

God's Plan for Saving Man

LESSON SIX -UNITY, THE NEED FOR SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY

There is no question that the people who claim to be the followers of Christ today are a divided people. This is not pleasing to God, nor in harmony with the will of Christ. There are over **300** major denominations in this country alone, each bearing a different name and teaching a different and distinct doctrine. Yet **Christ would have all of his people to be one**. If we love the Lord as we claim to, then **we will make it our aim to seek unity**. In this lesson, we want to study the subject of unity, the basis of unity given by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles, and the all important question of how to establish Scriptural Authority.

I. UNITY IS DEMANDED BY THE LORD.

- A. JESUS PRAYED FOR IT(**John 17:20-23**).
- B. UNITY WAS DEMANDED AT CORINTH BY PAUL(**1 Cor. 1:10f.**).
 - 1. Demanded in the name of Christ.
 - 2. **Speak** the same thing(refers to their teaching).
 - 3. **NO** divisions.
 - 4. Perfected together in the same mind and judgment.
- C. WE ARE TO **GIVE DILIGENCE** TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE(**Eph. 4:1-3**).

II. WHAT SHOULD BE THE BASIS OF OUR UNITY?(**Eph. 4:4-6**).

- A. THERE IS ONE BODY(see **Eph. 1:22-23; 2:16; Col. 1:18**).
- B. ONE SPIRIT(**1 Cor. 12:12-13; Phil. 1:27**).
- C. ONE HOPE(see **1 Pet. 1:3-5**).
- D. ONE LORD...ONE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY, ONE STANDARD.
 - 1. Jesus has all authority(**Eph. 1:22-23; Mat. 28:18**).
 - 2. We must respect his authority in all things(**Col. 3:17; 2 John 9**).
 - 3. His teachings are our standard(**John 12:48; Heb. 4:12-13**).
- E. ONE FAITH. WHAT IS MEANT BY "ONE FAITH?" ONE BODY OF DOCTRINE(**Jude 3; Acts 24:24**).
- F. ONE BAPTISM. *baptizo*, "Dip, immerse, overwhelm."
 - 1. Six baptisms discussed in the NT. Speaking of one all Christians have in common.
 - 2. Immersion in water for remission of sins(**Acts 2:38;8:36; 10:47-48**).
- G. ONE GOD, EMPHASIZING THE PREEMINENCE OF THE FATHER.
- H. PETER ADDS TO THIS LIST "ONE NAME"(**Acts 4:12; 1 Pet. 4:15-16**).
 - 1. To wear any other honors division(**1 Cor. 1:10-13**).
 - 2. Why not be a Christian only?(**Acts 11:26**).

III. WHY IS THERE NO UNITY IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD?

- A. PAUL'S ANSWER - **1 Cor. 4:6** - **GOING BEYOND** THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN, NO RESPECT FOR OR IGNORANCE OF GOD'S WILL. THE INSISTENCE ON MANY FAITHS.
- B. WE NEED TO LEARN NOT TO GO BEYOND THE THINGS THAT WERE WRITTEN(**1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9**). IF WE CAN ADHERE TO THE BIBLE, USE IT AS OUR **SOLE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY**, THEN WE CAN ACHIEVE UNITY.

COMPROMISE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE UNITY IS UNACCEPTABLE TO GOD(Jude 3; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; Prov. 23:23).

IV. HOW CAN SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY BE ESTABLISHED?

A. HOW DO THE WRITINGS OF THE APOSTLES, THE NEW TESTAMENT, TEACH?

1. By **Precept** - A direct command or statement.
2. By **Divinely Approved Example** - By this we mean the practice of the church in the New Testament under apostolic guidance and which the apostles had received from the Lord, and therefore by divine guidance.
3. By **Inference** - That which though neither expressly stated nor specifically exemplified yet is necessarily implied by the clear import and meaning of the language used
4. Let's notice some illustrations:

LORD'S SUPPER _____ CHURCH MUSIC

Precept _____ **1 Cor. 11:23**, Observe _____ **Eph. 5:19**, Sing

Example _____ **Acts 20:7**, When to take _____ **Acts 16:25**, Sing

Inference* _____ **Acts 20:7**, Frequency _____ **2 John 9**, Sing only

*Which first day is not specified, like which Sabbath day was not. Every Sabbath was to be observed. Every first day is to be observed.

B. THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF AUTHORITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

1. **Generic** - Includes any thing, method, or means of execution that comes within the same order or class of the precept, example or inference - **INCLUDES! Where God has not been specific.**
2. **Specific** - Excludes everything, method or means of execution that comes within the same order or class which is not particularly specified in the precept, example, inference. **EXCLUDES! God has specified.**
3. **Generic Authority** Illustrated:
 - a. **Mat. 28:19-20**. "Go!" How? "Teach!" What method? "Baptize!" Where?
 - b. **Heb. 10:25**. "Assemble!" God did not specify, **man must choose** for himself.
 - c. **Eph. 5:19**. "Sing!" From a book? Memory? Overhead? God didn't specify, **man cannot bind**.
 - d. Whatever expedient is chosen, it must not violate any law or principle found in the New Testament.
4. **Specific Authority** Illustrated:
 - a. Noah's Ark(**Gen. 6:14**). Gopher wood excludes oak.
 - b. Lord's Supper(**Mat. 26:26-29**). Unleavened bread and fruit of the vine excludes pie and ice cream. **Acts 20:7** excludes Monday observance.
 - c. Music(**Eph. 5:19**). Sing excludes other kinds of music.

CONCLUSION:

IN THIS LESSON WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THE NEED FOR **UNITY**, AND THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHING **SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY**. THE UNITY THAT PLEASES GOD IS BASED ON HIS WORD. UNITY BASED ON ANYTHING ELSE IS WRONG. WE MUST LEARN **NOT TO GO BEYOND** THE THINGS THAT ARE WRITTEN.

WE ALSO SAW THAT THERE IS ONE FAITH, ONE CHURCH. THAT CHURCH IS RECOGNIZED BY ITS CONFORMITY TO WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE CHURCH OF THE LORD. IN OUR NEXT LESSON, WE NEED TO DISCUSS THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCH.