

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

New Testament Saints and Faith

Last week, we looked at Jude, verses 3 and 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,...ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Two facts are learned from this brief passage. First, "saints" had received the salvation of which Jude speaks. In the New Testament, "saints" are not long-dead persons who are selected to be saints by some man or group of men, but all those who have obeyed God's commands and become Christians. Philippians 1:1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." (Incidentally, this verse also teaches us that "bishops" were a part of the local congregation. "Bishop" is simply another New Testament term for "elder.") Reinforcing the evidence that one of the proper terms for "Christians" is "saints," look at Colossians 1:2: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse:..." The second point from Jude 3,4 is: ungodly men, teaching error, had crept into the church. Unfortunately, the church today continues to be faced with attempts by ungodly men to creep into congregations to disturb and destroy Christians.

Ephesians 4:4-6: There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are 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." Religious people who want to accept all teachings, ignoring the fact that such teachings cannot be upheld with scripture, are quick to say, "Yes, there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit." They are unwilling to accept the other "ones" of Ephesians 4:4-6: "Yes, there is one body (see Ephesians 1:22,23 and Colossians 1:18), one faith, one baptism."

For the remainder of today's lesson, focus on "one faith." It is declared by denominational teachers that there is one gospel, and many faiths. Prayers of thanksgiving for the many faiths are directed to God. Look honestly at the scriptures in today's article. Question: are there many faiths, which are acceptable to God? A search of the New Testament will prove there is only one faith which God accepts. The "saints" at Ephesus had obeyed that one faith. "Gospel" is a synonymous term for the "one faith." Paul said, in Ro-mans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation..." Galatians 1:6-9: I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 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." The only conclusion that can be reached through a study of the New Testament is: there is one faith; the one gospel is synonymous with the one faith!