

*Home Bible Study Series*

**7**

# **Critical Doctrines Of Christianity**

- 1. One God, the Father**
- 2. One Lord Jesus Christ**
- 3. One Holy Spirit**
- 4. One Faith—That Has  
been Once 'Revealed**
- 5. One Body, the Church**
- 6. One Baptism into Christ**
- 7. One Hope that Sustains**

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*Lesson One****"One God The Father"***

The Bible begins with the assumption of God: ***"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*** (Gen. 1:1). The Apostle Paul in his preaching at Athens to the great philosophers of that day began his sermon with this same assumption (Acts 17:22-29). The Scriptures do not attempt to prove the existence of God but just declare that God is. Mankind in general has believed in some kind of Superior being(s), but has been greatly confused over the nature of God. A great purpose of Scripture teaching is to help us to see the true nature and the true identity of God.

**One God versus many gods**

At the time Jesus lived on earth "idolatry" or a belief in many gods was prevalent among all nations but one—Judah still had those who believed in the one true God as well as many of the Jews who had been scattered among the nations. The Bible and secular history both show this to be true. Israel, as they came out of Egyptian Bondage were called upon to make a choice between one or many gods (Joshua 24:14-15). Paul's preaching at Athens shows this clearly (Acts 17:16, 22-29). The world that we live in now still has idol worship or a belief in many gods. The books of prophecy in the Old Testament continually contrast the choice between one or many gods that men invent (Isa. 37:14-20; 44:12-17, etc.).

The inspired Apostle Paul stated that man is without excuse for changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like corruptible man, birds, and animals (Rom. 1:18-23). In the preaching that was done among the Gentile Nations, they were called upon to turn from "dumb idols to the living God" (1 Thess. 1:8-9). Our danger today is the same "in principle"—we may not make images and worship them, but we can still dethrone God and make Him into something different from what He is (Mal. 1:6-8; 1 Tim. 2:5). Also, we can put things or people before Him rather than allowing Him first place in our hearts and lives (Matt. 22:37-38; Luke 14:26; Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:5).

The real issue seems to be as follows:

1. Men can know there is a God, but refuse to accept such;
2. So, the problem is not knowing, but a rebellious spirit on man's part;

3. Men can choose, and often do, to give up the true knowledge of God.
4. The Psalmists warns: "*The fool has said in his heart there is no God!*" (14:1).

### **Three-in-One Concept of God**

The Bible clearly emphasizes the triune nature of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit); yet, there is also a strong emphasis upon His "oneness." (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6; Exo. 20:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6). In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for "one" is "Echod." (Deut. 6:4). But this same word is used in reference to the joining together of a man and woman in the marital state (Gen. 2:24). It is possible that this word is used in what could be called a "composite unity or oneness." There is strong evidence of this composite unity in the first three chapters of Genesis:

**Gen. 1:1**—The Hebrew word for God is plural with a singular verb (Elohim).

**Gen. 1:1**—It is stated that God created....but Heb.11:3 indicates that Jesus in His pre-existent state did the creating.

**Gen. 1:2**—The Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

**Gen. 1:26**—Plural pronouns are used with reference to God---"us" and "our."

**Gen. 3:22**—Similar usage as 1:26—"us."

It is possible that the universe about us helps to illustrate this oneness of God. We can see a tri-unity all around us, such as:

- 1) **Time** is made up of Past, Present, and Future. It takes all three to make up time. Without any one, there is no time. Yet, each one is time.
- 2) **Space** is made up of Length, Height, and Depth. It takes all three to make up space. Without any one, there is no space. Yet, each one is space.
- 3) **Man** is made up of Body, Soul, and Spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). It takes all three to make up what God calls "man." Without any one of these, man would not be "man." Yet, in a sense each one is man.

God is pictured to us as: **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**. All three are required to make up God....and yet, each one is God or Deity. God is One—a composite unity—but He is presented to us as three personalities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

God is complete in Himself. He is never lonesome and has full resource within Himself. And so, as His people, we are One Body but many members (Rom. 12:5).

