

## The Apostles' Teaching

### Scripture Reading:

Hymn: 509

- Heb. 1:1-2     God, having spoken of old in many portions and in many ways to the fathers in the prophets, Has at the last of these days spoken to us in the Son, whom He appointed Heir of all things, through whom also He made the universe;
- Acts 2:42     And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- Titus 1:9     Holding to the faithful word, which is according to the teaching of the *apostles*, that he may be able both to exhort by the healthy teaching and to convict those who oppose.

### **I. The apostles' teaching is the entire speaking of God in the New Testament. It is God's entire speaking in the Son to His New Testament believers—**

#### **Heb. 1:1-2:**

- A. God's speaking in the Son as the Man in the four Gospels—John 14:10; 5:24; 16:12; 10:30.
- B. God also spoke in the Son as the Spirit through the apostles, in Acts and the twenty-one Epistles (Romans to Jude)—John 16:12-15; Matt. 28:19-20; Heb. 2:3-4; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; Col. 1:25-27.
- C. God spoke in the Son, who became the Seven Spirits, through the Apostle John in Revelation—Rev. 1:2, 4; 2:1, 7.
- D. God's speaking concerning the New Testament teaching is completed through Paul and John—Col. 1:25-27; Rev. 22:18-19.
- E. The unique revelation of God's New Testament economy and the contents of the full gospel of God—Col. 2:2-9; Eph. 3:3-11; 5:32; Rom. 1:1-14.

### **II. The apostles' teaching is the church's constitution; the church must hold it and be under it absolutely—Titus 1:9:**

- A. The apostles' teaching is the constitution of the Christian faith—Jude 3; 1 Tim. 1:19; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.
- B. The apostles' teaching, as the church's constitution, should be universally taught everywhere in every church in the same way—1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17.
- C. This constitution, like every constitution, must be properly interpreted.

### **III. Any teaching that was different from the apostles' teaching was not allowed by the apostles:**

- A. Any other belief besides this unique faith was not allowed by the apostles—Gal. 1:7-9.
- B. Teachings that went beyond the teaching of Christ were not allowed by the apostles—2 John 7-9.
- C. The apostle would not allow any different teaching. All teachings different from the unique revelation of God's New Testament economy were considered by the apostles as winds of teaching—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 4:14.
- D. God's holy writing should not be twisted by anyone in any way, but rather unfold them rightly and straightly without distortion—2 Pet. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:15.

### **IV. The apostles' teaching is for the protection of the church, which is the oneness of the Body of Christ—Acts 2:41-42:**

- A. The teaching of the apostles is the very holding factor of the one accord—Acts 2:41-42.

- B. If we limit ourselves to the apostles' teaching (concerning the teaching of the New Testament economy), we will be kept in oneness and will have one way for one goal.
- C. There must be only one unique teaching in the church—the apostles' teaching; there must be also only one unique fellowship which is produced by the apostles' teaching.
- D. All other fellowship outside of the apostles' fellowship is divisive; our fellowship must be in the fellowship of the apostles.

**V. The church's being blessed is because the church is continuing steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship—Acts 2:42, 46; 6:7.**

**Reference Books:** *The Crucial Content of God's New Testament Ministry*, Chapter 1; *The Crucial Elements of the Lord's Present Move*, Chapter 1; *The Apostles' Teaching*, Chapter 1; *The Apostles' Teaching and the New Testament Leadership*, Chapter 1; *Elders' Training*, Vol. 4, Chapter 8; *Elders' Training*, Vol. 7, Chapter 8; *The God-Ordained Way to Practice the New Testament Economy*, Chapter 17; *The Ministry of the New Testament and the Teaching and Fellowship of the Apostles*, Chapter 2; *Life-Study Messages of Acts*, Chapter 12; *Life-Study of First Timothy*, Chapter 8; *Life-Study Messages of Titus*, Chapters 1 to 3.

**Excerpts from the Ministry:****The Apostles' Teaching Is the Entire Speaking of God in the New Testament.  
It is God's Entire Speaking in the Son to His New Testament Believers**

God has spoken, and today God still speaks. There are many matters in God's speaking. Today God speaks to us in the Son (Heb. 1:1-2). God's speaking in the New Testament is in the way of incarnation. The Lord Jesus' speaking was God's speaking in the Son as the man in the four Gospels (John 14:10; 5:24; Matt. 28:19-20). (*The Apostles' Teaching*, pp. 4-5.)

God's speaking did not stop in the four Gospels. He also spoke in the Son as the Spirit through the apostles, from Acts to Revelation (John 16:12-15; Rev. 2:1, 7; 1 Cor. 4:17b; 7:17b; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; Rev. 1:1-2). While God was speaking in the Son, one day the Son told His disciples, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall disclose it to you. All that the Father has is Mine; therefore I said that He receives of Mine and shall disclose it to you" (John 16:12-15)... This means that after the four Gospels, there would be God's further speaking. (*The Apostles' Teaching*, p. 6.)

