

**CONTENDING  
FOR THE  
FAITH  
(Basic Bible Doctrines)**

**13 Lessons**

**Prepared by  
PAUL E. CANTRELL**

**2008**



# **Contending for the Faith! (Basic Bible Doctrines)**

**13 Lessons**

**Prepared by:  
Paul E. Cantrell  
84 Northview Dr.  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050**

**[pecantrell@juno.com](mailto:pecantrell@juno.com)**

**2008**

# Preface

**Wanted! True Christianity!** Men have made so many changes in what God gave that it is hard to recognize the real thing. True Christianity can easily be lost in the maze of religious differences and indifference. Are we really concerned and serious about wanting to follow what God has given; or, are we more concerned about pleasing men or ourselves in our religious beliefs and practices. Just how serious are we to want to not only hold to the Truth originally given by God, but to live that truth—no matter what the cost! Many in the early church lost their lives striving to hold on to true Christianity. The time may not be too far off before we will face the same "cost!"

This series of lessons are entitled, "**Contending for the Faith!**" The purpose of this study is to take a second look at the basic teachings of Christianity and to encourage each of us to hold to these teachings. After looking at the seven "ones" in Ephesians 4 and stressing the concept of Biblical Unity, we will end this series with a lesson on contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. It is our hope that the study will be uplifting and challenging to each of us.

Paul E. Cantrell  
June, 2008

# **Table of Content**

## **"Contending for the Faith" (Basic Bible Teaching)**

<b>1 --</b>	<b>"Law versus Grace....."</b>	<b>1-4</b>
<b>2 --</b>	<b>"<u>One God and Father</u>" Who Planned Redemption for Man".....</b>	<b>5-8</b>
<b>3 --</b>	<b>"<u>One Lord Jesus Christ</u>" Who Made Redemption Possible for Mankind.....</b>	<b>9-12</b>
<b>4 --</b>	<b>"<u>One Holy Spirit</u>" That Provided the Message of Redemption.....</b>	<b>13-16</b>
<b>5 --</b>	<b>"<u>One Faith</u>" Man's Avenue of Redemption.....</b>	<b>17-20</b>
<b>6 --</b>	<b>"<u>One Baptism</u>" That puts us into a Redemptive State.....</b>	<b>21-24</b>
<b>7 --</b>	<b>"<u>One Body</u>" The Called out Redeemed People of God.....</b>	<b>25-28</b>
<b>8 --</b>	<b>"<u>One Hope</u>" Resurrection unto Life Eternal.....</b>	<b>29-32</b>
<b>9 --</b>	<b>"Biblical Unity".....</b>	<b>33-36</b>
<b>10--</b>	<b>"Love of God and Our Fellow-Man".....</b>	<b>37-40</b>
<b>11--</b>	<b>"The True Worship of the True God".....</b>	<b>41-44</b>
<b>12--</b>	<b>"Faithfulness to the End".....</b>	<b>45-48</b>
<b>13--</b>	<b>"Contending for the Faith".....</b>	<b>49-52</b>



## Lesson One

*"Law versus Grace"*

One of the "fundamentals" of Christianity is the concept of "Law" and "Grace" and the part they play in making us acceptable to the God who created us. An improper view of Law or Grace will invalidate our relationship with Him—make it void or vain. It is important that we understand the meaning of these terms and how they are used in the Word of God. True Christianity can only exist where these two terms are properly used and accepted. Men tend to go to extremes—to the far left or the far right; but, the truth is usually right down the "center of the road!"

**The Concept of Law**

What do you think of when you hear the word "Law?" Just what is Law? A very simple definition would be: *"A rule of action from an authoritative source."* The following scriptures may be of help to see how to fully define its usage:

- 1—Human instruction—Laws of the Land (Prov. 1:8)
- 2—Divine instruction (Isa. 1:10)
- 3—Regulations (Lev. 7:7)
- 4—Customs (2 Sam. 7:19)
- 5—A Principle that governs one's actions (Rom. 7:23)

Of course, the giving of the Ten Commandments is referred to as Law (Deut. 4:7-8, 13). However, mankind was on the face of this earth a long time before the Ten Commandments were given to the Nation of Israel (and only to Israel—Deut. 4:7-8; Ps. 147:19-20). What "Law" was mankind under from the beginning of our creation by God? Please notice the following distinctions that need to be made.

1. **God's generic Law to all mankind!** God gave special instructions to Adam and Eve that of course would not apply to anyone else but them. After disobeying God, they were driven from the Garden of Eden, but we do not know of any written Law that God gave to them. What is this "generic law" that we are speaking about? We can only make a guess from what little information we are given, but it is important to realize that we are talking about such people as Cain, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, Job, etc. In reality, all mankind up until about 1500 BC were under this generic law. The Apostle Paul spoke about this Law in Rom. 2:13-15 after indicating that the Gentile world had turned away from that which was obvious and turned to sinful activities (Rom. 1:18-32). Paul said that they knew better, but went on and did it anyway! What is the "Law" written in our hearts? Possibly, it could be our conscience because it can accuse or excuse us according to our actions. However, this conscience can be so seared that it cannot do its job properly (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

2. **God's Law given through Moses to Israel.** This was a "covenant relationship" with a special nation of people for a special purpose of bringing the Redeemer into the world (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:15-16). This Law was not to be permanent, but to last only until the "seed" should come—that is "the Christ." (Gal. 3:17-19). When Jesus came, He lived the Law perfectly, became the perfect sacrifice for sin, and did away with the Old Covenant and gave a New Covenant for all men to come under (Gal. 4:4-5; Jn. 1:29; Col. 3:14-17; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:16-17).
3. **God's Law given through Christ.** God has spoken to mankind through His Son (Heb. 1:1-2; 7:12). It is referred to as the "Law of Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21); the "royal law" (Jas. 2:8); and the "perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). Man is under obligation to keep this law—if he does not, he becomes a "law-breaker" or a sinner. Where there is no law, there can be no sin; for sin is the transgressing of the Law of God (Rom. 4:15; 1 Jn. 3:4).

## **The Purposes of Law**

God has purposes or reasons for giving or placing the concept of right and wrong in our lives. It is primarily to regulate the actions of men towards God and one another! It is to give instructions that could not otherwise be known by man—that is, what to do to be right with God. It also has a purpose of telling men how they can get out from under the just penalty of their sins by obeying what God expects of them. How would we ever know about redemption through Jesus if we did not have the Bible to tell us about such and how we may obtain it. The Law makes sin known! (Rom. 3:19-20). Man has a tendency to deceive himself and excuse himself when he does wrong. But the law points out his failures. Laws are really more for people who choose not to live up to their conscience—their basic knowledge of right and wrong (Rom. 2:13-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-2).

## **The Bondage of Law**

The Law's biggest failure is that it, in and of itself, cannot save mankind! Man can only be just before the Law if he keeps it (perfectly) (Rom. 3:20; Jas. 2:10; Gal. 3:21; 3:10-12). But man is weak and breaks God's Law and comes under its curse—which is death (Rom. 6:23). Why is man in bondage to Law? Simply because we cannot deliver ourselves out from under the curse of death! There has to be forgiveness, mercy, or grace in order to be back in fellowship with our Maker. Without this we are doomed forever away from God. We are not under a "Law System" for justification, but we are under a "Grace System" for justification that sets us free from the penalty (curse) of breaking Law. But the whole point is....we are still under obligation to keep God's Law. It is when we break His Law that we need His forgiveness. And the Apostle makes it very clear that we are not to take advantage of God's goodness by continuing in the way of sin (Rom. 6:1-2).

## **The Concept of Grace**

Grace is simply defined as "undeserved favor." Several terms are used that identify with the idea: **Forgiveness, Remission of sins, Mercy, Salvation, Redemption**, etc. God is offering something to mankind that he does not deserve, but that He wants to give! God wants His offer of Grace to be heard by all mankind (Matt. 28:18-20), but men have to accept it in God's appointed way—as given in this New Law or Testament or Covenant. Everything that He requires of man to receive His Grace must be done (Matt. 7:21). It should be obvious that a man who hears this message of Grace and does not have faith in that message (doesn't believe it to be true) will not obey what he is told to do. In Acts 2, at least 3,000 believed the message and were told what they must do to be saved or forgiven. They did it and were forgiven! (38-41). But this was only the beginning, they must continue in the Grace of God by living godly and righteously the rest of their lives (Rev. 2:10; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Jn. 1:7-10, etc.). We are to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh (Gal. 5:16-26). We are to walk according to the Law of Christ in order to continue in the Grace of Christ! (Phil. 1:27; Jas. 1:25).

## **Concluding Thoughts**

Both Jew and Gentile have been given a New Covenant (Law) by which to live and be made right (acceptable) with God. If we want to receive God's Grace, we need to pay attention to His new Law and what it says we must do. "Unconditional" Grace is never taught in Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. God's Grace is freely offered to all, but upon the basis of their obedience to the Gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Mark 16:15-16). Neither do the Scriptures teach that we can earn or merit our salvation. We are truly delivered from the curse of the Law by the Grace of God, but not delivered from being obedient people to the God of Heaven (Matt. 7:21).

## Questions for Discussion

### True or False

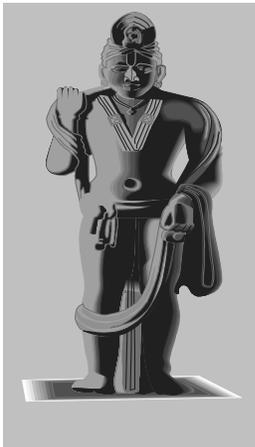
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. A middle of the road view of Law and Grace is definitely wrong.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Man's ability to draw up laws for people to live by shows he has an understanding of right and wrong and reward and punishment.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Mankind has always been under law to God from the beginning.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. The Law of Moses was a special Law given only to the Nation of Israel.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. The Apostle stated in Galatians that the Law of Moses was not to be permanent.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. The "Law of Liberty" has reference to the "Law of Christ."
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. What makes man a sinner is his decendency from Adam.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. Man can only be a sinner where there is Law that can be broken.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. A primary purpose of Law is to help man see how to act correctly towards God and his fellow-man.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Without Law, mankind could not know what was right and wrong.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. There are some things that man cannot know in regards to his salvation unless God gave him instructions.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. The "Generic Law of God" is primarily for the unrighteous person.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 13. The Law's biggest failure is that it does not make allowances for imperfection.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. The Law of God enslaves us and we cannot get free of its curse.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 15. We only need God's forgiveness when we break His Law.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 16. When one preaches about forgiveness, he is preaching on Grace.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 17. Man needs to hear the message of God's Grace in order to respond to it.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 18. Obedience to the Message is necessary even if a person believes the message to be true.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 19. A person must continue to be obedient to the Law of Christ or he could lose the grace of God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 20. "Unconditional Grace" is taught throughout Scripture.

## Lesson Two

## *"One God and Father Who Planned Redemption for Man"*

The Bible begins with the assumption of God: ***"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*** (Gen. 1:1). The Apostle Paul in his preaching at Athens to the great philosophers of that day began his sermon with this same assumption (Acts 17:22-29). The Scriptures do not attempt to prove the existence of God but just declare that God is. Mankind in general has believed in some kind of Superior being(s), but has been greatly confused over the nature of God. A great purpose of Scripture teaching is to help us to see the true nature of Deity. Most of these lessons in this series are designed to emphasize the true identity of God.

### **One God versus many gods**



At the time Jesus lived on earth "idolatry" or a belief in many gods was prevalent among all nations but one—Judah still had those who believed in the one true God as well as many of the Jews who had been scattered among the nations. The Bible and secular history both show this to be true. Israel, as they came out of Egyptian Bondage were called upon to make a choice between one or many gods (Joshua 24:14-15). Paul's preaching at Athens shows this clearly (Acts 17:16, 22-29). The world that we live in now still has idol worship or a belief in many gods. The books of prophecy in the Old Testament continually contrast the choice between one or many gods that men invent (Isa. 37:14-20; 44:12-17, etc.).