### **The "Father" Image of God**

Both the Old and New Testaments use this term "Father" in reference to God. (Isa. 1:1-3; 9:6; 63:16) (Matt. 5:16, 48; 6:6), etc. The emphasis is upon God being like a Father to us as His adopted children. What a blessing to have such a Father (1 Jn. 3:1).

1. He blesses us (Rom. 8:28)
2. He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7)
3. He protects us (2 Pet. 2:9)
4. He provides for us (Matt. 6:33)
5. He hears the cries of His children (1 Jn. 3:22)
6. He is preparing a place for us eternally (Jn. 14:1-3)

### **He Planned for our Redemption**

In our efforts to conceive of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we rank them in categories such as the following:

1. The Father is the Planner;
2. The Son is the Creator—brings the plans to fruition;
3. The Holy Spirit gives life to all.

When we look at man's redemption, we do somewhat the same thing: The Father planned for our Redemption from the beginning; The Son came and put the Plan into action in order to make Salvation or redemption possible; and the Holy Spirit gives life to all who obey the Gospel of Christ. Whether this is absolutely correct, I cannot say, but it does seem to fit the picture.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The "One God and Father" gives us a family image that we can easily identify with and see the value of. Sometimes our earthly fathers are not what they ought to be; so, we need a spiritual Father that can give us the perfect example of Fatherhood. God is a God of peace, not division and strife. He challenges us to oneness and unity for our own good. God redeems us and places us in the "One Body of Christ," but we have to maintain that oneness or unity by the way we conduct ourselves with others in the body of Christ.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

**True or False**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. The Bible assumes the existence of God and does not try to prove He exists.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Man's problem concerning God is to understand His nature, rather than His existence.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. In Jesus' time on earth, all nations were idolatrous but one.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Men can know there is a God, but refuses to accept such.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. The Bible states that men are without excuse for not believing in the one true God of heaven.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. "Idolatry" can be defined as putting anything before God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. Man's greater problem is rebellion rather than a lack of knowledge.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. "Deity" is revealed to us in the Bible as a "tri-une" being.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. There is strong evidence for this "tri-une" nature of God in the first three chapters of the Old Testament.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Our universe is filled with "triunities."
  
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. God is complete in Himself and does not need any thing or any one.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. Both the Old and New Testaments use the term "Father" with reference to God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 13. God is pictured in Scripture as the "perfect" Father for mankind.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. God, the Son, created all things—not God, the Father.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 15. It is the Spirit that gives life—not God, the Father.

## Lesson Two

***"One Lord Jesus the Christ"***

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-20); born of the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:23); grew up as a human being (Luke 2:52); lived a sinless life (1 Pet. 2:22); and then offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins (Phil. 2:8). As a result, God raised Him up from the grave and set Him on His Own Right Hand:

- 1) **Exalting Him highly;**
- 2) **Given a name which is above all other names;**
- 3) **So that all should bow before Him;**
- 4) **And that all should confess that Jesus is Christ and Lord to the glory of God (Phil. 2:9-11).**

The Apostle Peter stated by inspiration that this was foretold by David (Acts 22:32-33). Daniel also indicated this in his vision about One like a Son of Man ascending to the Ancient of Days....and He was given: ***"dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him."*** (Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus is KING over His kingdom!

