

THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED

Studies In Bible Doctrine

by

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THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS

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THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED - PHILOSOPHY OF BIBLE STUDY

"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. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Jude 3-4

There are two types of "Christians" in the churches today: (1) Those who profess to believe the Bible, yet only obey that which they want to obey based on personal preference, bias, convenience, etc.; and (2) those who believe the Bible and seek diligently to obey all that Jesus commanded to New Testament believers. The group that picks and chooses what to obey and what not to obey must find like minded pickers and choosers who pick and choose what they pick and choose--thus, you have many denominations/groups of like-minded pickers and choosers. It is terribly hard to get anyone to leave their group. The only way is to get them to pick and choose different things, or become one of the believers who just seek to obey all Jesus taught through his Word.

The Faith Once Delivered

This faith and practice will be the same as that which the apostles handed to the first century churches.

I have found that those who obey all the New Testament are a small minority, but usually have wonderful fellowship, godly homes, and peace with God. I want to be in this group.

"ALL THINGS"

The commission Jesus gave to the church was to teach the gospel, baptize the believers, and then teach them to observe *all things* that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:19,20). Most modern churches don't take this serious. The apostles taught the first century church to observe Jesus' commands. Many of the commands and teachings the apostles taught the first century churches are now *not* being taught or observed in churches today -- while a horde of beliefs and practices, which are not from the apostles are being taught and practiced! We see this as nothing else but **disobedience**: a rejection of Jesus as LORD, and a rejection of the Bible as our sole authority for faith and practice. The apostle Paul told the churches (which includes us) three very important principles:

#1. We don't have the right or permission to change what the apostles taught the first century churches.

- **2 Thess. 2:15.** Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.
- **2 Thess. 3:6,7** " 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.
- **Romans 16:17,18** Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

#2 We are to follow the apostles and use them as a ruler to measure other teachers' credibility. We are not to be so proud as to think we can improve on the apostles.

- **Phil. 3:17** Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (1 Cor. 11:1 also).
- **Phil. 4:9** Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

- **I Cor. 11:1** Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

#3 Those who changed what the apostles taught were grievous wolves. Any change to the apostolic pattern is a perversion. What we today are teaching and observing is either APOSTOLIC or from a GRIEVOUS WOLF.

- **Acts 20:29-31** "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
- **Gal. 1:8,9** 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.
- **Jude 3,4** 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. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Romanists try from this foundation to argue for "*oral tradition*", thus excusing their *additions* to the Word, however, I believe A.R. Fausset said it well when commenting on I Cor. 11:1,2: "**Romanists argue hence for oral traditions. The difficulty is to know what is genuine apostolic tradition intended for all ages. Any that can be proved to be such ought to be observed; any that cannot, ought to be rejected (Rev. 22:18). Those preserved in the written Word alone can be proved to be such.**"

"THE PHILOSOPHY"

In order not to be deceived, the Word of God must be the **SOLE AUTHORITY** in our lives. In order for it to be the sole authority, we must surrender our will to it, and obey it without preferring one thing above another.

- **I Tim. 5:21** I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

John tells us that if everything were written about Jesus' life that could be written, the world could not contain the books. So, we see God hand picked what he wanted in the relatively small New Testament that we have. The Holy Spirit made no mistakes. If God saw it as important enough to include, so must we.

No matter how small the matter may seem to you, if you pick and choose in any area, then **YOU become the authority**, and *not* the Bible. You then become a "*hearer*" and not a "*doer*" in that one area, and this leads to self deception.

- **James 1:22** But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
- **Matt. 7:21-27.** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:....and it fell not:....And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:....and great was the fall of it.

All deception is because the Bible loses its rightful place of **sole authority**, and you have stepped in and become the authority by picking and choosing what to obey, and what to throw out. If you have some experience, or read of someone else's, and proceed to interpret the Bible according to that experience, then the experience becomes an authority. You must allow the Bible to interpret any experience, not use the experience to interpret the Bible. You must be willing to hold to what the Bible actually SAYS over and above all your theological training, presuppositions, etc. You must bow to what God's revelation states in its proper context even if it means loved ones will be in hell or "unsaved", etc.

I repeat, no matter how small or large the matter may seem to you, if you pick and choose in any area, you are offending God, and heading for deception! God's Word alone must be the authority -- that means no adding, and no subtracting! If we add, then the church excommunicates for wrong reasons. If we subtract, then the church multiplies unbiblically. If we don't add, and don't subtract; then we have proper multiplication, and proper division.

