

GLAD TIDINGS

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

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THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP

By: Jerry Fite

The connection between Christians and the worship of the one true God begins with the teaching of the Apostles. It is not a coincidence that the apostles' teaching heads the list of activities the early Christians participated together in regarding worship. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). The apostles' teaching is foundational to knowing the true worship demanded of the followers of Christ.

DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

Jesus promised the apostles the Holy Spirit would come in His place and “teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you” (John 14:26). Jesus said, “All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you” (John 16:15). Follow the cable behind the apostles' doctrine and it will connect you directly with the mind, will and teaching of Christ who is in heaven. The apostles' teaching is the very doctrine Christ teaches. All worshipers must abide in this teaching. To go beyond it, we forfeit an approved relationship with the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

THE AVENUES OF WORSHIP. How do we know God wants us to

sing to him in worship instead of gathering fragrant flowers to place on an altar? The apostles' doctrine reveals the former, and is silent regarding the latter. Through the teaching of the apostles, we know God wants us “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God (Colossians 3:16). We do not have the approval of Christ to add flower offerings to the worship of the church. Avenues of worship become the proper channels because Christ authorizes them through the apostles' doctrine. Besides singing, the apostles' doctrine reveals the activities of preaching the word (Acts 20:7), partaking of the Lord's supper (I Corinthians 11:23-29), giving (I Corinthians 16:2), and praying (Acts 2:42) as ways Christians participate together in worship unto God.

HOW WE WORSHIP. The apostle's doctrine dives deeper into the channels of acceptable worship to teach Christians “how” they should worship. We are not to just verbally sing. In singing, we must make melody in our heart (Ephesians 5:19). In giving, we are to give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). In partaking of the Lord's supper, we must remember the death of the Lord (I Corinthians 11:26-27, 29). In prayer, we must pray in faith, confident in God's power to deliver, and united with the Lord's will (James 1:6, I John 5:14, I John 3:22).

VAIN WORSHIP PROTECTION. According to Jesus, teaching the doctrines of men produces vain worship (Matthew 15:9). By abiding in the apostles' doctrine, we protect ourselves from offering worship refused by the Lord. Men may want to “perform the word” through dramas and plays, but those abiding in the apostles' doctrine will “preach the word” as God commanded (2 Timothy 4:2). When men preach tithing, those inoculated with the apostles' teaching will apply the Lord's standard of giving as one has prospered (I Corinthians 16:2) When men feel mechanical instruments of music is the way to wake up our emotions in song, those respecting the apostle's doctrine will pluck the melodious chords of a thankful heart, knowing that such worship pleases the Lord (Ephesians 5:19).

The apostles' doctrine guides and protects us as we worship together in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). We should consider the teaching of the apostles as our life-line to heaven giving us assurance of the worship that pleases our Lord. As men seek to find the worship that pleases men and gathers crowds, may we remain focused on offering worship that pleases God. He, not men, is our audience in worship. Worship as the apostles' doctrine teaches.