

The Grapevine

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Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:15

Good News Today

by Jack Northart

Big changes occurred on the day of Pentecost, which occurred around the year, 28 A.D. With the advent of the outpouring of the holy spirit, the Christian Church was born.

Acts 2:1-4

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

From that moment, the new birth was available. It was a new day and age! For the time that followed, the word spread quickly about this great power and ability that God had blessed His people with, and that the Gentiles could also receive this wonderful gift and be part of the same body of Christ as the Jews. As we read through the book of Acts, we see the Word of God grew and multiplied again and again. From Jerusalem it spread throughout all Asia Minor and into parts of Eastern and Western Europe. Acts concludes with the Apostle Paul being in Rome.

Acts 28:21, 30-31

And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

This time frame has been considered to be sometime around 60 A.D. After Paul's release from his bonds in Rome, he lived in his own rented house for another two years, preaching the kingdom of God. At this point, there is no other chronology or events that were recorded in Scripture concerning the First Century Church. However, in several epistles, we can see that certain things were causing division among the brethren.

Galatians 1:6-7

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Some in the Churches of Galatia were preaching a different message. There were doctrinal differences in those churches, and Paul stated that the gospel that he taught had been received by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and that was the gospel that they should adhere to.

Verses 11-12

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Toward the end of Paul's life, doctrinal and practical error was picking up speed. Several leaders that had stood with him for years were not following the great mystery that God had shown Paul.

II Timothy 4:3, 9-13, 16

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia,

Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments. At my first answer [defense] no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

These verses are very enlightening about some things concerning the First Century Church. Paul tells Timothy about specific dissention going on in certain areas; that some were not adhering to sound doctrine, but surrounding themselves with teachers who taught according to their own selfish cravings and desires. He also informs him about some of the former leaders that had split out. He then tells Timothy to remember to bring the books, or scrolls and the parchments. This is an indication that Paul was taking steps toward preserving the scriptural writings up to that point. He saw the dark clouds of division forming.

The focus on personality traits and the attention that was being given to “another gospel,” was causing division, strife and contentions among the churches of Asia Minor. God, by revelation to Paul, was giving specific direction on what to do and how to handle this matter.

II Timothy 3:13-14

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

II Timothy 4:2

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

Paul was making Timothy aware of what was happening. Rather than getting caught up in the endless and useless discussions about “things” and “people” who were not following sound doctrine, the exhortation was to stay focused on the task at hand, namely to preach the word.

No matter how inflammatory and negative the world may get about God, His Word, or His people, our focus should be the same; **PREACH THE WORD!** Whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. Whether it is welcomed or unwelcome; whether the opportunity is favorable or unfavorable, keep your sense of urgency about living your life speaking God’s Word. We patiently herald the good news. We are to carry out the instructions of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 10:8

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Mark 15:17-18

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; [If] They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Acts 1:8

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

There is a lot of good things to do and good news to give people today! It starts with you doing your part by holding forth the greatness of God’s Word.