Who had all truth?

Jesus made it clear, as we will see later in the study, that to **believe** in him was to **hear** and **obey** him. Before Jesus died, rose, and ascended He gave the Apostles and disciples definite instructions as to what his plans were for his church. Additionally, He said He had many **other** things to tell them, but they couldn't receive them yet. However, he said, the Holy Spirit will come and "guide you into all truth".

- **John 16:12-14** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

It is clear that the Apostles had "all truth" when they wrote the Scriptures and made decisions for the life of the church after the Holy Ghost descended upon them at Pentecost. It is also vital to note that the FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST, which refers to all the doctrine he taught, was ONCE FOR ALL delivered to the saints; and that we are to EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THAT FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS.

God's truth may be progressively growing in your mind, but the FAITH, or doctrine of God's Word is not growing and changing! It was ONCE delivered to the saints, and we are to contend for THAT faith, and only that faith, which was ONCE delivered to the saints. "The saints" refers to the Apostles. The Apostles are the saints who received "ALL TRUTH" from the Holy Spirit, and thus all the New Testament books are considered authoritative because they were written or endorsed by the Apostles. For instance: Mark was a companion of Peter and Paul, who endorsed his Gospel to be correct.

Ephesians 2:20 tells us that the church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Jesus the chief corner stone. The book of Revelation pictures the New Jerusalem, which is symbolic of the church, having twelve foundations, which are the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. So we see that all true doctrine was known and taught by the apostles. There is no new truth or revelations being given today to the church.

The Faith Once Delivered

We are not to contend for any modern doctrines, or practices; but only contend for the FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS. This FAITH for which we are to contend was already delivered, and considered a past transaction when Jude wrote his book. God used circumstances to cause the Apostles to write GOSPELS and EPISTLES by the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, so that all the necessary oral preaching and teaching would also be written, so we in later generations would know the "all truth" that God gave to the saints, and not have to rely on the uncertain foundation of oral tradition. "Churchmen" have always liked to overcomplicate matters so the people feel completely dependent on them for guidance. If they convince the people that higher education, theological training, "secret knowledge", etc. is necessary to understand the Word of God; then they can maintain their power over the common people. They have in the past kept the Word of God out of the common language; but now they just try to convince people that they cannot understand the Bible. Well, the way many try to explain it, I am not surprised people cannot understand it.

The New Testament is a completed contract between God and man (II Thess. 2:15; I Tim. 4:16). It is the only foundation for faith and practice that is reliable today. All other writing and teaching is either true or false, based solely on how it measures up with the written Word of God. The foundation of the church is still the Apostles through their writings. They are and were the only ones capable to make authoritative decisions on issues of faith and practice (Acts 15). Jesus never wrote any letters or books; but what he taught the Apostles was later written by the leading of the Spirit of Christ -- WITH US IN MIND! PRAISE GOD, WE HAVE AN ANCHOR THAT IS SAFE AND SURE! We don't have to rely on modern "scholarship" and "education" to lead us. The Bible is understandable to those who strive to understand with intent to obey and pray for illumination.

All of the "faith" made its way into written form by the leading of the Holy Spirit, and we are accountable to obey all the Word of God that is handed down to us in the New Testament, without preferring one thing above another -- **Here, and only here, the Word of God becomes your sole authority; and you escape deception from the world, the flesh, and the Devil.**

When the Apostles died, and left the scene, the miraculous "signs of an Apostle" died with them (II Cor. 12:12). All writing of Scripture stopped when they died. And, as we read from early church writings,

the early church pastors simply contended for the faith that HAD BEEN DELIVERED.

This "**Faith**" is what we are to surrender our will to, and obey without bias or prejudice. This "**Faith**" is made up of "**all things**" Jesus taught the apostles and what the Holy Spirit taught them after Jesus ascended.

- **Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach 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 alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The Apostle's job was clear: To preach the Gospel to all nations, baptize the repentant believers, and then teach them to "OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU." It is very important in laying a foundation for studies in doctrine that we don't miss these important foundation stones. We must realize that what we have in our New Testament is all Jesus wanted us to have. It is the New Covenant. We have "all truth" concerning our covenant with God in the New Testament. We have "all things whatsoever" Jesus commanded the Apostles to give to us. And thus, all the New Testament commands which applied to the church then, applies to us now. It is the same covenant.

