

# THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

God has given His saved people (His church) a single set of teachings to believe and practice (2 Timothy 1:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15). These teachings are critical for pleasing God. However, it is common for churches to develop their own creeds (teachings). Those who are truly part of Jesus's church, however, will be diligent in the matter of what they believe and teach and what the church they fellowship with believes and teaches.

## ACTS 2:42

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Approximately 3,000 people had just obeyed the gospel (vv. 37-41). These newly saved members of Jesus's church were then devoted to learning. However, they were not just learning anything from anyone. Rather, they were devoted to learning the apostles' teaching. The teaching of the apostles was significant in the development of the church. For, Jesus had told the apostles that the Holy Spirit would come on them and would teach them all truth. This included reminding them of what Jesus taught while He was on the earth and teaching them things they were not yet ready to hear when He was on the earth (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15). The Holy Spirit came on the apostles at the beginning of Acts 2 (vv. 1-4) and, thus, this revelation of truth had begun. Later, God would also Divinely inspire others to speak His truth (called prophets, Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 15:32; 21:8-10). These gifts would help the church be built up during the time the New Testament was still being written (Romans 1:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12-14), but do not exist today now that the perfect word of God has been completed (1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Jude 1:3). Today, Jesus's church must continue to be devoted to learning, teaching, and obeying God's truth from the message revealed through the apostles and prophets in the pages of the New Testament (Ephesians 3:3-7; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16).

## 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

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All Scripture is inspired (breathed out) by God. This includes both Old and New Testament Scriptures. Notice that one of the things God intends for the Scriptures to be profitable for is teaching (doctrine). Sadly, many professing Christians and churches today now teach that doctrine does not matter. Many will claim that only teachings they have determined to be "core" teachings are essential for salvation. However, this passage demonstrates that God has given us the Scriptures so we can know what He teaches. This is the truth that sets people free from sin and is essential to living to please God (John 8:31-32; 1 Timothy 6:3-5). Therefore, everything God teaches should be viewed as being truth that must be believed and obeyed!

## 1 CORINTHIANS 4:17

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As an apostle, Paul spoke and wrote the message He received from God (1 Corinthians 11:23; 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). So, the apostles and prophets were never in conflict with each other whenever they were speaking what God had revealed (2 Peter 3:15-16). Furthermore, this passage demonstrates that the message of what God required did not differ depending on the circumstances of each church. The truth was the truth, and it was the message that was to be believed, practiced, and taught by Jesus's entire church (including every local church). The letter that was written to one congregation was even to be shared with another congregation (Colossians 4:16). In this way, God expects Christians and churches to all speak the same things and be perfectly united (1 Corinthians 1:10)!

## GALATIANS 1:6-9

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The message God had delivered for Christians to believe, teach, and practice was so united that Paul warned that anyone who preached a different gospel was to be rejected - even if this one was an apostle or an angel from Heaven! So, it does not matter who speaks a different message than what has been revealed, how popular they are, or how

many people follow the teaching. Any message that does not originate with God must be rejected (2 John 1:9-11)! Paul made it clear that such people stand cursed before God, on their way to eternal punishment in Hell (2 Peter 2:1-22)! Therefore, although many people and churches today treat teachings that depart from the Bible teaching as insignificant, God demonstrates it is serious!

### **ROMANS 16:17-18**

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Paul urged the Christians in Rome to watch out for those who create divisions and obstacles contrary to the teaching that comes from God. Such teaching was never meant to be tolerated by Jesus's church as being acceptable. Instead, it was to be fully rejected! It should be seen as being so dangerous that the people who teach such must be avoided if they will not repent of their false teaching (Acts 20:28-31; 2 John 1:9-11). Today, there are many false teachers working among churches. Some of these have knowingly chosen to teach false things. Others have been deceived themselves and spread false messages to others. This often includes twisting Scripture to teach things God has never taught (2 Peter 3:14-18)! So, God's church has the responsibility of searching the Scriptures, testing every message that is taught, rejecting anything that does not comply with the Scriptures, and holding on to everything that does (Acts 17:10-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22; 1 John 4:1-3).

### **CONCLUSION**

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Those who are in Jesus's church have believed the teaching that comes from God and continue to learn this teaching. They accept no other teaching besides what God has revealed in the pages of Scripture. Any teaching that involves more than God's teaching contains too much. Any teaching that involves less than God's teaching contains too little. Jesus's church will make it their effort to stand for exactly what the Scriptures teach!

### **DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

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What was the importance the early church put on the apostles' teaching?

How should the church today view and treat the apostles' teaching?

Does doctrine/teaching matter to your salvation?

Did the teaching of New Testament churches differ from church to church?

How could the teaching of every church be exactly the same?

How does God consider any teaching that differs from what He has revealed?

How should Christians respond to false teachers and false teaching?

How can Jesus's church make sure they only hold to the true teaching of God?