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Talks From The Bible: Seven-Ones

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TALKS
FROM
THE

Bible



SEVEN-ONES

A Prayer

Our Father,

Bless these words, we pray,

To the honor and glory of Thy Name,

And to the salvation of the souls of men.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.

Seven Ones

Please attend carefully unto the following words written by the Spirit-inspired apostle Paul to the church of Christ in Ephesus.

“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.” (Ephesians 4:4-6.)

With these words this servant of God introduces us to the *seven ones* which we are now ready to consider. Let us proceed into this study with deliberate care and complete sincerity that our souls may be refreshed and our understanding of God's will for us improved.

There Is One Body

We cannot properly understand the meaning of Paul in this statement until we get clearly settled in our minds what he meant by the use of the word, “body.” Earlier in this letter the apostle wrote,

“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.” (Ephesians 1:22, 23.)

About A.D. 64, the same inspired apostle wrote to the church at Colosse,

“And he is the head of the body, the church . . .” (Colossians 1:18.)

Some years before this, he had written to the church of the Lord in the city of Corinth,

“Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.” (1 Corinthians 12:27.)

Now, keeping these statements in full view of our minds, it becomes clear that the apostle is teaching that the one body is the church. The fact is emphasized, “There is one body.” Believers of the Bible would not dare try to escape the power and authority of this proclamation.

Our insight is further improved when we read,

“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” (Ephesians 2:16.)

Prior to the cross of Jesus, Jew and Gentile had been estranged by the existence of the “middle wall of partition.” When Jesus died this middle wall of partition was broken down so that following the death of Christ, and the establishment of the church, both Jew and Gentile could now be “reconciled unto God in one body—the church for which the Savior had bled and died.

We are taught in the Bible that the church has many members, but it is only one body.

The inspired writer attested this fact when he said,

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” (Romans 12:4, 5.)

Note how he emphasizes the “one body.” He also points out that the one body is “in Christ.” One must be *in Christ* to be saved.

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” (II Timothy 2:10.)

It is both absurd and useless to contend that salvation is outside of Christ. It is just as absurd and useless, therefore, to contend that salvation is outside the Lord’s church—for the Bible teaches plainly that *the church is in Christ!* Further, the Bible teaches that Christ is the Savior of the body.

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.” (Ephesians 5:23.)

Now, since we know that the body is the church, and Christ is the Savior of the body, it relieves all difficulty, for we can see that one must be in the body—the church—to receive the blessings of the Savior, in other

words to be saved. One cannot possibly be saved without the Savior, and Jesus is the Savior of the body, the church.

While the religious world agonizes in the throes of discord and division, our Bible continues as it has for nearly two thousand years to point out the way to unity. The thought in the prayer of Jesus must be accepted and produce good response in our hearts and lives if we are to please God, because he prayed,

“That they may all be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John 17:21.)

The Bible teaches, “There is one body.” The only answer to the problem of division is belief of that which the Bible teaches, and practice of that which it enjoins upon us. The word is clear. There is one body. The body is the church. Therefore, *there is one church.*

There Is One Spirit

Next in this series, we are told that there is one Spirit. The one Spirit is the Holy Spirit. There are not a multitude of Spirits, but only one Spirit, the Spirit of God.

Often, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the “third” member of the Godhead. In so doing, one is not relegating the Spirit to a position of unimportance, but is following the general pattern of the New Testament

when speaking of the three members of the Godhead in the same verse or context.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” (II Corinthians 13:14.)

We know that the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, was active in the creation for the word reveals,

“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1:2.)

The Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles to guide them into all truth. The One who is co-eternal with God, who was active in the creation, is also active in the redemptive plan and message of God to man. The importance and power of the message with which the apostles were to be entrusted forbade that they proceed on the basis of that which they were able to recall without assistance about the life and teachings of Jesus. The message was real, vital, essential in every point and particular, therefore, it was not to be confused in any manner. Jesus promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would be sent to guide them into all truth.

“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 show you things to come.” (John 16:13.)

It is apparent that Jesus did not speak of the Holy Spirit as some sort of an "it," but rather as "he." This shows us that the Spirit is a person—with personality, just as God is a person and Christ is a person. If we keep this in mind, it will help us to avoid some of the confusion that is so prevalent in some circles in our day.