The inspired Apostle Paul stated that man is without excuse for changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like corruptible man, birds, and animals (Rom. 1:18-23). In the preaching that was done among the Gentile Nations, they were called upon to turn from "dumb idols to the living God" (1 Thess. 1:8-9). Our danger today is the same "in principle"—we may not make images and worship them, but we can still dethrone God and make Him into something different from what He is (Mal. 1:6-8; 1 Tim. 2:5). Also, we can put things or people before Him rather than allowing Him first place in our hearts and lives (Matt. 22:37-38; Luke 14:26; Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:5). The real issue seems to be as follows:

1. Men can know there is a God, but refuse to accept such;
2. So, the problem is not knowing, but a rebellious spirit on man's part;
3. Men can choose, and often do, to give up the true knowledge of God.

4. The Psalmists warns: *"The fool has said in his heart there is no God!"* (14:1).

## **Three-in-One Concept of God**

The Bible clearly emphasizes the triune nature of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit); yet, there is also a strong emphasis upon His "oneness." (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6; Exo. 20:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6). In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for "one" is "Echod." (Deut. 6:4). But this same word is used in reference to the joining together of a man and woman in the marital state (Gen. 2:24). It is possible that this word is used in what could be called a "composite unity or oneness." There is strong evidence of this composite unity in the first three chapters of Genesis:

Gen. 1:1—The Hebrew word for God is plural with a singular verb (Elohim).

Gen. 1:1—It is stated that God created....but Heb.11:3 indicates that Jesus in His pre-existent state did the creating.

Gen. 1:2—The Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Gen. 1:26—Plural pronouns are used with reference to God "us" and "our."

Gen. 3:22—Similar usage as 1:26—"us."

It is possible that the universe about us helps to illustrate this oneness of God. We can see a tri-unity all around us, such as:

- 1) **Time** is made up of Past, Present, and Future. It takes all three to make up time. Without any one, there is no time. Yet, each one is time.
- 2) **Space** is made up of Length, Height, and Depth. It takes all three to make up space. Without any one, there is no space. Yet, each one is space.
- 3) **Man** is made up of Body, Soul, and Spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). It takes all three to make up what God calls "man." Without any one of these, man would not be "man." Yet, in a sense each one is man.

God is pictured to us as: **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**. All three are required to make up God....and yet, each one is God or Deity. God is One—a composite unity—but He is presented to us as three personalities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is complete in Himself. He is never lonesome and has full resource within Himself. And so, as His people, we are One Body but many members (Rom. 12:5).

## **The "Father" image of God**

Both the Old and New Testaments use this term "Father" in reference to God. (Isa. 1:1-3; 9:6; 63:16) (Matt. 5:16, 48; 6:6), etc. The emphasis is upon God being like a Father to us as His adopted children. What a blessing to have such a Father (1 Jn. 3:1).

1. He blesses us (Rom. 8:28)
2. He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7)
3. He protects us (2 Pet. 2:9)
4. He provides for us (Matt. 6:33)
5. He hears the cries of His children (1 Jn. 3:22)
6. He is preparing a place for us eternally (Jn. 14:1-3)

## **He Planned for our Redemption**

In our efforts to conceive of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we rank them in categories such as the following:

1. The Father is the Planner;
2. The Son is the Creator—brings the plans to fruition;
3. The Holy Spirit gives life to all.

When we look at man's redemption, we do somewhat the same thing: The Father planned for our Redemption from the beginning; The Son came and put the Plan into action in order to make Salvation or redemption possible; and the Holy Spirit gives life to all who obey the Gospel of Christ. Whether this is absolutely correct, I cannot say, but it does seem to fit the picture.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

The "One God and Father" gives us a family image that we can easily identify with and see the value of. Sometimes our earthly fathers are not what they ought to be; so, we need a spiritual Father that can give us the perfect example of Fatherhood. God is a God of peace, not division and strife. He challenges us to oneness and unity for our own good. God redeems us and places us in the "One Body of Christ," but we have to maintain that oneness or unity by the way we conduct ourselves with others in the body of Christ.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

**True or False**

- 1. The Bible assumes the existence of God and does not try to prove He exists.
- 2. Man's problem concerning God is to understand His nature, rather than His existence.
- 3. In Jesus' time on earth, all nations were idolatrous but one.
- 4. Men can know there is a God, but refuses to accept such.
- 5. The Bible states that men are without excuse for not believing in the one true God of heaven.
- 6. "Idolatry" can be defined as putting anything before God.
- 7. Man's greater problem is rebellion rather than a lack of knowledge.
- 8. "Deity" is revealed to us in the Bible as a "tri-une" being.
- 9. There is strong evidence for this "tri-une" nature of God in the first three chapters of the Old Testament.
- 10. Our universe is filled with "triunities."
- 11. God is complete in Himself and does not need any thing or any one.
- 12. Both the Old and New Testaments use the term "Father" with reference to God.
- 13. God is pictured in Scripture as the "perfect" Father for mankind.
- 14. God, the Son, created all things—not God, the Father.
- 15. It is the Spirit that gives life—not God, the Father.

## Lesson Three

*"The One Lord Jesus Christ  
Who Made Redemption Possible for Mankind"*

God is revealed to us in Holy Writ as "triune"—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20). It is what some call the "composite unity" of God. Each personality of Deity has His specific part to play in man's redemption. We previously suggested the following:

1. God, the Father, is the great Planner for man's redemption;
2. God, the Son, came to earth as a man to carry out those plans for man's redemption;
3. God, the Holy Spirit, came to give life to those who put their trust in God.

In this lesson, we want to take a close look at the Son's part in man's redemption; but, to also see Him as the "One Lord!" Remember, these seven "ones" are the basis of what we are to believe in to be pleasing to God. There is only one God, the Father! But, as well, there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ! Why is it so important to believe this?

**Jesus is God in the Flesh**

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea over 2000 years ago (Matt. 2:1). Was that the beginning of His existence as a "being?" If so, He was only a mere man like all other men. But the Bible portrays Jesus as "Deity!" He is portrayed as being equal with the Father (John 10:30). His birth is portrayed as a miraculous one—conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20) and born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23). Jesus, Himself, claimed to be God and was condemned by the religious leaders of the Jewish nation as being a blasphemer (Jn. 5:16-18). Expressions are used in the Scriptures that identify Him as being on an equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 13:14). If Jesus is Deity; then, His fleshly birth would indicate that God has come down in human form and lived among men as a human (Matt. 1:23).

The very fact that Jesus claimed to be equal with the Father would suggest to us that He had a pre-fleshly existence. The Bible clearly indicates such. He makes the claim that He had been with the Father and upon His physical death would go back to His Father (Jn. 16:28). The Gospel of John begins with this concept that the Word (the Son of God) was in the beginning with God (the Father); and was God (Deity) but was made flesh (Jesus) (Jn. 1:1, 14). Jesus, in His pre-human existence, was before all things that were created—for He created them (Heb. 1:2). Jesus clearly laid claim to this concept when He said to the Jewish people **"Before Abraham was, I am!"** (Jn. 8:58; 16:28). The Old Testament prophets foretold of this very thing (Micah 5:2; Isa. 9:6). His pre-existence with the God, the Father, would enable Him to be a perfect revealer of Deity to mankind (Jn. 1:18; 14:9).

### **The Perfect Sacrificial Offering**

The death of Jesus (physically) was basically the same as any other man's death; but, the significance of His death has made a huge difference to all mankind in one way or another. Jesus knew why He became a man and why He was going to die. He came to earth to become the perfect sin offering for lost humanity (Matt. 26:1-2; 20:18-19; Heb. 2:14-15; Jn. 1:29). Even though man plotted and killed Jesus; yet, it was the Father's plan and purpose for Jesus to die for the sins of the people (Acts 2:22-24; 2 Cor. 5:18-19). Jesus' sacrificial death was for the purpose of bringing man back into fellowship with God. He came to **"Seek and save the lost!"**

But why did He have to be our sacrifice? Simply because man could not live perfectly nor rid his own soul of his sins! All mankind has therefore come under the curse of breaking the Law of God (death) (Rom. 6:23; Gal. 3:10-11)—because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). The sacrificial death of Jesus shows clearly:

1. The Justice of God in dealing with sin (Rom. 3:24-26);
2. God's great wrath for sin (Rom. 1:18);
3. The reality of man's sin (Rom. 3:23);
4. The futility of trying to minimize our sin (Rom. 6:23);
5. The real reason for sin (selfishness) (Gal. 2:20);
6. And, most of all, it shows the infinite love of God for His creatures (Jn. 3:16).

### **Jesus was Raised from the Dead**

Jesus' willingness to offer Himself as our sacrifice for sin made it possible for man to come back into fellowship with God. But God's plan went even further—that is, He planned also for Jesus to be raised from the dead to give us a **"living hope!"** (1 Pet. 1:3). The Apostle showed the great necessity of having this hope when he said: **"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable."** (1 Cor. 15:19). Jesus died and was raised up so that our fellowship with God could be for all eternity! His resurrection not only gives proof of his being the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4), but it gives us an assurance of our own resurrection unto eternal life with God (Jn. 5:28-29). The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is at least 4-fold:

1. It was foretold by David (Ps. 16:8-11; Acts 2:25-31).
2. Jesus also foretold of His resurrection (Matt. 12:39-40).
3. His empty tomb has always been a thorn in the side of the skeptics (Matt. 28:6).
4. His appearances not only to his Apostles, but to the women, and above 500 at one time (Acts 1:3; 2:32; 1 Cor. 15:1-8).

Through the centuries, a belief in a resurrection unto life has had great appeal to humanity. It still does today!

## **Jesus is Lord**

The term "Lord" is one of prominence! The expression "Lord God Almighty" is one way of showing this concept. Daniel foretold of Jesus' prominence when he stated that He would be given: ***"dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him"*** (Dan. 7:13-14). Peter stated in his first sermon that God (the Father) made Jesus both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). Paul stated that God (the Father) has highly exalted Him, has given Him a name above every name, and that all will bow the knee before Him and every tongue confess His Lordship (Phil. 2:9-11). Our Salvation depends upon our recognition and confessing that He is Lord (Rom. 10:9). To confess Jesus as "Lord" is one thing; but to let Him truly be the Lord of my life is quite another thing. Confessing without obedience is hypocrisy (Jas. 2:22-27; Lk. 6:46). Jesus had several ways of helping people to see the necessity of their recognition of His Lordship:

1. Take up one's cross (Matt. 16:24).
2. Deny one's self (Matt. 16:24).
3. Lose one's life (Matt. 16:25).
4. Hate parents and family (Lk. 14:25-26).

Jesus is pointing out clearly that when a choice has to be made—we will listen and obey Him rather than any one else (even our own loved ones)!

## **Concluding Thoughts**

Many want the blessings that Jesus offers, but are not willing for Him to be the Lord of their lives. Many voices are calling out and making their appeal for people to follow them. They make an appeal to our selfish interest to get a following. The appeal that Jesus makes is to let Him be the Lord of our life and He will give us "eternal life" with the Father (Rev. 2:10). It is up to us to make the choice of who we will follow. Why not follow Jesus—for only He can give us eternal life (Jn. 6:68; 14:6). Jesus is to be the "one Lord" we are to believe in and be obedient unto!

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- 1. The term "Lord" is not necessarily a term used only of Deity.
- 2. If the above is true, then Jesus cannot be the "one Lord."
- 3. If God, the Father, is Lord; then, Jesus cannot be the "one Lord."
- 4. Jesus, the man, did not exist before He was born of the virgin Mary.
- 5. Jesus claimed to be one with the Father—that He came from the Father and would go back to the Father.
- 6. Jesus' claims to be equal with the Father would suggest that He had a pre-fleshly existence.
- 7. John 1:1, 14 shows an eternal connection of Jesus and Deity.
- 8. Only a perfect man could make redemption for mankind.
- 9. John the baptizer gave recognition to Jesus as being God's sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the World.
- 10. Jesus' death on the cross showed God's justness.
- 11. The importance of Jesus' resurrection is seen in His being the first fruits from the grave.
- 12. Jesus knew He had to die a terrible death, but was unaware of His being raised from the dead.
- 13. Reliable witnesses to an event are very important as evidence.
- 14. Jesus' resurrection is our assurance that we will also be raised.
- 15. It is hypocritical to confess that Jesus is Lord of our life and then not to obey him.

