

THE FAITH

Once Delivered

by

Mark W. Fenison, ThM.



Contend

for the

Faith

It matters what you believe!

THE FAITH

Once Delivered

By

Mark W. Fenison, ThM.

Published Under the Authority of

Victory Baptist Church

3 Alpine Court

Vader, Washington, 98593

Table of Contents

Introduction

What is the Faith.....	7
The Synonyms of the Faith.....	11
The Standard of Orthodoxy.....	18
The Contents of the Faith.....	20
The Copyright of the Faith.....	24
The Logo of the Faith.....	31
The Last Days and the Faith.....	34
The Importance of the Faith.....	39
Your Responsibility to the Faith.....	41
Diagnostic Conclusion.....	44
The Worksheet of the Faith.....	46

Introduction

We live in a day of religious confusion and counterfeit Christianity. Under the umbrella term of *Christianity* can be found literally thousands of conflicting systems of faith and practice, which are steadily increasing every day. Most people are completely confused, and have no idea how to discern true from false religions.

Discerning between the "true" and the "false" requires an objective standard for truth. Most systems of philosophy today do not acknowledge any universal objective standard for truth, but only admit to *relative* truth. Relative truth changes from person to person and from circumstance to circumstance, and is therefore subjective and unreliable by nature. Hence, according to such a definition, what is true for you may not be true for someone else or what may be true in one circumstance may not be true in another circumstance. However, the Scriptures declare that God is truth (Jn. 14:6 "*I am the...truth*") and "*thy word is truth*" – Jn. 17:17. Therefore, according to God's Word, truth is all that is consistent with the nature and will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Moreover, this is not a conclusion drawn from circular reasoning, but the Word of God can be verified by objective data, such as archeology, prophecy and pre-modern scientific revelations.

The Bible also provides a foundation of fundamentals or a skeletal body of essential truths referred to as "the faith" or "the truth" or "the doctrine" or "the tradition."

The following study revolves around the use and meaning of "*the faith*" and its synonyms.

*Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints. - Jude 3*

When Jude penned these words, "*the faith*" had already been "delivered" (Aorist tense verb), but the scriptural canon was not yet completed. Hence, the scriptures contain "*the faith*" but include much more than "*the faith*." That is, the scriptures contain much more than mere essentials of orthodoxy. Within the scriptures there is a **skeleton** of absolutes. The completion of the canon of Scripture provides the full layers of muscle, skin, etc. on that **skeleton**. Those core beliefs are called "the faith" by Jude.

Moreover, the aorist tense verb translated "*delivered*" refers to a completed action which most believe refers to the giving of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. The Greek term translated "*once*" (hapaz) is elsewhere translated "*once for all*" (Heb. 10:10), further emphasizing it is a final, and completed action.

The words "*earnestly contend for*" represent a Greek term [*epagononizomai*] from where we get our English word "agonize," and literally means to "*agonize upon*." Furthermore, this term has the wrestling event in the Greek Olympics for its background. If you can imagine that you are in a wrestling match, and realize the energy, and ability required to pin, and subdue your opponent, then you have an idea what Jude believes will be required to defend the faith.

Finally, Jude is not merely making a *suggestion* that his readers "earnestly contend" nor is he offering it as a *possible option*. This is a *command*. He is urging them in the strongest terms to take on this responsibility.

The book of Jude was written to warn the early Christians of a coming Great Apostasy and how to identify apostate characteristics and characters.

Although this study does not specify a preferred denomination, it does provide the reader with a framework of clear Biblical principles that serve as a guide to identify the essential

characteristics of Biblical New Testament Christianity.

Our method is quite simple and straight forward.

1. We will provide a Biblical definition for the phrase "*the faith.*"
2. We will examine the Biblical synonyms of "*the faith.*"
3. We will discover the Biblical contents of "*the faith.*"
4. We will examine the relationship of "*the faith*" with the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20.
5. We will examine the relationship of "*the faith*" with baptism.
6. We will examine "*the faith*" in its relationship to "*the last days.*"
7. We will examine our Biblical responsibility to "*the faith.*"
8. We will then provide diagnostic questions to stimulate thinking
9. We will provide a work sheet for review.

What is "The Faith"?

In any study, or discussion, it is of utmost importance to first define the terminology being used. Productive communication depends on all parties in a discussion understanding, and defining the same terms, the same way.

One of the primary problems of religious confusion is that the same Biblical terms are used within the circle of Christendom, but with radically different meanings.

The Bible uses the term "*faith*" in four basic ways:

1. The most common use of "*faith*" is the idea of commitment of *trust* or *belief* in something (idea, promise, and truth) and/or in someone.

For example, when faith is placed in a wrong or distorted gospel, it is called a "*vain*" faith (1 Cor. 15:10)

When saving faith is professed, but exists without any evidence or fruit of regenerative life ("*good works*" - Eph. 2:10) then it is called "*dead*" faith (James 2:14-17).

Therefore, faith in the true gospel, in connection with a true conversion experience to the gospel, would be recognized as *saving* faith.

2. Another basic use of "*faith*" in the New Testament refers to the fruit of "faith" accompanied by other fruit of the Spirit manifested in the Christian's life. This "faith" may be in regard to a number of things (specific Bible promises, areas of manifest trust; our general walk "*by faith*"; etc.). Also, it may refer to a special measure of faith (Rom. 12:3) in regard to a spiritual gift.

3. Another Biblical use of "*faith*" is when it is used with the

definite article "*the*", and thus, "*the faith.*" The definite article specifies that this faith is a specific kind or quality of faith. Obviously, when there is more than one kind of faith used in Scripture, the specific kind being communicated in the context must be separated from other types. The immediate context is always necessary to define what kind of faith is being referred to.

For example, in salvation contexts it refers to the true state of salvation which was entered by faith. For instance, the Apostle tells the church at Corinth:

Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates. - 2 Cor. 13:5

Notice that in this passage, to be "*in the faith*" is regarded by the apostle as equal to "*Jesus Christ in you.*" This type of usage is what grammarians call a metonymy, or where the object or consequence of faith (salvation in Christ) is regarded as "*faith*" itself.

