

Glad Tidings

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

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Come and Hear

(Jerry Fite)

While we are conscious of our responsibility to “go and seek” the lost, we have this week an opportunity to invite precious souls to “come and hear” the word of the Lord. Having unbelievers in our assemblies should be a goal for us to reach each night of this week’s Gospel Meeting.

When miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were needed in the beginning to spread of the Gospel, Christians possessing these gifts were to use them by considering the unlearned and unbelieving that might be in their midst. Paul writes, “*If therefore the whole church be assembled together and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reprov'd by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed*” (I Corinthians 14:23-25).

Miraculous tongue speaking in the assembly was not being condemned, for it, along with prophesying, had its place in the

revealing and confirmation of God’s word (I Corinthians 12:4-11). The problem occurred when the use of miraculous gifts neglected the goal of “edification” or the building up of others in the assembly. “*What is it then, brethren? When ye come together, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, and hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying*” (I Corinthians 14:26).

Edification can only occur when a person understands what is being said (I Corinthians 14:2, 5, 9, 12-19). So, if one does not know the language that is being spoken, he or she will not understand the needed message. The words might easily be considered mere gibberish to the unlearned, and one might think the speaker is crazy or out of his mind. This is why Paul commends “prophecy, which would be spoken in the language understood by the hearer.

When the unbeliever came and heard the revealed word of God, how were they edified? The secrets of their heart, which only they would know before God, were revealed. Though being judged and condemned, they knew God was among them, and

the source of the prophet’s message. Being built up with truth, they worshipped God in that edifying assembly.

Today we have the completed and confirmed word of God. It is “*living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword...and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Hebrews 4:12). Let us invite people to come and hear the penetrating message of God’s word, so when they leave our assembly they will know deep in their hearts that God is among us. Hopefully, they will want to worship God with us.

When the unbeliever comes to hear the word of God preached in our assemblies, may he or she also feel an atmosphere of love and peace. After all, the church is comprised of believers who have “peace with God” (Ephesians 2:14, 17) and should therefore be allowing “*the peace of Christ to rule in your hearts, to the which ye were also called in one body...*” (Colossians 3:15). Hearts “*knit together in love*” should greet the unbelieving visitor who needs to hear the message of God’s love for them (Colossians 2:2). It is time to come and hear!