

Glad Tidings

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

Vol. XXIV

July 27, 2014

No. 30

Beyond What Is Written

(Jerry Fite)

Paul presented himself and Apollos as examples so the Corinthians would not “go beyond the things that are written; that no one be puffed up for the one against the other” (1 Corinthians 4:6). Paul’s writings were the authoritative commandment of the Lord, and inspired Scripture (1 Corinthians 14:37, 2 Peter 3:16). He was faithful to what the Spirit revealed, and abiding in what is written, the Corinthians could avoid division.

What has been written? The faith revealed through the one and only gospel is “once for all” (Jude 3, Galatians 1:6-8, 23). Jesus’ incarnation was sufficient in helping us know the character of God, and bringing to naught the Devil who had power over death (John 14:9, Hebrews 2:14). Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension on High secures his High Priesthood for all time (Hebrews 7:23-8:1). No need for a new gospel, new faith, or a new avenue to a Holy God in Heaven.

Through Christ, the dispensation of grace ushered in the “last days” (Acts 2:17, Eph. 3:2). All has been accomplished for our eternal home in Heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4). We now wait for the

end, when Christ returns to meet His saints in the sky and return the kingdom unto the Father (Phil. 3:20, 1 Thess. 4:16-17, 1 Cor. 15:24).

Abiding in what has been written in the New Testament helps us avoid being carried away by modern day revelations and doctrines. For example, the “Church of Almighty God” advocates some strange doctrines. We are told to believe “the last day Christ” has returned to earth (in China) to usher in the final part of God’s management plan in a hidden way. God has been incarnated again as the authoritative “Almighty God”, different from that of the gracious “Jesus Christ”. The “age of grace” has ended, and the “age of the kingdom” has now come. Judgment has ushered in this new age with God’s people having to suffer at the hands of sinners. Believers, who knew the God of love in the age of grace, need to now know the God of Righteousness in the age of the kingdom.

We already know the righteousness of God through the Gospel (Rom. 1:17). We do not need a new age to know the way to eternal life, or know we have eternal life (John 14:6, 1 John

5:13). In the so called “age of grace”, the testing of faith through persecution was already teaching its lessons to the godly (1 Peter 1:6-7, 2 Tim. 3:12). Why a new age? In the so called “age of grace” the kingdom of God’s son was already present. It is the church which continues to submit to God’s rule in Christ today (Colossians 1:13, Heb. 12:23, 28). Why a new “kingdom age”? People were not only forgiven in the so called “age of grace”, but were sanctified and instructed to perfect holiness during this age (1 Cor. 6:11, 2 Cor. 6:16-7:1). What new instruction from a second incarnation of God is needed?

The “Church of Almighty God” believes God is speaking new things, beyond what has been written, which should be a red flag to true believers. No one person is identified as the incarnated “God Almighty”, as is Jesus Christ in His incarnation (John 1:14). It seems they believe God is incarnated today in humanity, both male and female. The Lord’s body, the church, is not a second incarnation of God, but a body of believers allowing what has already been written once and for all to work in their lives. Beyond what is written is not of God!