

KJV

KING JAMES BIBLE
USED FOR ALL
REFERENCES TO
GOD'S WORD IN
THIS NEWSPAPER

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?” 1 Corinthians 14:8

The Original BAPTIST OBSERVER



“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...” Jeremiah 6:16

Sounding Out The Faith January 2016

“The Best Way to Cook Frogs” or “Beware of the Slow Boil!”

The Bible is all we need to fulfil the will of God, II Timothy 2:4, especially coming unto the knowledge of the truth. God has revealed hidden things to His churches, thereby making mysteries known. (Ephesians 1:9) That being said, the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, has given specific things for a church to look out for: False teachers, False prophets, Wolves, and False brethren. Based on the basic principle of the Bible's verity, Psalm 119:160, a New Testament church does not need to be in doubt about what to look for. We have it forever recorded in the Bible “who” we need to watch out for.

Jesus Christ told His disciples who to look out for in Matthew 24:11 and Matthew 7:15, “false prophets...in sheep's clothing...they are ravening wolves.” He didn't stop there. He told them *how* to spot them. Matthew 7:16-20 tells us, “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” They have every intention to tear apart a church or leave it severely scarred or disabled indefinitely. Yet they can still get in and patiently wait for the right moment to strike and devour. (Acts 20:29-30) They get in because they look like us and privately begin to break down the foundation and principles of Bible doctrines. (II Peter 2:1-3) The best way to cook frogs is to bring the water to a slow boil. By the time the frogs know what's going on, it's too late. It is the same with false prophets inside New Testament churches. They are slow and cunning in their work of “boiling the pot”. The only difference is, the Lord's churches do not have to let them take them down without a fight. As soon as a church finds out their intentions, action should be taken. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, Jeremiah 23:16) We shouldn't follow them as they leave God's side. We shouldn't listen to them. We should mark them and avoid them because they are not serving the Lord. (Romans 16:17-18)

The answer is so simple, yet God's people, generally speaking, struggle with this. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” The more truth I put within and meditate on it, the stronger my faith in God will be. Thus, when a brother turns out to be a false teacher, I can fall back on God and rely on Him through His Word. It is always go-

ing to be the truth of the Scriptures that will reveal the error, expel the proponent wielding the error, and purify God's holy New Testament churches. (Jude 3-4; Galatians 2:4,14)

False brethren may rise up, but staying on top of the doctrines within the Scriptures can keep us sharp and blessed. The false brethren are disobeying the truth. (Ephesians 5:6) We are not to follow after men. We are to follow after God. (Jeremiah 17:5,7) We are to know what the Bible teaches so that we are on guard for such individuals. Colossians 2:6-8 tells us to be “rooted and built up in him, (Christ) and established in the faith...” Acts 20:31 warns us to “...watch, and remember...” Keeping in God's love is the answer. (Jude 21) Obeying the truth, all of it, will keep us wise and not foolish. (Galatians 3:1)

God and His Word is the answer to what to look out for, how to defend and mend ourselves, and how to be on guard so we are not caught unaware like a frog in a boiling pot! The devil will not stop trying to subvert the work of God through His New Testament churches. (I Peter 5:8) The only logical solution is to be as near to God as a human being can be, thereby resisting the devil and his pernicious ways. (James 4:7-8)

At the end of the day, every New Testament church is comprised of individual members. Any pastor worth his salt will continually teach, preach, encourage, and admonish the church he pastors to beware of false teachers, false prophets, wolves, and false brethren. In doing this, the church is accountable to God and must act accordingly if such a thing were to happen. If she does not, then to her it is sin! (James 4:17)



Will Jesus Find Faith Where You Are?

Luke 18:7-8 says, “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” This faith in these verses is the same as in Acts 16:5; Galatians 1:23; II Corinthians 13:5; and Jude 3. It is the system of doctrines in the Lord's churches. With the things going on today like they are, if the Lord came today, would He find faith?

I Timothy 4:1 and II Timothy 3:1 tell us that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith and perilous times will come. What was future in Paul's day is present today. So these verses could be read “have come” today rather than “shall come”.

