

God's Standard for Unity

I. Introduction:

- a. **(Eph 4:3-6)** “Endeavoring (to make effort; be prompt or earnest) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are 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.”
 - i. Unity of the Spirit is that unity which the Spirit leads.
 1. **(Rom 8:14)** “For as many as are **led** by the **Spirit of God**, they are the **sons of God**.”
 - a. Sons of God – Children of God – Family of God – Unity!
 2. The Spirit leads us through those that he spoke through
 - a. **(2 Sam 23:2)** “The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and **his word** was in **my tongue**.”
 - b. **(Rev 2:7)** “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”
 - i. How did the Churches hear what the Spirit said?
 - c. **(Acts 1:16)** “Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the **Holy Ghost** by the **mouth of David spake** before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.”
 - ii. If one is led by the Spirit, they are united with God and with one another – Fulfillment of Jesus’ Prayer!
 1. **(John 17:20-21)** “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”
- b. Interdenominational relationships are anything but united
 - i. Modern practice is the call for unity in division
 1. They pick and choose what one must be united upon
 2. God already made the Policy!
 - ii. Paul taught against this kind of ‘unity’
 1. **(1 Cor 1:10-13)** “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”

- iii. Some feel that there is no such thing as set standard for unity.
 - 1. They say:
 - a. One church is just as good as another.
 - b. One doctrine is just as good as another.
 - c. Attend the church of your choice.
 - 2. Why then did Paul say,
 - a. **(Rom 16:17-18)** “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause **divisions** and **offences contrary** to the **doctrine** which **ye have learned**; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”
 - 3. Truth is Absolute – There is a truth – Since there is truth, there is departure of the truth – Lie – these going against cause divisions! (Denominationalism)
- b. Modern unity call is based on a standard made by men – can not be united on this type of standard – One man’s standard is different from another – There must be one with authority to give a standard – God does in Ephesians 4:3-6

II. One God – Our Father

- a. Atheist must accept this or their can be no unity with them
 - i. **(Ps 14:1)** “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.”
 - ii. **(Heb 3:4)** “For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.”
- b. Idolators must accept this or there can be no unity
 - i. **(Ex 34:14)** “For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”
 - ii. Idolatry is not just a pagan type of religion – When you put anything above God it is idolatry
 - 1. **(Col 3:5)** “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:”
- c. Seeing how there is one God, there is one type of worship – His way!
 - i. **(Ps 22:27)** “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.”
 - 1. How will they worship?
 - ii. **(John 4:23-24)** “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
- d. Try these statements – See if you agree?
 - i. One God is just as good as another.
 - ii. Take the God of your choice.

III. One Lord – Our Savior

- a. Christ

- i. **(Acts 2:36)** “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
 - ii. **(Phil 2:11)** “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
 - b. One Lord = One Authority
 - i. **(Matt 17:5)** “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; **hear ye him.**”
 - ii. **(John 10:16)** “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and **they shall hear my voice**; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”
 - iii. **(Matt 28:18)** “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”
 - c. One Lord = One Salvation
 - i. **(John 14:6)** “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - ii. **(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. Try these statements – See if you agree?
 - i. One Savior is just as good as another.
 - ii. Take the Savior of your choice.
- IV. One Spirit – Our Teacher
 - a. Jesus Christ Promised the Comforter – Holy Spirit
 - i. **(John 16:13)** “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”
 - ii. **(John 14:26)** “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall **teach** you all things, and bring all things to your **remembrance**, whatsoever I have said unto you.”
 - 1. Two-fold office of the Comforter
 - a. Teaching
 - b. Reminding
 - iii. **(Luke 24:49)** “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”
 - 1. Promised to the Apostles to come to them and ‘endue’ them with power – Clothed them – completely surround them with Power from on high.
 - a. Clothing = Baptism
 - iv. **(Acts 1:8)** “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
 - b. The Apostles received this power

i. (**Acts 2:1-4**) “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it **filled all the house** where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

1. Filled all the house – completely surrounded them – Baptism
2. Who was the ‘they’? The apostles or the 120 mentioned in (**Acts 1:15**)?
3. McGarvey says, “The question, then, ‘Who were filled with the Holy Spirit?’ depends upon the reference of the pronoun in the statement, “They were all together in one place.” Those who suppose that the whole hundred and twenty are referred to, have to go back to the fifteenth verse of the preceding chapter to find the antecedent. But, if we obliterate the unfortunate separation between the first and second chapters, and take the last verse of the former into its connection with the latter, we will find the true and obvious antecedent much nearer at hand. It would read thus: “The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered together with the eleven apostles. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” It is indisputable that the antecedent to they is the term apostles; and it is merely the division of the text into chapters, severing the close grammatical connection of the words, which has hid this most obvious fact from commentators and readers.” (J. W. McGarvey’s Original Commentary on Acts)

c. The Spirit is our teacher through the inspired word of God

- i. (**2 Tim 3:16-17**) “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

d. Try these statements – See if you agree?