## Lesson Four

*"One Holy Spirit  
that has Provided the Message of Redemption"*

We believe that the "composite oneness" of Deity is identified as "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit." My ability to fully explain this concept to answer all questions is thankfully not a pre-requisite to my believing such. Faith is not "sight," but faith is based on sufficient evidence that I can believe something to be true or real. There is no question in my mind that Deity is presented to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20). The passage in Eph. 4:4-6 stresses that there is only "one Father," "one Son" (or one Lord Jesus the Christ), and "one (Holy) Spirit." In this lesson, we will be looking at the importance of there being "one Spirit." God is a Spirit (Jn. 4:24), but there is only "one Spirit." Man is made up of both physical and "spirit" (Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:23), but there is only "one Spirit!" Demons and the Devil are evidently spirit beings (along with all the Holy Angels)(Heb. 1:14), but there is only "one Spirit!" Let's examine together to see why there is only "one Spirit."

**The Personage of the Holy Spirit**

Because we are human and basically understand things from a human (person) standpoint, we use the term "person" to identify with God, the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit. A "person" to us has Life, Thought, Volition, Action, Individuality, Character, and Influence. The Bible indicates that the Holy Spirit has all of these things. It is also said of Him that:

1. He lives, He wills, He acts;
2. He has a separate individuality from the Father and the Son;
3. He has a particular character and possesses influence.

Personhood is indicated by such things as:

1. Possessing the ability to think (Rom. 8:27);
2. Possessing knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11);
3. Having affections (Rom. 15:30);
4. Having a will (1 Cor. 12:11);
5. Having names and titles (Spirit of Truth, Comforter, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, etc.).
6. Using "personal pronouns" to identify the person (Jn. 14:26).

The Scriptures obviously attributed all of the above to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not an "it" or a "thing," but a person in the general sense of the use of this word.

While it is important to understand that the Holy Spirit is a "person" just as much as the Father and the Son are "persons;" yet, it is also important to understand that He is Deity just as much as the Father and the Son are Deity. His Deity is identified through a reasoning process from Scripture references.

1. Acts 5:1-4—Peter stated that Ananias had lied to the "Holy Spirit" (v. 3) but also to God (v. 4). This could indicate His Deity.
2. Isaiah 6:1-13—Isaiah attributes the words in this passage to Jehovah; but, Paul attributes such to the Holy Spirit in Acts 28:25.
3. Matt. 28:18-20—His association on an equal footing with the Father and the Son certainly would indicate His Deity.
4. Heb. 9:14—He has the attributes of eternity, which identifies Him as Deity.

These thoughts, plus much, much more, can certainly indicate that the Holy Spirit is also just as much Deity as the Father and the Son.

### **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Miraculous gifts come from God—but which person of the Godhead? Where there is specificity, such gifts come from the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 12:1-11; Acts 19:1-7). The "gift" of the Holy Spirit promised by Peter in Acts 2:38 could be the "indwelling" of the Holy Spirit in the new child of God. But the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit would be those miraculous abilities that are listed in 1 Cor. 12-14 that were given in the early church before the New Testament was fully revealed and written down. It is very important to know why such "gifts" were given so that we do not draw wrong conclusions about these gifts still being given to men today. The Scriptures clearly state why such gifts were given (Jn. 20:30-31; Mk. 16:17-20; Heb. 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:7; 13:8-9; 14:4, 12, 22, 25-26, 40).

Two facts should be evident from the above information: (1) That those who claim to speak "for God" needed to have a miraculous sign to prove they were speaking God's message and not their own; and (2) That the new Churches being established all over the world needed to have these gifts in order to teach correctly the message of God so the church could be built up and matured in Christ Jesus. Once the "New Covenant" message was given completely and confirmed as being from God, there would be no longer a need for the miraculous gifts—they would cease (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

### **The Holy Spirit and the Word of God**

Who gave to mankind the "Word of God?" The Bible states that it was given by "God" or the "Spirit of God" or the "Holy Spirit" (Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 16:7-15, etc.). God gave His message to man through His Spirit inspiring them to speak it or write it down for posterity. Only the Spirit could reveal the mind of God to humanity (1 Cor. 2:10-13). But it needed to be written down correctly and preserved for all time (Matt. 24:35). Why is the "written down Word of God" so important to us? It should be obvious that this is the way God communicates to His creatures. This is also how God can influence and work in our lives through His Word! It has the power to save our soul because it comes from God and not men (Rom. 1:16). It is able to give us full guidance for our lives so that we will be completely prepared for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We don't need the "gifts" of the Spirit today for we have the full revelation that these gifts were designed to give to the early church. The Spirit's work of convicting men's hearts, turning them to God, and sanctifying them to

live godly lives is accomplished through the hearing of the Word of God, believing it, and obeying it (Jas. 1:22; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; Heb. 4:12; Rom. 1:16; Jn. 17:17, etc.). We must remember that the Spirit is one of the three "personages" of the Godhead and that He is accomplishing what Deity had decided upon before the foundation of the world—that is to bring man back to Himself!

### **The Work of the Holy Spirit**

Deity's desire is to bring men back into a relationship or fellowship with Himself so that he can be blessed here and be with God for all eternity. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection has made such possible to those who will put their trust in Him. The Spirit's work is not only to convict and bring men back to God; but, as well, to keep them faithful in their obedience to God. He does this through the use of the Word of God being read or heard, believed, and obeyed. That is the reason why such admonitions are given in His Word to:

1. Feed on the Word of God (1 Pet. 2:1-2);
2. Be filled with the Word of Christ (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18);
3. To be willing to be taught, reprov'd, corrected, and instructed in the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

If we will do the above, then the Spirit through the Word of God can give us:

1. Assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:16);
2. Strength to live godly (Eph. 3:16; Acts 20:32);
3. Comfort in the midst of life's trials (Acts 9:31; Rom. 15:4);

### **Concluding Thoughts**

There is no indication that the Holy Spirit works directly upon a person to save them or to guide them; but, rather, He does His work through the read or preached Word of God. A statement that I believe cannot be refuted that would show this—***"There are no Christians anywhere in the world where the Word of God has not been taught or read!"*** His work "in us" is accomplished by our hearing, believing and obeying the Word of God! He has given to mankind the Message of Redemption. It is our job to see that it is spread throughout the world so that men might hear it, believe it, and obey it to be saved and live godly lives until death (Rev. 2:10).

**Questions for Discussion****True or False**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. It is necessary to fully understand Deity before I can believe in the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. If God is Spirit, and man is spirit, and the demons and the devil are spirits, then there is more than one spirit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Bible says that God is a "person."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The term "person" is used in reference to God because that is the only way we have of identifying Him for our understanding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Using the term "person" in reference to God does not take away from His Deity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Divinity of the Holy Spirit has been questioned by some through the centuries, but the evidence is overwhelming in the Scriptures to believe in His Deity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Miraculous gifts can only come from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The "gift" or the Holy Spirit and the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit are different concepts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The New Testament actually lists the "gifts" of the Spirit that were given in the first century church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Scriptures do not really state why the "gifts" were given in the early church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Miraculous gifts were used to confirm that the message being spoken came from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Miraculous gifts were mentioned as being in churches over the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The New Testament (Covenant) was definitely given by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The New Testament was written down so that future generation could have the same message that the early church had.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. We do not need the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit today because we have the same full revelation that these gifts were designed to give to the early church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. We do not need to be constantly feeding on the Word of God today because the Spirit will give it to us directly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. There is no indication that the Holy Spirit works directly upon a person to save them or to guide them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. There are no Christians in the world where the Word of God has not been preached.

## Lesson Five

## *"One Faith Man's Avenue of Redemption"*

It is an obvious fact that faith in God, in Jesus as the Son of God, and in the Bible as the Word of God is extremely important! But not everyone who claims to believe in the above really believes. They think they do! If you were to question their faith in God, they would be adamant about their belief. Let's look at an example that helps to illustrate this.

- 1) Israel had been the special chosen people of God for 1500 years by the time Jesus came to earth.
- 2) They had all the evidences needed to have a strong faith in the "One True God" of Heaven. And yet, Jesus called them a **"faithless and perverse generation"** (Mark 9:19).
- 3) Jesus was continually outspoken about Israel's lack of faith and the greatness of the faith of some Gentiles among them (Matt. 8:5-10).
- 4) These same people help to crucify the Messiah—these were the ones who claim to believe in God!
- 5) The Apostle Paul says that they were cut off by God because of their unbelief (Rom. 11:19-21).
- 6) Jesus had warned these same people: **"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."** (Matt. 7:21)

From the above, it should be obvious that something was wrong with their concept of belief in God. Did these Jewish people believe in God? They would say "yes" with a strong emphasis. But God said "no" with a strong emphasis! Why the difference? The answer to this question might be found in what this lesson will be looking at—the **one faith!** Faith is an absolute necessity to be pleasing or acceptable to God (Heb. 11:6). What is it about this faith that makes us acceptable to God?

### **The Basis of Our Faith**

If a person claims to believe in God, what would be the basis of that belief? It should be obvious to all of us that there are people who say they believe in the one true God of heaven, but have never seen a Bible or read it. What are they basing their belief on? The Psalmists stated that this faith could come from observing the creation of God (Ps. 19:1). The Apostle Paul stated basically the same thing in Rom. 1:19-21 and added this expression: **"so that they are without excuse."** (v. 20). But this same Apostle pointed out another way of people coming to a faith in God and having some idea of how they should live (Rom. 2:12-15). The way we have been made by God, we can come to a logical conclusion about His existence—and even to some extent to know

what is right or wrong to do. Every nation of people, whether they claim belief in the one true God or not, have laws by which to govern themselves. What is the basis for those laws? It is the way we are made—our consciousness of right and wrong and reward and punishment.

But there is more that needs to be seen concerning the basis of our faith! While all men can know basic moral laws and that they should worship (reverence) the one true God of heaven; yet, there are things that God requires that He alone can tell us what He wants of us. Some men have tried to make a distinction between these two concepts by using two terms to identify them:

- (1) Basic Moral Laws—The difference between right and wrong with regards to our fellowman. These can be illustrated by the last six of the Ten Commandments which regulate man's relationship with one another. Even the first three commandments can be easily seen and understood to be right.
- (2) Positive Divine Laws of God—The fourth command could only be known if God openly stated such to man. These commands have to be revealed to men in order for them to know what God expects. Without a revelation, we may never know what God requires. It is logically right for man to want to worship the One who made him. But how that worship is to be expressed, when it is to be expressed, and the means by which it is to be expressed **must be revealed!**

Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible have things commanded that are logically right and we would possibly already know such without the Bible. However, there is also much that was revealed to Israel on how to be acceptable to God; as well as for us today; we have much revealed that we would not have known otherwise that can make us acceptable to God. Thus, we believe that our faith is based on things that are logically, consciously, right; as well as, those things that have been revealed. But because of man's heart being so corrupted, it is necessary for God to also give to us in His revelation of those basic moral laws that we should have known...but may not know. Thus, our faith is built on what the Word of God states as truth (Rom. 10:17).

### **What is Faith?**

The Hebrew writer gives a fundamental definition of what faith is in his chapter on faith. He not only defines it, but illustrates it in the lives of Old Testament Saints. It is as follows: **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."** (Heb. 11:1). It is to be convinced of something even though we cannot see it with our eyes. Many examples are given to illustrate this statement. The main thing that is pointed out was the action that was taken because of being convinced that God is and what He commands is right for us to do. Our faith today is to be in the one true God of heaven and His Son, Jesus the Christ. We must be convinced that God is really God and that Jesus is His Son. Once we are convinced, then our faith is put into action—being obedient to God in all things—not just what we pick and choose to accept. **"Why call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things that I say!"** (Matt. 7:21).