Let's consider what Jesus will find when He comes. II Timothy 4:1 tells us “some shall depart”. I Timothy 5:8 says some will “deny the faith”. I Timothy 5:12 says some will “cast off their first faith”. I Timothy 6:10 says some will err “from the faith”. II Timothy 2:18 says that some will “overthrow the faith of some”. II Timothy 3:8 says some will “resist the truth” being of “corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith”.

Truly we are in these times about which the Spirit through Paul wrote. We know that Jesus promised His churches would not be prevailed against in Matthew 16:18. The question is will Jesus find faith where you are? Will you be standing for the faith in the New Testament church where you are a member?

We must do as Luke 21:28 says, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth night.” We must continue to do as Jude 3 says, “**Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, an exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**”

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The Seven Feasts of Israel Revealed

As we study God’s Word, sometimes we find commands that seem strange to us. For example, who would have ever dreamed that walking around the walls of Jericho for seven days could have given Joshua the city? The fact is, the more we study, the more we can learn great lessons in these “strange” commands of God.

The same goes with the seven feasts of Israel which God commanded. They seem so strange, but as we study them, a wonderful pattern emerges. A pattern that reveals God’s seven thousand year plan for His Israel, and the entire Gentile Age enveloped in this pattern.

Following the Hebrew calendar, we see the first feast which God commanded is the Passover Feast. This feast commemorated Israel’s being freed from Pharaoh and their exodus from Egypt. It also was the foreshadow of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. I Corinthians 5:7 declares, “...For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:” Jesus said in Revelation 1:8, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Exodus 12:1-20; John 1:29; Revelation 13:8)

The second feast is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Israel was to prepare for the seven day feast of unleavened bread by putting leaven completely out of their houses for seven days beginning with the day after the Passover. Therefore, the house had to be prepared before the Passover meal the night before. No leaven could be present in the house for seven days. This commemorates no work being done to remove the leaven after the Passover. You see, Jesus was the Passover. He did all the work. Salvation does not come by works of righteousness. (Ephesians 2:8-9) A person must rely solely on the work that Christ has already done on his behalf. (Titus 3:5; Hebrews 4:15)

Feast number three is the Feast of Firstfruits. It was observed that God might bless the entire harvest. Anyone who has ever grown green beans in their garden can understand the firstfruits. That time is when the first group of beans becomes mature. There is usually enough for just one meal because the firstfruits are not the main harvest. Christ is our firstfruits of the resurrection. I Corinthians 15:20 says, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” The firstfruits of the resurrection occurred the day Christ rose from the dead, on the third day after His crucifixion. We see some other bodies of faithful saints being resurrected at that time also. (Exodus 34:22-28; Deuteronomy 16:9; Leviticus 23:10-14; Matthew 27:50-53; I Corinthians 15:12-20)

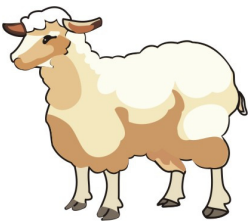
The fourth feast of Israel is the Feast of Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks. This is the main harvest of souls corresponding to the rapture. Deuteronomy 16 :9 says, “Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn.” Seven weeks times seven days per week is forty nine days. On the “morrow after the seventh sabbath” is Pentecost. This marks the main harvest of bodies of the redeemed resurrected as we see in I Thessalonians 4:16-17 and I Corinthians 15:51-56.

Next is the fifth feast, the Feast of Trumpets, instituted to celebrate the end of the harvest. The Feast of Trumpets is also known as the Feast of Ingathering when the “gleanings” of the harvest could be gathered for the less fortunate of Israel. This shows a picture of the few souls that will be harvested out of the tribulation, thus the gleanings, after the main harvest was raptured at the beginning of the tribulation period. It will not be impossible to be saved during the tribulation period, but it will be very, very difficult. The Lord’s churches and all the saved will be gone at the beginning of this time of trouble. The Anti-Christ will not be promoting the Word of God and many people will be “deluded” with his heresies. (II Thessalonians 2:11) However, some will remember what they have heard and will accept Jesus’ salvation but they will endure horrible things and even death. (Revelation 6:9) These will be the gleanings. (Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Numbers 10:1-10; Leviticus 19:9-10; Ruth 2)