The apostles were there at the time appointed of the Lord, enabled to speak as the "Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). The word of God is the message of the Spirit. The Spirit revealed it, and inspired those who wrote it. (I Corinthians 2:5, 10, 13.)

Just as there is one body, there is one Spirit. If there could be more than one Spirit, then there could be more than one body. But, we know there is only one Holy Spirit—and by the same word, we know there is one body.

There Is One Hope

The "calling" or "vocation" unto which God calls man is that of being a Christian. The call that comes to one to enlist in the army of God comes by means of the gospel.

"Whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thessalonians 2:14.)

It must be emphasized that one is called into the service of God by the gospel. The call does not come in some miraculous way. It does not come in a dream. It does not come in some way better felt than told. The Bible explains that we are called by the gospel. It becomes one and all, therefore, to avoid and shun, reject and refuse anything that is not the gospel.

Our text points out that there is one hope of our calling. This one hope which we have in Christ Jesus must not be construed as a promise of abundance and plenty of this world's goods. This one hope far transcends the temporal offerings of this present world. It looks beyond the troubles, hardships and frustrations of earth-life to that land that is fairer than day.

In Christ Jesus our hope is for the future, when those who have fought the battles of life and of faith will lay aside their battle-scarred armour to take up residence in the glorious city of God. Our hope—the one hope—is that which keeps our spirits aflame with love and desire to enter into that home of the soul. The one hope is all that we truly have because it is all that we truly need.

Paul declared, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have

kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown." (II Timothy 4:7, 8.)

The hope that burned in his heart, that brought yearning to his soul is the same hope that strengthens the Christian today. It is the one hope that offers in its fulfillment complete satisfaction, perfect peace.

Become a Christian, fill your heart with the one hope, and your life will never be the same. It will be filled with the growing joy of expectancy for there is *one hope*.

There Is One Lord

God has seen fit to crown his Son as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

"Which in his times shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords." (I Timothy 6:15.)

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is this day ruling and reigning as our spiritual King. There is no other! He has not chosen, selected, appointed, or elected any earthly dignitary to be the king or lord. He sits at the right hand of God, wielding the sceptre of his power over his kingdom.

"Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36.)

We dare not exalt one above our Savior. We dare not trifle with the word of King Jesus. We dare not disregard his commandments. We dare not discount his promises of both blessing for good and punishment for evil. He is the Lord. And, to us, there is one Lord.

Let us willingly and readily bow the knee in submission to him, now, lest the time come when we shall be confronted by his presence and find ourselves unprepared.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11.)

There Is One Faith

We come now in our discussion to consider the one faith.

The world is terribly crossed up in its religious views and ideas. One does not have to be very wise to know that this is true. Some appear to like it this way, and will contend that it is a good thing because it gives man the right of a multiple choice.

He then can choose, they argue, whatever may satisfy his conscience or please him most.

The question, however, is not that of pleasing man. It is rather a matter of pleasing God. We must keep in mind that **GOD HAS MADE HIS CHOICE**. We are to be interested in God's choice. The scripture now before us teaches, "one faith." It is singular. It does not allow a multiple choice. The "one faith" is the same thing as "the faith." "The faith" as it is used in the New Testament comprehends the entire Christian system. In writing of this to the church, Jude says,

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.)

Please examine with care the statement, "Contend for the faith." It is not suggested that one should contend for many *faiths*.

The faith is referred to in Titus 1:4 as "The common faith." Timothy is urged to "Fight the good fight of the faith." (I Timothy 6:12.) Paul wrote that he had "Kept the faith." (II Timothy 4:7.)

It is surely beyond debate that God intends that there should be only *one faith*—

one great system, plan, program of redemption and salvation. It is not of man's creation, it is not of man's design. It came not from the councils of men or the minds of men. The faith—the one faith had its origin in the mind of God, and it is designed by him for man's good, and God's glory.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. We pause to take note that Paul has said, "There is one Spirit." This is true and arouses little or no argument from any quarter. From the same text, "There is one faith." This is also true! There is just one!

Our Savior said, as he met with his disturbed and uncertain disciples shortly before his death,

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me . . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:1, 6.)

If indeed Christ is *the way, the truth, and the life*, how could there possibly be more than *one faith* acceptable in the eyes of the Lord? Why should there be more than one faith?