A "metonymy" is "*a figure by which one name or noun is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation*" (E.W. Bullinger, **Figures of Speech Used in the Bible**, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, p. 538).

In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul is challenging them to examine themselves closely to make sure that they have entered into the state of salvation. Since faith is the *subjective* entrance point into this state of salvation, the state of salvation is represented by "the faith" required to subjectively enter salvation.

It is under this same use as a metonym with the definite article, it is also used to refer to the body of apostolic doctrine or "the faith once delivered." Since the apostolic doctrine is the object of faith, it is called "*the faith.*" This use refers to the essentials of New Testament Christianity as a system or body of faith and practice.

However, the careful reader has already noticed that "*the faith*" has been used previously as a metonymy for the subjective entrance into the state of salvation. Therefore, the natural question that arises is, how can the reader of Scripture distinguish between the two. The answer is they are distinguished by the immediate context in which it is found. **The former is found in contexts that deal with *personal subjective* salvation, while the latter is always found in the context of apostolic doctrine and practice.** However, in such doctrinal contexts, the *objective* doctrine of salvation in its broadest sense (election, regeneration, progressive sanctification, and glorification) is no doubt included. In many contexts, there may be emphasis upon some specific doctrine in its relationship to the whole body of faith.

Jude 3 is an example where "*the faith*" refers to defending the doctrine of salvation in its broadest objective sense, as apostolic doctrine, and practice that was "*once delivered.*" Another clear use after this manner is 1 Timothy 4:1:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. - 1 Tim. 4:1

False professors have never entered into "the faith" as a subjective state of salvation, and so they can never depart from "the faith" subjectively (1 Jn. 2:19). However, they can depart from the objective doctrine of salvation. True Christians cannot depart from the objective state of salvation (Jn. 6:39) but can depart from "the faith" objectively as apostolic doctrine (Gal. 3:1) but can be led astray by false doctrine, and depart from "*the faith*" as an objective system of doctrine and practice (Eph. 4:14-15). Notice in the passage above, that "the faith" is in contrast with "*doctrines*" of devils. Hence, this is a context of contrast between the apostolic system of doctrine with a false system of faith originating with demons. All false doctrine originates with the "*spirit of error*" (1 Jn. 4:6).

Another clear reference to "the faith" as a body of doctrine, and practice, once delivered by Christ through the apostles is Titus 1:9, 14, where it is required as a qualification for ordination to the pastoral office:

Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers.....This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply that they be sound in the faith. - Tit. 1:9, 14

Notice the context is "*doctrine*" not the subjective state of salvation. In this passage "*the faith*" is the standard for determining orthodoxy, and doctrinal fitness for qualification to be ordained. These passages represent only a small portion of many others that will be used to demonstrate this particular use of "*the faith*."

The Synonyms of "The Faith"

As stated before "the faith" is a metonym for the doctrine and practice which is embraced by faith. However, this metonym has several synonyms. A synonym is a word that basically means the same thing as another word, but is spelled differently, and may add some different nuances or shades of meaning that compliment it.

There are several synonyms found in the New Testament for "*the faith*." A peculiarity of all these synonyms is that they are always found in the singular with the definite article "*the*" in context of doctrine.

The singular number with the definite article indicates that the writers spoke of a specific and united body or system of doctrine well known to the churches in the New Testament.

Perhaps the specificity and popularity with this body of doctrine was due to the well known fact that it was "*once delivered*" by Christ in the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20; Jude 3) to the apostles, who were faithful in defending and delivering it to the churches, as recorded in the book of Acts.

....teaching them to observe all things whatsoever, I have commanded you..... - Mt. 28:20

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers - Acts 2:42

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. - Acts 14:22

And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. - Acts 16:5

In all cases above, it was only disciples, those already saved, baptized and members of New Testament churches, that are being built up in "*the faith*."

There are a number of synonyms for "*the faith*" that will be considered next:

1. The Tradition
2. The Doctrine
3. The Truth

1. The Tradition: Because "*the faith*" was *passed down* by the apostles to the churches, first orally, then in writing, it became known as "*the tradition*." The word "*tradition*" is the translation of the Greek term *paradosis* and simply means that which is "*passed down*."

The term "*tradition*" is used two ways in the New Testament. It is used in a negative way when speaking of uninspired interpretations, and teachings of men that conflict with the scriptures:

But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?.....Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition..... But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. - Mt. 15:3, 6, 9

On the other hand, it is used for those teachings of the Apostles which were inspired of God. The oral teachings of the Apostles were regarded as the inspired Word of God. Writing to the Thessalonians Paul said:

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God,

which effectually worketh also in you that believe. - 1 Thes. 2:13

When Paul distinguished between the oral and the written, or when he spoke of specific teachings, as opposed to others, he uses the plural "*the traditions.*"

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. - 2 Thes. 2:15

Now I praise you, brothers, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, [Gr. pardoseis] as I delivered them to you. - 1 Cor. 11:2

However, when speaking about them as one united expression of apostolic doctrine and practice, he used the singular "*the tradition.*"

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 2 Thes. 3:6

The Faith was passed down from Christ to the Apostles and from the apostles to the churches. It provided the standard of orthodoxy to unite the churches in doctrine and practice. Any "*brother*" who willfully and consistently violated this standard of orthodoxy was to be withdrawn from by the churches.¹

¹ Paul uses the present tense ("*walketh*") showing a continuing action, not merely a onetime occurrence, but a persistent behavior or characteristic practice. Furthermore, the word "*disorderly*" presents a picture in the Greek language of a person consistently marching out of step with the rest. In other words, he marches to the beat of his own drummer. He stands in opposition to the rest of the congregation, and congregations of Christ in this matter. This does not refer to minor differences of interpretation that exist between churches of like faith and order, or between members in a congregation, unless that difference, no matter how small, is made an issue that causes division. At that point it is not the

The internal purity and stability of the churches depended upon reprimanding, and if necessary, withdrawing from "*every brother*" who stubbornly persisted in false doctrine, and/or practices contrary to "*the tradition*" they received from the apostles.

