the other Epistles. He mentions grace nearly 90 times and he mentions faith and believe 89 times in Romans, Galatians and Ephesians. **What Paul stresses is that in order for one to be saved, he must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ or have faith in Him.**

It is clear that when you examine the use of the word “disciple” it phases out in the New Testament. The word is used 72 times in Matthew; 44 times in Mark; 38 times in Luke; 77 times in John and 30 times in Acts and then it stops being used.

When we actually track the word “disciple” we must let a context determine what is meant by it because it means different things when it is used. G. Abbott Smith said the word meant different things at different times. It had earlier meanings and then later meanings (*Greek Lexicon*, p. 275).

For example:

- 1) In Matthew 10:1, 5-6 it specifically referred to the twelve apostles who were to take the Kingdom message to Israel.
- 2) In Mark 2:18 it refers to disciples of John, disciples of the Pharisees and disciples of Jesus.
- 3) In Luke 14:25-26 it is used in a context of Jewish people who wanted to physically travel with Jesus Christ as His disciple.
- 4) In John 8:31 there was a difference between being a believer who was saved and being a disciple who followed Him.
- 5) In Acts 6:1, 2, 7 where the word phases out it is used as a synonymous term for Christian; that is one who had believed on Jesus Christ (6:7). It is interesting in this very context that some were more committed than others and were to be selected by the congregation because of that (Acts 6:3). What this means is that not all had made Christ complete Lord of their lives with a complete surrender.

The reason why the word “disciple” phases out in the Epistles is because of dispensationalism. As we have repeatedly said, Lordship proponents are very confused about dispensationalism, especially as it relates to the Grace Age. They don't fully get it or grasp it.

The reason why Paul does not use the word disciple is because he understood grace and the position we have and the things we have in grace far surpasses any idea of discipleship.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer listed 33 Divine achievements in his *Systematic Theology*, Volume 3, pages 225-266 that occur the moment a person believes on Jesus Christ in this Grace Age which are all of grace. We have them also listed in our doctrinal study of *Soteriology*, pp. 101-110.

All of the things that Dr. Chafer observed constitute “The Riches of Divine Grace.” All things in grace:

- 1) Are not experienced;
- 2) Are not progressive;
- 3) Are not earned;
- 4) Are eternal;
- 5) Are revealed;
- 6) Are wrought of God;
- 7) Are not wrought of man.

This is exactly why the term disciple disappears.

The doctrinal development of grace under Paul trumps any discipleship idea. The moment a person believes on Jesus Christ he is redeemed, reconciled, forgiven, has new life, is freed from the Law, is a child of God, is adopted, is accepted by God, is justified, is brought near to God, is delivered from the power of darkness, is put into the Kingdom of God, is circumcised in Christ, is part of a royal priesthood, is a citizen of heaven, is part of the family and household of God, is a saint, has new heavenly associations, has access to God, is glorified, receives the Holy Spirit and stands complete and possesses every spiritual blessing, just to name a few things.

None of these things have anything to do with whether or not a person decides to follow Jesus and make him Lord of their lives. These are all given to one the moment one believes and this is what constitutes the riches of God’s grace, which is why Paul does not spend any time talking about discipleship.

In the great commission that Jesus gave to His apostles that they were to go into the world and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19), it was clearly in the context of preaching the Gospel (Mark 16:15) and clearly in the context of preaching forgiveness of sins in His name (Luke 24:47). So in all reality the charge was to go and preach grace found in Jesus Christ so people would believe in Him. The primary assignment was to get people to believe in Him by unlocking the truth about the Trinity (Matt. 28:19) and about the salvation work that is found in Him. Once a person believed on Jesus Christ they were classified as a disciple.

When Paul was singled out to unlock the doctrine of the Gospel of grace, which was a new covenant dispensation specifically revealed to him (II Corinthians 3:6), he does not use the word disciple because he realizes the magnificent theological ramifications of a position in Christ. He understood all of “the riches of divine grace.”