

The Bulletin

Meeks Street Church of Christ

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“The Faith Once Delivered To The Saints”

By Connie W. Adams



The first four verses of Jude sounded a warning to those within the church of that day to guard against "certain men" who would creep in "unawares" and undermine that system of divine truth which he called "the faith."

Jude was written late in the first century when the issues facing the church had taken on a different complexion from those of the first few decades after Pentecost. By this time the formal Jewish opposition had lost its punch and the church faced the insidious threats of bizarre philosophical approaches which came in with the advance of the gospel in Greece and North Africa.

The trouble they faced did not come from frontal assaults on the faith from the unbelieving world but rather from the deceitful behavior of those who professed allegiance to the truth while drawing away disciples after them. Attacks from without have always drawn the people of God closer together. The greatest devastation has always come from within.

A Body Of Truth - "The Faith"

The appeal of Jude 3 is to contend for "the faith." This argues that there is a body of teaching distinguished from all human wisdom. What pertains to "the faith" can be determined. If not, then contention for it would be impossible. It is popular these days to argue that truth cannot be known absolutely, that every generation and every person must find what appears to him to be truth. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life"* (John 14:6).

Before Pilate, he said, *"I came to bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice"* (John 18:37). The fulness of grace and truth came by him (John 1:14, 17). He promised his apostles to send the Holy Spirit to guide them into "all truth" (John 16:13-14). There is a body of truth called "the faith" which may be known so that "saints" may contend for it.

Complete Truth - "Once" Delivered The finality and completeness of this body of teaching is indicated by the word HAPAX translated "once" (KJV), "once for all" (NIV and NASV). This body of truth has one time for all time been made known. This passage strikes a death blow to all claims of latter day revelations. It argues the finality, completeness and all sufficiency of God's revelation. There is nothing left to be added from human wisdom. Nothing should be subtracted from it. Indeed, *"His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 1:3). It was during one interval of human history that God began and completed the revelation of that body of truth called "the faith." Paul said, *"once was I stoned"* (2 Corinthians 11:25).

That exhausted the number of times he was stoned. *"It is appointed unto man once to die"* (Hebrews 9:27). Man's appointment with death is summarized and finalized in that statement. When Jude said the faith was "once for all" delivered to the saints that argues for the fulness and completeness of divine truth in what God delivered.

Every system of religion based on the claim of latter day revelations is therefore false including Mormonism, Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Armstrongism and other systems of like nature. They all have in common the notion that divine revelation was not once delivered. If the fulness of its revelation occurred in the first century then all such claimants are proved to be false teachers, blind guides and deceitful workers.

Authoritative Truth - "Delivered" When Jude said this faith was once "delivered" he emphasized the authoritative nature of this body of teaching. In Titus 1:3 Paul said that God, "*hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me. . .*" This has reference to the apostolic preaching, the kind which Paul did. There are three terms used in the New Testament to describe these men through whom this revelation came.

(1) Ambassadors. Paul said, "*We are ambassadors for Christ*" (2 Corinthians 5:20). It is a misuse of scripture to apply that statement to modern-day Christians. The term "ambassador" implies a commission, suggests an official embassy and includes credentials to demonstrate the authority by which these ambassadors spoke. To receive an ambassador is to extend recognition to the power which sent him. Likewise, the rejection of an ambassador is the rejection of the power standing behind him. Jesus said to his apostles. "*He that receiveth you receiveth me*" (Matthew 10:40).

These men were sent forth to bind and loose what had already been bound in heaven (Matthew 18:18). Unto them Jesus said, "*Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained*" (Jn. 20:23). Unto these ambassadors of heaven the Lord gave the power to state divine law. The law did not originate with them for it was already settled in heaven. They made it known. Further, they were given credentials to show their official embassy in the miraculous powers they possessed.

"*Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds*" (2 Cor. 12:12). The age of miracles belonged to the time of their ambassadorship. During the time they were involved in this apostolic preaching, their credentials confirmed their word (Mk. 16:20).

