

The Truth Will Set Us Free – Ron Stullenbarger –

“Then He said again to them, ‘I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.’ And He was saying to them, ‘You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins. ... So Jesus said, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.’ ... So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’” (John 8:21-24; 28;31-32)

Jesus showed perfect knowledge of the future. He told His critics He was going away — referring not only to His death and burial, but to His resurrection and ascension back into heaven. Because of their rejection, they would die in their sins. This would mean that they would be forever prevented from entering heaven, where the Lord was going. It is a solemn truth! Those who refuse to accept the Lord Jesus have no hope of heaven. How dreadful to die in one's sins, without God, without Christ, and without hope forever!

Jesus often used repetition for emphasis. In verse 24 He solemnly warned them again that they would die in their sins. The word **He** is not found in this verse in the original, though it may be implied. It reads literally: **“If you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins.”** We see in the words **I am** another claim to deity of Christ.

Jesus made a distinction between those who are disciples and those who are truly disciples. A disciple is anyone who professes to be a learner, but a **true disciple** is one who has definitely committed himself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are true believers have this characteristic — they abide in His Word. This means that they continue in the teachings of Christ. They do not turn aside from Him. True faith always has the quality of permanence.

The promise is made to every true disciple that they **shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free**. The Jews did not know the truth, and they were in a terrible form of bondage. They were in the bondage of ignorance, error, sin, law, and superstition. Those who truly know the Lord Jesus are delivered from sin, they walk in the light, and are led by the Holy Spirit of God.

Some of the Jews who were standing by heard the Lord's reference to being made free. They resented it immediately. They boasted of their descent from Abraham and said that they had never been in bondage. But this was not true. Israel had been in bondage to Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and now Rome. But even more than that, even while they still spoke with the Lord Jesus they were in bondage to sin and to Satan.

It is evident that the Lord was speaking about the bondage of sin. He reminded them that whoever **practices sin** is a slave of sin. These Jews pretended to be very religious, but the truth of the matter was that they were dishonest, irreverent, and soon to be murderers — for even now they were plotting the death of the Son of God.

When we abide in His word, and are His disciples, then we shall know the truth, and the truth will make us free. The freedom Jesus talks about doesn't come from just an **academic** pursuit of *“truth”* in general; but from **abiding** in His word and being His disciple.