The sixth feast is the Feast of Atonement. God tells Israel in Numbers 29:7-11, “...ye shall afflict your souls...” We can read about the afflicting of souls as we study Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27. The Feast of Atonement correlates with the seventieth week of Daniel’s vision, which correlates with the seven year tribulation detailed in Revelation. The purpose of this affliction is to bring Israel back to God, as Romans 11:25-27 mentions and Matthew 24:15 references. At the midpoint of the tribulation, or the middle of the seventieth week, Israel will wake up and realize they missed their Messiah 2 millennia ago. While Israel and the rest of the world are undergoing the Tribulation, the saved in Christ from all ages will be standing before Christ’s judgment seat in Heaven. (II Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10; Psalm 1:5)

The last feast of Israel commanded by God is the Feast of Tabernacles, which is the feast of rejoicing. It is described in Deuteronomy 16:9-17. It coincides with Christ’s millennial reign as described in Isaiah 65:21-25; Zechariah 14:20-21; and Revelation 19:11-15. This describes a time of peace and order that Israel has never known. It will last 1,000 years.

In these seven feasts, God outlines His entire history and relationship, some yet to be fulfilled with Israel, who is His wife. Within the pages of this history, are couched Christ’s relationship with His bride, the faithful of His New Testament churches. As we study the Bible, we can see that these seven feasts of Israel are essentially the “cliff notes” of world history, of God’s relationship with Israel, and His plan for the Gentiles. The feasts were given in a specific order, and it is recorded faithfully in the Old Testament. We have the benefit of reading the “back of the book” and seeing the meaning of the feasts revealed.



Daddy had a little boy, his soul was white as snow. He never went to Sunday school because Daddy wouldn’t go. He never heard the Word of God that thrills the childish mind. While other children went to class, this child was left behind. As he grew from babe to youth, Dad saw to his dismay, a soul that once was snowy white became a dingy gray. Realizing that his son was lost, Dad tried to win him back, but now the soul that once was white had turned an ugly black. Dad even started back to church and Bible study too. He begged the preacher, “Isn’t there anything that you can do?” The preacher tried, failed, and said, “We’re just too far behind. I tried to tell you years ago, but you would pay me no mind.” And so another soul was lost that once was white as snow. Sunday school would have helped,
but daddy wouldn’t go!

God’s Greatest Spokesman

There were many great spokesmen for God in the past: Elijah—the great challenger of Baal; Jeremiah—the weeping prophet; Nathan—the rebuker of King David; John the Baptist—among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet but...

“And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him.” Luke 2:33
“And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?” Luke 4:22
“The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.”
John 7:46
“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”
Hebrews 1:1-2

the Greatest Spokesman for God was Jesus!

Jesus spoke of the sinfulness of man. He knew what was in man. (John 2:23-25) He knew men were lost and so declared it. (Luke 19:10) He declared that all men are condemned without Him. (John 3:18-19) He told the Samaritan woman of her sins. (John 4:29)

He spoke of the holiness of God. He declared Him to be perfect. (Matthew 5:48) He declared Him to be good. (Matthew 19:17) He addressed Him as “Holy Father”. (John 17:11)

He spoke of the shortness of life. In the parable of the rich barn builder, Luke 12:16-20, Jesus said “this night” the man’s life would end. Jesus’ own life on the earth was a short 33 years. (Luke 3:23) Over and over again He warned of this life being temporal and the need for eternal life. (Matthew 6:25; Matthew 7:14; John 5:24)

He spoke of a never ending eternity, a place of endless life. (Luke 20:36; John 11:25-26) He spoke of spiritual life being everlasting. (John 3:16; 4:14; 6:47) He gives eternal life. (John 17:2)

He spoke of the necessity of being regenerated, or born again. (John 3:1-7) One must trust Jesus as Savior. (John 3:18) One must be converted, or changed inwardly. (Matthew 18:3)

He spoke of the reality of Hell as a place of destruction. (Matthew 7:13; 10:28) It is a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 13:42, 49-50) Hell is a place of multiplied torment and from which there is no escape. (Luke 16:23, 26)