A preacher who excuses and skips over parts of the New Testament is a false teacher. If I violate the contract with which I am purchasing a house, I lose the house. Even so, if we **knowingly violate** any portion of the new covenant, then we are forfeiting our inheritance -- we are no longer walking by faith, but are in rebellion. No man has the right or authority to put God's commands to New Testament believers in any order of priority; or tell people, "that is not a salvation issue".

OBEDIENCE is a salvation issue; because, unless you are living in obedience to the light you know, you are not living by faith, but unbelief/obstinacy.

Our churches and families today must believe and practice just as the churches and families believed and practiced in the days of the Apostles, observing all things whatsoever Jesus commanded through the Apostles, and interpreting the Bible the way they did; or we have been led astray by one of the deceivers crept in unawares. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall in the ditch. Just because you are sincere, you are not safe. You had better not contend for your "faith", until you

make sure it is THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS.

THE LAW OF ILLUMINATION

As we said earlier, one reason it is so important to "observe all things" is because there is a law of illumination that always applies. God gives light (knowledge). If we walk in that light (obey), then God gives more light. As long as we obey the light God brings our way, our heart is perfect before him, we are covered by Christ's atonement, and God continues to illuminate us. When I walk in all the light I have, even if that isn't very much, I am walking by *faith*. God accepts this "walking by faith" by grace and counts it for righteousness. He knows I cannot produce perfect obedience, but He expects me to do what I can do.

- **2 Co 8:12** For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.
- **1 John 1:6,7** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

As soon as we resist some new light (new understanding of the Bible) that God brings to us, and refuse to accept or obey it, then we are walking in darkness. We cannot then receive any fresh understanding of Scripture or new knowledge of God until we repent and obey that light we tried to swerve around. Instead, we are headed for sure deception! Don't think this is taking the case too serious; for Jesus said the "last days' deception" would be so strong, that it could almost deceive those earnestly following all Jesus taught (the very elect). "Walking in the light" is synonymous with "believing in Jesus". And thus we must continue to walk in light, or we open the door for deception.

When the Devil sees you resistant to some new light, he will take the opportunity to offer you an alternative. To receive this alternative is exactly what Adam and Eve did. God will chasten you, but if you persist, you will be cut off, and die spiritually (Rom. 6:16, 8:13, 11:22, Heb. 10:26-, etc.). You will not know you have died spiritually, because you will be deceived by the alternative you accepted to avoid simple obedience to the Word. This is scary business, and all these statements we are making will be proven from the Bible in our later studies. It will also be shown that this is exactly what the early

churches of the first two centuries A.D. believed. Thus, those who refuse to obey "all things" are not to be trusted in their doctrinal statements, because they are violating the law of illumination. They may be propagating Satan's *alternative*. I believe Calvinism and Antinomianism are two alternatives Satan has authored to help man escape the responsibility and expectations put on him by God's Word.

- **Mark 4:24** "Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given."
- Jesus said in **John 7:17**, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

The phrase "will do his will" actually means "*wills* to do his will" or "*desires* to do his will". A direct translation straight from the Greek sounds like this: "**If anyone desire his will to practice, he shall know concerning the teaching whether from God it is, or I from myself speak**". Jesus here states the law of illumination: If any man *wills to do* God's will (all of it, without personal bias and preference), he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God, or if the speaker is just speaking it of himself. This is a principle that you cannot violate without deception. You must LOVE God's Laws, statutes, judgments, principles, commands, etc.; or you will be deceived. James states the same principle in James 1:22, "**But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**"

Many other passages teach the same thing in many different words:

- **John 14:21,23** He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him... Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.
- **Acts 5:32** ...the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.
- **I John 2:3-5** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him
- **I John 2:15** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- **I John 2:24** Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

Actually, in these last times we live in, deception is not the exception, but the rule. People want to have an easy, comfortable, convenient, religion, void of sacrifice and responsibility. One reason that deception is so rampant, is that people want it over the inconvenient truth. The second reason is because people have forgotten to test preachers. Both of these reasons stem from the Bible losing its proper place as sole authority for faith and practice and opinion - and people not *loving* to obey God's Word. The reason they like their false teachers is because the false teachers are offering them a way out of obedience.

