

The Christianity of the Apostles

When the Apostle Paul arrived at Rome, he had an interview with certain Jews there who desired to hear what he believed; 'for', they said, 'as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against' (Acts 28:22).

The members of this sect 'were called Christians', a name which was first used - probably by their opponents - at Antioch.(Acts 11:26)

By their inspired leaders they were called:

✳disciples(Acts 20:7)

✳saints (Romans 1:7)

✳brethren (Gal. 1:2)

✳brethren in Christ (Col. 1:2)

✳joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17)

✳believers (1 Tim. 4:12)

✳children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7)

✳Abraham's Seed (Gal. 3:29)

✳a peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9)

✳children of light (1 Thess 5:5)

✳children of God (1 John 3:10)

✳sons of God (1 John 3:1)

✳the elect of God (Col. 3:12)

✳etc

This 'sect' was composed of two classes, Jews and Gentiles. The former had discontinued observing the abrogated Mosaic Law, which was 'a shadow of good things to come'(Heb. 10:1) and had acknowledged that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, was the Messiah for whom they had been looking. (Acts 2:36)
They had confessed that only through him could remission of sins be obtained (Acts 2:38) and, in accordance with the predictions of their prophets, they looked for him to sit upon the throne of David and restore the kingdom of Israel. (Acts 3:20&21)

The latter class, the Gentiles, had 'turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven' (1 Thess 1:9&10) for the purpose of ruling the world in righteousness. (Acts 17:31) They expected at that time to

- ✳'reign with him' (2 Tim 2:12)
- ✳'on the earth' (Rev 5:10)
- ✳in 'his kingdom' (2 Tim 4:1)
- ✳to sit with him on his throne (Rev. 3:21)
- ✳and to have 'power over the nations' (Rev 2:26)

in accordance with God's promises. But Being 'heirs of the kingdom' of God (James 2:5) they had not begun to inherit it. They believed it to be a kingdom which must be entered 'through much tribulation' (Acts 14:22) and therefore they patiently suffered persecution that they might be counted worthy of it. (2 Thess 1:5)
They did not believe this kingdom to be the church, for they were told that no 'unrighteous' persons should enter it, and even 'flesh and blood could not inherit it. (1 Cor 6:9, 15:50) They therefore looked to being changed from mortality to immortality (1 Cor. 15:51-53) at the second appearing of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 3:20,21)

Believing that 'the wages of sin is death' (Rom. 6:23, 1 John 5:11) and that 'death passed upon all men' (Rom 5:12) the members of this 'sect' recognized the apostolic truth that eternal life, or immortality, is the 'gift of God', obtainable only through Jesus Christ. As enjoined by the apostles, they sought immortality (Rom 2:7) and endeavoured to 'lay hold on eternal life'; (1 Tim 6:12) consequently they did not believe they were naturally immortal, or in the present enjoyment of eternal life. The 'dead in Christ' they believed to be sleeping (1 Thess 4:14) 'in the dust of the earth' (Dan. 12:2) with no power to praise the Lord (Psalm 115:17) until the resurrection, an event necessary to prevent the faithful dead from perishing. (1 Cor. 15:16-18) This 'sect' did not look for the conversion of the world before the second appearing of Jesus Christ, because they were told that 'the mystery of iniquity', which was then working, would, when ripe, be destroyed **by** the coming of Christ (2 Thess 2:7-8).

This false system, which is to be destroyed at the return of Jesus denies or ignores many of the Bible Truths discussed above. There is a body of people who **do** adhere to the beliefs of the apostolic 'sect everywhere spoken against'. They do not adopt a name invented by the enemies of Christ, but they make use of a word synonymous with one of the names given by the Spirit of God, namely 'Brethren of Christ' (Heb 2:11-12), which in Greek becomes '**CHRISTADELPHIAN**'. Amid indifference and misunderstanding in a world which says, 'where is the promise of his coming?' (2 Peter 3:4), they try to bear witness to the truth. Having received the message themselves, they have the responsibility of 'watchman' (Ezek 33:7-9) to pass it to others. This it is their great desire to do, for they are confident that they have the greatest treasure treasure in the world, the Gospel, which is 'the power of God unto salvation' (Rom. 1:16) and the way to eternal life.

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For further information, please contact:

*The Dawn Christadelphians,
130 Western Road,
Bletchley,
Bucks. MK2 2PU,
United Kingdom.*

Email: admin@bible-uk.com

Web-site: www.bible-uk.com