As there is *one body, one hope, one Spirit, one Lord*, so there is *one faith*.

There Is One Baptism

The Bible reveals to us that God approves one baptism. Though men have not been

pleased or content with that which God has revealed, those who expect to please God should be happy to accept his will. God's will is as definite on this subject as it is on any other subject that may be studied or examined. Let us give attention to that which is written.

Our Savior came from Nazareth to John at the Jordan River for the purpose of being baptized. John forbid him, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee." Jesus persuaded John, however, that it was an act of righteousness that had to be performed. Jesus was not baptized for the removal of his sins for he had none. He was baptized because it was right. It was right because it was the will of God.

In his baptism Jesus came up straightway out of the water (Mark 1:10). He could not have come up out of the water unless first he had *gone down into the water*. Jesus went down into the water, was baptized, and came up out of the water. This shows clearly that baptism is immersion. The Son of God did not engage in the doing of unnecessary things. He was immersed because it was necessary for him to be immersed to please God.

Later, Jesus in giving the Great Commission to his disciples said,

“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.” (Mark 16:15, 16.)

The apostles of Jesus were faithful to that which the Master commanded and taught. When the first Pentecost after the ascension of Jesus came, the apostles arose to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance. When those who were gathered together heard the powerful truth which they presented, they cried out, “Brethren, what shall we do?” The apostle Peter immediately gave the answer—the *very answer* which the Lord required—“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 Spirit.” (Acts 2:38.)

The people responded in great numbers to this call to obey the will of God as we learn from reading the remainder of the chapter. They did not argue or quibble. They did not contend that it could be done some other way. They did not wait. They obeyed God. Baptism is an act of obedience to God.

We now see that baptism is necessary. We should also understand that baptism is immersion. To further help us, let us notice these statements of Paul,

“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.” (Romans 6:3, 4.)

Again, Paul wrote, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” (Colossians 2:12.)

There can be no doubt in view of the foregoing statements, that baptism is immersion.

The *one baptism* is not Holy Spirit baptism! Holy Spirit baptism was a promise. (John 14:26; 16:13; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8.) Baptism in water is a command. The promise of Spirit baptism has been fulfilled. (Acts 2; Acts 10.) Water baptism is still a necessity.

Now, let us bring this part of our brief discussion to a close by urging you to consider these facts. The *one baptism* is in the element, water. The act is performed by immersion. The design of baptism is for (unto) the remission (forgiveness) of sins. The one baptism is required of all responsible people. There are no exceptions for God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34.)

There Is One God

The Bible opens with the marvelous revelation, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1.)

The only reasonable explanation of the existence of man, and his surroundings is God.

The apostle tells us, "There is one God." He is the one who is above all, through all, in all. By this we know that God is all-powerful, all-wise, and ever present. We cannot fool God. We cannot flee or hide from God. We cannot over-power God. He is everywhere!

Down through the ages men in their superstitions and moments of fantasy have made unto themselves gods—idols—that could neither hear, see, nor talk. To these they have bowed down, they have sought to worship. God has time and time again brought about the destruction of these creations of man's foolishness. By this he has shown us that he is the one true God.

Aaron's golden calf was shown to be a sinful, presumptuous act of unbelief and rebellion on the part of the Israelites. Dagon, half-man, half-fish god of the Philistines was shown to be nothing but the representation of unbelief and ignorance.

In modern times, many still pursue their idols in rebellion against God. Some have made a god of pleasure. Some have made

a god of money. Others have made an idol of the human body. Still others have made idols of gadgets and "things." These idols, too, will be wrecked, overthrown, ruined, and shown to be nothing.

Our God is surely the God of mercy. Day by day we see evidences of it. He is the God of compassion. He knows we are here and he is mindful of us. Our God is the God of love for "love is of God," and, "God is love." In all things and in every way we should absolutely and totally believe in him and accept him. *There is but one God!*

We plead with you, now, dear friend, to let God have his way in your life. Be not afraid or ashamed to do his will. Do all that he wants you to do. Be all that he wants you to be. He will love you, forgive you, provide for you, and save you.

NOTE

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The speaker on the program is Charles E. Cobb, minister of the South Water Avenue Church of Christ, Gallatin, Tennessee.

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