

One Lord? One God? One Faith?

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One?

Ephesians 4:1-6, written by the divinely-inspired Apostle Paul (Eph. 1:1; 2 Tim. 3:16-17) to the first-century congregation of the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16) that worked and worshipped together in Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38; Eph. 1:1, 3:8-12; Rev. 2:1-7), has been the subject of countless **millions**, probably even **billions** I daresay, of sermons, bible studies, gospel meetings, conferences, seminars, articles, and spiritual dissertations of all sorts since it was written in the mid first-century. It is one of the simplest, most beautiful, most unifying, and straightforward texts in the entire, sacred collection, echoing and underscoring our precious Savior's sentiments on "one-ness" which He poured out in prayer to His heavenly Father (with whom He enjoyed such one-ness), as recorded in John 17. Listen to it again; let it wash over your soul; let it sink deeply into your heart and mind, yet one more time....



One. Single. Solitary. Solo. Only. Lone. Specific.
Precise.

"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 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."

Let us also try one more time, to not only see and appreciate the simple beauty of this sacred text, but to seek to do so in such a way that our denominational friends and neighbors might be able to better internalize and benefit from its beacon of eternal truth as well. And this we will try to do, by starting with the portions of the text which we all most certainly agree on.

No denominational seeker would disagree with the fact that there is but ONE GOD. But which God? Well, the ONE GOD of the Bible of course! The ONE GOD of the Bible who created the heavens and the earth; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to save lost sinners' souls, just as Scripture says (Gen. 1; Acts 3:13; Jn. 3:16).

Likewise, no denominational seeker would disagree with – but would adamantly defend in fact – the undeniable fact that there is but ONE LORD. But which Lord? Well, the ONE LORD Jesus Christ, and Him alone (Acts 4:12; Col. 1:15-18)! The ONE LORD we also read about in the bible, who became flesh and dwelt among us; who humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross; and who was raised up to the right hand of the Father in heaven to intercede for us just as Scripture says (Jn. 1:14; Phil. 2:5-11; Hebs. 7:25).

And (and here's where the difficulty seems to be for some of our denominational friends and neighbors to see and accept – but certainly not because it's not simple enough to understand), in **exactly the same way, the same sentence, and the same sentiment**, we read that there is also only ONE FAITH and ONE BAPTISM, according to the ONE GOD. And which ONE FAITH and ONE BAPTISM is that exactly? Well, the ONE FAITH and the ONE BAPTISM which we also read about in the sacred Scriptures in exactly the same way – and none other whatsoever!

It is the ONE FAITH which all of God's children are to have in common, and in which we are to all be unified, undivided, and undenominated (Phil. 1:27-2:3). It is the ONE FAITH which was once for all delivered prior to the end of the first-century (Jude 3) and which we can therefore explore in its entirety within the pages of the New Testament. It is the ONE FAITH **to** which one must be obedient, **in** which one must stand by faith, and **from** which none must deviate (Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5, 16:26; Col. 1:19-2:14; 2 Cor. 13:3; 1 Tim. 1:19, 4:1, 6:10, 20-21) in order to be saved God's ONE WAY.

And the ONE BAPTISM that is therefore the only one valid before the ONE GOD and ONE LORD is obviously also only the ONE BAPTISM which we read about repeatedly in the New Testament Scripture since the Lord's church was established in Acts 2. It is the act of faith in the working of God who raised Jesus from the dead, which makes us children of God by our faithful obedience to it (Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:26-27). It is a full, 'by faith' burial in water specifically and exclusively FOR the forgiveness of one's sins, to wash away one's sins, and the exact point in time at which a lost soul is saved and added by God to His Son's blood-bought church of Christ (Ro. 6:3-4; Acts 2:37-47, 22:16; 1 Ptr. 3:21).