In the Acts, in the Epistles, and in Revelation, God spoke further, in the Son as the Spirit through the apostles. The apostles through whom God spoke in the Son as the Spirit were only a few. They were Peter, John, Paul, James, and Jude. Nearly the entire New Testament was uttered by these five persons.... Paul was used by the Lord in his speaking to complete the word of God, especially concerning the mystery of the Triune God (Col. 1:24-25)... Paul completed the part of God's speaking that concerns the mystery of the Triune God, but John completed the entire speaking of God. Therefore, at the end of Revelation there is a concluding word which says that no one has the right to add anything to this book or to subtract anything from this book (Rev. 22:18-19)... God's speaking is complete. Thus, when God speaks today, He simply repeats what He has already spoken. (*The Apostles' Teaching*, pp.10-13.)

The apostles' teaching is God's entire speaking in the New Testament, firstly in the incarnate Son, then through the disciples in the pneumatic Son. In the New Testament, God cannot depart from the principle of incarnation. He must speak through man. In the four gospels, He spoke through Jesus. In the next twenty-three books, He spoke through the apostles. Today, we are those people. God speaks in the principle of incarnation (*Holy Word for Morning Revival—The Crucial Content of God's New Testament Ministry*, Vol. 1, Week 1, Day 2.) **(Translated)**

**The Apostles' Teaching is the Church's Constitution;  
The Church Must Hold It and Be Under It Absolutely**

We have seen that in the Old Testament, the law could be considered as the written constitution of God's people. In the New Testament what replaced the law for God's administration among His people? We know that Christ replaced the law, but we are referring to the aspect and sense of replacing the law in God's administration. In the New Testament, the teaching of the apostles replaced the law. Acts 2:42 says, "And they were continuing steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles." Immediately after the three thousand were saved on the day of Pentecost,

they began to continue steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles. In the Old Testament kingdom of God, the constitution was the law, and in the New Testament kingdom of God, the constitution is the teaching of the apostles. (*Elders' Training*, Book 9, p.45.)

Acts 2:42 indicates that all the three thousand who were saved on the day of Pentecost continued in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles.... We must continue in these two things—in the teaching of the apostles and in the fellowship of the apostles. If we intend to continue in the fellowship of the apostles, we must first continue in the teaching of the apostles. Teaching must come first; then fellowship follows. (*The Apostles' Teaching*, p. 8.)

### **Any Teaching That Was Different From the Apostles' Teaching Was Not Allowed by the Apostles**

Any teaching different from [the unique revelation of God's New Testament economy] is not allowed by the apostles (1 Tim. 1:3-4). "Teachings that go beyond and do not abide in the teaching of Christ also are not allowed by the apostles" (translated) (2 John 9-11). The different teachings included things from the Old Testament, yet they were different from God's New Testament economy. Such teachings were not allowed by the apostles (1 Tim. 1:3-4). (*The Ministry of the New Testament and the Teaching and Fellowship of the Apostles*, p.12-13.)

(In the Lord's recovery, we must) take this way for this goal,...having no different teachings (1 Tim. 1:3-4). We only accept the apostles' teaching (Acts. 2:42), that is, the healthy words of the Lord Jesus (1 Tim. 6:3).... This way of having one goal is altogether within the limitation and boundary of the apostles' teaching. The problems, divisions, and confusion among Christians today all are due to one matter—not caring for the apostles' teaching. Many Christians teach differently than the apostles' teaching. They do not have a strict limitation and restriction and are not safeguarded within the boundary of the apostles' teaching. The apostles' teaching is the deciding factor for this way of having one goal. **(Translated.)**

Any other belief besides this unique faith is not allowed by the apostles (Gal. 1:7-9). Galatians 1:8 says, "But if even we or an angel out of heaven should announce to you a gospel beyond that which we have announced to you, let him be accursed." ...The apostles were very strict in their teaching, that is, in the New Testament teaching, the contents of the full gospel of God.

All teachings different from the unique revelation of God's New Testament economy were considered by the apostles as winds of teaching (Eph. 4:14).... These winds of teaching are... with a view to inducing men into the satanic system of error.... Satan has a system, and if it were possible, he would induce all Christians into it. The goal, the aim, the purpose, of his system is to carry the saints away from the central lane of the divine revelation with the intention of frustrating and even tearing down the building up of the Body of Christ. Some winds of teaching do not appear to be evil. However, the factor of evil is there.

The apostles' teaching, the New Testament teaching, is very crucial. Whenever we hear something differing from the apostles' teaching, we should not be bothered or affected. We should simply come back to the apostles' teaching. However, if we are not able to properly discern a teaching, we should fellowship with certain saints to receive some help. In God's New Testament economy, there is only one kind of teaching revealed and recognized by God—the teaching of the apostles. We need to

continue steadfastly in this teaching (Acts 2:42). (*The Apostles' Teaching and the New Testament Leadership*, pp. 13-14, 16.)

Acts tells us that on the one hand, there was one accord among the disciples, and on the other hand, all those who were one in one accord were continuing in the teaching of the apostles (2:42). The teaching of the apostles was the very holding factor of the one accord. If there were more than one teaching, this would damage the holding factor. (*Elders' Training*, Book 7, p. 111.)

### **Turning Away from the Ministry Versus Keeping the Word**

In 2 Timothy 1:15 Paul says, "...all who are in Asia turned away from me." Asia was a province of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor, far away from Rome where Paul, who was in prison, was writing his Epistle to Timothy. When Paul said that all who were in Asia turned away from him, this does not indicate that they turned away from the person of Paul because the person of Paul was far away from them. This verse indicates that they all turned away from Paul's ministry. Among the churches in Asia was the church in Ephesus, which was fully established by Paul's ministry as recorded in Acts 19. They received the gospel, the teaching, the edification, and the establishment from the ministry of the Apostle Paul. But by the time Paul was imprisoned in Rome, they had all turned away from this ministry.

Paul's second Epistle to Timothy was written about A.D. 68. About thirty years later, the Lord used John to continue His divine revelation. The Lord came back to all the churches in Asia who had turned away from Paul. Because they turned away from Paul's ministry, the churches in Asia declined into a situation full of degradation. The degradation of the churches in Asia as recorded in Revelation 2 and 3 was due to their turning away from the proper ministry. This degradation began with their losing of the first love toward the Lord, which transpired at Ephesus (2:4), and ended with the lukewarmness (3:16), the Christlessness. The Lord as the Head of the church is standing outside the degraded church, knocking at her door (3:20).

In these seven epistles in Revelation 2 and 3, the striking point of the churches' degradation was three kinds of teachings: the teaching of Balaam, a Gentile prophet (2:14), the teaching of the Nicolaitans to build the hierarchy (2:15), and the teaching of the woman, the so-called prophetess, Jezebel, full of heresies and fornication (2:20). These three kinds of teaching crept in because they left the teaching of the apostle. Why has Christianity become degraded? Because they turned away from the apostle's teaching. Thus, all the different teachings came in.

In 1 Timothy 1:3 and 6:3 Paul warned not to teach differently. The saints should teach according to Paul's teaching, and the result of this turning away was that they received three kinds of heretical teachings. The teaching of Balaam to worship the idols, the teaching of the Nicolaitans to build up the hierarchy, even the papal system, and the teaching of Jezebel to bring the leaven of evil, heretical, and pagan things into the fine flour of Christ (Matt. 13:33) came in because the proper teaching was rejected. Within thirty years after Paul's final Epistle to Timothy, these churches had reached such a point of degradation. It is dangerous to leave or turn away from the apostle's teaching, from the apostle's proper revelation.

The Lord came in these seven epistles to judge those degraded churches. His eyes were as a flame of fire (1:14) to observe, search, and enlighten, and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword (1:16), which is His discerning, judging, and slaying word (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17). They turned away from the right word, so the

Lord came with this word to judge them. The Lord's feet were like shining brass, as having been fired in a furnace (1:15). Brass signifies divine judgment (Exo. 27:1-6). The Lord's coming to the churches in such a way fit in with their turning away from the apostles' teaching and their picking up of different teachings.

One church was unique, and was highly appraised by the Lord—the church in Philadelphia. The Lord highly appraised them and even appreciated them because they kept the word (3:8). That means they did not turn away from the apostles' proper teaching. Although they were weak, the Lord still appraised them highly, telling them that they had a little power and that they had kept the word.

To turn away from the proper teaching is a terrible thing that will result in degradation and in picking up other teachings. I say this as a warning to those dear ones who would not take the new way. To reject the proper revelation, the proper teaching, of the leaders among you is a dangerous thing. You will open the door for other teachings to come in and suffer degradation. I hope that all of the church people in the recovery would not be followers of those in Asia who turned away from Paul's ministry. Rather, I hope we would follow the pattern of the church in Philadelphia—keeping the Lord's word even though we only have a little strength. Let us keep the word of the Lord, which is to remain in the teachings of the apostle, to remain in the healthy words, to remain in the unique revelation from the Lord with the proper leadership. Then we are safe. (*Elders' Training*, Book 7, pp. 128-130.)

### **Questions:**

1. Please explain what is the apostles' teaching.
2. Why did the apostles forbid any teaching differing from the apostles' teaching?
3. How does the apostles' teaching influence the church?