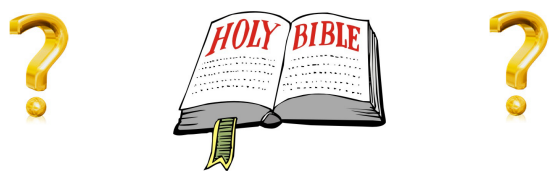
He spoke of the glory of Heaven. (John 17:1-5) It is a place of no decay. (Matthew 6:20) It is a place with mansions and a special dwelling for His bride, the faithful of His New Testament churches. (John 14:1-3) It is a place where we will behold the glory of Christ. (John 17:11,22-24)

As we consider the topics of the Great Spokesman of God, would we consider this a “politically correct” message? Perhaps we would not, but Jesus, the Great Spokesman is above reproach. If we consider His message to be perfect and pure, then we must too preach the same message as He has sent those of His New Testament churches with His power to proclaim it. (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8)

Let us not allow the wickedness of this world dictate what we will speak for God. We must be a spokesman for God as Jesus, the Great Spokesman, was for God. Let us not be influenced by the compromising world to stop the message of God from being proclaimed. We must learn from our great example, Jesus, God’s Greatest Spokesman!

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2

Scriptural Baptism—Does it matter?



Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the two pictorial ordinances the Lord gave to His New Testament churches. Together, the Lord’s Supper and baptism picture the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, painting a memorial picture of the redemptive work He did for mankind. (I Corinthians 15:3-4) The details of the way the Lord delivered these ordinances in the Bible are very important because if we do not follow the instructions exactly as given, we destroy the picture.

If you are wondering if your baptism is in accordance with Heaven’s baptism, you need look no further than the Bible. The Bible is God’s complete revelation to man and it contains all we need to know about spiritual matters. Let’s look at five different aspects to Scriptural baptism: mode, administrator, authority, candidate, and intent.

First, we will look at the “mode”, or manner, for a proper baptism. The Bible teaches baptism by complete immersion in water. John 3:23 says, “And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.” We also have the example of our Lord’s baptism in Matthew 3, where Jesus “went up straightway out of the water”. We have the example of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:39, “And when they were come up out of the water,...” The most compelling teaching in the Bible on the proper mode for Scriptural baptism is in Romans 6:4 where it states that we are **buried** with Christ by baptism into (with reference to) death. A burial is a complete covering. If we try to bury someone by pouring dirt on their head or by sprinkling dirt on them, they will not get buried. Also note, that when you walk through a cemetery, you don’t see hands or noses sticking up out of the ground. A burial is a complete covering. To modify the picture of baptism by burial to sprinkling or pouring water on someone, destroys God’s picture and we must not do it. The only example we have for baptism is in water. (John 1:26, 33) Every example that we have is that both the candidate and the administrator are both in the water. (Matthew 3:6; Acts 8:39)

Next, we will look into the Bible teaching on a Scriptural administrator for baptism. Every instance of baptism in the Bible is performed by a God-called, ordained bishop. The Apostle Paul, John the Baptist, Cephas, Moses as an Old Testament picture, and Philip all fit these qualifications to baptize. We will look at Philip’s work since many accuse him of being a “baptizing deacon” rather than an ordained bishop. In Acts 6, the Jerusalem Church called out seven men from among themselves, to serve in the office of deacon for that church body. After the persecution of Stephen, Acts 7 & 8, the church was scattered abroad into the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the Apostles. We see Philip going to the city of Samaria where he preached and baptized. For him to baptize means that the Jerusalem Church had ordained him as a bishop before he left Jerusalem. We see as we trace his path from Samaria to Gaza to Azotus, Acts 8:40, that on his journey he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea, his final destination. We see later in Acts 21:8, where he is referred to as “Philip the evangelist”. We also see in that verse that Philip “was” one of the seven. This is the Greek work ek, which means called out from among. In a modern day parallel, New Testament churches sometimes have men who are ordained bishops sent out as missionaries with authority to baptize.