However, the word "faith" seems to be used in at least two fundamental ways: (1) The faith (being assured of) in God; and (2) The fully delivered revelation that we must be guided by. The first one we have discussed briefly. It is to be convinced that God is real and we have an obligation towards Him that is very important. The second one we need to look at closely in order to see the difference. Two passages help to illustrate the second concept:

1. Jude 3—"***Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.***"
2. Eph. 4:5—"***There is.....one faith...***"

"The faith" or the "one faith" are the things that God has revealed to us today for us to put our trust in and show it by being obedient in all things. One writer uses the expression: "*The System of things to be believed.*" It is God's final revelation to mankind through His Son (Heb. 1:1-2). It has been fully and completely revealed as a means of instruction and guidance for our lives today (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We are not to add to it or take away from it (Deut. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9). If we do so, we will destroy God's purpose for His revelation to man. Those who change it are said to be "accursed" of God. The "one faith" can be found in the New Testament books or letters that have been revealed, written down, and preserved for us today. The Hebrew writer calls it "***the word of God.***" (Heb. 4:12).

### **Contend for the Faith!**

To contend for something is to uphold it, hold to it, and encourage others to hold to it; as well as, to defend it against false teachers who want to change it. It is critical that we abide in it—being obedient in all things. Those who will not are called transgressors and lose their fellowship with the Father and the Son (2 John 9-10). Such can be labeled as "unbelievers!" They may claim to believe in the Father and the Son, but their lack of abiding in (being obedient to) the doctrine of Christ (the faith, one faith) shows their unbelief.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The basis upon which we must live our lives must be based purely upon what God has given in His Word! We must fully believe in what God says, not just the things we want to accept. We must not handle His Word deceitfully or for filthy lucre. We must abide in the "one faith" and encourage others to do the same. To deviate from it is to lose our changes of living with God eternally. Are we holding to the "one faith" once for all delivered to the saints?

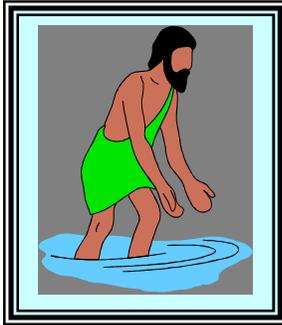
**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. When a person says he believes in God, it is not right to call him an unbeliever.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. God called people who thought they believed in God...."faithless!"
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. There were Jews that had a zeal for God, but God said they were cut off from His fellowship because of their unbelief.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. People who crucified Jesus thought of themselves as "believers."
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. It is possible that we can think of ourselves as "believers" but God would not agree with our conclusion.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. There is no such thing as "blind faith" because true faith must have a basis or evidence upon which to have their faith.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. A person can believe that God exist without ever having heard or read the Bible.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. The laws that men draw up to govern themselves comes from a basis consciousness of right and wrong placed in every man.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. There is a key difference in "Basic Moral Laws" and "Positive Divine Laws of God."
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Both the Old and New Testaments have things commanded that are logically right to our minds and we may have already known about such.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. True Faith needs to be based on all that God have revealed to us today.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. Faith can be real even when it is not based on any evidence.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 13. "The faith" and the "one faith" are the same thing.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. The "one faith" has been given to mankind through God's Son.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 15. It is wrong to "contend" for what we believe in.

## Lesson Six

*"One Baptism  
That puts us into a Redemptive State"*



There has been for many years a question about the meaning of the word "baptism." People want to know how it is to be administered—is the person to be **"sprinkled with water," "have water poured over him,"** or is the person to be **"immersed in water?"** What makes the answer to this question critical deals with another vital question about baptism—is it essential or necessary in order to be saved or made right with God? Both of these questions deal with the issue on how to approach and study the Bible to arrive at its vital truths. This lesson will deal with both of these questions.

**The Meaning of the Word "Baptize"**

Unfortunately, those who have translated the Bible into English have been a major cause of so much questioning over baptism. They could have easily solved the problem, but they have not done so (and will not do so!). The Greek word has not been translated, but merely "transliterated" into our English language. If you will look at the Greek word below and fill in the English equivalents, you can see the truth of this matter.

Greek Word: βαπτίζω

English Letters: Baptizo

Most of us have been exposed to the Greek Alphabet so that we can pretty well figure out that the translators only transliterated and did not translate the Greek word. This leaves the average Bible reader with two choices: (1) To try to find if the Scriptures actually tell us how baptism is to be performed; or (2) To look up the meaning of the Greek word in a Greek Lexicon. Please look up the following Scriptures and see if they give an "indication" or a "statement" as to how baptism was performed.

**John 3:23** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 8:35-38** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 8:39** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 6:4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 6:5** \_\_\_\_\_

**Colossians 2:12** \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to the above Scriptures, the definition of the word makes it very clear how the act is to be administered.

1. **"to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge"**
2. **"To cleanse by dipping or submerging"**
3. **Metaphorically, "To overwhelm"---**Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

Thus, not only does the Bible tell us the "how" to administer "baptism" but the meaning of the Greek word supports it clearly.

### **Three Different Actions: Sprinkling, Pouring, and Immersion**

Three different English words are used to describe how some feel that baptism is to be administered: Sprinkling, Pouring, and Immersion. However, these are three different actions and cannot be the same. An interesting fact about these three words is that the Greek language has three **different** words for these **different** actions.

**Rantizo is translated "sprinkling" in such passages as Hebrews 9:13.**

**Cheo is translated "pouring" in such passages as Acts 2:17.**

**Baptizo is described as a burial in such passages as Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.**

These are three different words and three different actions. God chose the Greek word that He commanded of men—**Baptizo—to dip, to submerge, to immerse**. If Jesus is Lord, then we will do what He commands (Lk. 6:46).

### **Six Different "Baptisms" in the New Testament**

Another factor that has caused some confusion over the question of Baptism is that there are possibly six different baptisms that are mentioned in the New Testament. The following is a summary:

1. **Baptism of the nation of Israel in the Red Sea** (1 Cor. 10:2). This is a figurative use of the term and is a past historical event that does not involve us.
2. **John's Baptism** (Matthew 3:6-7, 11, 13-14, 16; Mark 1:4, 5, 8-10; Luke 3:3, 7, 12, 16, 21, 7:29-30; 20:4; John 1:25-26, 28, 31, 33; 3:22-23, 26; 4:1-2; 10:40; Acts 1:5, 22; 10:37; 11:16; 13:24; 19:3-4). This baptism was no longer valid after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (Acts 19:1-7).
3. **Baptism of Jesus' suffering** (Matt. 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50). This is a figurative use again and a past historical event that does not involve us.
4. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). This was a promise by Jesus to His Apostles (Acts 1:5) and a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-4; 11:14-18). This baptism served its purpose and is no longer valid for today.
5. **Baptism in water under the Great Commission**(Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
  - a) This baptism is a command to those who believe and repent (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 1:13-17; 12:13; 15:29; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12; Heb. 6:2; 1 Pet. 3:21).
  - b) This baptism is done in order to be saved or receive remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
  - c) This baptism superseded John's baptism (Acts 19:1-7).

6. **Baptism of fire** (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16). This is used figuratively with reference to future punishment.

### **The "One Baptism"**

Out of the six baptisms mentioned above, only **ONE** is now valid according to the inspired statement of the Apostle Paul (Eph. 4:5). Please notice that in Acts 2 (A.D. 30) there are two baptisms mentioned:

- 1) Acts 2:1-4 (1:4-5)—This one is called a baptism by the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Acts 2:38, 41—This one is a command to be immersed in water.

In Eph. 4:5 (A.D. 63), the Apostle states that there is "one" baptism! One of the two baptisms mentioned above had to cease or we would have "two" baptisms that would be valid! The logical one to cease would be the one that was a promise (a baptism of the Holy Spirit). The other baptism is a command that must be obeyed in order to receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38). An important study would be to see further the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Once we see its purpose, it is easy to see that it is the one that ceased—not water baptism!

### **The Necessity of the "One Baptism"**

We need to look a little further into the necessity of water baptism. It is a command that we can obey and must obey (Lk. 6:46) in order to be acceptable to God. It is interesting to notice that in every case where "water baptism" is mentioned and "salvation" or its equivalent is mentioned in the same passage—that "salvation" or its equivalent always come to a person after being "immersed in water" in obedience to God's will. Notice these Scriptures:

- 1) Mark 16:16—"**He who believes and is baptized will be saved**"
- 2) John 3:5—"**Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**"
- 3) Acts 2:38—"**Repent and....be baptized....for the remission of sins.**"
- 4) Acts 22:16—"**Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins**"
- 5) Rom. 6:4—"**buried with Him through baptism.....walk in newness of life**"
- 6) Rom. 6:17-18—"**you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine...and having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.**"
- 7) Col. 2:12-13—"**buried with Him in baptism.....made alive...having forgiven you all trespasses.**"
- 8) 1 Pet.1:22-23—"**you have purified your souls in obeying the truth..... having been born again.**"
- 9) 1 Pet. 3:20-21—"**eight souls, were saved through water.....an antitype which now saves us—baptism**"

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- 1. "Baptizo" is a Greek word that **cannot** be translated!
- 2. There is no different between transliteration and translation.
- 3. The New Testament no where tells us how "baptism" was performed.
- 4. Greek Lexicons translate the word "Baptizo" as a choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.
- 5. This Greek word is used in a figurative or metaphorical way in the New Testament.
- 6. There are no Greek words for "sprinkling" or "pouring" in the New Testament.
- 7. It is not important to know what God is commanding of us in the Greek word "baptizo."
- 8. There are at least a possible 6 usages of the concept of "baptizo" in the New Testament.
- 9. John's baptism did not end at the time of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.
- 10. Three of the 6 usages of "baptizo" are used figuratively.
- 11. While there were two valid baptisms mentioned in the beginning of the New Testament age (A.D. 30); yet, only one of them was valid by A.D. 63.
- 12. Logic easily indicates which of the two baptisms in Acts 2 later ceased.
- 13. We cannot obey a promise, but we can obey a command.
- 14. "salvation" or its equivalent never comes before baptism, it is always (without an exception) after baptism.
- 15. Baptism in water has nothing to do with receiving the remission of our sins.

## Lesson Seven

*"One Body  
The Called Out Redeemed People of God"*

If a person were to go to the "World Christian Encyclopedia" with the intent to look up information on the church, he would be amazed at the great divisiveness and fragmentation of what is called by men "the church." At the time this Encyclopedia was completed there were 20,800 different (distinct) churches listed. This is in stark contrast to our lesson today—The One Body or Church of Christ! (Eph. 4:4). It is an obvious fact beyond dispute that in the beginning of Christianity there was but one body or church. All who obeyed the Gospel were added to this group of redeemed people (Acts 2:47). If someone were to ask: "*What has happened,*" the answer should be obvious—man has made a lot of changes! (2 John 9-11). To learn about this "One Body" we must go to the source—the Word of God!

**The One Body is the One Church**

The "One body" is the spiritual body of Christ. Thus, the "One body" of Christ is the "One church of Christ." (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). Jesus is the head of this body, the church. There is but one head over one body! The church and Christ are not a "freak," but that which is natural all around us—one head over one body. Headship carries with it the concept of authority over the body (the church). The body is either in subjection to the head or in rebellion against the head. When the Scriptures use the phrase "***the churches of Christ salute you,***" it is not referring to different churches, but the same church (congregation) in different localities. (Rom. 16:16). It is also obvious that a body is made up of many members; and, in the same way, the church is made up of many members—but they make up that "One Body of Christ (the church)." (1 Cor. 12:12).