**KING OVER HIS KINGDOM**

The Prophet Daniel foretold of Jesus being given a kingdom, but David was told by God that one of his descendants would sit on the throne of this kingdom (2 Samuel 7:13-14). Peter indicated that this kingdom was set up with Jesus sitting on David's throne in about AD 29-30 (Acts 2:33-35; 8:12; Col. 1:13-14). Jesus did not come to set up an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom! (John 18:36-37). The Jewish people were expecting an earthly kingdom because they had already pre-judged what kind of a kingdom it would be. Jesus made it clear that His kingdom is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, joy, and peace (Rom. 14:17). It is called the "kingdom of heaven" because it is of heaven, not of this earth. Jesus is reigning on His Throne in heaven, not on the earth. He came so that God could reign in the hearts and lives of men—not in a political or material manner. The kingdom of Christ is His church (Matt. 16:18-19; Luke 22:29-30). When Christ returns for His own, then He will give up His reign and deliver the kingdom up to the Father (1 Cor. 15:23-27). John, the baptizer, came preaching: ***"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*** (Matt. 3:2). About three years later, Jesus is sitting (figuratively speaking) on the throne of David (in heaven!). Paul stated clearly that ***"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"*** (1 Cor. 15:50). Those who make up this kingdom must be "born again" of the water and the Spirit! (John 3:3-5). It is a spiritual birth into a spiritual kingdom! But, it is also an "everlasting kingdom" (2 Pet. 1:11).

## JESUS IS LORD

Jesus is to be confessed as "Lord" to our salvation (Rom. 10:9). To confess Him as Lord is to confess Him as "Deity!" But, it is also giving recognition to his authority over us. In Jesus' time on earth the word (κυριος) was used with reference to idolatrous gods, Roman Emperors, and high ranking officials in the empire (1 Cor. 8:5). Among the Jews, it was used with reference to God—denoting His Sovereign authority over mankind (or over heaven and earth) (Matt. 11:25; 9:38; Acts 17:24; Rev. 4:11). Two of the words in the Old Testament that were used of Deity were (Adonai and Yahveh). When the New Testament quotes passages with these two names, they are used to identify Jesus (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1—Mark 1:3), etc. The 12 disciples used the term to refer to Jesus. He stated: ***"You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."*** (Jn. 13:13-14). Jesus taught the people as ***"One having authority!"*** .... and He did! (Matt. 7:29). While on earth Jesus was Lord, but it was after his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension that He was so highly exalted by God, the Father (Phil. 2:9-11). He has been seated at the right hand of the Father, been given a name that is above every name, and at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (in heaven, on earth, and under the earth), and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father!(Eph. 1:20-23).

But, it is one thing to recognize and confess that Jesus is Lord and quite another to truly let Him be the Lord of my life! Confessing Jesus as Lord is required, but so is obedience as well. Confessing without obedience is hypocrisy (James 2:22-27). Jesus openly rebuked the people in one of His audiences with these words: ***"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"*** (Luke 6:46). He went on to point out the blessings that come to the person that not only hears Jesus' words, but does them! (Luke 6:47-49). The Apostle John stated it this way: ***"He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous."*** (1 John 3:7). He warns his readers not to deceive themselves into thinking otherwise. If Jesus is truly Lord of our lives, we will be obedient to His Will—without questioning! Love for the Lord will cause us to be obedient servants of Jesus (1 John 5:3).

## THE DEMANDING "LORD"

Towards the end of Jesus' public ministry, many of His disciples turned and walked no more with Him. Why? Why would anyone in their right mind turn from the only One who could give them eternal life? (John 6:59-69).



The answer given was brief and to the point: "*This is a hard saying who can understand?*" Jesus wanted followers who trusted in Him so His demands would be followed. Discipleship to Jesus is not determined by our wishes or our convenience, but by His Will or His Commands. He sets the standards to be met for those who want to answer His call. The very concept of being a disciple is one who is willing to be taught and willing then to put those things into practice in one's life.

Several different expressions are used to communicate Jesus' demands for being His follower. Some of the more obvious are found in Matthew and Luke's Gospels. The following will give a general idea of what would be involved.