- **2 Tim. 4:3,4** 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, and shall be turned unto fables.

Let us look at these two reasons briefly:

1. The following verses teach that one main reason people are deceived, is because they want to be:

- **Jer. 5:30** "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"
- **Isa. 30:9-10** "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:"
- **Also: Micah 2:11; John 5:43-44; II Timothy 4:3-4.**

Jesus taught that to have full light, one must have a "*single eye*" or single motive (Matt. 6:19-24). If you secretly want "your denomination or system of doctrine" to come out on top, you are biased, and have a double motive for studying Scripture. You must not come to the Bible to "*prove your case*", but simply to receive whatever it has to give you, no matter where it leads you.

If you find that another denomination is right on one point with which your group disagrees, then change your mind on that point, even if that other denomination is wrong on ten other points where you are right. Don't bias yourself to truth, just because somebody you don't like is right on it, and you would have to admit error. God will not excuse you for resisting truth because it wasn't presented to you "*in the right*"

way". On judgment day, your bias will provoke the wrath of God, no matter what excuses you come up with.

True Christian consistency is that of ever growing and changing, not being stuck in one gear for 30 years. If you can boast not having changed your ideas in 20 years, it could just mean you haven't learned any new thing from God in 20 years! It doesn't matter, by the way, if you find others who agree with your biased opinion -- even a major denomination; because God says in **Proverbs 16:5 "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished."** You may be able to join hands with many who believe like you, but if you are wrong, you are still wrong, and accountable to God for not seeking truth.

2. The second reason people are deceived is because they don't test the source. Jesus said, YE SHALL KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUIT. He didn't say you will know them by their *sermons* - even Satan can quote Scripture and say much truth with his subtle error. Jesus didn't say you would know them by their nice voice or delivery - See Romans 16:17,18. He didn't say you would know them by the size of their ministry - See 2 Peter 2:2. He didn't say you would know them by the number of converts they had - Converts to what? He didn't say you would know them by how sharp their books look on the shelf at the book store. HE SAID YOU WOULD KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUIT. The fruit spoken of is what proceeds from their *life*, as opposed to merely their *lip*. **Are they striving to obey all that Jesus taught? Are they striving to practice what they preach?**

If you see an apple on a tree, you know it is an apple tree. Even so, if you see a teacher who doesn't bare the fruits of faith and obedience, he is not a trustworthy teacher. If a preacher has nine things right, yet is **refusing to obey God's Word** in one area, he is bearing the fruit of disobedience. If I obey 99 laws, but break one, I still must be punished. If you see a preacher who sounds good, looks good, but produces rebellious ungodly children, who are pursuing the world, then his fruit has revealed his true character. Look at the requirements in Titus and Timothy for a bishop and deacon:

- "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;...not a novice,...have a good report of them which are without;" **1 Tim.**

The Faith Once Delivered

- "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 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."
Titus 1:6-9

Notice it says a preacher must be *apt to teach, able by sound doctrine to convince the gainsayers, faithful*, etc.; but it never gives the requirement of producing many converts. This is a modern deception, which ignores plain statements of Scripture, such as II Tim. 4:1-5:

"...Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season...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;..."

In this situation, who is going to have all the "converts"? If you compare Jude 12 (false teachers have no fruit); with II Peter 2:2 (many will follow them); you will see the fallacy of this foundation. Compare Romans 6:21-22 with 7:4.

ARE YOU TESTING FRUIT?

Many pick up a book in the religious book store, and read it. If it says what they want to hear, they endorse the author as a man of God. This is insane. They have never met the man, seen if his house is simple or extravagant; seen how his children act; seen how his wife dresses and obeys; seen if he spends his evenings watching TV or reading God's Word; and yet they endorse him as a man of God. He may be living in adultery. Like one popular preacher, he may be using a ghostwriter who is "gay". People foolishly think they don't need to use Bible principles for making their decisions, or choosing their leaders, but are smart enough to get by without them.

If you see a pastor whose wife is wearing jewelry, costly array, and makeup; you can know they are violating the law of illumination, and the command to obey "all things". If someone is a pastor, they have surely read the Bible enough to come across I Tim. 2:9, but why are they not obeying? This is just basic baby food. To a first century believer, this is so basic, they would think I am wasting my time: but today it is a major controversy. Some will argue that "converts" are all that comprises the "fruit" of a teacher; but this is ridiculous. If this is

true, then either the pope or Mohammed must be right. Read II Timothy 4:3,4 again, and then tell me why this cannot be the fruit Jesus was talking about. Also read Matthew 23:15 - The Pharisees were very evangelistic, but what were they producing?