**Planned for, Foretold of, and Promised by Jesus**

This "One Body" was planned for by God even before the creation of the world (Eph. 1:3-12). There are two sets of Scriptures that emphasize this concept.

1. **Planned before Creation** (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:19-20; 1 Cor. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2).
2. **Planned for from the Creation** (Eph. 3:9-11; Matt. 13:35; Rev. 13:8; Matt. 25:34; Lk. 1:70; Acts 3:21; 15:18; Rom. 16:25).

Any thing that would be planned in this way must be of grave importance to mankind—and it is! But, not only did God plan the "One Body," but He continually foretold of it coming through His holy Prophets! This foretelling is of a new kingdom of God or the house of God that would be set up among men. But tied closely to this new house or kingdom would be the Messiah that would come to make all of this possible. See how God foretold of these things.

**The coming of a Redeemer:**

1. **Genesis 3:15**—The seed of the woman would deal a death blow to Satan's power over man. Heb. 2:14 tells of the completion of this work in Christ.
2. **Isaiah 53:1-12**—This prophecy was given about B.C. 690. Many prophecies were given, but this is the most revealing.
  - 53:5**—*"wounded for our transgressions"*
  - 53:6**—*"Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all"*
  - 53:8**—*"for the transgression of my people was he stricken"*
  - 53:10**—*"made his soul an offering for sin"*
  - 53:11**—*"he shall bear their iniquities"*
  - 53:12**—*"he bore the sin of many"*
3. **Matthew 1:21**—At the birth of Jesus (B.C. 4) an Angel appeared to Joseph and stated that the child's name shall be called **Jesus** because he will save His people from their sins.

**The coming of a king and kingdom:**

1. **2 Samuel 7:12-16**-- God is speaking to David and making a promise in regards to a successor for his throne. While some of these promises in this passage were fulfilled in Solomon, there is something about the promises that look to the future. David's seed (Solomon) was set upon David's throne. But Jesus was also a seed of David and was set upon David's throne (Acts 2:30; Luke 1:32-33). It was said of David's seed that he would build a house for the Lord. Solomon did build the Temple that served for the worship of God under the Old Covenant. But Jesus also built a house for the Lord (Hebrews 3:3-6), the church! But the one promise that has to be looked at closely here is the promise of God establishing the throne of his kingdom forever. The old kingdom ended with the Babylonian captivity. The only possible fulfillment would be through Christ being placed on the throne of David to rule over this new kingdom of God (Luke 1:32-33; Colossians 1:13). This prophecy to David is dated about B.C. 1000.
2. **Daniel 2:44**—This prophecy is dated about B.C. 604. Daniel is giving the interpretation of a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar of a giant image of four different sections and of its destruction by a little stone cut out of a mountain. He points out that the image represented four succeeding kingdoms, with the Babylonian being the first and the Roman being the last. It was during the days of the kings of the last kingdom that God would set up His new kingdom. But again a most significant statement is made about it—it will never be destroyed. It will not have an end like all earthly kingdoms have had! The new kingdom of God has lasted for almost 2000 years thus far.
3. **Daniel 7:13-14**—This prophecy is dated about B.C. 545. It speaks of one likened unto the Son of Man coming before the Ancient of Days (God, the Father). This one was given Dominion, Glory, and a Kingdom. But notice the special feature of this new dominion—all

peoples and nations shall serve Him. People of all nations will make up this new kingdom. And again it emphasizes that it is to be an everlasting, unending dominion. It would not pass away nor be destroyed by men.

4. **Matthew 3:2**—In a about the year A.D. 26 (A.D. 30 in original calendar), both John and Jesus came preaching that the kingdom was at hand, about ready to be set up among men. What kingdom? It had to be the one that God had been promising from the beginning of time through His prophets.

### **The Coming of the Lord's House:**

1. **Isaiah 2:1-3**-- This prophecy is dated about B.C. 740. The Lord's house was to be established in the top of the mountains (Mt. Zion in Jerusalem) (Heb. 12:22-23). It was to be established in the last days or last age of mankind on earth (Acts 2:16-17). All nations were to flow into it (Lk. 24:46-47). The word of the Lord was to go forth from Zion.
2. **Isaiah 9:6-7**—This prophecy was about B.C. 734. It foretells of Jesus being the new king and head over the church/kingdom (Matt. 27:11; Eph. 1:22-23; Matt. 28:18). There was to be no end to this new kingdom and it would be established with justice forever.
3. **Matthew 16:18-19**—Jesus said He would build His church—confirming what the prophets have said. The Apostles were given the keys to this new kingdom.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

In addition to the Prophets foretelling of the coming of a Redeemer, the Lord's House, and the King that would reign over this new kingdom, there would also be:

1. A New Covenant—Isa. 2:3; Jere. 31:31-34; Luke 24:47)
2. The Coming of the Holy Spirit—Joel 2:28-32; John 16:13-15; Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-4, 16-36; 10:1-48; 11:1-18).

God's great mystery that He had planned from before time began was made known in "prophetic language" among the Jewish people from about 1500 B.C. down to about 400 B.C. The final prophet that God sent after 400 B.C. was John the Baptizer who was to prepare the way for the Messiah and His setting up of the new kingdom-house (church) (Mk. 1:1-15; Matt. 3:1-2). Everything was in readiness—the "fullness of time" had come for God's plan to be fully unfolded in Jesus! (Gal. 4:4).

**Questions for Discussion****True or False**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. The "One Body of Christ" is made up of 20,800 different churches.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. The "One Body of Christ" is the "spiritual Body, the church."
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. If there is "One Body of Christ;" then, of necessity, there must be only "One Head" over that Body.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. When the New Testament speaks of "**Churches of Christ**" it does not have reference to many different churches, but the same church in different localities.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. It takes many members to make up the One Body.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. The Body or Church was planned by God before He created the world.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. God foretold of a Redeemer that would be the head over His Body (the church) and king over the new kingdom of God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. The name "Jesus" was given to the Son of God to show His headship over the body, the church.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. Jesus is a descendant of David that would sit on David's throne and His kingdom would last forever.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Daniel's prophecy of a new coming kingdom was made known to a Gentile king in the 6th century B.C.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. Both John the Baptizer and Jesus taught that the "kingdom of God" was at hand (about ready to be set up).
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. Jesus promised to build His church during His public ministry.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 13. The Lord's house mentioned by Isaiah is the same as the Kingdom of God as mentioned by Daniel.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. The Apostles were given keys to this new kingdom of God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 15. God's prophets also foretold of the giving of a new Covenant to the Jewish people.

## Lesson Eight

## *"One Hope Resurrection unto Life Eternal"*

**"...always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"** (1 Pet. 3:15). "Hope" is a strong underlying concept in our lives whether we recognize it or not. However, the word is used in different ways, so it is necessary to clarify what we are talking about when we discuss the hope that is in us.

1. People often say: *"I hope you are okay"* (wishful thinking).
2. Others may say: *"I am hoping to inherit a lot of money"* (A desire, but not something that is certain).
3. When we talk about our hope in Christ, we are referring to a hope that is built upon strong evidence (certainty).

Biblical hope or the "one hope" of the Christian is based on firm evidences to give us assurance of what is ahead for us. This evidence is in various forms:

1. Old Testament passages that show the dependability of God's promises (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).
2. The assurance that God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18).
3. The assurance of a resurrection unto Judgment (John 5:28-29; Rom. 1:4).
4. The assurance of a resurrection unto eternal life with God (1 John 5:13).
5. Our hope is also based on our belief (obedience) or faithfulness (Rev. 2:10).

We are actually being exhorted to give a defense for our hope (1 Pet. 3:15)—that is, to give reasons for having this hope (Rom. 8:24).

### **We are Saved by This Hope!**

Rom. 8:24 states that we are saved by hope! It gives us great motivation to continue faithful to the end. It is worth the price that must be paid to receive this hope at the end of life. However, it is important to note that we have not yet received what we hope for. Hope ends when we receive that for which we hope (Rom. 8:24-25). With a strong confidence in this hope, we can:

1. Live with confidence and face the future with courage;
2. We can meet life's trials and challenges triumphantly;
3. We can walk in the light daily (constantly) with assurance;
4. We cannot turn our back on God, but constantly submit to His will;
5. We can be assured of the continual cleansing by the blood of Jesus.

There has to be a reason for doing what we do. If we doubt our hope, there is a grave danger that we will fall away and lose our hope. It is important that we hold our confidence steadfast to the end (Heb. 3:12-14). The Hebrew writer also reminds us that the Israelites that came out of Egypt did not get to receive their hope because of their unbelief (doubt) or disobedience (Heb. 3:18-19).

### **We have "One Hope" not many!**

One of the many grave problems with the teaching of "Pre-Millennialism" is that it advocates more than "one hope." We are promised eternal life with God if we are faithful to the end—**that is our "one hope."** All that Jesus went through or endured in his life was to make this hope a reality for us some day.

1. He was born as a human and developed as a man.
2. He enjoyed and endured all that humans experience.
3. His life was one of perfect obedience to His Father's will.
4. He died a horrible death for our forgiveness so we could have this hope.
5. He was buried and raised from the grave to give full assurance of our own resurrection unto everlasting life.
6. He ascended up on high in order to send the Holy Spirit back to us to teach us and guide us unto this everlasting life.
7. 1 Tim. 3:16

Thus, as the apostles went out to preach this inspired message to mankind, they did so not only with boldness, but certainty (Acts 4:17-20; 4:29-31). Jesus' resurrection from the dead is our assurance that death does not end it all for humans who believe in God. Thus, when death would visit a family in the 1st Century Church, they had hope that their loved one(s) (who was a faithful Christian) would spend eternity with God (1 Thess. 4:13-17).

### **Several Factors are Involved in this Hope**

To have this "one hope" we must believe that **death is not the end of our existence!** Even though our body will go back to dust (Eccl. 12:6), our spirit will go into what the Bible calls "Sheol" or "Hades." This is referred to as the intermediate state of the dead (Luke 16:19-26). The Rich Man was in Hades in torment, while Lazarus was in "Abraham's Bosom" in comfort after the physical death on this earth. Jesus, upon his physical death, also went into "Hades" but was brought forth and re-united with his body before He ascended back to the Father (Acts 2:22-36). Our spirit or soul continues to exist even though the body goes back to dust from which it was made.

To have this "one hope" we must also believe that our **physical bodies will be raised from the grave and re-united with our spirit** (1 Cor. 15:42-44). This present body will be raised (or changed—1 Cor. 15:51-52) and be changed into a "spiritual body!" Jesus' resurrection is our assurance of our own resurrection (Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:45-50). The person who has this "one hope" should no longer fear death because we are promised victory over death—we will be given everlasting life (1 Cor. 15:54-58). We must hold firmly to the teaching of a resurrection some day—for this is our assurance of our hope in Christ. Paul warned against such by calling the names of two persons that were discouraging people from believing in a coming resurrection unto everlasting life (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Paul deals with those at Corinth that were evidently teaching that there is no resurrection and states clearly the results of not believing in a resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-19):

1. If there is no resurrection, then Christ is not raised!
2. If there is no resurrection, our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.
3. If there is no resurrection, those who preach such are false witnesses.
4. If Christ is not raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.
5. If there is no resurrection, those who have died have perished.
6. If there is no resurrection, we are of all men the most pitiable.

To have this "one hope" we must also believe in a **Day of Judgment!** (Heb. 9:27). If there is to be no judgment, then there will be no giving of an accounting of our lives before God nor will there be any reward or punishment given. (2 Cor. 5:10-11). Thus, without a judgment, there can be no everlasting life given to the faithful (Rev. 2:10). All of the wrongs and injustices that mankind has had to suffer will not be punished—there will be no punishment for wrong-doing nor will there be any reward for living right. Then, it becomes obvious that it does not really matter how one lives in this life—other than, to get whatever he wants no matter whom it hurts.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

We all have learned that life is not just a "bed of roses!" It has its trials, tribulations, and heartaches. What is it that keeps us living, working, and striving to live righteous lives? It has to be the "one hope" that we hold on to desperately that gives meaning to all that we have to deal with in this life. This hope keeps us faithful to God! But so does the fear of facing God in judgment and being punished with everlasting death. We believe that we will be given either everlasting life (to be with God for ever) or everlasting death (to be away from God for ever) (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The two terms that the Bible has used and have become the most used by our generation are "Heaven" or "Hell!" (Matt. 25:41, 46). We determine our own destiny by what we chose to believe and how we chose to live. Have we chosen wisely? We need to keep our "one hope" strong!

