

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Vaughn, Mr. Winns.

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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One Faith

By Derek Long

The Bible plainly states "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6). What are some implications of the fact the Bible teaches there is but "one faith"?

The world around us lauds religious pluralism. Even among so-called "Christian" denominations there is a great deal of tolerance for different "faiths" and belief systems. Even among some brethren appeals have been made to have "unity in doctrinal diversity." Does the Bible allow for us to believe, teach, and practice different things?

God's word teaches us to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3). The unity of the Spirit would be unity based upon what the Spirit has revealed to be the truth. In the same chapter, God's people are pictured as being equipped and edified "till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13). The goal of God's people is not for us all to believe different things but for us all to believe only what the faith teaches.

During the first century, we read of several local congregations in different areas yet all these local congregations were practicing and believing the same thing. In Acts 16:5 we are told, "So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in

number daily.” There were several local congregations but they were all following “the faith.” Denominationalism has several churches but they are all following different faiths. In the first century, we read of how the same thing was taught in every church. 1

Corinthians 4:17 says, “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” 1

Corinthians 7:17 records Paul’s instruction to the Corinthians, “But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.” In 1

Corinthians 11:16 Paul could make an appeal to those who might be contentious at Corinth as to what to do by appealing to the universal practice of the churches. He says, “But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.”

It could not be said of the religious world today that the same thing is taught in all the churches. The fact is the “one faith” is not being taught in a great deal of so-called “churches” throughout this land.

Churches today practice a variety of things and yet the churches you read about in the Bible all practiced the same thing. In 1 Corinthians 16:1 Paul instructs the Corinthians to keep the same orders he gave to the churches of Galatia. He says, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” Do all the denominations around us today keep the orders given to other churches? No! There are denominations which would baptize an infant and others who would oppose such an action. There are denominations which allow for a person to have water sprinkled or poured on them and others which insist on immersion as the proper action in baptism. These and many more differences make it evident the various denominations are not following the “one faith.”

Jude 3 reminds us of an important principle regarding the “faith.” Jude 3 says, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” The faith we are to believe and follow was delivered one time for all time. Groups which follow latter-day revelations such as the Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists,

Christian Scientists, Catholics, etc. are failing to stick with the faith “once for all delivered.” God expects His people to “contend earnestly for the faith.” We need to stand opposed to those things which violate the “one faith.”

Acts 6:7 speaks of what took place after the seven were appointed to serve tables. It says, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” The faith is something which God expects us to obey (Romans 1:5; 16:26). The result when God’s word is spread is people will obey the faith. People, like the priests, are made disciples by obeying the faith. Have you obeyed the faith?

1 Timothy 4:1 speaks of some who “will depart from the faith.” Acts 14:22 records how some were being exhorted “to continue in the faith.” We can look around and see many who have never even obeyed the faith. There are also those who “depart from the faith.” People leave the truth and begin following error. We must be on guard lest we “depart from the faith” and thus incur God’s wrath.

Much more could be said about the “one faith” but we hope these thoughts have been helpful. Let’s all “examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5).