*Christians**

Acts 11:19-26 (19) Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.
(20) And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.
(21) And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.
(22) Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.
(23) Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.
(24) For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.
(25) Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:
(26) And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. **And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**
Now the disciples are known as "Christians." This is their special name; by this they are known; this at once suggests their character, their feelings, their doctrines, their hopes, their joys. A name which rises above every other appellation; which unites in one the inhabitants of distant nations and tribes of men; and which is a bond to unite in one family all those who love the Lord Jesus, though dwelling in different climes, speaking different languages, engaged in different pursuits of life, and occupying distant graves at death. He who lives according to the importance of this name is the most blessed and eminent of mortals. The proper meaning of this

name is, a follower of Christ; it denotes one who, from serious thought, embraces the religion of Christ, believes His promises, and makes it his chief care to shape his life by Christ's precepts and example. Hence it is plain that multitudes take the name of Christian to whom it does not rightly belong. Believing in Him, but not His words of salvation. It was the design of God to make all baptized believers of one heart and one Kingdom, that they might consider him as their Father, and live and love like children of the same household. A Christian, therefore, is the highest character which any human being can attain upon earth; and to receive it from God, how glorious the title!
Now listen to this;
MATHETES TO DIOGNETUS (written app. AD 130-160)
THE MANNERS OF THE CHRISTIANS
Quote; For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They

have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonoured, and yet in their very dishonour are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honour; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred. *Unquote*
Mathetes evidently was aware of the teachings of the Apostles and the faith that was based upon the Lord Jesus Christ. His speech is similar to that of Peter. Turn with me to;
1Peter 2:5-10 (5) Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.
(6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.
(7) Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,
(8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.
(9) 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 marvellous light:

(10) Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

In the ministry of Jesus Christ He selected twelve disciples. Near the end of His earthly ministry eleven remained, one had departed and that was by choice. A twelfth Apostle would be selected after His death. But there is an interesting revelation concerning the selection. There were two selected to replace the one departed. Turn with me to;

Acts 1:15-26 (15) And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

(16) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

(17) For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

(18) Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

(19) And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

(20) For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

(21) Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

(22) Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

(23) And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

(24) And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the

hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,
(25) That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.
(26) And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.
Now this is an interesting revelation. Matthias was numbered with the eleven remaining apostles and was apparently considered as an apostle. Martyrs Mirror confirms that Matthias, according to the opinion of some, was of the royal house of David; and from his youth was well instructed in the law of God, at Bethlehem. He was one of the seventy disciples of Christ; but shortly after the Lord's ascension, the apostles and disciples, about one hundred and twenty names, through prayer to God, and by the lot, elected Matthias as an apostle and an ambassador of Jesus Christ, in place of faithless Judas to preach the Gospel, according to the command of the Lord, to all nations, and to baptize the believers. But at the appropriate time Paul was chosen by Christ. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (Rom 1:1). *I have never read where Matthias was called. However, the selection of both Matthias and Paul would increase the number to thirteen in all. Some Bible teachers view Matthias as an "invalid" apostle and believe that Paul was God's choice to replace Judas Iscariot as the twelfth apostle. So how many Apostles were there? The Levites were a tribe of Priests who were chosen to render service at the tabernacle; thus they were not always listed in a list of tribes, since they didn't possess any land but were assigned a place to live in or near the tabernacle. To further complicate matters, Manasseh & Ephraim were each considered half tribes as they descended from Joseph of whom a tribe is not always named. But since Joseph was a faithful man of God, his children were treated as brothers, but with*

limitations within the Nation of Israel. This further explains the variation between the list of tribes. If the count includes the name of Levi, then the names of Manasseh and Ephraim in place of Joseph makes the number thirteen, the same number as the Apostles, thirteen, if the names of both Matthias and Paul replace Judas. However, the important thing is this; from the tribes that descended from Israel, a nation emerged from which was born Christ of Judah. From the teaching of Christ and His Apostles emerged a Kingdom, and the citizens of this Kingdom became known as Christians. Now we cannot all be Apostles, Paul was the last to be selected for that office, but there are opportunities for all Christians. Turn with me to;

1Corinthians 12:27-31 (27) Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.
(28) And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.
(29) Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?
(30) Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?
(31) But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

