

News & Notes

Sunday, August 17, 2008

Remember in Prayer: Juanita Akin; Daryl Alberson; Tommy Alberson; Mary Bailey; Vikie Cobb; Melba Cox; Lettie Mae Hunt; Charles Johnson; Dot Ketchum; Dawn Givens; Renea Hightower; Christie Hurt; Wayne Kidd; Earl Liming; James Luna; John and Deliah Mann; Diane Mize; Kaylee Northrop; Ann Ray; Jerry Ray; Katherine Shaw; Chris Spence; Jamie Spence; Calvin Urserly; Alvie Williford;

Pantry item for the month of August is Sugar.

Ashland Events: Today: Periodic singing at Briarcrest Extended Care at 4:00 PM; August 20: Wednesdays in August;

Area Events: August 19: Summer Tuesday series at the Somerville congregation; August 23: Senior Adult Rally at the Booneville church of Christ; September 7-12: Gospel meeting at the Grand Junction church of Christ in Grand Junction, Tennessee;

Sermon in Preview:

AM: Marking Them which Cause Division

PM: The Nature of Hell

For the Record (August 10, 2008):

Attendance: 79 Contribution: \$1345.400 Budget: \$1452.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

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Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Worship 10:30 AM
Worship 5:00 PM

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King
Jeff Roberson
Carrol Street

Romans 11:33

ASHLAND ANNOUNCER

Increasing in the Knowledge of God



“The Everlasting Kingdom”

Chuck Northrop

From the very beginning of the church, men and their movements have tried “to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:30). All who care for the souls of men find this most disturbing. How ever disturbing this may be, the fact still remains.

One of the great testimonies of this most disturbing fact is the number of warnings in the New Testament concerning apostasy. Nearly every book of the New Testament has at least one warning involving false teachers and apostasy. Most of the books have far more than that. And every inspired writer recorded warnings not to fall away or err from the truth.

Because so many do fall away, there is no comfort found in the actions of men. However, we can take great comfort in God “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). And we can take great comfort in Jesus who is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). Further we can take great comfort in the word of God as in the inspired words of Peter recorded in 2 Peter 1:11. Peter wrote that we have entrance “into the everlasting kingdom” or better “the eternal kingdom.”

Since the kingdom is eternal, no matter what may come upon it or no matter how many may leave it, it will always be. Jesus declared that He will build His church and “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). Christians throughout all the ages have taken great comfort in the fact that despite any vast apostasy, the church will always be. There has and there will always be a remnant of God’s faithful ones. In consideration of

this passage, we find the kingdom in the past, in the present, and in the future.

The Past

Our text, 2 Peter 1:11, is in direct fulfillment of the prophesy of Daniel. Daniel 2:44 says, “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Daniel prophesied of a kingdom that was to be established in the days of the Roman empire and it was to be an eternal kingdom. That kingdom was the church established on the day of Pentecost in AD 33. Further Isaiah prophesied,

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2-3).

From the prophecy of Isaiah we learn that all nations shall flow into the kingdom or the church and the gospel message would first be proclaimed in Jerusalem spreading from that location.

The Present

An often asked question is, “if the church existed through the ages, do we have historical evidence to show this?” There are three reasonable views concerning the present state (from AD 33 to the present) of the eternal kingdom.

First is the view that the church existed in seed form during such times as the dark ages. Jesus taught that the seed of the kingdom “is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). Since the word of God is eternal, the kingdom is eternal. Whenever and wherever the seed of the kingdom is planted in good soil of the human heart, it produces citizens of the kingdom.

Second is the view that the church exists in a spiritual state rather than in a physical state. That is to say that the dead in Christ who are awaiting judgment are alive in spirit and separated from the body make up the eternal kingdom. An example of this may be the souls under the alter who “were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (Revelation 6:9).

A third reasonable view is that the church existed throughout the centuries since AD 33 in obscure small groups being overshadowed by the apostate Roman Catholic church. Since the Catholic church wrote much of the religious history during the dark ages, it is reasonable to consider that they would discredit any movement that would oppose them. Just as in our own restoration history other religious groups have tried to discredit us by calling us “Campbellites.” We can appreciate what many have done in the Restoration movement, but we are not followers of Campbell or Stone or any other man. We are followers of Christ and, thus, Christians.

The Future

In the great resurrection chapter, Paul declared that at the second coming, Christ would deliver up the kingdom to God, the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24). Further, Paul wrote that there is no need to sorrow in death, as does the world who has no hope.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18).

It is at this time that those who are free from sin through the precious blood of Jesus will be free from death. “Death is swallowed up in victory”