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- 1. We do not have to have reasons or evidence to believe in everlasting life.
- 2. There is no way for us to know that God does not lie.
- 3. Believing in everlasting life is a matter of choice—not forced upon anyone.
- 4. People cannot give a reason for their beliefs because they are not interested sufficiently to know the basis of their beliefs.
- 5. The Scriptures do not teach that "hope" saves us.
- 6. Hope ends when we receive that for which we hope.
- 7. The Christian's "one hope" is to be given everlasting life with God.
- 8. To have doubts about our hope in Christ is to show our "unbelief!"
- 9. Pre-Millennialism teaches more than "one hope."
- 10. Believing in Jesus' resurrection is a necessity if we are to hold to our "one hope."
- 11. Believing in "Sheol" or "Hades" is a necessity if we are to hold to our "one hope."
- 12. Believing in our own resurrection is a necessity if we are to hold to our "one hope."
- 13. Believing that we will be given a new body to clothe our spirit is a necessity if we are to hold to our "one hope."
- 14. Believing that there will be a Day of Judgment is a necessity if we are to hold to our "one hope."
- 15. Heaven and Hell are the two terms that are used by our generation to indicate where one's final destiny will be after death.

## Lesson Nine

*"Biblical Unity"*

A challenging question for every Christian is "how do we hold to doctrinal purity and Biblical unity at the same time." In this series of studies, we have been stressing the basic Bible teachings that make us right with God and with one another. Can all God's people hold to these teachings and still be unified? All we have to do is to look around us in the religious world and we can see disunity every way we turn. There seems to be a constant struggle in the minds of people, who profess faith in Christ, between the possibility being unified and being doctrinally pure—can you have both? The problem may be more of going to extremes than contradictory concepts! For an example:

1. To demand absolute purity of doctrine in order to have unity in Christ is an extreme that helps to destroy the body of Christ—not unify it.
2. But to advocate unity on any basis is to give up the doctrine of Christ.

The natural question then would be to ask: "How can we hold to both concepts correctly and keep the church moving onward and upward—pleasing to God? Both concepts are plainly taught in Scriptures and strongly appealed to by the inspired writers.

1. John 17:20-23—"***That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.***"
2. Eph. 4:3—"***endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.***"
3. 1 Cor. 1:10-13—"***that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.***"
4. Gal. 1:6-9—"***if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.***"
5. 2 John 9-10—"***Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.***"

The church could easily be turned into a "social club" if we fail to be concerned about doctrinal purity. But, on the other hand, not to strive for Biblical unity and only stress doctrinal purity can turn the church into a "cult of clones."

**Examples of Extremes**

Biblical teachings may at times seem to be contradictory, but when both concepts are looked at closely, it becomes obvious that both are needed. Look at the following examples of such.

**1. The Deity and Humanity of Christ.** To stress Jesus' Deity and neglect His humanity is wrong (heresy). But to stress Jesus' humanity and neglect His Deity is also wrong (heresy). Both need to be taught and held to even though we may not fully comprehend the possibilities. Strong divisions have been brought about among professed believers in Christ just over these very approaches.

**2. God's love and His Judgment of Mankind.** Again, to stress one over the other is to go into an apostasy and will destroy the unity of the body of Christ. Both need to be taught and held to in order to maintain the unity of the church. This, too, has led to division among those who profess to believe in Christ.

**3. The Sovereignty of God and the Free Will of Man.** John Calvin and many of his contemporaries in the 16th century stressed the Sovereignty of God to the exclusion of the Free Will of Man. However, to go to the opposite extreme, stressing the Free Will of Man to the exclusion of the Sovereignty of God is just as much heresy as the other.

**4. Biblical Unity and Doctrinal Purity.** The same problem exists here as well. There is a tendency to over-stress one over the other and have a distorted view of the concepts rather than a balanced view. Both concepts are plainly emphasized in Scripture. The tension between the two should cause us to look closer at both and harmonize them together in a balanced view rather than cause division and strife over extreme and wrong (heresy) views. A correct understanding of both will be a safe-guard for our lives in Christ.

A proper amount of tension between two concepts is good if we allow it to help us come to a proper and balanced view of the two teachings. We need a balanced outlook rather than a reactionary one. We need both concepts in our lives to be the kind of people God is striving to make of us.

### **The Challenge of Unity**

Ephesians 2:11-22 shows the challenge that God's people have to become a unified people of God. It is to bring people out of perverted Judaism and outright paganism and idolatry and make them "one" people in Christ. Just imagine the differences to be dealt with in regards to their past beliefs! How can they become "one" with so many differences? Was it instantaneous or over a period of time? We can see from the New Testament some of the many challenges to oneness that the early church faced. These differences were physical, sociological, monetary, slave versus free, Jew versus Gentile, etc., that had to be dealt with. Unity not only involved "doctrinal" beliefs, but many other areas as well. To some extent, we have the same challenge today. The conflict between Jew and Gentile in the early church is illustrated in Romans 14-15 and 1 Cor. 8-9. It put a great strain on the unity of the early church.

1. Jewish Christians felt that Gentile Christians should accept the Law of Moses and Jewish tradition.
2. Gentile Christians felt that Jewish feast days and food laws were unacceptable to them.

How did they solve their problem?

1. Jewish Christians could maintain their traditions as long as they did not impose them on the Gentile Christians.
2. Gentile Christians were free from having to observe these traditions as long as they did not ignore the demands of God's will, nor put down the Jewish Christians.

3. They showed that unity was more important than their own personal liberty in Christ, and that both parties gave up some of their liberty to promote a greater common good.

### **Biblical Unity must be Desired**

Unity in a congregation can often be sensed or picked up on when you come into their midst. People seem to love to come into an atmosphere of unity and harmony, not only in the church, but in the home as well. Even the humblest of homes can have an atmosphere of love, care, concern, unity and harmony that money cannot buy! If a home or church has hostility, negative feelings, it cannot be hid for long. And one of the saddest things is where a church or home has allowed disharmony to lead to division or separation. This animosity is often passed on from generation to generation. Some churches find it very hard to overcome a division that has taken place. A church is most fortunate and blessed when it can say it has never had a church fuss, split or division. Churches need desperately to live in harmony with each other and do all they can to preserve unity in their midst.

Biblical unity cannot be forced! God has commanded it, but it is of no value unless we respect the one who commanded it. Elders can plead with the congregation to be unified, but they cannot force it on them. Preachers can preach on unity, but that may not accomplish it—unless the people desire to have Biblical unity. Jesus prayed earnestly for His people to be unified. If we respect His Lordship over us, we will want what He wants. ***"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*** (Ps. 133:1). A unified group is a wonderful environment to be in. And it is because of unity that great things can be accomplished (Judges 20:11; Gen. 11:6). But one of the blessings that Jesus mentioned was that the world may believe in Him as the Son of God (Jn. 17:21). Biblical unity is at the foundation of a great church of the Lord. We show our strong desire for Biblical unity by:

1. Overlooking, being longsuffering with each other's weaknesses and differences. (Rom. 14:13; 15:1-2).
2. By being understanding, courteous, and thoughtful of others (1 Cor. 13:4-7; Gal. 5:15).
3. Church leaders leading the way with a unity mind-set (Heb. 13:7). Make unity a priority for the congregation....along with determination to teach only the Word of God correctly.

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- 1. Biblical Unity and Doctrinal Purity are in opposition to one another.
- 2. To demand absolute purity of doctrine in order to have unity in Christ is an extreme position.
- 3. Unity on any basis is also an extreme position.
- 4. We are commanded, as God's redeemed people, to keep the unity that we have been given in Christ.
- 5. The church could be turned into a "social club" if we fail to be concerned about what we teach.
- 6. Some things taught in Scripture seem to be at odds with each other, but both must be accepted to be correct in our relationship to God.
- 7. A balanced view of unity and doctrine is the correct approach.
- 8. The great challenge of unity in Christ is the bringing into the church people from all walks of life with many differences.
- 9. Rom. 14-15 illustrates the struggle of the early church to keep unified.
- 10. Unity may have to be gained among us by our willingness to give up some of our liberty in Christ.
- 11. Visitors can often "sense" if a group of people are unified and at peace with one another.
- 12. Biblical unity cannot be forced by the preacher, elders, or even Christ, Himself.
- 13. Biblical unity is at the foundation of a great church of the Lord.
- 14. Being longsuffering with each other's weaknesses and differences goes a long way in maintaining a harmonious group of people.
- 15. A unity mind-set on the part of leadership is vital to every congregation.

## Lesson Ten

*"Love of God and Our Fellow-man"*

In this series of lessons we are looking at basic Bible teachings. There is probably no more basic concept taught in Scripture than the lesson that we are now looking at. When we use the English word "love" we have to clarify what we mean, while the Greeks had separate words to help make that distinction. The following can help to illustrate:

- 1—Eros denotes physical attraction, desire, and even lust.
- 2—Storge denotes affection or attachment to family.
- 3—Phileo denotes strong attachment or affection to another person that helps them to be close friends or companions.
- 4—Agape is used of God's love (concern) for His creatures and the love (concern) we should have towards our fellowman.

Basically, Agape (agapao) involves the will of God or man and not necessarily affection. The Scriptures tell us that God "loved" (agape) us while we are enemies (in rebellion against God) (Rom. 5:6-10). Jesus' command that we are to "love" (agape) our enemies shows clearly that affections are definitely not involved in this command to love (Matt. 5:43-45). It is possible that such concern for another human being can lead to a strong attachment, but this the Greeks would call "phileo." Godly love (agape) begins with a strong emphasis to do to others what is in their best interest and what we ourselves would like to have done for us (Matt. 7:11-12). In this lesson, we will be looking at a very brief overview of God's teaching on Love. To get a fuller understanding, it would be necessary to go through a quarter's study on the subject.

**Old Testament Teaching on Love**

There is a continual strong emphasis upon man loving the God of Heaven with all his heart, soul, and might (Deut. 6:5). But God reminds Israel in particular that He first loved her with an everlasting love (Jere. 31:3). Even though Israel would rebel against God, He would still be concerned about them (Illustrated in the book of Hosea). But Israel was not only commanded to love God, but told how to show that they loved God by the following actions:

- 1—By keeping God commandments (Exo. 20:6, etc.).
- 2—By walking in His ways (Deut. 10:12).
- 3—By serving Him with all your heart and soul (Deut. 11:13).
- 4—By listening to the TRUE prophet of God (Deut. 13:3).

These passages briefly give a clue to us that God does not want just lip service of loving Him, but show it by being obedient children from the heart.

But the Old Testament also stressed loving of one's neighbor as we love ourselves (Lev. 19:18, 34). The Proverbs helped to stress the kind of actions that true Godly love would show towards one's neighbor (Prov. 27:5-6, etc.).

## The 10 Commandments and Love

The Ten Commandments help to illustrate how we can show our love both to God and our fellow-man. These commands can be divided into two divisions: (1) How we show our love to God; and (2) How we show our love to our fellow-man.

### 1—How we show our love to God:

- a) Have no other gods before Him (Exo. 20:2-3).
- b) Make no idol gods to represent the true God of Heaven and not to worship them, but Worship only the true God of Heaven (Exo. 20:4-6).
- c) Respect or reverence the Name of God (Exo. 20:7).
- d) Keep the Sabbath Day holy as God has decreed (Exo. 20:8-11).

