

Simply Christ
Gospel Newsletter
Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

January 13, 2023

Looking to Men

A few years ago, I was visited by two Mormon missionaries. Instead of following their course of discussion, I took the opportunity to share with them the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to deliver us from sin. After a short time, they said they needed to leave. One of them then held out a Mormon bible and asked if I would read it prayerfully and ask God if it was true. When I told them, "I cannot do that," they asked, "Why not?" The following was my reply.

In his letter to the church, Jude wrote that we *"...should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."* Jude 1:3. We are not instructed to look for a new revelation of the gospel, but to contend for (seek, stand upon, and defend) the gospel which had already been given to the church in days of the early apostles.

The Apostle Paul adds to this truth when he wrote of the revelation of the gospel he received. He said, *"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."* Galatians 1:11-12. So certain was Paul of the gospel he received by revelation of Jesus Christ, that he said, *"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." Galatians 1:8. This is an astounding statement. If the Apostle Paul himself showed up at your door with another gospel than what he had already preached to the church, Paul said, "Let me be accursed." Even if an angel from heaven were to bring a different revelation, we are to let the angel be accursed also. The gospel the apostles preached and wrote is the only gospel of Christ.

Paul again strengthens this when he wrote. *"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, ...For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* 1 Corinthians 3:10-11. Paul was adamant. He had laid the foundation of the church through preaching the gospel he received by revelation of Jesus Christ. There was not, and never would be, any other foundation which could be laid. If it is not that which was *"once delivered to the saints,"* it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As I concluded, I said to the two Mormons, the issue is not whether Joseph Smith received his revelation and writings from an angel, (or on golden plates), as he claimed. The issue is "Is it the faith which was already received, preached, and written by the apostles of the early church?" One of the men sought to disagree with me, but the other spoke up and said, "He's right. That is the real issue."

As these men prepared to leave, I told them, "If you want to know the gospel of Christ, you must

give up the men you look to as the source of truth, and search to know and understand what the early apostles preached and wrote. As long as you hold the word of men over the word of God you will never know the truth.”

After the Mormon missionaries left, I began to consider how many of us look to our own “man” as the basis of truth rather than the word of God. None of us are exempt. Catholics look to their church fathers and councils to determine what is truth. Protestants look to Calvin, Luther, Arminius, or Wesley. Denominations look to their general or founding councils to determine what is truth. Some, such as I, who are not a part of any organized denomination or movement, look to what is generally believed by our “fathers and peers.” And, of course, there are always those who are looking to their “prophet.” Almost universally, professing “Bible believers” rise to defend what they have been taught and given by men over what the word of God actually says.

When I was very young in the ministry I was sharing passages in God’s word about being made free from sin through Jesus Christ with an elder pastor whom I very much loved and respected. Having no answer for the scriptures I showed him, he said to me, “You just need to accept what the godly men in our councils (He was with the Assemblies of God) have said about these things.” I was shocked at his words and held my tongue, but in my mind, I thought “That is what the Catholic hierarchy told the people when they forbade them to have the Bible in their own language.”

I am not advocating that people lightly disregard the things they have received from those who have ministered to them. But every one of us must be ready to say with the Apostle Paul, *“Let God be true and every man a liar.”* Romans 3:4. To do that we must be willing to turn loose of our “men” and hold to God’s word. Pick up your Bible and believe it for what it says, and not for what someone has told you it means. Read the words of Jesus, Paul, John, and Peter. Do what Jude instructed us to do and *“earnestly contend for the faith which **was once delivered** unto the saints.”* Jude 1:3. It is only then you will know the truth which Jesus said, *“shall make you free!”* John 8:32