



# The Voice of Truth

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## **What Manner of Persons (Part 1)**

**By Jimmy Pettigrew**

The third chapter of second Peter is devoted to discussion of the Lord's second coming: *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up"* (2 Pet. 3:9-10). When the Lord comes, the earth and the works therein shall be burned up. In view of His return, **"What Manner Of Persons Should We Be?"** Well Peter answers this question: "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in (all) holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Pet. 3:11-12). There are at least three characteristics set forth in **Second Peter 3**, showing the kind or manner of persons we should be. We will look at these three characteristics in the next three bulletin articles to come. Let us look at the first characteristic.

God's people must be **"HOLY"**! God has always demanded holiness of His people. *"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God,"* (Lev. 20:7). *"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine,"* (Lev. 20:26). The Christian has a perfect pattern of holiness, *"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy,"* (1 Pet. 1:16). God's people are to be holy in all manner of living, *"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation* (Living ASV)," (1 Pet. 1:15). Christians constitute a holy nation, *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light,"* (1 Pet. 2:9). Without the quality of holiness in life there can be no real hope in the heart.

What is holiness? The word signifies separation to God. Holiness is the result of sanctification (being set apart to God's service). Christians are separated from the world. *"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,"* (John 17:14). We are consecrated to God (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Tit. 2:14). Christians are people for God's own possession.

The realization of the second coming of Christ should prompt one to take time to be holy, *"to keep himself unspotted from the world,"* (Jas. 1:27), and to live a life of dedicated service to God !!!

## **Personal Accountability**

**By Brian Yeager**

There are many people in this world that do not realize that they are accountable for the things that they do. There are those people who live life on "the edge". These people do not realize that while they are escaping death, or the law, they are not getting away without God

**CONTINUED INSIDE...**

knowing. In this period of time in our culture the thing that seems to be least realized is that this life is not full of immorality, and sin without punishment. Even in the Church there are those that forget that they will be accountable for such things in the judgment day. We are going to be accountable to God. In the book of **Romans chapter fourteen and verse twelve** we are told this in the simplest terms, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God". This should scare some people, as they will not be able to blame someone else for their actions. The devil will not even be able to be used as a scapegoat.

The Bible also informs us of some things we are accountable for. We are going to be accountable for those things that we say. (**Matthew 12:36**) "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." We will be accountable for those things that we do. (**II Corinthians 5:10**) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Will be held accountable for those possessions that we put before giving to the Lord and the cause of the Gospel. (**II Corinthians 9:6-8**) "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purporeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." We will be held accountable for those sins that we commit in our hearts, and minds. (**Matthew 5:28**) "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." We will be charged in that day of judgment for not doing what we know is right. (**James 4:17**) "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Does personal accountability scare you? This is a sure sign that something in your life is not right and needs to be adjusted according to that which would please God. We know that we will be giving answers in judgment day. We know that we need to be careful in every thing we do, say, think, and fail to do. We know that we have a Heavenly Father that expects a Christian to be his child and live according to the rules he has given us in the New Testament. Remember in your daily activities that you may escape judgment today for something that you might do that is wrong, but in the final day you will answer to God for such sinful activities. If there is a need in your life to change, please do it before it is too late, and you hear the words "depart I know you not". You are accountable so take notice of your actions.

## **If You Abide In My Word**

**By Jonathan L. Perz**

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed" (**John 8:31**).

In this statement, Jesus not only defines one of the terms of discipleship, but impresses upon the believer the importance of His word.

### **True Discipleship**

"If" is a critical word in the understanding of any statement. It is a word that places a condition upon the statement that follows or precedes.

In this case, a condition is placed upon true discipleship. In order to be His disciples, we must abide in His word. If we do not abide in His word, are we truly His disciples?

### **Abiding In His Word**

What does it mean to "abide in His word?" To "abide" means to continue in, not to depart from. Hence, we must continue in His word, or teachings, if we are to truly be His disciples.

A disciple is one who is taught, one who follows a discipline, or teaching of another.

Therefore, it is fundamentally implied that unless we continue in Jesus' teaching, we are not His disciples.

### Disciples Indeed

The word "indeed" means truly, of a truth, in reality, most certainly. Many profess to be a disciple, but not all are followers. Jesus asked, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things which I say?" (**Luke 6:46**). It follows that we cannot do what He says if we do not abide in His word.

The word "indeed" infers more than in thought. It infers action (deed). One must show His discipleship in action, not only in word.

### Applications

Many today profess to "follow Christ," but practice things not taught in His word. If one were to assemble a panel of 10 "Christians" representing various "faiths" and they were all asked what one must do to be saved, what would the end result be?