- 1) **Take up one's cross (Matt. 16:24).** Whatever burdens or hardships that may be placed on us because we are a disciple of Jesus, we must willingly bear it!
- 2) **Deny one's self (Matt. 16:24).** A person will either do his own will, or the will of someone else, or the Will of God. He makes the choice! Jesus is calling for us to do the Will of the Father in heaven if we want to follow Him.
- 3) **Lose one's life (Matt. 16:25).** To try to keep one's life for himself is to lose it, but to give up one's life for righteousness, he will gain it.
- 4) **Hate parents and family (Luke 14:25-26).** The concept of hate in this place carries with it the idea of loving them less than God. If we love them more than God, then when a choice has to be made between listening to them or God, we will choose our family over God!

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Jesus' demands are not arbitrary, but practical. A choice has to be made as to which will be first in our lives—God or other things, or other people! (Matt. 6:24). It just isn't possible to serve two masters! If we are not willing to renounce all, we cannot be a true follower of Jesus. Jesus wants to be the Lord of our lives, the King over His subjects—for our own good!

Many want the blessings that Jesus offers, but are not willing for Him to be the Lord of their lives. Many voices are calling out and making their appeal for people to follow them. They make an appeal to our selfish interest to get a following. The appeal that Jesus makes is to let Him be the Lord of our life and He will give us "eternal life" with the Father (Rev. 2:10). It is up to us to make the choice of who we will follow. Why not follow Jesus—for only He can give us eternal life (John 6:68; 14:6).

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**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. When was Jesus to be given the position of King over His domain? (Dan. 7:13-14)
  
2. Was Jesus "Lord" and "King" while He was on earth?
  
3. What is the difference between being "Lord" and "King?"
  
4. How does Jesus identify His kingdom? (John 18:36-37; Rom. 14:17)
  
5. How does one come under Jesus' kingship? (John 3:3-5)
  
6. Why must one confess Jesus to be Lord? (Rom. 10:"9)
  
7. Did Jesus acknowledge His Lordship? (John 13:13-14)
  
8. Why did some of Jesus' followers leave Him? (John 6:66-69)
  
9. What are some of the demands of Jesus if we are to let Him be the Lord of our life? (Matt. 16:24-25; Luke 14:26-27)
  
10. How do we show our hypocrisy to Jesus as Lord?

*Lesson Three****"One Holy Spirit"***

We believe that the "composite oneness" of Deity is identified as "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit." My ability to fully explain this concept to answer all questions is thankfully not a pre-requisite to my believing such. Faith is not "sight," but faith is based on sufficient evidence that I can believe something to be true or real. There is no question in my mind that Deity is presented to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20). The passage in Eph. 4:4-6 stresses that there is only "one Father," "one Son" (or one Lord Jesus the Christ), and "one (Holy) Spirit." In this lesson, we will be looking at the importance of there being "one Spirit." God is a Spirit (Jn. 4:24), but there is only "one Spirit." Man is made up of both physical and "spirit" (Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:23), but there is only "one Spirit!" Demons and the Devil are evidently spirit beings (along with all the Holy Angels)(Heb. 1:14), but there is only "one Spirit!" Let's examine together to see why there is only "one Spirit."

**The Personage of the Holy Spirit**

Because we are human and basically understand things from a human (person) standpoint, we use the term "person" to identify with God, the Father, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit. A "person" to us has Life, Thought, Volition, Action, Individuality, Character, and Influence. The Bible indicates that the Holy Spirit has all of these things. It is also said of Him that:

1. He lives, He wills, He acts;
2. He has a separate individuality from the Father and the Son;
3. He has a particular character and possesses influence.

Personhood is indicated by such things as:

1. Possessing the ability to think (Rom. 8:27);
2. Possessing knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11);
3. Having affections (Rom. 15:30);
4. Having a will (1 Cor. 12:11);
5. Having names and titles (Spirit of Truth, Comforter, Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, etc.).
6. Using "personal pronouns" to identify the person (Jn. 14:26).

The Scriptures obviously attributed all of the above to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not an "it" or a "thing," but a person in the general sense of the use of this word.