- i. One Teacher is just as good as another.
- ii. Take the Teacher of your choice.
 1. If the teacher is important, then why not the doctrine that the Teacher teaches?

V. One Faith – Our System of Doctrine

a. Many believe Doctrine doesn’t matter – God says it does

- i. (**Eph 4:5**) “One Lord, one faith, one baptism”
 1. One Faith doesn’t leave much room for any other faiths
 2. Paul must be narrow minded too!

b. One Faith = The one and only gospel system of Doctrine

- i. (**Phil 1:27**) “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear

of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the **faith of the gospel**;"

- ii. **(1 Cor 16:13)** "Watch ye, **stand fast in the faith**, quit you like men, be strong."
 - c. We have no right to the faith of our choice – To accept this faith is to accept the word of God; no more and no less!
 - i. **(Rom 10:17)** "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - ii. **(Acts 27:25)** "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for **I believe God**, that it shall be even as it was **told me**."
 - d. We must obey in order to be saved
 - i. **(Gal 5:6)** "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but **faith** which **worketh by love**."
 - 1. Your physical birth and the old covenant between God and Abraham – Fulfilled – No longer accomplishes anything
 - 2. What accomplishes Paul?
 - a. Faith which worketh by love
 - i. The faith that accomplishes is a faith that works through love
 - ii. **(Rom 16:26)** "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the **obedience of faith**:"
 - 1. **(Vs 25)** 'Gospel' – Now is made manifest – Gospel directs us to the obedience of faith – How we are saved by the Gospel – Believe it and obey it!
 - iii. **(Rom 6:17-18)** "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed from the heart** that **form of doctrine** which was **delivered you**. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - e. There is only one Faith – God makes it one of his points of unity!
- VI. One Baptism – Birth – **(John 3:3)** **(John 3:5)**
- a. There were many baptisms
 - i. There used to be many baptisms under the Old Law
 - ii. There was the baptism of John
 - iii. There was the baptism of the Holy Ghost that the Apostles received
 - iv. There will be one more (Baptism of Fire)
 - b. Right now there is only One – Water Baptism
 - i. Water Baptism is for all nations
 - 1. **(Matt 28:19-20)** "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 2. **(Mark 16:15-16)** "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

- c. This baptism is for the remission of Sins
 - i. **(Acts 2:38-39)** “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. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”
- d. This baptism is a burial
 - i. **(Rom 6:3-4)** “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
- e. This baptism puts one into the Body of Christ
 - i. **(1 Cor 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.”
 - ii. **(Gal 3:27)** “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
 - iii. See the example of this on the Day of Pentecost
 - 1. **(Acts 2:41)** “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”
 - 2. **(Acts 2:47)** “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

VII. One Body – The Church

- a. One and Only one Church that is Jesus Christ’s
 - i. **(1 Cor 12:20)** “But now are they many members, yet but **one body**.”
 - ii. **(Col 3:15)** “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”
 - iii. Jesus is the Head
 - 1. **(Eph 1:22-23)** “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
 - 2. **(Eph 5:23)** “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
 - iv. Is one church as good as another? – Not narrow-minded – Biblical Fact!
- b. We are reconciled to God in the body
 - i. **(Eph 2:16)** “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:”
- c. It is the aggregate of all the saved – If you are saved you have been added to this great brotherhood – Family of God!
- d. You cannot be saved and be on the outside of this church.

1. Because God added you to the church if you were saved by His terms (**Acts 2:47**) “And the **Lord added** to the church daily such as should be saved.”
 - e. The Lord bought His church with His Blood
 - i. (**Acts 20:28**) “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
 - ii. There is no church of your choice. There is only one, if you want salvation from the death of Christ!
- VIII. One Hope – Life beyond the grave, in Heaven – Rest – Paradise – Home
- a. (**Titus 2:11-14**) “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; **Looking for that blessed hope**, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and **purify unto himself a peculiar people**, zealous of good works.”
- IX. Conclusion
- a. God’s policy for unity – God’s Standard for Unity!
 - i. If we could agree on these seven points, we would have nothing to be divided over.