2. The Doctrine: The term **doctrine** simply means "*teaching*", and coincides perfectly again with the command found in the Great Commission - - "*teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you*" (Mt. 28:20).

As mentioned previously, many believe Jude is specifically referring to Matthew 18:18-20 as the delivery point when the faith "*was once delivered.*"

The total teachings of the Lord² are referred to as "*the doctrine*" or "*the doctrine of Christ*" (Heb. 6:1) and the individual doctrines are called "*the principles.*"

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.....- Heb. 6:1

It has already been seen that the total teachings of Christ handed down to the apostles in the Great Commission is called "*the apostles' doctrine*" (Acts 2:42).

As the rule of orthodoxy "*the doctrine*" defines sound faith, and practice. "*The faith*" could be used by the churches to test anyone who came into their midst claiming to be a teacher from God. The churches were commanded to mark, and avoid anyone who came into their midst teaching things contrary to "*the doctrine*" or body of faith they had learned from the apostles:

difference of interpretation that is the problem, but the attitude determined to cause division which is the problem.

² It is one thing to come short in obedience to "*all things*" Christ commanded, but quite another thing to intentionally depart from, reject, repudiate doctrines that Christ taught.

Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. - Rom. 16:17

3. The Truth: Because the apostolic doctrine provided the basis for what was to be considered "*truth*" as opposed to error, it was often referred to as "*the truth*."

*We are of God: he that knoweth God **heareth us**; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.* - 1 Jn. 4:6

John had identified "*us*" in 1 John 1:1-3 as those who heard saw and touched the Lord Jesus Christ - the apostles. Twenty-three out of the twenty seven books of the New Testament were written by apostles. The remaining four were written by New Testament prophets, and so, the church's foundation of truth consisted of the inspired writings of "*the apostles and prophets*" (Eph. 2:20).

Paul writing Titus in regard to the qualifications, and responsibilities of the office of Bishop (pastor - see Acts 20:13, 28) said:

....Wherefore, rebuke them sharply, that they be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. - Tit. 1:13, 14

Doctrinal soundness is the subject. Both the phrases "*the faith*" and "*the truth*" are synonyms in regard to sound doctrine.

Writing to Timothy, Paul describes those who come door to door attempting to deceive and destroy the faith once delivered:

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning

the faith. - 2 Tim. 3;7-8

Paul is warning Timothy against those who teach an opposing system of faith/doctrine and uses "*the truth*" as a synonym for "*the faith*." In direct contrast to these false teachers, of whom Paul describes are ever learning, but never able to accept the apostolic body of truth, he says:

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, - 2 Tim. 1:10

Again, after warning Timothy:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, - 2 Tim. 4:3,4

He concludes this epistle by claiming "*I have kept the faith*" (2 Tim. 4:7b). In regard to "*the faith*" as a subjective state of salvation, he claimed that was something which he committed unto Christ to keep (2 Tim. 1:12). However, "*the faith*" as a system of doctrine was committed unto him by Christ to observe, guard, keep, and earnestly contend for - and this he did faithfully.

Paul uses "*sound doctrine*", and "*the truth*", and "*the faith*", as synonyms for the apostolic system of doctrine and practice delivered to the saints.

It was the responsibility of the ordained officers (Bishops and deacons) of the churches to teach and defend "*the faith*" which was once delivered. Hence, one qualification is that they must be "*sound in the faith*."

Using this same standard to qualify who could be ordained (Tit. 1:9-13; 1 Tim. 3:1-13), and who could retain membership (2 Thes. 3:6) in the churches, eliminated heresy, preserved unity, and

sustained the church as "*the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15).

Shortly after describing the church under such sound leadership, Paul warns:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; - 1 Tim. 4:1

Again, the subject is "*doctrine*" and the warning is that some shall depart from the apostolic system, or body of faith and practice. They will be led away by "*doctrines of demons*."

Conclusion: In studying these synonyms for "*the faith*" we have discovered that the faith was *passed down* to all churches, and thus it was identified as "*the tradition*."

It was considered to be the teaching that Christ delivered once for all, and as such, was identified as "*the doctrine*" of Christ.

As the standard of orthodoxy, it provided the standard for "*the truth*" in order to identify, and protect the churches from those who embraced the "*spirit of error*" and "*doctrines of demons*."

In many of the passages cited, two or more of these synonyms are found together in contexts that deal with defending apostolic doctrine from those who err.

Some other possible synonyms for "*the faith*" may be "*the whole counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27) and "*the way*" (Acts 24:14). Paul did not have sufficient time in merely three years to teach all the Scriptures to the church at Ephesus. So the "*whole counsel of God*" must refer to the essentials of "*the faith*."

If the exact contents of "*the faith*" could be identified, it would provide the same standard for orthodoxy today to discern truth from error, and define what is, and what is not a true New Testament church.

The Standard of Orthodoxy

There is a general consensus of opinion by theologians, that there is a standard of orthodoxy that can distinguish between non-orthodox and orthodox Christianity.

1. Dr. Walter Martin, a well known authority on defining what is a cult versus what is orthodox said:

*A cult, then, is a group of people polarized around someone's interpretation of the Bible, and is characterized by major deviations from **orthodox** Christianity relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith.*

2. Dr. Josh McDowell, an international authority on cults versus orthodox Christianity says:

*A cult is a perversion, a distortion of Biblical Christianity, and/or a rejection of **historic teachings** of the Christian Church.*

3. Dr. James Sire, an authority on cults said,

Any religious movement that is organizationally distinct, and has doctrines, and/or practices that contradict those of the Scripture, as interpreted by traditional Christianity, as represented by the major Catholic and Protestant denominations, and as expressed in such statements, as the Apostles Creed.

All agree that deviant or cultic Christianity is a departure from Biblical Christianity, or what they refer to as "orthodox" Christianity. However, there is a problem in defining what exactly the meaning of "orthodoxy." is

James A.Silba presents this problem very well when he says:

*The first problem with the definition of a cult, as an unorthodox religious group is that it leaves unsolved the question of **Christian orthodoxy**. Sire's definition seems to include all traditional Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) under the standard of orthodoxy, thereby, by passing the many debates that have split the Christian Church through the ages.*

The narrower standard proposed by Martin is that of evangelical Christianity, a criteria that excludes several well established Christian churches, and sects, which are judged to be unorthodox, and hence, liable to be called cults....Many....have at times referred to the Catholic Church as a cult.