The fruit of an apple tree (an apple) contains the seed whereby other apple trees are produced. An apple tree is the *indirect* fruit of an apple tree, and is dependant on the condition of the soil, not the apple or the apple tree. So it is with believers. We produce the fruit of righteousness (includes witnessing); in this fruit is the seed which produces other believers, *if* the condition of the soil is right (soil is the heart). Just as when Jesus preached, if the soil is stony, shallow, full of weeds etc.; then the seed sown will not produce. This is not the fault of the preacher, if he is preaching the truth and praying for God's blessings. Will you fault Jesus? - See Luke 8:11-15.

Listen friend, if you are not willing to obey all things, then you CANNOT understand the deep things of God. If you put up a roadblock to obeying small commands, then you might as well stop here, because you are not ready to study doctrine. If you don't have your wife in her place: head covered, modest apparel, no jewelry or costly array, obedient, silent in the church, etc.; then you are not ready to study the deeper doctrinal issues; because you are not obeying the obvious commands. First, obey the obvious commands of Scripture, then God will illuminate you to understand the deeper doctrinal issues.

If you are living extravagantly, dressing in fashion, seeking the applause of men, then you are not ready to study doctrine. Until you "will to do all his will", and "obey all things", then you are not prepared to discern doctrine. It is just that simple. If you say, "I am willing, but I've never been taught some of these things", then you need to proceed with caution, and be sure your bias doesn't stop you short of the truth.

I wasn't taught all this as a young convert; but had to learn it by much prayer, crucifixion of my bias; and putting the Word of God as Sole Authority of my opinions and actions. If you are willing, and walking in all the light you have, then you are ready to proceed. Don't ever pass over the smallest New Testament command, because, when you do, the Bible ceases to be the authority, and you are heading into deception -- every time without fail!

TRUTH OR LIFE STYLE?

You are in a continual struggle between *Flesh* and *Spirit*, *Self life* and *Christ*, or in simpler terms *Truth* or *Life Style*. Either your *life style* will bow to *Truth*, or you will force "*truth*" will bow to your *life style*. Any compromise of *Truth* is a victory for *life style*. You cannot find a happy compromise. Jesus is either *Lord of all*, or He is *not Lord at all*. Any alteration of *Truth* becomes an error. You either live seeking and obeying *Truth*, or you seek to justify your *life style*. Justifying self and life style is not living by faith in Jesus Christ, and you will end up very surprised and eternally disappointed at the outcome of such a course.

What I am saying is this: **God will not cast his pearls to swine. If you prove yourself a swine by desiring the mire of the world more than the pearl of great price—the way of Jesus Christ; you will never get to truly know God or his truth.** You will be allowed to deceive yourself and condemn yourself; because you loved not the truth. You must love truth, pursue truth, obey truth -- for Jesus is the truth. You cannot contend for the faith once delivered until you are ready to live it and submit to it!

- "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." **2 Thess. 2:10-12**
- "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." **1 Tim. 4:16**
- "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest this deeds should be reproved." **John 3:19-20**

How you respond to the truth of God's Word (the faith once delivered unto the saints), will determine your eternal destiny. You cannot *have* Jesus as *Savior*, yet *not have* him as *Lord*. You cannot have Jesus' cleansing blood without taking up the cross. You cannot have the Jesus who died for you, yet follow some modern day gospel. If you want the Jesus of the first century, then you must follow the faith of the first century.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Is God still revealing new truth to the church today?
2. When did the Holy Spirit give "all truth"? To whom?
3. What is the law of illumination?
4. What are the two reasons people are deceived?
5. Pick two of the listed verses dealing with people wanting to be deceived, and discuss their meaning.
6. Why are converts not the "fruit" whereby you discern true and false teachers?
7. What is the key to having full light from God?
8. How do you know if the Bible is your sole authority?
9. What happens when we throw out what we call "small" commands, such as "greet one another with a holy kiss"? Who becomes the authority? Where does this lead?
10. Without using any helps, list all the New Testament commands you can think of. Are you practicing all these? Are you practicing them like the first century church did?

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