

One, One, One!

Text: Ephesians 4:5-6

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5 *One Lord, one faith , one baptism,*

6 *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE CHURCH'S FOUNDATION

1. In the words of our text, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism,” we have a formula revealing the way in which the Church is founded and built up.
 - a. From time immemorial, God’s chosen people have embraced the foundational truth of **Deuteronomy 6:4...**
 - (1) ***Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:***
 - (a) On the Day of Pentecost, when the Christian Church was born, the recipients of God’s great Gift memorized and quoted that very verse from early childhood.
2. Paul states emphatically that there is but ONE LORD.
 - a. In other words, there is but one Master whom we are called to serve.
 - (1) To the heathen world in which Paul ministered, where men worshipped numerous gods, Paul would stand and declare that there was only ONE to whom they should devote themselves – ***“God that made the world and all things therein...He is Lord of heaven and earth,”*** (Acts 17:24).

- (a) When Paul spoke these words, nearly every cult of mystery religion had its own lord.
 - (b) However, the New Testament has only one Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the only means of access into His church! **And...**
 - 1) A consentaneous and harmonious obedience to His mandates blends His servants into one compact unity.
- 3. Paul further declares that there is but ONE FAITH.
 - a. There is but one body of inviolable truth, one code of divine commands, one gospel of promise, presenting one object of faith.
 - (1) The term “faith” is used several different ways in the Scriptures.
 - (a) Sometimes it relates to the subjective placing of confidence in God;
 - (b) Sometimes it refers to the body of doctrine that believers accept;
 - (c) Sometimes it refers to a means of access.
 - 1) The last is the use in this context – Paul is telling us that there is one ONE means of access.
 - 2) **Hebrews 11:6 – *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.***
- 4. And then Paul states simply, “ONE BAPTISM.”
 - a. In a humanistic society that is determined to embrace EVERY silly idea and religion that comes our way,

declaring that, just as there are hundreds of roads that lead to New York City there are hundreds of ways to make heaven, Paul declares with certainty that there is only ONE WAY.

- (1) What Paul is declaring is that there is but one gateway of entrance into the company of believers forming the one Church – there is but one baptism (*one immersion*) into the body of Christ.

- (a) **I Corinthians 12:13 – *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.***

- 1) When I was a child, we used to sing a chorus that simply said, “One, one, one, one way to God...baptized in Jesus name!”

II. **BODY**

A. **ONE LORD**

1. The fundamental fact is indicated by the words, “One Lord.”
 - a. The reference is to Him in whom all the fullness of Deity dwelt corporeally, and in whom all the universal excellencies of humanity, according to the Divine plan and purpose, were included.
 - (1) We at once recognize that in Him a myriad of glories meet in perfect strength and beauty.
 - (2) In Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt.
 - (a) Everything that God ever was or is or will be is fulfilled in the man Christ Jesus.
2. Since the beginning of time there has been a progressive revelation of God to man.

- a. God did not, in the very beginning, fully reveal His name, His identity or His completeness.
 - (1) But, as Isaiah said, it was a matter of ***“here a little and there a little, line upon line, and precept upon precept”*** (Isaiah 28:10,13).
3. God saved the best for the last with respect to the revelation of His name.
 - a. There was a secret being kept all that time, but I am so glad that I can announce unto you that there came a time when God instructed His angel Gabriel to carry the secret down to a virgin named Mary, who lived in Nazareth.
 - (1) When the angel appeared unto her, he not only came with greetings and salutations from God.
 - (2) He did more than that.
 - (3) He brought to light a name greater than any name that has ever been named, both in this world and in the world to come.
 - (4) He said in essence...
 - (a) ***“Mary, the Holy Ghost shall overshadow you, and thou shall bring forth a son...”***
 - (b) ***Joseph is not going to name the boy; you’re not going to name Him...***
 - (c) ***This name was determined before the earth was ever created, this name was determined before the foundation of the world, to be the only name that would take away and remit sin...***
 - (d) ***Mary, you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”***
4. The secret was out – it wasn’t a secret anymore.
 - a. The great Creator became our Savior!

- (1) He that was rich became poor that we, through His poverty, might become rich!
- (2) The divinity put on humanity, that humanity might share His divinity!
- (3) He became a man that we might lay aside the man and put on the Holy Ghost, put on Christ, and make it to heaven one day!
 - (a) To be sure, there is but one God, and that God manifested Himself as the Father in creation, as the Son in redemption, and as the Holy Ghost in regeneration!
 - (b) I Timothy 3:16 – *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

B. ONE FAITH

1. There is but one Lord, Jesus Christ our Savior.
 - a. Acts 4:12 – *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*
 - (1) Paul told the Galatians, *“Even though we or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed”* (Galatians 1:8 – NKJV).
 - (2) *“For the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him”* (Romans 10:12 – NKJV).
2. Consequently there can only be one faith.

- a. Paul is not referring here to the act of faith by which a person is saved or the continuing faith that produces right living, but rather the body of doctrine revealed in the New Testament.
 - (1) In true Christianity there is only one faith, ***“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”*** and for which we are to contend (**Jude 3**).
 - (2) Our one faith is the content of the revealed Word of God.
 - (a) Lack of faithful and careful study of His Word, unexamined tradition, worldly influences, carnal inclinations, and many other things fragment doctrine into many varying and even contradictory forms.
 - (b) God’s Word contains many truths, but its individual truths are but harmonious facets of His one truth, which is our one faith.