Silba points out correctly that none of the experts can agree about the definition of orthodoxy. Nobody wants to define orthodoxy so that it excludes them. However, if you make it so large it includes everyone; it is then made moot, and worthless.

However, does the Bible provide its own guidelines to determine the essentials of orthodoxy?

The Contents of "The Faith

Dr. John MacArthur, a well known international Bible teacher said in his book *Reckless Faith* when considering this very issue under the chapter entitled "*What Are the Fundamentals of Christianity*" said:

Does the Bible itself identify specific doctrines as fundamental? Indeed it does. - John F. MacArthur, **Reckless Faith**. Crossway Books, Wheaton, Ill: 1994, p. 108

The Biblical canon had not yet been completed when Jude wrote his epistle or said "*the faith that was once delivered*" (Jude 3). The faith had been delivered previous to Jude writing his epistle, as he spoke of its delivery in the past tense, but the scriptures had not yet been completed, as his own epistle was part of that ongoing process. Neither had the book of Revelation been written when Jude said this. Therefore, "*the faith*" and the scriptures are not one and the same. The scriptures contain "*the faith*" but they contain much more than the essentials of orthodoxy³.

Instead of giving our opinion, as to what doctrines should be regarded as essential to define orthodoxy, the reader will be provided three Biblical principles that can be used to establish the standard of orthodoxy. In addition to these three Biblical based

³ The Bible contains many geographical, biographical and cultural details. It also contains things that are relatively non-essential in comparison to other issues. Even Jesus made a distinction between the weightier issues over other issues in Scripture (Mt. 23:23).

principles, the principles found inherently in the Great Commission will be provided to further define what is the standard of orthodoxy.

We believe there are three basic Biblical principles that reveal the contents of "*the faith*" once delivered to the saints. These three principles are self-evident, and are as follows:

Principle #1: *Every doctrine and practice that the Bible clearly states, or necessarily infers to be non-negotiable, must be regarded as essential to the definition of orthodoxy.*

Such doctrines are marked in Scriptures by words like "must" or limited in number like "one" or explicitly denies any other alternatives. For example:

1. Limited numerically: "*one*" God, Spirit, baptism, faith, way to heaven, Savior, gospel, etc. - Eph. 4:4-6; Acts 4:12; Jn. 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5; etc.

2. No alternatives - "*if any man preach any other gospel...let him be accursed*" - Gal. 1:8-9 "*except a man be born again he cannot....*" (Jn. 3:3) etc. "*repent or perish*" - Lk. 13:3

3. Limiting definitions or absolute contrasts - "*if it be of grace then it is no more of works, otherwise, grace is no more grace..*" - Rom. 11:6

These are doctrines the Bible clearly and explicitly states we must not deny or we must believe. These are also Biblical truths the Bible infers to be necessary without explicitly demanding they are necessary (e.g. incarnation, etc.)

Principle #2 - *Every doctrine, and practice that is essential to distinguish New Testament Christianity from other world religions*

and/or predicted false doctrines that characterize predicted apostate Christian religions.

Some examples of this principle that separate Biblical Christianity from other world religions are:

1. The God of the Bible
2. The Person and work of Jesus Christ
3. The Incarnation and resurrection of Jesus
4. The Bible as final authority for Christians
5. The way of salvation by grace without works

Some examples of predicted false doctrines that characterize predicted apostate Christian cults are:

1. 1 Tim. 4:1-5
2. John 16:1-5
3. 2 Tim. 3-4:6

These distinctions are essential or there could be no way of telling any difference between Christianity and other world religions, or discerning between New Testament Christianity and predicted apostate Christianity.

Principle #3: *All doctrines and practices that is essential to preserve New Testament Christianity.*

The Scriptures clearly teach that New Testament Christianity, as established by Christ, and the apostles, will be preserved until Jesus returns (Mt. 16:18; 28:20; Eph. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:26; Jude 3; etc.).

For example the basis for truth must be preserved or truth cannot be discerned. The doctrines of inspiration and preservation of the scriptures (Isa. 8:20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17) are essential to have an objective basis for discerning truth from error. If the scriptures are

not preserved for future generations, and/or not trustworthy, then there is no basis to determine truth from error.

For example, the essentials for making disciples must also be preserved for conveying the truth from one generation to the next. The Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20) provides this process "*till the end of the world.*"

Another example of what is essential to preserve New Testament Christianity is the church as "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*" There can be no such thing as a "New Testament congregation" if the scriptures do not clearly spell out what is the New Testament essentials that define it (officers, ordinances, government, doctrine, etc.)? If not, then we have no idea what is, and what is not, a true scriptural congregation.

In our next chapter we will look at the mechanism or process Jesus has provided to preserve "*the faith*" until He returns.

The Copyright of "The Faith"

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [Gr. exousia = authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go teach [Gr. mathetos = make disciples] of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the world. Amen - Mt. 28:18-20

I am sure you are familiar with a copyright. A copyright is the legal protection that prevents unauthorized reproduction of someone's materials, design, or invention. A copyright may allow for authorized reproduction under certain limited and stated terms or conditions.

There are certain characteristics of this commission that act as a copyright to protect a certain process. The assertion of authority in verse 18 and the limitation of "*whatsoever I have commanded*" are restrictive and protective measures. Only Christ is authorized to select and commission representatives in his behalf. No one has authority to teach anything other than what He has commanded.

The process that is being protected by copyright is how to make disciples, or replicate those who are like faith and order with Christ. Moreover, many scholars believe that Matthew 28:18-20 is the very point in time that Jude refers to when he says "*the faith*" was "*once delivered*."

1. Limited by Definition: What is this copyright protecting? It is protecting the disciple making process. The word "*teach*" in verse 19 represents a completely different Greek term than the word

"*teaching*" in verse 20. In verse 19 the word "*teach*" represents a Greek term that means "make disciples."