(2) Earthen Vessels. In order to "deliver" the faith, Christ chose the earthen vessels of the apostles into whose hearts he shined the light of inspiration. "*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*" (2 Corinthians 4:6-7). The "earthen vessels" of this passage were those who had the light of divine inspiration and therefore does not relate to preachers other than those who originally "delivered" the faith. Since they had "the light" of divine knowledge, their message was authoritative and not to be rejected.

(3) Witnesses. The faith was "delivered" by witnesses who saw the Lord, heard him speak, knew directly of his deeds and could speak as eye witnesses of his resurrection. Jesus said to them just before his ascension, "*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth*" (Acts 1:8). Peter said, "*We . . . were eyewitnesses of his majesty*" (2 Pet. 1:16). John wrote, "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. . . . declare we unto you*" (1 John 1:1-3). The special appearance of the Lord to Paul was to make him "*a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee*" (Acts 26:16). The faith was "delivered" by chosen and empowered ambassadors who were vessels of earth into whose hearts the light of divine truth shone, and who were witnesses of the power and majesty of our Lord. What they "delivered" therefore is authoritative and binding on earth even as it is bound in heaven.

Trustees Of The Faith - "The Saints"

Knowledge of the truth delivered and obedience to it made saints of them even as it does today. A saint is one made holy and consecrated to the Lord's service. Every saint should cherish the truth which set him free and should seriously consider his obligation to guard that body of truth which made him free. The faith is worth contending for. The word "contend" in Jude 3 represents the most strenuous effort required of man. It speaks of struggle, of intense effort. If the faith is not defended from those who creep in unawares then the hope of all mankind is lost. When saints grow weary from the struggle and retire from the field of battle then the enemy shall take captive souls at his will. Those of us who live now are deeply indebted to those who have gone before us who had to sort out truth from error and who, upon finding truth, contended for it with all their might. We owe it to the faith itself to contend for it. We owe it to ourselves. We owe it to our unsaved friends and loved ones. We owe it to generations yet unborn.

What God delivered must be kept as he gave it. "*There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism*" (Ephesians 4:5). Let us be constantly aware of the sly maneuvers of those who would slip into the flock, deny the faith, compromise with error and lead souls astray. "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong*" (1 Corinthians 16:13).

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, and Sherry Doles, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Danny Cottrell, Jerry Trimble, and Brandon Briggs, Jimmy Briggs, Chad Harris, Randy Ferrell (Brandi's brother in law), Eli Johnson, Susan Farler, Burt Ward, and Mackenzie and family.

Paul and Lisa Busby have Covid.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Blake Briggs
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: *"Ways We Can Be Resisting God"*

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Jerry Kennemur
Author: Philippians
Starting Page & Question: Paul R. Blake
Page #43, Question #14

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Doug George
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Danny Sheffield
Scripture Reading: *1 Thessalonians 3:1-4*
Song Leader: Jerry Kennemur
Lord's Supper: Paul Busby
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: *"Days We Really Need Encouragement"*
Closing Prayer: Paul Johnson

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

January 11th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Russell Briggs
Workbook: The Miracles Of Jesus
Author: Mike Willis
Starting Page & Question: *Page #63, Question #1*
Invitation: Russell Briggs
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Closing Prayer: Nathan Meade

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Meeks Street Church of Christ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgiXJxZC1oraOugO9qlfBtw?view_as=subscriber

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“Ways We Can Be Resisting God”

Lesson Text: **Acts 7:51.**

I. Why Would Anyone Want To Resist And Oppose God?

- They Don't Believe God. **2 Thessalonians 3:2.**
- They Accept Other Beliefs Contrary To God's. **Romans 10:1-3.**
- They Resist Him Out Of Fear Of Having To Fully Submit To Him. **John 13:17.**
- They Resist And Oppose Him Out Of Ignorance. **1 Timothy 1:13.**

