

THE ONE TRUTH

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*“There is **one** body and **one** Spirit, just as you were 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.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)*

The apostle Paul listed this collection of seven “ones” immediately after admonishing the Ephesian brethren to “have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3). If we are to keep the “unity of the Spirit,” we must be unified upon the revelation of divine truth that was delivered by the Spirit (3:1-5). The “bond of peace” is made possible by that unity that makes all men one in Christ Jesus (2:14-22).

The word “endeavoring” (v. 3) means hard work and making every effort possible. It is the same word used by Paul when he wrote to Timothy, “*Be diligent* to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Spiritual unity and peace does not happen overnight or by accident. It exists when brethren work to establish a common stand upon the truth of God. This is why Paul pleaded with the Christians at the church at Corinth that they might “speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). Upon what things should we “speak the same thing” and “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”? Consider the “one’s” listed by Paul in our text:

ONE BODY

The “one body” is the church of Christ. “And He [Father] put all things under His [Lord Jesus Christ] feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to *the church, which is His body*, the fullness of Him who fill all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Jesus established only one church (Matt. 16:18), with only one head and one pattern of organization, work, and membership. The multiple bodies of differing denominations today are not of God, but of men. They divide men and lead them from the authority of God. The unity of the Spirit is kept when men seek God’s will and restore His ways in their teaching and practice. This would put all churches out of business except the Lord’s church that you can read about in the Bible.

ONE SPIRIT

The Bible speaks of the “Spirit of God” through whom God revealed His will (1 Cor. 2:10-11). There are not many spirits revealing contradictory revelations of God. All truth was revealed by the Spirit of truth (Jn. 16:13). Concerning the spiritual gifts of the first century, Paul wrote, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:4, 11; v. 13). How foolish it is today for some to claim guidance by the Holy Spirit for their religion, and then on the next corner is an entirely different religious group claiming guidance by the same Spirit, and neither one following what the Holy Spirit revealed in the Bible. The unity of the Spirit comes when we stand together on the truth revealed by the one Spirit of God in the New Testament.

ONE HOPE

The one hope of the Christian is connected with his “calling.” We are called to be saved by the gospel, “because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 2:13-14). The Bible does not reveal any special “callings” for certain individuals, like preachers. All are called by the same gospel message. When we respond in obedience to this calling, we then have the “hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Titus 1:2). God has “begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). The truth and promises of Scripture provide the reason that our “faith and hope are in God” (v. 21). Our true hope is eternal. How sad that so many have their hopes set on earthly things that will pass away.

ONE LORD

On Pentecost, the apostle Peter declared that “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). One who is “Lord” has all authority as our Master (Matt. 28:18). Men were commanded to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). There are many “masters” today that compete for our submission: money, fame, earthly wisdom, false religion, etc. We must constantly remember that there is “one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live” (1 Cor. 8:6). We have but one true Master, Jesus Christ; we cannot try to serve other masters (Matt. 6:24).

ONE FAITH

The one “faith” is the one body of revealed truth for man today, the doctrine of Christ contained on the pages of the New Testament. Paul spoke of “obedience to the faith,” that is, the response of man to the teachings of the truth of God (Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Acts 6:7). While there are many “doctrines and commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:22), there is only one faith delivered to man to believe and obey. We are to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The creeds and religious disciplines of men destroy the unity of the Spirit by leading men away from the “one faith” of Jesus Christ. We would do well to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27). The faith of the gospel will produce the kind of faith in us that will please God (Heb. 11:6).

ONE BAPTISM

In the Old Testament there were various washings required. When John was preaching in the wilderness, he preached “a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Lk. 3:3). Jesus promised the apostles a baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). Jesus commanded the apostles to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). With so many baptisms, which is the “one baptism”? It would be the baptism preached and practiced “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). It was the one commanded by Jesus and necessary for the salvation of all men (Mk. 16:16). It is immersion in water of the penitent believer for the remission of sins (Acts 8:36-38; 22:16). It is the baptism that some submitted to when they learned that their previous “baptism” was invalid (Acts 19:1-7). This baptism puts one into Christ and His body, the church (Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Cor. 12:13). Denominational baptism may put one into a human denomination, but it will not save man from sin.

ONE GOD AND FATHER

Indeed, there is “only one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him” (1 Cor. 8:6). Just as there is one Spirit, one Lord (the Son, Jesus Christ), there is one Father. These three are joined together in essence, mind, and purpose. It is only through Christ that we “have access by one Spirit to the Father” (Eph. 2:18). Some false religions believe in the worship of many gods (polytheism) or that everything is God (pantheism). The true God is above all things and is one. There are no other gods. There is no other truth. We can only be unified as one in Him and His truth. Keep the unity of the Spirit by contending for the seven “ones” of Scripture.