The third aspect of Scriptural baptism we will ex-

plore it the necessity of proper authority to baptize. The Lord placed His authority to baptize in His New Testament churches only. (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) Notice that Jesus did not give them carte-blanche. He gave them the power and authority to perform teaching, preaching, and baptizing only as **He had ordained, or commanded**. He made His commands clear in His Word. Authority was very important to people in Bible times. Notice the conversation in Mark 11 between the chief priests, scribes, elders, and Jesus. They asked Him by what authority He did those things. Jesus answered with a question about John the Baptist’s authority to baptize. To be Heaven’s baptism, according to the Scriptures, any baptism after John was cast in prison must come by the authority that comes through one of the Lord’s local, New Testament churches. To be one of the Lord’s, a church must have lineage back to the Jerusalem church by church succession. This lineage is important because as we see across God’s creation, “like begets like”.

The fourth and fifth aspects to Scriptural baptism are closely linked and we will explore them together. For Heaven’s baptism to take place, a person must already be saved. We see in the Scriptures that baptism always followed salvation, as in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, Saul in Acts 9, the Philippian jailor in Acts 16, and Lydia in that same chapter. God even shows us someone who was baptized who was never saved in Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8. Even after being baptized, Simon was still in the “gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” demonstrating that baptism itself does not save anyone. Only faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ can save. John the Baptist demanded “fruits meet for repentance” before he would baptize the Pharisees and Sadducees in Matthew 3. The pattern holds true even in our Lord’s baptism. He was already the Son of God before His baptism. His baptism showed forth His intention to get started on the business of calling out His church. This leads us to the fifth aspect of Scriptural baptism. That is the proper intent of the saved candidate after baptism. The only intention acceptable to God is the desire to join himself to the church body and serve the Lord in Spirit and truth. (John 4:24) The intention must be to “put on Christ”. (Galatians 3:27)

In order to meet God’s qualifications, baptism must be followed to the very letter. Our Lord has spelled out the specifics to us clearly. Why would God be so narrow? Because He knows man’s frame, that we are dust. (Psalm 103:14) The picture of baptism is clear. If man modifies it, he destroys God’s perfect picture. Psalm 19:7-11 says it clearly,

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”

Food For Thought!



“Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts;

Consider your ways.

Ye have sown much, and bring in little;

ye eat, but ye have not enough;

ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink;

ye clothe you, but there is none warm;

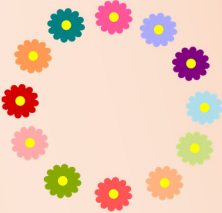
and he that earneth wages earneth wages

to put into a bag with holes.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts;

Consider your ways.”

Haggai 1:5-7



What Shall I Do Today, Lord?

Where am I needed,

Dear Father, today?

What loving words

Do You want me to say?

What kindly deeds

Would You have me to do?

What lives will I touch,

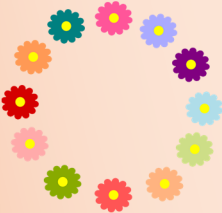
Before the day is through?

Show me Your perfect will—

Teach me Your way—

Teach me Your plan—

For my life, Lord, today!



“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thought, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:6-9

The Bible Plan for Starting New Testament Churches

NOT Missions!!!

In Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8, we see that the Lord places His power and authority in His local church. He sends them with a power and purpose to go into all the world. His promise to be with them unto the end of the world shows perpetuity. This is accomplished through church succession which is clearly detailed and outlined throughout the book of Acts.

Let’s begin by looking at God’s pattern in John the Baptist’s work. What was John’s work? Prophecy tells us it was to prepare the way before the Lord. (Malachi 3:1; Luke 1:17, 76) John the Baptist was a man sent from God. (John 1:6, 33) John came preaching repentance, baptizing, and teaching the way of the Lord. (Matthew 3:1-9) Exodus 31:1-5 shows us that Bezaleel was a man prepared by God and called to prepare a material for Moses to build the tabernacle. John the Baptist was called to prepare a material for the Lord to build His New Testament church out of. (John 1:7-8, 15) The material for the Lord’s church was saved and Scripturally baptized people for Jesus to call out for the purpose of organizing His New Testament church. (Matthew 4:19-25; Ephesians 2:19-22)

The Jerusalem Church that Jesus first started was organized on the seashores of Galilee. (Matthew 4:19-25; Isaiah 9:1-2; Acts 10:34-37; Acts 13:31) It was done by His authority, when two or three were gathered in His name, by His authority. (Matthew 18:20) This is our example for today of how to organize a Scriptural New Testament church.