A "disciple" by definition is one who "follows" a master. He is one who copy's the faith and practice of his master. He is a reproduction or replication of his master in doctrine and practice. This is the design of the Great Commission, and there are inherent limitations that characterize this process in order to insure that disciples rather than apostates are being made.

In contrast, one who innovates or departs from his master's faith and practice is not a "disciple" but an apostate.

This is a commission to reproduce "disciples" or those who will follow, imitate, or practice like faith and order with the Master.

2. Limited by Like faith and order: This commission limits this process within the boundaries of "*whatsoever I have commanded.*" The Lord never authorized or commanded anyone to go preach "*another gospel,*" or administer another baptism or teach another faith and practice than what He observed and practiced Himself. Such a person would not be His disciple or a follower of Him.

This is authority to go preach the **same** gospel (Jn. 3:16, 36) that Jesus preached. This is authority to administer the **same** baptism Jesus administered (Jn. 4:1-2; Lk. 7:29-30). This is authority to teach the **same** faith and practice Jesus taught and observed. Why would Jesus authorize anyone to depart from His own doctrine and practices and yet call them "His" disciples? However, there are many today that do just that and call themselves "disciples" of Christ.

Those who preach "*another gospel*" are "*accursed*" (Gal. 1:8-9) and have violated this copyright. Those who administer another baptism have violated this copyright. Those who teach another faith and practice have departed from "*the faith once delivered*" (1

Tim. 4:1) and have violated this copyright. Those who innovate, change, depart, have disobeyed what Christ "*commanded*" and thus violated this copyright that prohibits teaching things contrary to what he has commanded.

3. Limited Authority: The Greek term translated "*power*" in verse 18 is elsewhere translated "*authority*" in the King James Version (e.g. Matt. 7:29). It refers to the "*power*" of authority.

Only Christ claims to have all "*power*" or authority in heaven and earth. That authority resides with Him alone. However, he is delegating authority for a certain process. Delegated authority is limited and answerable to the one giving it.

For instance, governments are authorized by God to carry out a specified function within the limits of the boundaries of righteousness (Rom. 13:1-5). That is why they are called "ministers of righteousness" as they are authorized within the boundaries of righteousness.

For instance, the wife is to be subject to the husband in all things qualified by the phrase "*in the Lord*" or what is in keeping with God's Word (Col. 2:16). Children are to be subject in all things to the authority of their parents within the boundaries of righteousness or "*in the Lord*" (Eph. 6:1-3).

Likewise, the Lord is delegating authority to make disciples within specified boundaries of "*whatsoever I have commanded.*" That is a copyright restriction.

4. Limited Process: The Lord does not give authority to make disciples any way you please. Although the English translation is quite clear about this, the Greek grammar is even more explicit.

There is one main verb translated "teach" in verse 19 which

literally means "make disciples." That main verb is then followed by three participles ("*go....baptizing....teaching*") that limit and define how disciples are to be made.

These three participles provide the copyrighted process in making disciples. Disciples produced by any other process are at minimum defective disciples. If they are discipled by another gospel, then they are counterfeit disciples.

Let's examine these participles a little bit closer. The first participle translated "*go*" is found in the Aorist tense, while the next two are found in the present tense. What does this mean in regard to the stated process?

First, the Aorist tense demonstrates that "going" is regarded as a completed action prior to the action of the main verb. In the parallel Gospel of Mark the command to "*go*" is further explained as "*go preach the gospel*" (Mk. 16:15).

Second, this means that evangelization or conversion to the gospel is regarded as a completed action prior to the act of baptism, and indoctrination by teaching. A person must be completely evangelized before they can be a fit candidate for baptism or indoctrination. Hence, a person can be evangelized without being baptized or taught. Examples of this are the thief on the cross and Paul's words to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:17) that prove salvation and baptism are not interchangeable terms.

Third, the order of participles is a logical process. People must first be saved or evangelized, then baptized, and then added to the teaching assembly. This is precisely the process carried out by the church in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost:

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. - Acts 2:41-

42

Note the precise order of this copyrighted process:

1. "*received the word*" - evangelization
2. "*were baptized*" - baptism
3. "*were added unto them*" - added to a teaching assembly

Notice that the third process (added to a teaching assembly) is for indoctrination, and observing of all things as members of a New Testament congregation. Baptized believers were added to the church at Jerusalem for the purpose to be taught how to observe all things commanded:

.....were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. - Acts 2:41b-42

New Testament disciples are saved persons who have submitted to baptism, and have been added to a teaching congregation in order to observe all things commanded. It is impossible to observe the commands of Christ in Matthew 18:15-18; 26:22-30; etc. outside the membership of the congregation.

Fourth, this means one can be evangelized or "saved", and yet not be a "disciple" of Christ according to this copyrighted process. There are many "saved" but unbaptized and unchurched professors in the kingdom of God. The thief on the cross was a saved, but unbaptized and unchurched believer.

Those who attempt to make disciples or be disciples outside this three-fold copyrighted process are defective disciples - simply because they are not really following Jesus Christ, and the term "disciple" means "one who follows."

5. Limited by Qualifications: Not only is there a qualified process to become a disciple of Christ, but not just anyone is authorized to

make disciples for Christ.

This commission contains three classifications of people:

1. "*Ye...you*"
2. "*all nations*"
3. "*them*"

However, only one classification is given authority to "make disciples." It is the classification being addressed by Christ or the "ye...you."

The second classification "*all nations*" refers to the lost multitudes populating the known world. No such authority is given them to administer any of these things.

The third classification "*them*" are those who have been evangelized by going to them with the gospel, but they are in need of baptism and assembling to be taught. They are the recipients of the commission rather than the authorized administrators of the commission.

The first classification "*ye*" are those who are authorized to administer this commission to "*them*" because they "*have*" already been through the process and are "disciples" (Mt. 28:16 "disciples").

What does this mean? It means that Christ never authorized the unevangelized, unbaptized or non-church member to "make disciples." It means that Christ never sent the blind to lead the blind. It means one must first be a disciple by this threefold process before they can make disciples. It means the unconverted cannot convert, nor the unbaptized baptize, or the untaught teach.

