

The Unity of the Spirit

Intro: The psalmist speaks of the beauty of the unity of the Lord's people. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133:1).

I think the unity of God's NT people is equally wonderful. There is nothing more beautiful than the peace and unity to which God has called us in Christ. In Ephesians two Paul reminds the Ephesians of the great reconciliation that took place between Jew and Gentile when they were both reconciled to God. In Ephesians 4 Paul calls this unity "the unity of Spirit". I believe that he calls it that because it is the result of the gospel; and the Holy Spirit is the divine messenger of the gospel. The gospel is the Spirit's ministry (2 Cor. 3).

I believe that this unity is not something that we obtain after becoming Christians; but something that we possess and embrace in becoming a Christian. Hence, it is something that we can "keep" or preserve through the proper attitude toward one another, and something we can build upon toward spiritual maturity.

One God and Father of all...

Our unity begins with God our spiritual father who begot us and made us a part of His spiritual family (Cf. Eph. 1:5).

I take it that the "all" refers not to the whole world but is a typical contextual limitation of "pantes"—all believers. What Paul sets forth is God's relationship to all believers. He is transcendent, pervasive, immanent.

Over all—suggesting His authority over them.

Through all—suggesting His power in them.

And in all—suggesting His likeness by them.

The starting point of the unity of the Spirit is God!

Has given to man one Lord...

That one Lord is His Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3)

In Revelation he is king of kings and lord of lords

In Ephesians he is head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23)

Our allegiance is totally to him and to no one else; thus our unity is based on our acceptance of the Lordship of Christ.

Ac. 2:36

Rom. 10:9

The unity of the Spirit is the result of embracing Jesus as Lord.

Leading to one faith and one baptism.

If it were the totality of all that we believe Paul would be incredibly redundant. The context suggests that the one faith is the teaching that we believe when we hear the gospel (Eph. 1:13) What men believe is:

That we are sinners who violated the law of God (Eph. 2:1)
That Jesus died, that he was buried, that he was raised for us (Eph.
And that through Him we can have forgiveness (Eph. 1:7)

The one baptism is the culminating manifestation of the acceptance of the gospel (Mk. 16:15-16)

It is immersion in water in the name of Jesus (upon the basis of His lordship) Ac. 2:38
For the remission of sins (Ac. 2:38)

Consequently we have become and are one body...

In baptism all those who embrace the one Lord enter the one body (1 Cor. 12:13).

That body is the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 5:22)

Indwelt by one Spirit...

That one Spirit is "the Holy Spirit" whom we receive in becoming a Christian (Eph. 2:22)

All those who enter the one body drink of one Spirit as the source of their spiritual life (1 Cor. 12:13).

All those who enter the one body are filled with the one Spirit who is the source of their power (Eph. 3:16)

Possessing one hope!

That hope is eternal life (Tit. 1:2)

Conclusion: Today the religious world seeks ecumenical or denominational union. Instead what we need is "the unity of the Spirit".

When men accept the gospel they can have access to one Father by the one Spirit as members of one body (Cf. Eph. 2:16-18). Every Christian is joined together in unity with every other Christian by this unity of the Spirit. When that happens all denominations of men will cease to exist!