

A Church Kitchen at Jerusalem?

One of our readers asked for help in responding to a brother who is defending church kitchens on this basis: *how do we know the Jerusalem church didn't have one to use in the daily serving of food to its widows (Acts 6:1-6)?*

First, the question is not, how do we know they didn't have a kitchen?; it is, how do we know they did? We can only follow the apostolic pattern (Philippians 3:17) by observing what the Bible says the early Christians did. Guessing about things they might have done, but things about which the Bible says nothing, opens the door to endless innovations.

Second, I doubt the Jerusalem church even had a building at this point in its existence, much less a kitchen! There was so much poverty in the group that many were having to sell land or houses just to meet the physical needs of their brethren (Acts 4:34-35). Given that, and the fact that their number quickly swelled into the thousands (Acts 2:41; 4:4), where would they have gotten the funds to build a meeting house sufficient for so many? Acts 2:46 points to the temple courts as their meeting place.

Third, the only justification for a church having *any* facility is that it is a means of carrying out the work God has assigned the church (collectively). A building is authorized because we are commanded to assemble for worship (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; etc.). Classrooms for edification/instruction in God's word might be included (Ephesians 4:11-12; etc.). If one is going to argue in favor of a gym, he must show that recreation is a church function. If one is going to argue in favor of a kitchen and eating hall, he must show that eating is a church function. Facilities for doing unauthorized things are themselves unauthorized. If the New Testament contained any commands or examples that made dinners and recreation the church's work, brethren would not resort to arguments such as the one we are considering. Not only are there no positive statements to support such things, Paul's prohibitions in 1 Corinthians 11 explicitly place eating in the realm of the home, not the church. "What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? . . . If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home . . ." (vss. 22, 34).

Fourth, who's kidding whom? What church has so many members lacking food and cooking capability that a kitchen in the meeting house is legitimately the most practical way to provide for them? And more to the point, in what congregation is preparing meals for indigent members the exclusive, or even the primary, use of such facilities? It is dishonest to justify building a facility for one purpose, then switching (perhaps all the while planning) to use it for others. By such tactics we might console ourselves, but God is not deceived.

- by Frank Himmel

Historical & Literal

Those who attack the authenticity of what the Bible says about creation will say that Genesis 1-11 is mythology. In other words, they say it did not really happen and it is nothing more than a fairytale. They understand if they can convince people that it is mythology, they can destroy the credibility of the Bible and promote their manmade teaching of evolution with its billions of years.

Let's see what the Bible says. In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus quotes from Genesis 1 & 2 as being true. In John 8:44, Jesus called Satan the "father of lies" referring back to Genesis 3:4. In Matthew 23:35 Jesus spoke of Abel in Genesis 4:2-10 as a historical person. In Matthew 24:37-38, Jesus spoke of the Flood of Noah in Genesis 6-9 as a historical event. If Genesis 1-11 is a myth, then Jesus was mistaken in all of these instances.

In 1 Corinthians 11:8, 12, Paul states that man was created first, then woman just as Genesis 2:18-23 states. In 1 Timothy 2:13, Paul called Adam & Eve by name, and in Romans 5:14 he says "death reigned from Adam to Moses." In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul says, "The first man Adam became a living being." If Adam was only a mythological character, then everything Paul said is false. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul says, "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted." I am afraid many minds have been corrupted by believing that Genesis 1-11 is nothing but a fairytale.

The New Testament shows that the first 11 chapters of Genesis are historical and literal. In fact, there are more than 100 references in the New Testament that refer back to the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Besides this internal evidence, there is ample proof of the global flood as described by the Bible because over 100 cultures historically record a global flood. Also, the fossil record proves that every mountain on earth was covered by water. For example, marine fossils have been found high in the Himalayas, the world's tallest mountain range. When one begins to examine the internal and external evidence of Genesis 1 – 11, one will be overwhelmed with proof that the Bible is true and not mythology.

- by Cougan Collins

Our Gospel Meeting: A Success or A Failure?

A message received from a friend told of a gospel meeting at their local congregation. He said that two different men prayed during the Sunday morning assembly that God would bless them and help the church to have a good gospel meeting. But, alas, neither of those two men returned for the Sunday evening service!

While this scenario is not uncommon, it is still discouraging. And, we wonder if those two brothers realized the negative impact of their example on others in the church.

Do YOU think about how your decisions affect others? Have you considered how even the simple choice to attend or not attend an assembly will speak to others about your commitment to Lord? Do you really want them to have the impression that you are not terribly serious about your service to the Lord? Are you willing for your Christian and non-Christian friends to assume that other things are actually more important to you than His kingdom? Like it or not, others are drawing such conclusions about you.

Some are saying that gospel meetings have lost their effectiveness. They think that we are wasting time and money by continuing to conduct these special evangelistic sessions. We believe they are right - that is, they are right if brethren are not going to take such efforts seriously, and if they are unwilling to support these meetings with zeal and enthusiasm.

A gospel meeting provides an excellent opportunity for us to spread the message of salvation right here in our own community. But, the outcome of the meeting largely depends upon *YOU*. Will you help make it a success, or will you be contributing to a failure? Think!

- by Greg Gwin