Furthermore, it means that Christ has established a horizontal authorized administrator identified as "*ye...you*" which is qualified because they "*have*" been first discipled through this same process. That means there is no direct authorization given by Christ to "*all*

nations" or to "*them*" to administer this commission.

This means the unbaptized and unchurched believer must seek out the authorized administrator for baptism and church membership or they violate this copyrighted designated authority

Finally, notice this is a plural rather than a singular "*ye....you.*" This authority had previously been given to the Lord's congregation in Matthew 18:17-18 - "*tell it to the church.*" The church administers the commission through its ordained officers. The apostles were "*set in the church*" first (1 Cor. 12:28).

Conclusion: This is precisely why the congregation of Christ is called "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*" It is this copyrighted process that preserves "*the faith.*" Those brethren who depart from "*the faith,*" (Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim. 4:1) and start a different disciple making process are to be withdrawn from by New Testament congregations, and disciples (2 Thes. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; Rom. 16:17; etc.). They simply have no authority from Christ to violate His commission.

Therefore, the three previous principles that define the contents of "*the faith*" joined with these Great Commission principles that define those who are authorized to preserve "*the faith*" till the end of the world provide a Biblical basis, or a compass to direct the Bible believer to those who teach "the faith" once delivered.

The Logo of "The Faith"

Just as you are familiar with a copyright, most are also familiar with a logo. A logo is a visible symbol or representation that identifies the ownership of a product.

Baptism is the logo of "*the faith*." Baptism identifies the candidate with those entrusted or authorized to make disciples, and teach "*the faith*" in the Great Commission. Therefore, it identifies you publicly with the doctrine and practice of your administrator.

For example, if you choose to submit to a Roman Catholic Priest for baptism, what would that tell those who observe that baptism? They would interpret that baptism to publicly identify you with the Roman Catholic system of faith and practice. It was your choice, so why else choose that particular administrator?

Can you see how important who it is that you choose to publicly identify with in baptism? Your public identification with an administrator of baptism is your visible stamp of approval on their doctrine and practice. Indeed, most will not baptize you unless they believe you are committing yourself to their faith and practice.

This is precisely why Jesus restricts baptism in the Great Commission to administrators who are like faith and order with Himself. He does not want His disciples to publicly endorse, or identify with any system of faith other than that which was "*once delivered to the saints*." Think about it? Is this not the best way to preserve the true purpose and practice of baptism by restricting it to those who are like faith and order with Christ?

This is why in the Great Commission; Christ authorized, and identifies the proper administrator of baptism to be only those who

follow him, by going with the **same** gospel He preached, administering the **same** baptism he administered, and teaching to observe the **same** doctrine and practice. This is the meaning of "*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*" He restricts authority to baptize to those like faith and order with Himself. This is the meaning of "*make disciples*" and this is what it means to follow Jesus.

Therefore, in the Great Commission, baptism is the visible logo of those He commissioned that identifies the candidates with His disciples, and therefore with his faith and order.

However, there is more! Baptism is the logo of "the faith" because in the scriptures baptism is identified with essential doctrines of Christ. It is directly identified with the following doctrines:

1. The Triune God - Mt. 28:19
2. The Gospel - Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 15:3-4
3. Faith and repentance prior to baptism - Mt. 3:6-8; Acts 19:5
4. Progressive Sanctification - Rom. 6:5
5. Resurrection of the body - 1 Cor. 15:12-17, 28
6. The congregation of Christ - Acts 2:41-42;
7. Regeneration - Col. 2:11-13 with Rom. 5:11

But that is not all! Baptism is also a protector of "*the faith*" in the very way it is administered. The scriptures require four prerequisites for an act to be regarded as scriptural baptism or else one just gets wet and still in need of baptism.

1. **The right candidate** - repentant believer - Mt. 3:8; Acts 19:5
2. **The right design** - symbolic and public identification - 1 Pt. 3:21
3. **The right mode** - immersion only - "buried" - Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:12

4. **The right authority** - church of like faith and order - Acts 2:41

These four essentials of public baptism further define "*the faith*" once delivered. The baptismal prerequisite of a right candidate (a repentant believer) denies infant baptism. It demands a regenerated person as the proper material not only for baptism, but for church membership. Hence, it defines the essential characteristic of the nature of proper members for New Testament congregations - baptized believers.

The right design for baptism denies that regeneration is obtained *literally* in baptism or in church membership, but like a logo it is an outward symbol or sign of a previous internal work of the Holy Spirit through faith in the gospel (1 Pet. 3:21; Rom. 4:11). It demands that regeneration is in connection with gospel conversion rather than external forms.

The right mode of baptism defines the true nature of the gospel (Rom. 4:4-5). The gospel is about what Christ did for sinners through his death, burial and resurrection rather than what sinners do for Christ (1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21).

It's restriction in the Great Commission to administrators of like faith and order make it a fitting logo of "*the faith.*" The doctrines that baptism identifies with in the Scriptures and the essentials for its administration make it a perfect visible logo for "*the faith.*"

The Last Days and "The Faith"

Many see the last days as a time of great revival. However, that is not the view of scriptures. The New Testament is very clear in the last days there will be a great departure from "*the faith*." It will be on a steep decrease, while false Christian systems of faith will be on a steep increase.

Indeed, the apostasy from "*the faith*" will be so great that Jesus asks rhetorically if he will even find "the faith" when he returns:

Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [lit. "The faith"] on earth? - Lk. 18:8

Paul says one of the chief characteristics of the "*last days*" will be the increase of false teachers and false systems of faith:

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. - 2 Tim. 3:12

Paul tells Timothy that the Holy Spirit emphasizes that the latter times will be characterized by departure from the faith:

The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils - 1 Tim. 4:1

Indeed, both Jesus and Paul describe one aspect of this last day great departure from the faith to be an appearance of apostolic revival of signs and wonders:

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. - Mt. 24:24-25

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first,.....Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, - 2 Thes. 2:3, 9

Indeed, the parable of the tares in Matthew 13 is perverted by these same revisionists to teach a great revival, when in fact, the context of this parable makes it clear Jesus is talking about the increased size of the visible professing kingdom of God due to the increase of tares rather than true disciples. Indeed, the true seed of the kingdom become so obscure and lost within this increasing corruption that they only come to light when Christ removes tares at His coming:

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. -Mt. 13:43

However, prior to that time, they are hidden in this world of the professed kingdom of God, like a treasure that must be sought out and found.