**The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Miraculous gifts come from God but which person of the Godhead gives

these gifts? Where there is specificity, such gifts come from the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 12:1-11; Acts 19:1-7). The "gift" of the Holy Spirit promised by Peter in Acts 2:38 could be the "indwelling" of the Holy Spirit in the new child of God. But the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit would be those miraculous abilities that are listed in 1 Cor. 12-14 that were given in the early church before the New Testament was fully revealed and written down. It is very important to know why such "gifts" were given so that we do not draw wrong conclusions about these gifts still being given to men today. The Scriptures clearly state why such gifts were given (Jn. 20:30-31; Mk. 16:17-20; Heb. 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:7; 13:8-9; 14:4, 12, 22, 25-26, 40).

Two facts should be evident from the above information: (1) That those who claim to speak "for God" needed to have a miraculous sign to prove they were speaking God's message and not their own; and (2) That the new Churches being established all over the world needed to have these gifts in order to teach correctly the message of God so the church could be built up and matured in Christ Jesus. Once the "New Covenant" message was given completely and confirmed as being from God, there would be no longer a need for the miraculous gifts—they would cease (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

### **The Work of the One Holy Spirit**

Deity's desire is to bring men back into a relationship or fellowship with Himself so that he can be blessed here and be with God for all eternity. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection has made such possible to those who will put their trust in Him. The Spirit's work is not only to convict and bring men back to God; but, as well, to keep them faithful in their obedience to God. He does this through the use of the Word of God being read or heard, believed, and obeyed. That is the reason why such admonitions are given in His Word to:

1. Feed on the Word of God (1 Pet. 2:1-2);
2. Be filled with the Word of Christ (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18);
3. To be willing to be taught, reproved, corrected, and instructed in the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

If we will do the above, then the Spirit through the Word of God can give us:

1. Assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:16);
2. Strength to live godly (Eph. 3:16; Acts 20:32);
3. Comfort in the midst of life's trials (Acts 9:31; Rom. 15:4);

### **The Deity of the Holy Spirit**

Several terms are used in Scripture to refer to the Supreme Being of the universe: God, Deity, Divinity, Godhead, Jehovah, God Almighty, Lord, etc. One strong emphasis of Scripture is that there is but One God (not many gods).

However, the Bible pictures God as:

- 1) One God, but in three personages of equal rank and dignity.
- 2) Yet, in some sense there is a certain subordination of function and manifestation.
- 3) Three in One—a tri-unity—a trinity!

And, of course, three different terms are used to identify each personage of the God head: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Holy Spirit is identified with Deity by a reasoning process. In Acts 5:1-4, Peter said that Ananias had lied to the “Holy Spirit” (verse 3); but, he also said that he had lied to “God” (verse 4). We could conclude that the Holy Spirit is God. What Isaiah records in Isaiah 6:1-13 as being spoken by Jehovah, Paul by inspiration attributes such to the Holy Spirit in Acts 28:25. This is even a stronger indication of the Deity of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is associated on an equal basis with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

- 1) He was with the "Father" at creation (Gen. 1:1-3);
- 2) He was with the "Father" at the baptism of the "Son" (Lk. 3:21-22)
- 3) Jesus speaks of the Father sending the Comforter (John 14:16).
- 4) The Father gives us the Spirit and we become heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:12-17).

For the Holy Spirit to be Deity, He must possess the attributes of Deity. Scripture shows Him to have such attributes:

- 1) He is spoken of as the “eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:14).
- 2) He is said to know all things, even the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:10-11).
- 3) There is no place man can go from the Spirit of God (Ps. 139:7).
- 4) His holiness is noted by His special name—Holy Spirit.
- 5) He is the giver of life (John 3:5).
- 6) He is all-powerful (Micah 3:8).
- 7) He was involved in the creation of the universe (Ps. 104:30).
- 8) He performs miracles and will be involved in the resurrection of man’s bodies (1 Cor. 12:4-11; Rom. 8:11).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

There is no indication that the Holy Spirit works directly upon a person to save them or to guide them; but, rather, He does His work through the written or

preached Word of God. A statement that I believe cannot be refuted that would show this—*"There are no Christians anywhere in the world where the Word of God has not been taught or read!"* His work "in us" is accomplished by our hearing, believing and obeying the Word of God! He has given to mankind the Message of Redemption. It is our job to see that it is spread throughout the world so that men might hear it, believe it, and obey it to be saved and live godly lives until death (Rev. 2:10).

