

# Glad Tidings

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

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## Revealed Truth Is the Constant of Fellowship

(Jerry Fite)

**T**here is no fellowship with God apart from the declaration of truth of His Word. John writes, “*that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ*” (1 John 1:3).

The revealed truth of God’s word is not only the basis for fellowship, but is also the constant in maintaining fellowship with God and one another. Maintaining fellowship demands brethren receive some, and not receive others (*Romans 14:1, 2 John 9-11*). The Christian will be taking a brother aside to talk, and marking some to avoid (*Acts 18:26, Romans 16:17-18*).

Maintaining fellowship with others will demand we consider the variables of different stages of knowledge; the possible responses to admonition; the time factor for grasping knowable truth; and the various attitudes manifested in the face of truth. Recognizing the variables, we focus on revealed truth as the visible touchstone for maintaining our fellowship with God and others.

Apollos was not bringing the doctrine of Christ of the baptism in the name of the Lord when he taught the baptism of John. But Priscilla and Aquilla received Apollos, instead of not receiving him as demanded when faced with one who does not bring the doctrine of Christ (*2 John 10*).

Apollos’ problem was a lack of knowledge of the truth. He “knew only” the baptism of John. He needed to be taught “more accurately” the way of God (*Acts 18:26*). Was his error a matter of salvation? Certainly, for baptism in the name of the Lord is for the remission of sins (*Acts 2:38*). Yet, Apollos was not labeled as a false teacher, and rejected. Instead, he was received and taught more accurately the truth.

Paul demanded obedience to baptism into the name of the Lord among those who may have been influenced by Apollos’ teaching. They had been baptized with John’s baptism, when the baptism in the name of the Lord is the one baptism in Christ’s new covenant. They responded to the truth by obeying it (*Acts 19:1-5*).

If Apollos had rejected the revealed truth of God, and then

refused further appeals and warnings; people, maintaining fellowship with God, would now have to avoid him and not receive him. Why? He would have now become “facious”, in that He determines to be the center of truth, instead of submitting to God’s revealed truth (*Titus 3:10-11*). His determining to keep on teaching the baptism of John has now become willful ignorance at best. He must not be received or given God’s speed (*2 John 10-11*).

Concerning those who persist in sin and refuse the appeals of established truth, we must withdraw ourselves from them (*Matthew 18:15-17, 2 Thess. 3:6-14, 1 Cor. 5:1-13*). Apollos was received and treated differently, not because he was a giant in the brotherhood, or that truth lacked clarity, but because he was at a different stage in the knowledge of truth.

When the weak brother could not in good conscience eat meat, the truth of God’s word was not hidden from him (*Romans 14:1, 14*). The weak conscience needed the declaration of truth in order to judge more accurately and brethren be united in truth. What is your touchstone for fellowship?