The key to discerning the false revival and nature of this miracle movement is not whether the miracles are genuine, as they are genuine, with genuine power behind them. The key is the word "lying" (2 Thes. 2:9). The purpose behind God's signs and wonders is to confirm the words of his messengers to be true (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3-4; etc.). The workers of miracles in this false end time revival have authentic miracles, but it is their message that is false. Satan is attempting to counterfeit the confirmation method so that people will believe the message of his servants is true.

Moses predicted that false prophets would perform authentic miracles, and authentic prophecies, and by such authentic wonders would lead God's people away from the truth of God's Word:

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and

giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, - Deut. 13:1-2a

Moses confirms the miracle or wonder is authentic. There is nothing "*lying*" about the authenticity or power of the wonder. However, Moses goes on to describe the nature of the real lie:

saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God,

Miracle workers are to be tested by God's Word, not by the authenticity of their miracles, signs, or wonders.

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. - Isa. 8:20

The Spirit of God is the Spirit "*of truth*" (Jn. 16:13), and only by the Word of God, which is the "*sword of the Spirit*" (Eph. 6:17) can we ultimately discern between "*the spirit of error and the Spirit of truth*" (1 Jn. 4:6). All other attempts to discern truth from error are subject to error as they are all subjective tests.

One acid test that distinguishes the bulk of apostate Christendom from "*the faith once delivered*" is the question over the preservation of true children of God. Any denomination or system of faith that teaches that a true born again child of God can lose their salvation is rebuking Christ (Jn. 6:37) and calling God a liar (1 Jn. 5:9-13).

Do you realize that over 93% of professed Christendom identify with systems of faith that reject the grace of God in eternal salvation? Out of the 2.2 billion professing Christians on planet earth 1.2 billion belong to the Roman Catholic Church, while another .5 billion belong to denominations/churches that teach that ultimately your good works determine entrance into heaven. These are those Jesus predicts will make a profession of faith plus good works as the basis for entrance into heaven:

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? - Mt. 7:21

This is the same "many" just previously described in Matthew 7:13 who are on the broad way through the wide gate of faith plus works. In direct contrast, "few" there be that enter the strait gate and narrow way, and (Mt. 7:14) build their life on the Person and work of Jesus Christ, as the only hope to pass through the judgment.

Another acid test that distinguishes the bulk of apostate Christendom from "the faith once delivered" is the question of final objective authority. Any denomination or system of faith that denies inspired revelation has ceased with the completion of the Biblical canon and/or denies objective scripture is the final authority over all subjective experiences has no light in them (Isa. 8:16-20).

Conclusion: Here is another additional Biblical clue to identifying "the faith" once delivered. It is not only identified by the three principles for defining the essentials given in the chapter entitled **Identifying the Contents of The Faith**. It is not only identified by the copyright principles inherent in the Great Commission. It is not only identified by the principles that characterize scriptural baptism as the logo of "the faith." It is identified by its decrease rather than its increase as time of the coming of the Lord gets nearer. It is identified among the "few" rather than the "many" that

make up professing Christendom. When all these principles are considered together, the majority of denominations/churches⁴ today are easily weeded out by the identification process.

⁴ By "denomination" I am referring to any group of churches united by the same faith and practice. The plural "denominations" would refer to many such groups with conflicting belief systems. Christ designed the Great Commission to produce His churches which were united by the same faith and practice. In that sense, He established a denomination or churches that are like faith and order.

The Importance of "The Faith"

The importance of "the faith" must be determined by the scriptures alone. We can see the importance the scriptures attach to it by the following:

1. There can be no qualified persons to ordain to the ministry apart from those "*sound in the faith*" - Titus 1:9-13
2. There can be no true New Testament congregation apart from "*the faith*" 1 Tim. 3:15-4:1
3. There can be no qualified church membership apart from "*the faith*" - 2 Thes. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:11-13
4. There can be no true unity apart from the unity in "*the faith*" - Rom. 16:17; Eph. 4:3-6, 13-14
5. There can be no Biblical Christianity apart from "*the faith*" - Mt. 28:19-20.

This does not mean that Christians cease to exist, but apart from the faith. Christians can and do exist outside "the faith" within distorted and apostate systems of faith and practice:

*And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people,** that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. - Rev. 18:4*

Neither does this mean that there is any person or denomination/church that knows and practices all truth. However, it does mean that any person who claims to be a Christian must embrace some essential truths in order to be recognized as a true Christian. It does mean any group of professing Christians must embrace some essential truths in order to be recognized as a New Testament congregation. It means that there are churches today

that are characterized by all these essentials, and there will continue to be such churches till Jesus comes again, because He promised there would be (Mt. 28:20).

Your Responsibility to "The Faith"

Your responsibility to the faith depends upon your present relationship to it. You need to critically analyze what type of system of faith you are now identified with, and determine if it is the Biblical system of faith and practice. The Bible commands us:

Prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good - 1 Thes. 5:21

Take the principles provided in the previous chapters and apply them to the system of faith you are now identifying with. If your present system of faith does not identify with all of these essential principles, then you are within one of the predicted apostate denominations or churches.

If you find yourself outside "*the faith*" but inside polluted forms of Christianity, then the Lord's admonition to you is:

....come out of her my people, and be not a partaker with her sins...
- Rev. 18:4

On the other hand, if you are a member of a New Testament congregation, then your responsibility is clearly stated in Scriptures:

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong - 1 Cor. 16:13

This admonition is more necessary as the Lord's return approaches because the apostasy from the faith increases more and more. If you are not prepared for this, it will be very discouraging as your congregation decreases in number and failure to recognize that will make you susceptible to apostasy.

