**Once Delivered**

“Once delivered” is a phrase used by the King James translators in Jude verse 3: “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.” The New American Standard Bible says that the faith was “once for all handed down to the saints.” Jesus had promised the apostles that He would send the Spirit of truth to guide them into all the truth (John 16:13) and Jude is saying that Jesus kept that promise. His body of teaching had been delivered to us once and for all, and it is our responsibility to earnestly contend for it.

The apostle Paul issued an intriguing command in Galatians 1:8. He said, “Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!” The message is clear: God has spoken and no one is at liberty to tamper with what had already been preached by His apostles! Preachers throughout the remainder of human history are permitted to preach only what was once delivered through the apostles of Jesus Christ. The message is critical, not the messenger.

**It doesn’t matter how godly he seems.** In 1 Kings 13, a prophet had been sent on a mission to reprimand king Jereboam for building idolatrous altars and he performed that task faithfully. But the young man was also told, “You shall eat no bread, nor drink water there; do not return by going the way which you came” (v 17). But he was met by an older prophet who was intent on persuading the younger man to dine with him. He said to him, “I also am a prophet like you, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying ‘Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.’” *But he lied to him.* Unfortunately the younger man believed the lie, disobeyed God’s commands and paid for his error with his life. You see, he abandoned what God had already told him at the word of a man in whom he should have put no confidence.

**It doesn’t matter how impressive he is!**  Paul warned the saints in Thessalonica that some would be deceived by one with “power and signs and false wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Even an angel from heaven has no right to contradict the teaching once delivered to us by Christ’s apostles; a person who can baffle us by performing “false wonders” certainly has no more doctrinal credibility than an angel from heaven! Verse 10 indicates that a person with a sincere love for truth will not be susceptible to the wiles of those who dare to teach doctrines contrary to God’s word.

The Holy Spirit conveyed the faith once for all to the apostles of Jesus, they left those truths in written form and it is our responsibility to earnestly contend for them. The inspired Scriptures will equip us for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is our task to obey and contend for the faith which was once delivered and reject everything else.

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