Chances are some would state that you must believe, accept Jesus into your heart and say some version of a sinner's prayer. One might teach that you must be baptized in the Holy Spirit. One might propose that there is nothing you can do to be saved. Another might declare that you must be baptized, and then later confirmed into "The Church." Yet another would argue that you must be immersed in water for the remission of sins, having heard the gospel message, believed, repented, and confessed Christ as Lord. Still another would say, you must simply be a good person. One may cite the keeping of a specific doctrine regarding the day of worship, while another may cite the importance of attending church.

The problem is obvious. Some of these "Christians" are not disciples indeed. How do we discern who is and who is not? Which answer is correct and which is error? What is the measure by which we may know?

As a disciple indeed, who abides in Christ's word, every action should be based on a book, chapter and verse (**Colossians 3:17**). A disciple indeed will pay careful attention not to twist or wrest His word by his own understanding (**2 Peter 3:16**). Furthermore, a disciple indeed will want to be extremely careful not to transgress (go beyond) or omit (fall short of) any aspect of His teaching (**2 John 9-10; Revelation 22:18-19**).

A disciple indeed will not seek a passage to prove a position, but rather base a position on the whole of God's teaching on a given matter (**Acts 20:27**). A disciple indeed will be studious and diligent to present themselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth (**2 Timothy 2:15**). He will not be willing to base his faith on what everyone else is practicing or doing, but accept no other foundation but the word of God (**Luke 6:46-49**). He will prove all things, test the spirits, search the scriptures daily, and examine himself (**1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1; Acts 17:10; 2 Corinthians 13:5**).

All of this emphasizes the premium that Jesus placed upon His word, His teaching, and His doctrine. His word is the measure by which we shall be judged (**John 12:48**). His word is the authority for all that we say and do (**Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17**). His word, His gospel, is the basis of our salvation (**Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:13; 1 Peter 1:22-25; James 1:21**).

To answer the question posed earlier, the measure by which we may know how to be saved is God's word, and God's word alone. Jesus concludes the statement—which is the basis for this article—by saying, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (**John 8:32**).

God's word is truth (**John 17:17**). Despite men's best intentions and best efforts to obfuscate, twist, pervert, hide, rationalize, render obsolete, marginalize, and re-characterize God's truth to conform to some modern standard or idea—they will never succeed. For what

is written is written in heaven (**Revelations 20:12**) and will be there just as it was originally given in that final day.

Therefore, our only hope is to “abide in His word” and be His “disciples indeed” knowing “the truth” which shall “make [us] free.”

## SIX WAYS TO STOP GOSSIPERS

By David J. Riggs

(1) **Frown on gossip.** **Prov. 25:23** says, "The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." If we show a dislike for gossip, the gossipers will avoid us. It is the ready listener who often become a partaker in other's sins. Remember, the one who speaks evil of others to you will most likely speak evil of you to others. Also, always be careful in what you say about others; it can and may be used against you.

(2) **Defend the one spoken against.** Christians are to speak evil of no one (**Titus 3:2; Eph. 4:31**). We must always think the best of others and give them the benefit of the doubt. "To the pure all things are pure." (**Titus 1:15**). "...Love thinks no evil." (**1 Cor. 13:5**). If we strongly defend the one spoken against, the gossip will probably become discouraged and quit. Furthermore, we would want people to defend us when we were spoken against.

(3) **Tell them to go to the one they are speaking against.** In **Matt. 18:15**, Jesus did not say, "If your brother sins against you, go tell his fault to others," but "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." More often than not the former is what is actually done. A Christian, upon hearing a brother tell the fault of another said, "I'm going to tell him you said that." The brother replied, "I didn't mean for you to tell him; it was just between you and I." The Christian answered, "If you are not willing to go to him, you should not be spreading it to others."

(4) **Remind them that those who gossip lack wisdom.** "A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back." (**Prov. 29:11**). "A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter." (**Prov. 11:13**). "A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul." (**Prov. 18:7**). His own mouth gets him into trouble. The righteous will join together against him.

(5) **Teach them the evils of gossip.** "He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends." (**Prov. 17:9**). "The words of a talebearer are as wounds..." (**Prov. 18:8**). When brethren are offended and contentions arise, it is difficult to overcome the barriers to fellowship and understanding (**Prov. 18:19**). The tongue is the root of many church problems and divisions. "As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife." (**Prov. 26:21**).

(6) **Emphasize God's displeasure of gossipers.** God hates the sower of discord among brethren (**Prov. 6:16-19**). "A worthless person, a wicked man, walks with a perverse mouth...Perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord. Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; suddenly he shall be broken without remedy." (**Prov. 6:12-15**). If a person does not control his tongue, his religion is vain and he only deceives himself if he thinks otherwise (**James 1:26**). His lips are the snare of his soul (**Prov. 18:7**).

### **THINK! THINK! THINK!**

*What sort of church would the Lord's church be  
If every member were just like me?*