Questions To Ponder

Years ago, a lady handed me a business card. The reason became apparent when I looked at it, for it said, “Original Church of God.” Although this church met in a small town not very far from where we lived, I still know little about it; but some questions are in order.

Is this the church Jesus purchased with His blood? When Paul met with the elders of the church in Ephesus, he said, “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Notice that Paul said the church was purchased with the blood of Christ. We know that Jesus shed His blood “for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28), but how are our sins washed away by His blood? How do we become one of the purchased ones, one of the saved?

A similar question is in order: Is Jesus Christ the head of this church, the “Original Church of God”? As we know, an organization is controlled by its head. Concerning Christ and His church, Paul wrote, “And he is the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:18). Further, we find in Ephesians 1:22–23 that God “hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body.” It was necessary for Christ to be obedient to His Father (Hebrews 5:8), so it follows that anyone who would be saved must do the same. Can a church claim true connection with Christ unless He is its head? Should we make that declaration unless Christ has full control over us?

Our next question for the “Original Church of God” is also very simple: When did this church begin? There were about two hundred fifty recognized denominations in our country in the ’50s, but by the early ’80s this number rose to more than twelve hundred—we are certain that many more have been added to the list of recognized churches, for multitudes of churches have sprung up in recent years. Jesus said that He would build His church and then promised to give Peter the keys—the means by which to open the door—of the kingdom (Matthew 16:18–19). He also said that some who were then present would not see death before the kingdom came (Mark 9:1). We believe the Bible teaches that the kingdom and the church are the same entity. This being true, the church has long been established—its roots can be traced to the first Pentecost day after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:1–47). Would a church that had its beginning at any time other than that notable Pentecost day fit the description that Christ gave concerning His kingdom? Would you want to be a part of such a church?

These questions to the members of the “Original Church of God” can be asked of anyone. We should even ask them of ourselves, should we not? And this is really the point, for either we are on the side of the Lord or we are not: there is no middle ground in which we can be pleasing to God. Jesus said, “He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth” (Matthew 12:30).

Jesus gave a solemn warning in Matthew 7:15. “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.” As He was closed His powerful Sermon on the Mount, He spoke these sobering words:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And
then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21–23).

Peter also reminds us of this important truth. He said,

There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction (2 Peter 2:1).

Should we take these warnings lightly?

The need for diligent Bible study has never been greater than it is presently. Many false doctrines are spreading rapidly by means of extremely swift communication. Some are taught by people who are ignorant; others are teaching with full knowledge of their error. The only way we can discern between truth and error is to have God’s word fixed in our hearts. Holding the Bible as our standard, we will not need to speculate on whether or not a thing is true. Jesus said that the truth will make us free (John 8:32); and it will if we allow it to have free course in our lives. Would the apostle Paul say to us what he said to the church at Rome when he wrote the following?

But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered (Romans 6:17).

Are we following the doctrine of God or a doctrine of man? We must be certain not to become apathetic toward false teaching, for it damns the souls of those who embrace it. Further, we cannot afford to be like those of whom Jeremiah wrote, saying that “the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so” (Jeremiah 5:31). Do you love the truth?

—Dale E. Andrews