### **Questions for Discussion**

#### True or False

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. It is necessary to fully understand Deity before I can believe in the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. If God is Spirit, and man is spirit, and the demons and the devil are spirits, then there is more than one spirit.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. The term "person" is used in reference to God because that is the only way we have of identifying Him for our understanding.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Using the term "person" in reference to God does not take away from His Deity.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. The Divinity of the Holy Spirit has been questioned by some through the centuries, but the evidence is overwhelming in the Scriptures to believe in His Deity.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Miraculous gifts can only come from God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. The "gift" or the Holy Spirit and the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit are different concepts.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. The New Testament actually lists the "gifts" of the Spirit that were given in the first century church.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. The Scriptures do not really state why the "gifts" were given in the early church.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Miraculous gifts were used to confirm that the message being spoken came from God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 11. Miraculous gifts were mentioned as being in churches over the world.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 12. The New Testament (Covenant) was definitely given by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 13. The New Testament was written down so that future generation could have the same message that the early church had.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 14. We do not need the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit today because we have the same full revelation that these gifts were designed to give to the early church..

*Lesson Four****"The One Faith That has been Once Revealed"***

The Bible states that there is “one God and Father,” “one Lord Jesus Christ,” and “one Faith (Ephesians 4:4-6). We have previously looked at reasons for believing in the One God, One Lord, and One Spirit—now, we want to see the reasons for believing in “**the faith**” or “**one faith.**” It is important to identify what the “one faith” of Ephesians four is talking about.

Contained within the Bible is what is called the “New Covenant” that God wants to make with mankind. This New Covenant is the basic beliefs and practices of what we refer to as “Christianity.” Jude, in his short letter, is reminding his readers of their receptivity of “the faith” that was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3)—which faith is to be upheld or contended for with diligence. Jesus, obviously, is the giver of this New Covenant or “the faith” (Hebrews 1:1-2; 9:13-17). But Jesus also brought us “the truth” (John 1:17; 14:6; Galatians 3:23). It is this truth that can set us free from the bondage of sin (John 8:32) and sanctify us before God (John 17:17). The expression, “the truth,” would seem to be used synonymously with “the faith.” We are to believe “the truth,” but we are to also believe “the faith.” We are to hold to and follow “the truth,” as well as to hold to and follow “the faith” (Acts 6:7). Our souls are purified upon our obedience to “the truth” (1 Peter 1:22), but we are also called upon to be obedient to “the faith” in order to be right with God (Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 16:26).

**WHAT IS THE ONE FAITH (THE FAITH)?**

From the above, we would suggest that the “one faith” is “the faith” or the “common faith” (Titus 1:4) which was once delivered to God’s people. It is that body of beliefs and practices that: (1) Has to be preached (Galatians 1:23) for people to hear, believe, and obey to be right with God; (2) Must be held to (2 Timothy 4:7), contended for (Philippians 1:27), be steadfast in (Acts 14:22; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:9), be grounded and established in (Colossians 1:23; 2:7), and to be sound in (Titus 1:13). Those who are weak in “the faith” are to be encouraged and helped (Romans 14:1). The whole church is to be established in “the faith” (Acts 16:5) and be unified in “the faith” (Ephesians 4:13). We are exhorted to examine ourselves to be sure we are in “the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Those who are in “the faith” are also “in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 3:13).

The following passages help us to see that "the faith" is an expression used to denote also "the word of God" or the "gospel."

