

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Greek Orthodox ...By What Standard?

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The word, “*orthodox*” denotes thinking “*conforming to the usual beliefs or established doctrines...or beliefs conforming to the Christian faith as formulated in the early ecumenical creeds or confessions.*” Orthodoxy demands a recognized standard.

God has revealed the standard by which we can judge all things, especially in religion. His word is “*truth*” offering the proper standard (*John 17:17*). His Scripture is the basis for *doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction or training in righteousness*, offering a complete standard (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*).

From this inspired standard, we have the responsibility before God to “*test*” teachings and teachers (*1 John 4:1*) and “*prove all things*”, holding fast to that which “*is good*” (*1 Thessalonians 5:21*). God honors those who test what they hear with the revealed Scriptures, examining the things heard to make sure they “*are so*” (*Acts 17:11*). The words of the Lord’s apostles provide us “*the pattern of sound words*” to which we are to “*hold*” (*2 Timothy 1:13*).

In one sense, orthodoxy is what God desires, for He has founded in Christ only “*one faith*” (*Ephesians 4:5*), and the “*doctrine of Christ*” establishes the boundaries for our all teaching and practice (*2 John 9*). This faith contains the “*established doctrines*” to which God demands all of us “*to conform*”. But in another sense, when the standard is “*the early ecumenical creeds and confessions*”, the standard has not gone back far enough. Yet, this is the standard by which the Greek Orthodox Church is founded.

The Eastern Church, of which the Greek Orthodox Church is part, exalts the seven ecumenical councils, starting with Nicae (A.D. 325) to Nicae II (A.D. 787) as forming the basis for its orthodoxy. These councils including Constantinople I, II, III, Ephesus, and Chalcedon were all called to expose Arianism (the teaching that Jesus was less than God) as heretical teaching. While Arianism is heretical, it is not because the councils determined it so, but is so because Scripture demands the belief that Jesus is God (*John 1:1,14; 5:17-19; 8:24; 10:30; 14:9, Hebrews 1:8*).

The Greek Orthodox

Church has not gone back far enough for its standard. This is evident by examining some of their practices. They exalt their religious leaders with the title “*Father*” when Jesus condemned such a practice (*Matthew 23:9*). We know from Jesus and Paul that remembering the death of Christ was proclaimed by eating the bread and drinking the fruit of the vine. The Scripture says, “*In like manner also the cup after supper...*” (*Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25*), but the Greek Orthodox Church mixes the elements of the Lord’s supper together and serves them with a spoon. Which practice is “*orthodox*” according to God’s standard?

The Eastern Church has for centuries refused to use mechanical instruments of music in worship. Now, the Greek Orthodox Church in America is including the organ in their worship. Instead of holding to the doctrine of Christ which authorizes singing (not playing) psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (*Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16*), the Greek Church’s standard in America for orthodoxy is popular American religious culture. Orthodoxy is only commendable when the standard for determining orthodoxy is of God.