### 2—How we show our love to our fellow-man:

- a) Honor Father and Mother (Exo. 20:12).
- b) Do no murder of an innocent person (Exo. 20:13).
- c) Do not commit Adultery (Exo. 20:14).
- d) Do not steal (Exo. 20:15).
- e) Do not bear false witness against your neighbor (Exo. 20:16).
- f) Do not covet your neighbor's house, wife, servants, animals or anything that belongs to your neighbor (Exo. 20:17).

## Jesus' emphasis on Love in His Public Ministry

Jesus placed a strong emphasis upon these two great concepts: (1) Love for God (Matt. 22:37-38); and (2) Love for one's neighbor (Matt. 22:38-39). Of course, He was answering the question what is the greatest command in the Law of Moses. But Jesus added a thought that has great significance under the New Covenant that we are under today: **"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."** (Matt. 22:40). Jesus also stressed the need not to hate one's enemy, but to love him (Matt. 5:43-48). Jesus stressed the importance of abiding in God's Love by keeping the commands that Jesus was giving from God (Jn. 15:9-10). But Jesus also went a step further in His emphasis on loving—love your brother in Christ! Our love for one another will help the world to see that we truly are followers of Jesus (Jn. 13:35). Jesus also exemplified the great love of God for mankind in general by His willingness to become a man and die a sacrificial death for us (Jn. 3:16; 15:13; Rom. 5:8). Jesus illustrated this concept by pointing out what a shepherd does for his sheep. He cares for them, protects them, see that they have food and water—but greatest of all, the shepherd is willing to give his life for the sheep (Jn. 10:11-13). He went on to point out clearly that He was laying His life down willingly for mankind (or those who would hear His voice and follow Him (Jn. 10:17-18).

## New Testament Teachings in the Letters

There are many passages that stress that God has shown His love through His Son's death for our forgiveness (Rom. 5:8, Phil. 2:5-8, etc.). And the showing of our love to God and to His Son is by keeping His commands (1 John 5:3). The Apostle John gave a strong emphasis on abiding in God's love—thereby showing that we abide in

God for God is love (1 Jn. 4:16). We should love God because He first loved us (1 Jn. 4:19).

But John went a step further in his emphasis upon love. We cannot truthfully say that we love God and hate our brother—that is inconsistent (1 John 4:11, 20-21). If we love God, then we will love His children (1 Jn. 3:14-17). This love is not to be only expressed by our tongue but shown by our concerned actions (1 Jn. 3:17-18). This love needs to be perfected, complete, or matured! (1 Jn. 4:12, 18). But this love must also be sincere (Rom. 12:9; 2 Cor. 6:6; 1 Pet. 1:22). God's love in our hearts will cause us not to do any evil to our neighbor, but we will fulfill the law (Rom. 13:10). God wants us to be rooted and grounded in His love (Eph. 3:17) and to serve one another (Gal. 5:13). He wants us to be knit together in this love (Col. 2:2).

The Apostle Paul shows the importance of this love and how it is to be shown to one another in 1 Cor. 13:1-8 and ends by showing that love is greater than faith and hope (1 Cor. 13:13).

- 1—Without it, we are like sounding brass and worthless, and none of our actions will profit us (13:1-3).
- 2—Love suffers long, is kind, does not envy, does not parade itself, is not puffed up (13:4).
- 3—Love does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, and thinks no evil (13:5).
- 4—Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth (13:6).
- 5—Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (13:7).
- 6—Love never fails! (13:8).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

There are some rather interesting expressions in connection with loving that are given in the New Testament Letters:

- 1—Whom the Lord loves, He chasten (Heb. 12:6).
- 2—We are to love the brotherhood (1 Pet. 2:17).
- 3—We are not to love the world (1 Jn. 2:15).
- 4—God is love (1 Jn. 4:16).

There should be no question in any of our minds as to how basic and fundamental the teaching of Love for God and our fellow-man is! Without it, we are only fooling ourselves!

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. The English language has to have some way to qualify what is meant by the word "love."
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Agape and Agapao are from the same root word for love.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. There is no difference between the Storge and Phileo in the Greek language.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. The Greek word that is used in Jesus' command to love our enemies is Phileo.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. The Old Testament taught that the Jew was to love God with all his heart, soul, and might and his neighbor as himself.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Love has to be shown by our actions for it to be real.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. The book of Proverbs is giving illustrations on how to show love to other people.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. The Ten Commandments show us how we are to both love God and our neighbor.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. The Jew was to show His love for God by his obedience to the commands of God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Jesus stressed that upon these two great commands (to love God and our neighbor) the whole law and prophets are fulfilled.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. Jesus did not say that we have to love our enemy as ourselves.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. The true shepherd of the sheep is willing to lay down his life for his sheep.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 13. The greatest expression of one's love is the willingness to give one's life for another.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. A person is inconsistent if he says he loves God but hates his brother.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 15. Sincere love is one where that is no hypocrisy.

## Lesson Eleven

*"The True Worship of the True God"*

Worship is definitely commanded by God! This is shown in every period of human history! The Bible begins with such an emphasis and ends with the same commands! Even pagans or idol worshippers understood the concept of worshipping "deity." Man's problem is not needing to be told to worship God so much as the need to worship correctly the true God of Heaven!

Of recent years, we have seen a change in the type of worship being offered to God by various religious groups. The mentality is—that the old way of worship, that at one time was acceptable, is no longer acceptable! To them, it is stale, boring, and irrelevant and needs to be changed. They advocate something new, different, and exciting that will stir the emotions and cause people to want to come to "worship!"

From a study of Scripture, we not only find that God commands worship, but He is concerned about the "how" of our worship to Him. This emphasis is seen from Genesis to Revelation also. There are many Old Testament examples that help us to see the importance of the "how" and we also see the corrections that are found in the New Testament books showing clearly the same emphasis. The purpose of this lesson will be to get a Biblical view of what God expects of His creatures and encourage the doing of these things correctly.

**True Worship is to be from the Heart!**

The Israelite nation was urged to love God and keep His commandments (Deut. 5:1); but, this love for God was to be with all their heart, soul, and might (Deut. 6:5). Jesus condemned the religious leaders of the Jewish Nation because their heart was far from God (Matt. 15:8-9)—but He is quoting from an Old Testament prophet that was condemning Israel for their heart not being in their worship (Isa. 29:13). Jesus' statement in John 4:24 shows that our worship must come from our "spirit" which would seem to have reference to the "inner person." Worship is unacceptable if it is only an outward show and does not come from a grateful or thankful heart (Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:22; Eph. 6:6). An ungodly life will make void any worship because it is not coming from a heart devoted to obeying God and living godly (Matt. 5:23-24)! James 4:8-10 shows this concept clearly. The prophet Isaiah warned Israel that even if they multiplied prayers to God, He would not listen because their hands were covered with blood. His admonition to them was: ***"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from my sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow."*** (Isa. 1:15-17). When our hearts are in our worship, we show great reverence and respect for God!

### **Acceptable Worship must be Sincere!**

Hearts that are pure are hearts that are sincere (Matt. 5:8; 2 Pet. 1:22)! Hardened hearts are impure hearts, not sincere (Mark 3:5)! Joshua called upon God's people under the Law of Moses to serve God in sincerity and in truth (Joshua 24:14). Our love for the Lord must be sincere (Eph. 6:24) and our lives are to be lived in sincerity and without offense (Phil. 1:10). Our love for God, as well as our fellow-Christian, must be sincere (without hypocrisy) (Rom. 12:9). Some of the strongest words of condemnation were to the scribes and Pharisees because they were not sincere, but rather hypocritical in their religious activities. He said of them: **"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."** (Matt. 23:28). Whatever efforts put forth by them in the way of worship or service to God was made void by their hypocrisy. He said: **"You are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."** (Matt. 23:27). Even though their worship activities and service activities may have been correct, they made vain their worship by their ungodliness and hypocritical lives.

### **Acceptable Worship must be according to God's Directions!**

Here, again, is where man gets into trouble—he becomes dissatisfied with what God says and He wants and offers to God what he thinks God should accept. Many examples are given in the Old Testament of such actions and of God's rejection of those who do such.

**1. Gen. 4:3-7.** Cain brought an offering unto the Lord, but God would not accept it. God did accept Abel's offering. What was wrong with Cain's worship? He didn't listen to God and do what God commanded of him (Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12). Cain illustrates the human tendency on the part of men to modify God's instructions to suit themselves.

**2. Exo. 25:1-40.** God gave instructions on how the "Tabernacle" was to be built where worship to Him would take place and ended the chapter with this admonition: **"See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain."**

**3. Lev. 10:1-3.** Two sons of the High Priest (Aaron) took the liberty to offer strange fire unto God that He had not commanded them. They were consumed on the spot by fire from the Lord. God told Moses: **"By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored."** We honor God by doing what He commands, not what we think God ought to accept from us.

**4. Mal. 1:10-2:2.** The prophet Malachi sums up this concept as the last writing Prophet in the Old Testament. He is rebuking the people that bring polluted offerings unto Him—thereby showing disrespect. He warns the people of the need to show honor to God by doing what He commands. **"If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your**

**blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already, because you are not taking it to heart." (Mal. 2:2).**

In the book of Matthew, it is recorded of Jesus that He quoted from Isaiah 6:9-10 and applied it to the people to whom He was speaking: **"...the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them."** (Matt. 13:15). But unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of Jewish people would not listen, nor do what God commanded. Jesus pronounced condemnation upon that generation of people—**"Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?...O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"** (Matt. 23:31-38).

God has given strict, but simple instructions, on how He wants men to worship Him today. Specific instructions are given on each item of worship:

1. **The Lord's Supper**—1 Cor. 11:17-34; Acts 20:7
2. **Singing**—1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
3. **Praying**—1 Cor. 14:15-19; James 1:5; 5:14-18
4. **Giving**—1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-9
5. **Teaching**—1 Cor. 2:1-6; 4:17; 14:26-35

We need to go to His Word, listen to His instructions, and then carry them out each time we worship God. We should not add to nor take away from what God has given (Deut. 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9). While this may appear to be restricting to some; yet, it becomes obvious that God has left a lot of decisions up to us on "HOW" to carry out His commands. We are to meet on the Lord's Day (1st day of the week) to worship together. But we decide the:

1. When we meet (time);
2. How many times we meet;
3. How long the worship assembly will last;
4. What order or sequence of the events of worship;
5. etc.

We show honor to God's name when we listen to Him and do His bidding!

### **Concluding Thoughts**

God does not want confusion nor disorder in His worship (1 Cor. 14:33, 40). He wants our worship to come from our hearts. He wants us to show honor and respect for Him—and we do it by doing what He commands in the way He wants it done; as well as, living godly lives! Will we learn the lesson from History? Will we listen to God and correctly worship the true God of Heaven?

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- 1. God has always required worship shown to Him by His creatures.
- 2. Even pagans or idol worshippers understood the need to worship deity.
- 3. Those who want "change" in worship do not really want to depart from what God commands of us.
- 4. True worship, from the heart, will stir the emotions and cause people to want to worship God.
- 5. The "how" of worship is more important than what we do in worship.
- 6. Worship from the "heart" will make any worship activity acceptable to God.
- 7. Living a godly life is not necessary in order to make our worship acceptable to God.
- 8. Sincerity in worship is shown by doing what God says.
- 9. It is possible for a person to appear to be righteous, but inside they can be full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
- 10. Jesus said that the religious leaders of the Jews were like whitewashed tombs.
- 11. We can engage in "correct" worship activities and still not be acceptable to God.
- 12. Cain brought the right offering unto God, but his heart was not in it.
- 13. God was very concerned that Moses see to it that the Tabernacle was built exactly according to His instructions.
- 14. Nadab and Abihu were probably drunk when they went into the Tabernacle to offering fire before the Lord.
- 15. Malachi called the worship "gifts" from the Jewish people polluted gifts.