1. **Acts 6:7**—The word of God spread and people were obedient to the faith.
2. **Acts 13:7-8**—The proconsul heard the word of God, but Elymas sought to turn him from the faith.
3. **Acts 14:21-22**—They preached the gospel and they exhorting the hearers to continue in the faith.
4. **Rom. 1:5**—All peoples were called to be obedient to the faith.
5. **Gal. 1:23**—Saul now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.
6. **Phil. 1:27**—Christians are to stand fast in the faith of the gospel.

It would seem obvious that the expression "the faith" has reference to the word of God or the gospel of Christ. The Bible stresses that there is but "one faith" or "one gospel" (Eph. 4:5; Gal. 1:6-9). This expression would seem to carry with it the idea of something that has been given and is complete and final and should be not only held to but contended for! See 2 Pet. 1:3; John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). "The faith" is not something to be taken lightly, ignored, or be indifferent to; but rather, it is to be contended for! It contains and gives directions to all peoples on how to be saved and live a righteous life in order to receive a "crown of righteousness." It can furnish us completely for every good work that should be done. The Apostles were to be guided into all truth (Jn. 16:13); therefore, we can conclude that "the faith" was completely given during the life-time of the Apostles! After their death, there was to be no more added to "the faith." It was complete, final, and once for all delivered to mankind in general and to the "saints" in particular. Religious leaders of various kinds who claim to believe in Jesus, but claim to have "latter day revelation" are in direct opposition to what Jude has stated by the inspiration of God! Such persons as Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy, and a host of others are all false prophets with a false message. Even when men meet in religious conferences or synods and give a pronouncement—it is false unless it agrees with "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Once "the faith" is delivered, it never changes (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 2:2).

It is important that we diligently hold to "the faith" because there are those who will strive to lead us from it. If we do not have the courage to uphold what we claim to believe—it puts in doubt as to whether we really believe such or not. It is also important that we do not go to extremes in this matter. It is necessary to contend for the faith, but with the proper spirit. But to have a "namby-pamby" spirit and unwilling to stand up for that which is truth certainly shows a great weakness on our part and would seem to put us in danger of being led astray from the faith. Please read Paul's exhortations in regards to this matter: (2 Tim. 4:1-5; Tit. 2:1; 1 Tim. 6:3-5, 20-21).



Logically, we evaluate the end result of something to determine if we want to believe or follow that particular teaching or set of beliefs. The purpose of the “one faith” is to make us right with God—to cleanse us, to sanctify us, to forgive us, and to bring us into a saved relationship with God. The reason for holding to the “one faith” is to make sure we keep this relationship with God intact. If we depart from the faith, we depart from God (2 John 9). And....the dangers or possibilities are real. Several warnings are given in the New Covenant Scriptures about the dangers of departing from “the faith” (1 Timothy 4:1). It is possible to deny “the faith” also (2 Timothy 2:18). Any deviations from “the faith” can be dangerous according to the Apostle Paul in Galatians 1:6-9. We are strongly urged to abide in the teaching of Christ (the faith) in order to keep our relationship with the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

### **REWARDS OF THE ONE FAITH (THE FAITH)**

To believe and obey “the faith” is to bring us into a saved state with God. To continue to believe and obey “the faith” is to maintain our relationship with God. But why is this so important to us? To hold to “the faith” opens up to us the great assurances needed by man. Life has its challenges and trials. We need something to hold to that gives meaning and purpose to our existence upon this earth—as well as the motivation to hold to something that is firm and sure. “The faith” gives us the assurance of God’s love (1 John 4:16), God’s promised care over our lives (Hebrews 13:5-6), God’s promise of working out all things for our good (Romans 8:28), God’s promise that He will not bring upon us more than we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13), and the assurance of God’s mercy and continued forgiveness when we fall short of perfect obedience to “the faith” (1 John 1:7-10). But especially, when we face death or the death of a loved one, we need assurance of what to expect for them or us beyond this life (1 John 5:12-13).