- 3. Wherever people believe in Jesus Christ alone and trust in his death, burial, and resurrection for their salvation, they are joined with all other believers because of this one faith.
 - a. This faith alone saves; this faith is the one and only “way” (John 14:6).
 - (1) This one faith binds all believers together.
 - (a) The definition of the Greek word used here and translated “faith” in our text is that of persuasion; or credence.
 - (b) It is the moral conviction of religious truth; and, by extension, it is the system of the Gospel truth itself.
 - 1) Therefore, what Paul is literally saying is that **there is only ONE persuasion; one belief; one truth!**

- 2) Those who would try to convince you otherwise – making you think that it doesn't really matter what you believe (Hinduism, Muslim, any form of Christianity, etc.), Paul says that we are to let them be accursed, or condemned.
4. Ladies and gentlemen, it really does matter what you believe...
 - a. And to believe something, you must understand it...
 - (1) And to understand what you believe requires you to study it!

C. ONE BAPTISM

1. When I was a child, there was a chorus that we sang quite regularly – ONE WAY TO GOD.

**ONE, ONE, ONE, ONE WAY TO GOD!
ONE, ONE, ONE, ONE WAY TO GOD!
ONE, ONE, ONE, ONE WAY TO GOD:
BAPTIZED IN JESUS NAME!**

2. The topic of baptism has always set us apart from all other churches and doctrines.
 - a. And, about 100 years ago, it was called simply, "The Issue."
 - (1) What we're talking about is baptism – the form and formula.
3. The act of believing is manifested through the act of baptism – and Paul's inclusion of this "ONE BAPTISM" reveals the great importance that baptism held for the early church.

- a. "Baptism" here refers to baptism in water, as opposed to baptism by the Holy Spirit, and it is vital that we understand this.
 - (1) And, as it relates to water baptism, there is but ONE BAPTISM that is Scripturally correct and acceptable: Baptism in Jesus' name!
 - (a) Jesus tells us in **John 14:6** – *"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."*
 - (b) **John 10:9** – *I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*
 - (c) **Acts 4:12** – *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*
 - (d) **Acts 2:38** – *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*
4. This is the only baptism formula that was ever used by Peter, Paul, and the rest of the apostles.
 - a. Believers were not baptized in the name of a local church, a prominent evangelist, a leading elder, an apostle, or even in the titles "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost..."
 - (1) They were baptized exclusively in the name of Jesus Christ!
5. Harvard professor, Harvey Cox, writes in his book, *Fire From Heaven, The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century*:
 - a. *"Within a few years the entire [Pentecostal] movement was torn apart by a debate over whether to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (which had*

been traditional for centuries) or in just the name of Jesus, which some Pentecostals insisted was the practice in The Acts of the Apostles (they were right) and therefore the theologically correct formulation for these Last Days.”

6. I guess that old song we used to sing was right!
 - a. There is only one, one, one, one way to God...
(1) Baptized in Jesus name!

III. CLOSE

A. BRINGING IT HOME

1. In conclusion this morning, I want to refer to Paul’s follow-up statement to, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.”
 - a. Paul further states with clarity:
(1) Ephesians 4:6 – *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*
2. Bart Ehrman is one of the most published textual critics of the Bible today, albeit a liberal one.
 - a. Concerning the Godhead, Ehrman writes in his most recent book, *Jesus, Interrupted*:
 - (1) *From the writings of such church fathers of the second and third centuries as Hippolytus and Tertullian, we know that at one time the MOST POPULAR VIEW among Christian thinkers and church leaders was one that self-consciously and aggressively asserted the oneness of God.***
 - (2) *This view held that there was only ONE GOD and that Jesus is the incarnation of God here on earth.***
 - (3) *In other words, GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON ARE NOT TWO SEPARATE ENTITIES.***
 - (4) *God the Son is God the Father when the latter becomes incarnate [p.256]...***

- (5) *In response to the Modalists of his day, Tertullian had begun to speak of a trinity [p. 258]...*
 - (6) *The Trinity is a later Christian invention” [p. 260].*

- 3. There is a well-known passage in the Confessions of St. Augustine, where he asks and answers the question, “What is God?” in a very impressive way.
 - a. *“What art Thou then, my God?” he cries.*
 - b. *“Highest, best, most powerful, most omnipotent.”*
 - (1) *Most merciful and most just;*
 - (2) *Most deeply hidden and yet most near;*
 - (3) *Fairest, yet strongest;*
 - (4) *Steadfast, yet incomprehensible;*
 - (5) *Unchangeable, yet changing all things;*
 - (6) *Never new, yet never old;*
 - (7) *Ever busy, yet ever at rest;*
 - (8) *Gathering, yet needing not;*
 - (a) *Bearing, filling, guarding;*
 - (b) *Creating, nourishing, and perfecting;*
 - (c) *Seeking, though Thou hast no wants...*
 - 1) *What can we say, my God, my life, my holy joy?*
 - 2) *Or, what can anyone say who speaks of Thee?*

- 4. There you have it, ladies and gentlemen!
 - a. ONE, ONE, ONE!
 - (1) *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism!”*
 - (a) *“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all!”*