And just as Ephesians 4:4-6 tells us about the ONE and only Holy SPIRIT (Matt. 28:18-20), and our ONE HOPE (Rom. 5:1-5), it also tells of the ONE BODY of Christ... The same ONE BODY which the apostle Paul earlier, in that same epistle to the Ephesian Christians, also called the "church" (Eph. 1:22-23; see also Col. 1:18, 24). If the "church" and the "body" are ONE and the same institution – as God's word says they absolutely are – and if there is only ONE BODY as Eph. 4:4-6 clearly says, then there is only ONE – and there is no way there can be more than ONE – church (which is His body – Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18, 24; etc)! Again, the terms "church" and "body" are used synonymously in Ephesians and elsewhere in the sacred, New Testament Scriptures, to refer to the ONE saved, undivided, undenominated group of people purchased, pardoned, and belonging to Christ.

Now, here's the bottom line. What does "ONE" actually mean? Because **whatever** it means when it says "ONE LORD," "ONE GOD," and "ONE SPIRIT," it means exactly the same thing when it says "ONE HOPE," "ONE FAITH," "ONE BAPTISM," and "ONE BODY" (church). People who believe that there are multiple different churches that God finds acceptable, and that God is okay with people attending any "church of their choice" never found in Scripture, then they must also believe that God is okay with people believing in many different "gods," or worshipping "the god of their choice" not found in Scripture either.

Conversely, if there is only ONE GOD and ONE LORD, and a religious person truly believes and accepts that there is only the ONE GOD and ONE LORD which we find in the bible, then they must also understand that there is only the ONE FAITH, ONE CHURCH, and ONE BAPTISM we read about therein as well! We can't have it both ways! There can't be many different faiths, baptisms, and churches found outside of Scripture that God is still okay with our being a part of, while at the same time holding us to the standard that there is only the ONE GOD and ONE LORD found in Scripture!

So what exactly does ONE mean to you? Because whatever it means in any ONE of those phrases, it means in every single ONE of them: ONE BODY (CHURCH); ONE SPIRIT; ONE HOPE; ONE LORD; ONE FAITH; ONE BAPTISM; and ONE GOD. Does it mean "ONE?" Or, does it mean many? Does it mean instead of "ONE" that there are therefore:

- ★ Many different religious bodies/churches, never found in Scripture, but for which Christ died and of which God still approves?
- ★ Many different Holy Spirits, never found in Scripture, but for whom Christ died to send and of whom God approves?
- ★ Many different hopes of destinations other than heaven which are never found in Scripture, but which Christ died to secure for us and of which God approves?
- ★ Many different Lords other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who are never found in Scripture, but of which Christ and God both approve of us worshipping and following?
- ★ Many different faiths (denominations, divisions, and departures from the original such as the Catholic Faith; Baptist Faith; Lutheran Faith; Methodist Faith; and etc, which are never seen named in Scripture because they came along hundreds of years after the New Testament was written which contains the ONE FAITH delivered for all the saints: Jude 3), but of which Christ and God still approve of us practicing and following?
- ★ Many different baptisms (such as sprinkling or pouring instead of being "buried," and for multiple and various reasons such as to show that one has been previously saved by saying the so-called "sinner's prayer;" as an "outward sign of an inward grace;" or to cleanse from so-called "original sin") which are never found in Scripture, but of which Christ and God both approve of us practicing despite the ONE BAPTISM they commanded for salvation in the New Testament?
- ★ Many different gods, who are never found in Scripture, but which Christ and God approve of us worshipping anyway? (By the way, please check out Deut. 5:6-10, 10:12-13; Matt. 22:35-38; and Hebs 12:22-29 if you think "ONE" means "any one of many" in this case!)

So; does ONE mean ONE... or many? Faithful to the New Testament, "old paths" (Jer. 6:16) congregations of the Lord's ONE New Testament church (or world-wide blood bought body of saved people – Acts 20:28; Ro. 16:16) simply, in humble, obedient, submissive and trusting faith in almighty God and His divinely-inspired word, understand and accept that when their ONE God said "ONE," He meant... "ONE." What do YOU believe?

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