

RECEIVING CHRIST AND THE FATHER

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In Mark 9:37, Jesus said, “*Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receives me: and whosoever shall receive me, receives not me, but him that sent me*” (see also the parallel passages in Matthew 10:40 and Luke 9:48). He spoke these words after taking a child and setting him the midst of his apostles (Mark 9:36). How is receiving a child in Christ’s name the same as receiving Christ and also the Father?

Christ did only his Father’s will

Whatever Jesus did on earth was according to the commandments his Father gave him: “*But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do*” (John 14:31). Jesus’ meat was “*to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work*” (John 4:34). Jesus could of his own self do nothing, “*because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me*” (John 5:30). Jesus said, “*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*” (John 6:38). Jesus did nothing of himself, but only did what he saw the Father do. In John 5:19, he said, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*” Again, John 8:28-29 says, “*Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.*” On his last night on this earth, Jesus was able to say to his Father, “*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*” (John 17:4). The Father then glorified the Son by giving him all authority in heaven and in earth (Matt 28:18). Only by that authority, *in Christ’s name*, may we speak or do anything (Col 3:17).

Christ was sent by the Father

It is also important that we recognize and understand that Jesus did not come to this earth according to his own will, or on his own authority. Jesus was *sent* (Matt 15:24; 21:33-44; Mark 12:1-11; Luke 4:43; 20:9-18). And Jesus was not sent by just anyone. He

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was sent by the Father (Luke 4:18; 10:16; John 3:17,34; 4:34; 5:23-24,30,36-38; 6:29,38-40,44,57; 7:16,18,28-29,33; 8:16,18,26,29,42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44-45,49; 13:20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3,18,21,23,25; 20:21; Acts 3:26; Gal 4:4; 1 John 4:9-10,14).

The sender is greater than the sent

With this in mind, we can examine the key principle that Jesus taught in John 13:16: “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.*” The sender is greater than the one he sends. Jesus was actually applying this principle to his apostles on this occasion, but it is a general principle that also applies in the other direction. In John 14:28, Christ stated, “*My Father is greater than I.*” The Father is greater than the Son, as the Son is greater than those whom he has sent. That is why when Jesus sent forth the seventy to preach, he told them, “*He that hears you hears me; and he that despises you despises me; and he that despises me despises him that sent me*” (Luke 10:16). That is also why Jesus said in John 5:23 that “*all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which has sent him.*” Jesus said, “*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he has sent*” (John 6:29). But to believe in the one sent is to believe in the sender since the sender is greater. That is why Jesus also said, “*He that believes on me, believes not on me, but on him that sent me*” (John 12:44), and, “*If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me*” (John 8:42). Since Jesus only did what the Father showed and told him to do, and since it was the Father who sent him, then what we do with Jesus is what we are doing with the Father, good or bad. And how we treat the Lord’s children is how we are treating the Lord to whom they belong. In John 13:20, Christ said, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receives whomsoever I send receives me; and he that receives me receives him that sent me.*” Therefore, to receive the Lord’s children is to receive Christ which is also to receive the Father (Mark 9:37).