## Lesson Twelve

*"Faithfulness to the End"*

One of the better-known characteristics of human beings is the failure to accept responsibility for their actions and decisions—and then, they try to excuse themselves by blaming others. Irresponsibility has been a curse on mankind from the beginning. Adam and Eve illustrate the concept by their disobedience to a simple command of God; and when faced by God about their disobedience, they both tried to blame others (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-13). It is so easy to blame others for our bad decisions, disobedience, inactivity, or whatever. I am convinced that "faithfulness" is a very important and basic concept involved in being a true and acceptable child of God. The wise man pointed this out when he stated: ***"Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man? A righteous man who walks in his integrity—how blessed are his sons after him."*** (Prov. 20:6-7). *Why would he ask such a question? Are such people scarce? Is it too hard for people to be faithful?* As we look closer at this concept, let's be willing to honestly look at our lives and evaluate it as to faithfulness.

**What is Faithfulness?**

The Scriptures speak of certain ones being "faithful!" Can you get some insight as to why they were called faithful?

1. Ps. 119:86 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Heb. 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Heb. 2:17 \_\_\_\_\_

It should be obvious that God is calling on His people today to be faithful!

1. 1 Cor. 4:2 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rev. 2:10 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Heb. 3:14 \_\_\_\_\_

Many of the early Christians faced strong trials and temptations that tried their faith in God. Because we live in a time of relative peace and prosperity, our faith may not be put to the test as strongly as some of them faced.

1. But what would be our decision if we had to endure the kind of hardship that they faced?
2. Would we deny our commitment to Jesus?
3. If we are tempted to complain about services lasting a few minutes longer, what would we do if we faced real hardship as a Christian?
4. If we complain because the building gets too hot or too cold, what would we do if we faced terrible persecution for Christ?
5. Have we grown too soft?

6. Are we too caught up in this materialistic age?
7. If we are addicted to our material things, what would we do if suddenly we were called upon to surrender them all up in order to be faithful to Christ?

### 1 John 2:15-17 \_\_\_\_\_

---

### **What makes Faithfulness a Virtue?**

1. Is it because there are so few (Prov. 20:6)? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is it because God praises men by calling them faithful (Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:2)? \_\_\_\_\_
3. It is because blessings are promised upon the faithful?
  - a) Rev. 2:10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Prov. 28:20 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Ps. 31:23 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Ps. 101:6 \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Matt. 25:21 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is it because such are like God (Lam. 3:23; Ps. 119:138)? \_\_\_\_\_

Look at the contrast between the faithful and unfaithful:

- a) Faithful (Matt. 25:21):
  - ◇ He was given a job to do and he did it well.
  - ◇ He was dependable.
  - ◇ He did what was expected of him.
- b) Unfaithful (Lk. 16:1-2, 10-12):
  - ◇ He was a wasteful steward and did not do his job well.
  - ◇ If not dependable in few things, he won't be over many.
  - ◇ Faithful men and women can give a good accounting.

Look what was said of Daniel (6:4):

- a) He was true to his responsibilities—no fault found.
- b) He was honest to the core.

It seems to be obvious that God judges more by man's character than by the number of talents, abilities, or opportunities that he has (Matt. 25).

### **The Value of Faithfulness**

A young lady who was a Christian married a non-Christian. He was attending services with her before marriage and thought he was interested and learning. After they got married, he stopped attending and even tried to get her to quit. But, she kept attending "faithfully!" After the first child came, she missed a couple of Sundays. But on the third Sunday she got in the car to go to services, but the car would not start. Her husband had taken the coil out of it so that it would not start. But, she was determined to go and started walking. Her husband then began to feel ashamed of himself. He went and took her to the services. That night he went with her to services. And shortly after that he became a Christian.

1. What would have happened if the wife had given in and stayed home? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Was she rewarded for her "faithfulness?" \_\_\_\_\_

God has had recorded in His book of Life the lives of many who have been faithful in their service to Him. As far as we know, all of the Apostles (Except for John) faced persecution and died a violent death because of their devotion and service to Jesus, the Son of God. He had recorded in Heb. 11 a long list of men and women that were examples of faithfulness. The chapter ends with these wonderful words: "***Of whom the world was not worthy!***" (Heb. 11:38).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

We trust and pray that God may continue to grant us the opportunity to serve Him in quietness and peace. But, if the time should come when our faith in Him will be challenged to the fullest, may we be prepared and faithful to the end.

1. What about your life—could it be looked upon as a faithful Christian?
2. Can people see in your life that trustworthiness, dependability, and steadfast obedience to Christ's Will?
3. Or, do they see wavering, uncertainty, on and off, hot and cold, and instability?

We believe that **faithfulness** is not only a virtue, but it is a basic concept of being a Christian (a child of God!). It is in a person's life because he wants it there. And it is there because he has seen the value of faithfulness in his own life and in the lives of others as well. **Let's be faithful people of God!**

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Human beings are creatures that are known for their faithfulness!
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. The Wise man in Proverbs seems to indicate that faithfulness or trustworthiness is rare virtue among men.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. God actually calls some people "faithful!"
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Persecution, as well as, indifference can be a challenge to man's faithfulness to God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. We cannot know if we would be faithful to God if we faced hard persecution.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. To love the "world" is to be "unfaithful" to God, according to the Apostle John.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. Faithfulness is a virtue because God said so!
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. God is the only one who is truly faithful!
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. Faithfulness has to do with whether we will be saved or not.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. A faithful person is one that can be depended upon to do his work.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. The unfaithful person is often wasteful as well as indolent.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. Daniel is given as an example of one who was faithful in the midst of persecution.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 13. Being faithful to God will not always cause an unbelieving mate to become a believer.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. All of the Apostles died a violent death with the exception of John.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 15. Faithfulness is a basic concept of Christianity!

## Lesson Thirteen

*"Contending for the Faith"*

This lesson in this series of studies is vital to the whole reason for having such a study. Why has God given us these basic Bible doctrines if we do not plan to hold to them? What is the point of giving us "the Faith" if there is no reason to believe and hold to these teachings? We believe that our point is made! God wants us to hold to these basic teachings! Jude 3 shows this clearly: ***"I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."*** The Apostle John used another expression—**the truth**—instead of the faith. In John 8:32, he quotes Jesus: ***"You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."*** The concept of "truth" is used in opposition to that which is false or a lie. "The faith" and "the truth" we would presume has reference to the same thing. Truth is to be held to so we can be set free. "The faith" is to be earnestly contended for because it gives "salvation" to those who will accept "the faith."

**What is "the faith?"**

The following passages help us to see that "the faith" is an expression used to denote also "the word of God" or the "gospel."

1. **Acts 6:7**—The word of God spread and people were obedient to the faith.
2. **Acts 13:7-8**—The proconsul heard the word of God, but Elymas sought to turn him from the faith.
3. **Acts 14:21-22**—They preached the gospel and they exhorting the hearers to continue in the faith.
4. **Rom. 1:5**—All peoples were called to be obedient to the faith.
5. **Gal. 1:23**—Saul now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.
6. **Phil. 1:27**—Christians are to stand fast in the faith of the gospel.

It would seem obvious that the expression "the faith" has reference to the word of God or the gospel of Christ. The Bible stresses that there is but "one faith" or "one gospel" (Eph. 4:5; Gal. 1:6-9). This expression would seem to carry with it the idea of something that has been given and is complete and final and should be not only held to but contended for! See 2 Pet. 1:3; John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). "The faith" is not something to be taken lightly, ignored, or be indifferent to; but rather, it is to be contended for! It contains and gives directions to all peoples on how to be saved and live a righteous life in order to receive a "crown of righteousness." It can furnish us completely for every good work that should be done. The Apostles were to be guided into all truth (Jn. 16:13); therefore, we can conclude that "the faith" was completely given during the lifetime of the Apostles! After their death, there was to be no more added to "the faith." It was complete, final, and once for all delivered to mankind in general and to the "saints" in particular. Religious leaders of various kinds who claim to believe in Jesus, but claim

to have "latter day revelation" are in direct opposition to what Jude has stated by the inspiration of God! Such persons as Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy, and a host of others are all false prophets with a false message. Even when men meet in religious conferences or synods and give a pronouncement—it is false unless it agrees with "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Once "the faith" is delivered, it never changes (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 2:2).

### **How does one Contend for the faith?**

It is not a question of "if" we should contend for the faith, but how do we contend for the faith! Jude stated it very clearly—we are to **earnestly** (stoutly) contend for the faith! For a person not to earnestly contend for the faith results in a denial of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4). The reason should be obvious—He gave us "the Faith" (Heb. 1:1-3). II John 9 makes this clear also: ***"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God."*** The concept is simple—if you want a relationship with God, you must hold to and earnestly contend for the faith.

Jude does not stop with the exhortation, but goes on to show how false teachers were misleading the people—thereby leading them away from "the faith" or the former messages from God.

1. They turn the grace of God into lewdness (v. 4).
2. Those God delivered from Egypt, he later destroyed because they did not believe God's message to them (v. 5).
3. Angels who did not remain in their proper domain were placed in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day (v. 6).
4. Sodom and Gomorrah gave themselves over to sexual immorality and went after strange flesh and were punished by fire from heaven (v. 7).
5. These present dreamers that Jude was pointing out defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries (v. 8).
6. etc.

The Apostle Paul pointed out that those who teach "another gospel" than "the gospel" (that he and the other Apostles taught) that they were accursed of God (Gal. 1:6-9).

Not only is it needful or necessary to earnestly contend for the faith, but we must do so with the right spirit and right motive. The Apostle Paul told about some who may have taught "the faith" correctly but from a false motive (Phil. 1:14-18). He also stressed in the Ephesian Letter that God's truth (the faith) must be taught in love for the hearers (Eph. 4:15). Paul stressed to Timothy that those who teach the faith must do so without creating a quarrel and to correct people in humility and gentleness (2 Tim. 2:23-26). We must contend for the faith without being contentious (2 Cor. 12:20-21)!

### **Concluding Thoughts**

It must be remembered that we are to earnestly contend for what God has given to us to believe—not what I or some men have given to be taught and followed. To teach the wisdom of men will only destroy the souls of men, not save them (1 Cor. 2:1-5). Only truth can set us free, not error (Jn. 8:32). Satan and all of his followers will make a diligent effort to **corrupt** the faith, to **change it**, or to advocate a **different faith**. If we are not on our guard, we can easily get caught up in his craftiness (2 Cor. 11:3, 13-15).

It is important that we diligently hold to "the faith" because there are those who will strive to lead us from it. If we do not have the courage to uphold what we claim to believe—it puts in doubt as to whether we really believe such or not. It is also important that we do not go to extremes in this matter. It is necessary to contend for the faith, but with the proper spirit. But to have a "namby-pamby" spirit and unwilling to stand up for that which is truth certainly shows a great weakness on our part and would seem to put us in danger of being led astray from the faith. Please read Paul's exhortations in regards to this matter: (2 Tim. 4:1-5; Tit. 2:1; 1 Tim. 6:3-5, 20-21).

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. God has given us "the faith" but it is not all that important that we hold to it much less to earnestly contend for it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. "The faith" and "the truth" are basically the same thing in the teachings of the Apostles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. "The faith" and "the Word of God" are also basically the same thing in the teachings of the Apostles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. "The faith" and "the Gospel" are also basically the same thing in the teachings of the Apostles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The Apostles were to be guided into all truth—not just part of it.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Upon the death of the Apostles, "the faith" was once for all delivered to the saints.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Abiding in "the faith" (the teaching of Christ) is critical to our relationship to God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Jude goes on to illustrate the dangers in the past of people being led away from God's message.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Men can be accursed if they teach another "gospel."
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. We must contend for the faith, but not be contentious!
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Even "the faith" can be taught accurately, but with the wrong spirit or motive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. We are not to contend for our own "pet ideas" but for "the faith" that has been given by God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. It takes courage and fearlessness on the part of believers to earnestly contend for the faith.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. If we are not willing to earnestly contend for the faith then we may be in danger of being pulled away from such.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Only truth (the faith) can set us free from sin and its slavery.



