

LESSON 5



BIBLE UNITY

Scripture Texts: Ephesians 2:14-18; John 17:11-23; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:3-6; Ephesians 1:10

As we look about us and see so much division, so many groups with different teachings, the one question which arises in most minds is, Who is right? The question that really matters is, What is right? Of which must one be saved to be a member? When one finds *what* is right he will find *who* is right.

There is but one true church. It is important that we find it. Unless a person is in the true church he is lost forever. Joining any human sect never saves one.

MEMORY VERSE: *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism.* *Ephesians 4:4-5*

Unity in Nationalities

Ephesians 2:14-18 In the first verses of this chapter, God, speaking through Paul, makes it plain that unity does not rest on intellectual ability or attainment, but on blood relationship (Christ's blood) to God. Both Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, are brought into one relationship in Christ Jesus. **For he is our peace, who hath made both one . . .** There can be no true peace without each member being made one. He began His plan for unity by preaching **peace to you which were afar off—the Gentile nation—and to them that were nigh—the Jews. For through him—through Christ—we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**

God recognized that worldlings could not be brought into unity without receiving a new Spirit, so it is no use for men to try it. Men make union but not unity. Man with his differences cannot be pressed or forced into Bible unity. No legislation can bring it. The Spirit causes all nations to flow together (Isaiah 2:2-5). They flow together into Zion—the Church of God. Notice the peace this unity brings in verses 4-5. This established one nation.

Unity in Name

John 17:11-20 Jesus prayed just before His crucifixion, **Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me . . .** All those given Christ were to bear the Father's name (Ephesians 3:14-15). The Bible was sealed in A.D. 97. Any name after that cannot be the true name. They are to be kept **that they may be one**, all united in one body with one name. It is to be done through God's name, His power, His life, His love, and His Spirit. The church bears God's name (it is called the church of God many times in the New Testament) as an outward mark of the fact of God's ownership and His relationship to it. It bears God's name as a wife bears the name of her husband. Assuming the name without the spiritual reality within his heart cannot place anyone in the church.

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name . . . Now He has sent His Word and His Spirit to keep His people one.

John 21-23 Jesus prayed that all who believe on Him **may be one**, not as worldly people are joined in associations, but even as the Father and Jesus are united—each in the other. **One in us—IN God and Christ. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.** In great measure the belief of the world upon Christ depends upon the true unity of the church. There are three essentials on which true unity depends:

- (1) The right name
- (2) The right Word
- (3) The right Spirit

We cannot be one family and have many different names. For one to receive his inheritance he must have the right name, must keep God's Word, and be sealed by God's Spirit.

Unity in Body

Romans 12:4-5 The church, being the body of Christ, bears a similarity to the human body. Our hands, feet, and other members are fitted to fill different uses, yet all are joined in one body. So is the church. Every member is joined with every other member in one body of Christ (Acts 4:32). How are we put into the one body? All are **made to drink into one Spirit** (1 Corinthians 12:13). Not by joining church, not by any form, not by anything outward or material. It is done by the Holy Spirit. God's people are born of the Spirit (John 3:5) and walk in the Spirit (Romans 8:1; Galatians 5:16). Because they all have the SAME Spirit, all are in one body, the one church. The only time the church is spoken of in the plural form is in congregations in different localities. When the Bible speaks of different doctrines it condemns them (Ephesians 4:14; Revelation 2:14-15, 20, 24).

Ephesians 4:3-6 All of God's children are united into one family. This is God's part. Our part is to **keep**—or to remain in—**the unity of the Spirit**. Walking in the Spirit keeps us in that bond of unity. Sin breaks fellowship and casts us out of the church. The body **MUST** be one because there is but one of each of the necessary provisions upon which the church depends—**One Spirit . . . hope . . . Lord . . . faith . . . baptism . . . God and Father**.

When we have the **unity of the Spirit** we will not use such phrases as "my church" and "your church." The Spirit draws us into the unity of one church. He furnishes us the virtues by which we can live and work in harmony with the rest of the church—**perfectly joined together . . . all speak the same thing** (1 Corinthians 1:10).

Physical Unity in Heaven

Ephesians 1:10 Now God's children both in Heaven and on earth are united in the name of God. The time is coming **in the dispensation of the fulness of times** when they will be brought together in bodily presence in one place (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17). Then unity will be complete, both spiritual and physical. Unity is a law of God in all realms. The heavenly bodies move in unity. The laws of nature work in harmony as one. Religious division, sectarianism, is contrary to God's nature. People cannot be pounded or tied together; they must be squeezed by God's love and then they will flow together in Bible unity.

JUST A THOUGHT

**When your face is toward the light
the shadows fall behind you.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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