Jesus placed His authority inside His church and He commanded them to further His work. We know that the Bible teaches local, independent churches all throughout the Scriptures in Acts, the epistles, and Revelation. (Acts 8:12-17; Galatians 1:2; Revelation 1:1-4) Therefore, it cannot be Scriptural to organize a church by a man because Jesus did not give His authority to a man. (Matthew 28:16-20) It cannot be Scriptural to organize a “church” by a universal command to the saved because He did not give His authority to all the saved, only to His local church. (II Thessalonians 1:10; John 17:10; Romans 8:17; Ephesians 3:21; Romans 16:27)

By following the example of the Scriptures, we can see how to Scripturally organize churches today. Consider how the church at Samaria was organized. In Acts 8:5-17 we see a man of God doing a work in Samaria through the Jerusalem church. He is preaching the Word and a great deal of those in the city believed and were saved. Philip then baptizes them. After he sends word back to Jerusalem, they send Peter and John to Samaria, authorized by the Jerusalem Church, to organize those in Samaria into a New Testament church. We see God’s approval upon this by them receiving the Holy Spirit as Comforter as shown by their ability to perform the spiritual gifts given to the church. Notice how the church at Antioch was organized. In Acts 11:19-27 we see that the Jerusalem church sent out Barnabas to Antioch to organize a church at Antioch because there were

many that believed there.

In Acts 13 we can see that the church at Antioch sent out Barnabas and Paul to do missionary work. There were times that we read they were limited to a certain area. (Acts 11:22) Paul reported back to the church in Antioch on several occasions. (Acts 14:27) All of the churches that were organized by Paul’s work was done directly under the authority that came through the Antioch church. Paul was not “freelancing” or else he would not have needed to report to the church about his work. Paul understood that the authority for the work he was doing came through the church. He reported back to the church regularly, even during the time when communication was limited because he knew the Lord’s authority came through the church.

Just as John the Baptist gathered and prepared a material for the Lord to organize a church, a prepared material must be gathered today to organize a local church in a designated area. This work must be done through a local, Scriptural, New Testament church in order for it to be Scriptural and approved of by God. We do not see a “group” of people, or a “mission” conducting themselves as a church until they are organized. In fact, in Acts 19:1-7 we see a group of people trying to conduct themselves as a church without proper authority. God does not show approval of their conduct until after they are Scripturally baptized and then Scripturally organized by the authority that comes through the Antioch Church by Paul as their missionary.

“Missions”, so called, conducting business, observing the Lord’s Supper, and other practices behaving as a “church” are unscriptural. (Exodus 12:46; I Corinthians 11:17-20, 33; I Corinthians 5:7) God only recognizes one body, and that’s a local, New Testament church that has been organized by the proper authority of Christ that comes through one of His Scriptural New Testament churches. (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23) There is no place found in the Scriptures for a “mission” being a substitute for a church. There is mission work being done so a New Testament church can be established which is preaching so people can be saved. If the church has authorized the missionary to baptize, then baptizing will be taking place. Until the group of people are organized, they cannot function as church. The work done in that area must be understood that it is in effort to organize an independent body by the authority that comes through the sending church.

The time to organize a New Testament church is as we see in Acts 13. The Spirit directs the church and then the missionary. The place is where the Word is received by a group in the city or town. When the people there are ready to hold fast the Word they have been taught, then the Spirit will guide the church and then the missionary to organize. However, the authority does not lie in the missionary as we saw with Paul. It is through the church.

God is in control and we must yield to His Holy Spirit,

but He will never lead contrary to His Word. The examples are there for our learning. All we have to do is consider the patterns and commands in the Scriptures. (II Timothy 3:16-17) Remember, it is not the “church’s” authority, but the authority of Christ through the church. Jesus only gave a local, Scriptural, New Testament church the authority to conduct themselves as He “has commanded”.

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 16:18-19

“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 always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Matthew 28:18-20

“To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faiths; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

Ephesians 3:10-21

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

II Corinthians 11:2