Notes: _____

II. How Do We Resist God?

- By Hardening ourselves Against Him- **Job 9:1-4; Hebrews 3:7-8.**
- By Not Listening To Him- **2 Kings 17:13-14.**
- By Not Believing Him- **Mark 16:14; Acts 19:9.**
- Openly Resisting And Fighting the Truth- **2 Timothy 3:8; 4:14-15.**
- Blaspheming And Contradicting The Truth- **Acts 13:45; 14:2.**
- By Spreading False Doctrine- **2 Timothy 2:16-17; 2 Peter 2:1-2.**
- By Persecuting God's People- **Acts 9:1-2; Acts 26:9; 13:50; John 16:2.**
- By Hindering People From Obeying The Gospel- **Matthew 23:13; Acts 13:6-12.**
- By Not Obeying The Laws Of The Land- **Romans 13:1-2.**
- By Standing In The Way Of God's Will- **Mark 8:31-32; Acts 11:14-18.**
- By Not Obeying The Gospel- **Acts 9:3-5.**

Notes: _____

III. What Does Resisting God Accomplish?

- It Keeps Us From Being Saved **Acts 13:46; 23:12; 26:28.**
- Keeps Us In Sin's Bondage **John 8:33-34.**
- It Makes An Enemy Of God **Acts 13:10.**
- We Are Doing The Devil's Work **John 8:39-41.**
- Our Destruction, Misery, And Punishment **Romans 2:8-9.**
- It Doesn't Help In Resisting God— We Only Hurts Ourselves! **Acts 5:39.**

Notes: _____

“Days We Really Need Some Encouragement”

Encouragement Defined- 1. The Action of giving someone support, confidence, or hope. 2. Persuasion to do or to continue something. 3. The act of trying to stimulate the development of an activity, state, or belief. (Oxford Dictionary).

I. Why Do We Need Encouragement? 1 Thessalonians 3:1-4.

- Difficult Days, Everything We Do Fails!
- Sickness or Health Issues....
- Someone Was Unkind/Spiteful To Us....
- Sorrow For Great Loss....
- When We Are Tempted by The Devil.
- When We Are Discouraged!
- People Of God Who Needed Encouragement:
 - Job- **Job 1-2.**
 - Elijah- **1 Kings 19:2.**
 - The Disciples Of Jesus- **John 16:16-20.**
 - Jesus- **Mark 14:34.**
 - Paul- **Acts 14:19-20; 2 Corinthians 4:8.**

II. Where Do We Go To Find Encouragement?

- **Where We Do NOT Go:**
 - Back To World- **Mark 4:16-17.**
 - To Alcohol And Drugs- **Proverbs 20:1.**
 - Withdrawing From Everyone- **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.**
 - People Like Job’s Friends- **Job 16:2.**
- Where Did Job Find Encouragement? **Job 38—42.**
 - Knowing That God Knows Everything We Suffer.
 - The Lord Will Right All Wrongs- **Job 42:7-8.**
 - Our Temporary Circumstances Will Be Gone- **Job 42:12-17; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.**
- Where Did Elijah Find Encouragement? **1 Kings 19:14-18.**
- Where Did The Disciples Find Encouragement? **John 14:26; Acts 20:32.**
- Where Did Jesus Find Encouragement? **Luke 9:28-31.**
- Where Did Paul Find Encouragement? **Romans 1:12; Proverbs 27:17.**

III. How Do We Become An Encouragement To Others?

- Be Like Barnabas- **Acts 4:36-37; 9:26-28; 11:23.**
- Be There For Others To Help- **2 Timothy 1:16.**
- Show Kindness: Phone Calls, Text Messages, Cards, Flowers...
- Encouraging Words- **Acts 20:1-2; 1 Corinthians 14:31; Hebrews 10:24-25.**
- These Are Choices We Make That Can Affect People Forever!