

The word "*Christian*" is only used three times in the New Testament. What do we learn about them?

Acts 11:19-26 Christians must "*remain faithful ... with steadfast purpose*". It is a serious commitment. They should also share their beliefs with all who are willing to listen.

Acts 26:19-28 Paul tells King Agrippa and the Roman Governor, Festus that: Christians must "*repent and turn to God.*"

They must also believe in the Old Testament scriptures. They should always speak "*true and rational words.*"

Jesus rose from the dead. He was the first to inherit everlasting life.

1 Peter 4:12-19 Christians may have to suffer for their belief in Jesus Christ. Jesus will return to judge those who God decides are responsible to him.

All these statements add to our understanding of what Christians should believe and how they should behave. They are fully in tune with what Peter taught in Acts 2.

### **3. IF MY CHURCH DOES NOT TEACH WHAT 1ST CENTURY CHRISTIANS BELIEVED, WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

In Acts 18:24-28, we learn about a Jew named Apollos. He was a keen preacher but he only understood some of the things that Christians should believe.

Was that all right? No. Aquila and Priscilla, who had a fuller understanding, taught him "*the way of God more accurately.*"

From this example, it would be wise of you to join a group of Christians who fully accept the beliefs of 1st century Christians.

Christadelphians certainly do accept all those beliefs.

What can be more important than believing, and teaching, the true gospel as taught by Jesus, Peter and Paul? If you do, it will lead to everlasting life in the Kingdom of God.

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## ***Christadelphian Bible Mission***

### **What a Christian Should Believe**

#### **ACCEPTING THE BELIEFS OF 1st CENTURY CHRISTIANS**

When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:

1. Why should I accept the beliefs of 1st century Christians?
2. What did 1st century Christians believe?
3. If my church does not teach what 1st century Christians believed, what should I do?

#### **1. WHY SHOULD I ACCEPT THE BELIEFS OF 1ST CENTURY CHRISTIANS?**

It is very important that 21st century Christians have the same beliefs as those in the 1st century.

Why? Because 1st century Christians lived closest to the time when Jesus Christ preached, "*the Gospel of the Kingdom of God*".

If we want to drink the purest water from a stream we must get as close as we can to the water source. We know that further down the stream, pollution will have affected the purity of the water.

It is just the same with understanding Bible teaching. Jesus is the source of pure water. The closer we get to his teaching, the purer our understanding will be. The apostles Peter and Paul lived at the same time as Jesus. We cannot go wrong if we believe what they taught. Sadly, what they taught is rarely spoken about by modern preachers.

## **2. WHAT DID 1ST CENTURY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE?**

We must examine the first speech made by Peter, after Jesus went to heaven. He tells us in Acts 2:14-47 what Christians should believe.

Acts 2:21,23 Jesus did not die by accident. It was part of God's plan that Jesus, His sinless son, should give his life to save sinners. Because of Adam's sin, a death sentence was passed by God on Adam, Eve and all the human race. Jesus, by his sinless life, made everlasting life possible for all who believe in him and keep God's commandments.

Acts 2:24-28 Because Jesus lived a perfect life, God raised him from the dead. King David, who lived 1,000 years before Jesus, was also a prophet. He foretold the death and resurrection of Jesus. David said, of Jesus, God "*will not abandon my soul to Hades (the grave), or let your Holy One see corruption.*" (Psalm 16:10)

Jesus died and was laid in a tomb. God brought him back to life again (resurrection). God gave Jesus an immortal body (one that does not die). It is important to notice that the Bible does not

say that Jesus had an immortal soul that went to heaven when he died. That is a Greek idea, not a Bible one. Jesus still had a body. He could eat, be handled and recognised, in his immortal state 2:29-36 King David was loved by God. Even so, Peter tells us that David "both died and was buried". That is the natural end of all of us. Peter did not teach that David had an immortal soul. The Christian hope is that when Jesus returns from heaven, he will raise the dead. He will give his faithful followers an immortal body just like his own.

God promised that, "*He would set one of his descendants on his (David's) throne*". David was speaking of the "*resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades (the grave), nor did his flesh see corruption*". So Jesus went to Hades (the grave) when he died, not to heaven. God raised his body from the tomb. Notice also that Jesus is to sit on David's throne.

Where was that? It will be in Jerusalem, in the land of Israel. Jesus will return to be a real king on earth. The Kingdom of God is to be on earth, not in heaven. Jesus is coming to claim his kingdom. His faithful saints (those who have believed in him) will live forever. They will reign with Jesus over the world's mortal people in his kingdom.

Peter explains that David's prophecy told us that Jesus would sit on God's "*right hand*" (where he is now). However that is only until God makes the enemies of Jesus his footstool. Then God shall "*send the Christ*" to be king of the world (Acts 3:19-21).

Peter reminds the crowd, "*that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.*" People in the crowd were very upset when they understood that they had helped to put Jesus, God's son to death. They asked an important question, "*what shall we do?*". Peter told them, "*Repent and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.*"

Note that mature adults asked the question, "*what shall we do?*". Christian baptism is for mature people who choose to follow Jesus and repent of their sins. The sprinkling of babies (christening) is not taught in the Bible. To summarise what Peter, Jesus' disciple, believed and taught:

- Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- He lived a sinless life and died for us.
- He went to Hades (the grave) after death.
- God raised Jesus from the dead.
- In his immortal state, Jesus still had a body.
- Jesus went to heaven, to sit on God's right hand.
- He will return to the earth to be king on David's throne in Jerusalem.
- Christians must believe in Jesus, repent of their sins and be baptised.
- They should meet often to remember Jesus by "*breaking bread*".
- They must believe that the Old Testament was inspired by God.

If we are to call ourselves Christians, we should believe all the statements listed above.