What is your responsibility toward those who have been taught, corrected, but will not listen to the truth, and are departing from the

faith?

1. "*....wherefore **rebuke them sharply** that they may be sound in **the faith***" - Tit. 1:13
2. "*Now I beseech you brethren, **mark them** which cause divisions and offences contrary to **the doctrine** which ye have learned and **avoid them.***" - Rom. 16:17
3. "*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **withdraw from every brother** that walketh disorderly, and not after **the tradition** which he received of us.*" - 2 Thes. 3:6
4. "*...it as needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should **earnestly contend for the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints.*" - Jude 3

These responses are not merely necessary for the spiritual health of yourself, but your family, and your church. It is faithfulness to these responsibilities that enabled Paul to persevere in "*the faith*" so he could say at the end of his life:

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: - 2 Tim. 4:7

It is the clear command of Scriptures that those who stand for "*the faith*" are not to support false systems of faith in any way, shape or form, whether it is by their presence in their meetings, or participation in their financial support. The Scriptural command has always been to "*avoid*" them and "*come out from among them*" when it comes to ecclesiastical matters and fellowship. That does not mean we cannot support secular legislation with those who support other Biblical principles. That does not mean we are to treat them harshly. It simply means we are to be *ecclesiastically* separated from them so that we do not even appear to support their doctrine or practice. Those who do are viewed in scriptures as

partakers of their errors:

....*be not a partaker of their sins*... - Rev. 18:4

For he that biddeth him God's speed is a partaker of his evil deeds.
- 2 Jn. 11

Your responsibility is to find, join, and support the kind of church (1) that embraces every doctrine the Scriptures plainly states is essential; (2) that is a product of the Great Commission process, and characterized by the Great Commission principles; (3) that is characterized by the principles of scriptural baptism; (4) that practices ecclesiastical separation from false systems of faith and practice.

Once having done that, then the Biblical admonition for you is:

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, **be ye stedfast, unmovable**, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* - 1 Cor. 15:58

Diagnostic Conclusion

The following is a list of diagnostic questions to help guide you in the proper application of the principles set forth in this booklet.

1. *Did Christ authorize any church to preach **another** gospel (Gal. 1:8-9) other than the gospel He preached (Jn. 3:16)? If not, then why should anyone recognize the authority of any denomination or church that does preach another gospel? How does Paul respond to those who preach "**another gospel**"?*

*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach **any other gospel** unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. - Gal. 1:8-9*

2. *Did Christ authorize any church to administer **another** baptism other than the one which is according to the counsel of God (Lk. 7:29-30) and administered by Christ (Jn. 4:1-2)?⁵ If not, then why should anyone publicly identify with such administrators who administer another kind of baptism?*

3. *Did Christ authorize any church to carry out the Great Commission other than a church of like faith and order with Him in the same gospel, same baptism and same faith and practice? If not, then why recognize any group of people as a "church of Christ" who are not like faith and order with Christ?*

4. *Did Christ authorize any church to reproduce disciples or churches other than those of like faith and order with Him? Then*

⁵ This is the only possible kind of baptism at the time the Great Commission was given, as no other kind existed when it was given. This is the only possible kind he can say "**I HAVE commanded**". This is the only kind that is truly "Christ-ian" or Christ like, as Jesus never submitted to any other baptism.

who is responsible for producing such churches and their doctrines (1 Tim. 4:1; Acts 20:29-30; Rev.18:4)? Who is responsible for such confusion (1 Cor. 14:33; Mt. 13:39)?

5. Did Christ authorize anyone to teach another system of faith other than the system of faith that "was once delivered to the saints" by Christ in the Great Commission? Wouldn't another system of faith produce another kind of disciples other than disciples of Christ? Why should any sincere Christian want to be a follower of some other Master or a product of some other discipleship program?

The answers to the above questions will limit your definition of what is a true New Testament congregation.

What about congregations that began the right way, but have since departed from certain truths? At what point do they cease being New Testament congregations?

Although we cannot determine the precise moment they cease to be recognized by Christ as His churches, we can, and we should determine what is essential for us to recognize them as His churches.

True churches are churches of like faith and order with the processes and principles found inherent in the Great Commission. They embrace and practice those truths that baptism identifies with in scriptures. They embrace and practice those essentials that the Scriptures explicitly state to be essential. All churches that deny or depart from these principles should not be recognized as churches of like faith and order with Christ and Christianity as found in the pages of the New Testament.

Worksheet for "The Faith"

The following worksheet will aid in assimilating the information you have read in this booklet. All the answers are supplied in the booklet. Review if you cannot answer a question.

1. Which of the three classifications of *faith* do the following Scripture references fall under?

a. Galatians 1:23_____

b. 1 Cor. 16:13_____

c. Gal. 5:22_____

2. Name three synonyms for *the faith*

a._____

b._____

c._____

3. Name three guiding principles that help determine the contents of the faith:

a._____

b._____

c._____

4. What is the difference between "all" authority and "delegated" authority?

5. Name and describe four administrative limitations placed by Christ upon the Great Commission

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

6. Do those limitations help us identify, and define the proper authorized administrator for baptism? Why or Why not?

7. Do the Scriptures predict a great revival or a great apostasy in the last days?

a. 2 Tim. 3:1,13 _____

b. 2 Thes. 2:2,9-12_____

c. Matthew 24:24-25_____

d. Luke 18:8_____

8. Are miracles, signs and wonders the final proof that God is the source of power?

a. Deut. 13:1-5_____

b. 2 Thes. 2:9_____

9. According to the Scriptures what is the basis for unity among professing Christians?

Jn. 17:17_____

Eph. 4:3-6_____

Eph. 4:13-14_____

2 Thes. 3:6_____

10. Did the Lord foresee any time when He would not be with his churches carrying out the Great Commission - Mt. 28:20?

11. How many times did the Lord deliver the faith?

Jude 3_____

12. Do all present religious systems of faith originate with Christ?

Acts 28:29-30_____

Rev. 18:4_____

13. Name four specific responsibilities you have to the Faith?

a._____

b._____

c._____

d._____