And God hath set in the Church - That is, has appointed, constituted, ordained to His purpose. He has established these various orders or ranks in the church. The apostle, having illustrated the main idea that God had conferred various endowments on the members of the church, proceeds here to specify exactly what he meant, and to refer more directly to the various ranks which existed in the church. The first to be set in the Church were Apostles. Are all Apostles? No, very few were given that particular character and gift: some are prophets, as distinct from apostles; and some are teachers, as

distinct from them both, and some are neither. It is God's providence which "has appointed different orders in the Church." And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (2Timothy 2:2).
Jesus commissioned the Apostles to teach (Mark chapter 16).
The Apostle Paul was a teacher (1Tim chapter 2).
Bishops should be apt to teach (1Tim chapter 3).
A servant of the Lord should be apt to teach (2Tim chapter 2).
And yes, women should be teachers in their order (Titus chapter 2). I sometime think of the parable of the talents. Even for Christians that do not have five talents there is something to do! One could share in the work of those who have gone out into the world preaching the gospel by supporting them monetarily or with other necessities as they have need, just do not bury that talent in the sand.
Turn with me to;
Philippians 4:15-18 (14) Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.
(16) For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.
(17) Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.
(18) But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.
The person who has only one talent must overcome the urge to bury it in the sand. Surly one can see the work of the Lord that needs to be attended to. There are many fables in the world today that need to be rebuked! How many rapture predictions have come to naught, unfulfilled? And yet this unscriptural doctrine remains intact. Perhaps the couple best known for correcting error in the Church would be Aquila and

Priscilla. Could you imitate their example? Turn with me to; **Acts 18:24-26** (24) And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.
(25) This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.
(26) And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.
*Here a Christian couple took Apollos aside privately to expound unto him the way of God more perfectly. Error can result when a person inadvertently teaches something that is incorrect. Apollos mistake was unintentional; he meant well, he was sincere, but he was wrong. In the story just read about Apollos, he was a Jew who was fervent in spirit and who spake and taught the things concerning Jesus according to his knowledge, but his knowledge was limited. But when Apollos traveled to Ephesus, and began speaking boldly in the synagogue, Aquila and Priscilla heard him and realized that he was advocating the baptism of John the Baptist. That baptism was no longer valid, having been supplanted by the baptism instituted by Christ is for 'remission of sin, John's baptism is not. The baptism ordained by Christ is the burial that puts one into His death where that old man of sin is crucified. Women should take every opportunity to teach the word afforded to them biblically. Perhaps the most joyful and important thing a woman can do would be teaching and admonishing her own children to become God fearing people. What could possibly be more joyful for a woman than to hear Jesus say unto her children, "*enter into the joys of the Lord*." Therefor;* Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Pro 22:16). *But the husband cannot put all the teaching of their children on his wife only. Both parents should be contributors in the raising*

and training of their children in the Lord. Children brought up within the confines of Christian teaching have been subjected to a great treasure.
However this great treasure can and should be preached in season, out of season, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, that is, preach the message of salvation in Jesus Christ to any person who will listen. Turn with me to;
Matthew 9:35-38 (35) And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.
(36) But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.
(37) Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;
(38) Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.
Many are unable to go out into the harvest, however all can pray to the Lord to send labourers into the harvest, and do not forget financial help to further their labors. Pray for the protection of labourers that are in other lands as they may be in locations that are not safe and in fact are 'dead' set against the Christian faith. History is replete with evidences that becoming a Christian may be hazardous to your health.
Turn with me and read;
John 15:18-23 (18) If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.
(19) If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.
(20) Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

(21) But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.
(22) If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.
(23) He that hateth me hateth my Father also.
Now when Jesus came teaching the will of His Father, He was hated because of that teaching. The people were not willing to accept the will of the Father. If you may remember, Christ was condemned because of false witnesses. We also may experience extreme hostility because we speak the testimony of Jesus Christ, even in elementary teachings such as, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. *And yet, while on earth Jesus established the ordinance of baptism. People must be taught that Faith in Christ is the effect of belief and Baptism is the effect of faith; It is not all those who wish to be saved, who will be saved. Only those who admit their need of salvation and accept God's grace on His terms. God is not willing that any should be lost, but there is coming a time when the door will be shut and no one shall enter in - despite their crying Lord, Lord. Therefore, only those who have first believed the testimony of God, and by faith repented of their sins, and by faith confess Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, and by faith have been intelligently baptized into His death, have the full and explicit testimony of God assuring them of pardon. It is hardly necessary here to remark, that as the disciples of Christ are declared to be in a pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved state, they are the only persons in such a state. Today is your day to be saved, but it is your decision. Also from time to time the faithful need prayer, in either case, come while we gently persuade with song.*

This message approved by
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Study Aids; Martyrs Mirror
Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary
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