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

What a blessing to have assurance that we are so tied with God that we can face whatever life may bring us and in death be prepared to go home to be with Him (Psalm 23). The Apostle Paul stated this assurance for himself in this way: ***“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”*** (2 Timothy 1:12). Of all “the faiths” in this world, “the one faith” given by God through His son (Hebrews 1:1-2) is the one alone in which men can have full confidence. Have you believed and obeyed this “one faith?” If you have, are you still sound in it?

**True or False**

- \_\_\_ 1. There are many “faiths,” but only “one faith” given by God.
- \_\_\_ 2. “The faith” and “the truth” are one and the same thing.
- \_\_\_ 3. Assurance of eternal life is only given to those who hold to the “one faith.”
- \_\_\_ 4. God wants His people to be unified in “the faith.”
- \_\_\_ 5. A person can be weak in “the faith” and needs to have help.
- \_\_\_ 6. A person cannot examine himself to see if he is in “the faith.”
- \_\_\_ 7. Those who are in “the faith” are in Christ.
- \_\_\_ 8. A person can err from “the faith” only if he is forced to do so.
- \_\_\_ 9. It is possible for someone to preach another Gospel (the faith) and be condemned by God.
- \_\_\_ 10. The end result of a certain kind of life should help us make wise decisions.

*Lesson Five****"The One Body the Church"***

If a person were to go to the "World Christian Encyclopedia" with the intent to look up information on the church, he would be amazed at the great divisiveness and fragmentation of what is called by men "the church." At the time this Encyclopedia was completed there were 20,800 different (distinct) churches listed. This is in stark contrast to our lesson today—The One Body or Church of Christ! (Eph. 4:4). It is an obvious fact beyond dispute that in the beginning of Christianity there was but one body or church. All who obeyed the Gospel were added to this group of redeemed people (Acts 2:47). If someone were to ask: "*What has happened,*" the answer should be obvious—man has made a lot of changes! (2 John 9-11). To learn about this "One Body" we must go to the source—the Word of God!

**The One Body is the One Church**

The "One body" is the spiritual body of Christ. Thus, the "One body" of Christ is the "One church of Christ." (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). Jesus is the head of this body, the church. There is but one head over one body! The church and Christ are not a "freak," but that which is natural all around us—one head over one body. Headship carries with it the concept of authority over the body (the church). The body is either in subjection to the head or in rebellion against the head. When the Scriptures use the phrase "*the churches of Christ salute you,*" it is not referring to different churches, but the same church (congregation) in different localities. (Rom. 16:16). It is also obvious that a body is made up of many members; and, in the same way, the church is made up of many members—but they make up that "One Body of Christ (the church)." (1 Cor. 12:12).

**The One Body is the New Kingdom of God**

The kingdom about which the prophets foretold and that John and Jesus proclaimed was at hand was set up and established on the first Pentecost after the Resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2). This was to be a new kingdom, not like the one with which the Jewish nation was familiar in their past experiences. The Messiah would reign over this new kingdom. He would govern His people. God was king over the Jewish nation at first, but the people clamored for a king like the nations around them; thus, rejecting God as their only king (1 Samuel 8:1-7). Under this new kingdom, God again would be their king (through the reign of Jesus) over His people.

### THE CHURCH IS THE "CALLED OUT"

The literal translation of the Greek word "ecclesia" is "the called out." With reference to what we call "the church," it is the called out people of God. Descriptive phrases are used to identify these special "called out" people. In each case the emphasis is upon the one to whom they belong.

1. Church of God (1 Cor. 1:1-2).
2. Church of Christ (Rom. 16:16).
3. Kingdom of God (Acts 19:8).
4. Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13).
5. Temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17).
6. Family of God (Eph. 3:14-15)
7. Body of Christ (Col. 1:18)

### THE NATURE OF THIS CALLING

God's people today are a separated people, separated out from among the peoples of all nations, to be the new kingdom of God upon earth. In the Greek New Testament, these people are referred to as the "EKKLESIA:" that is, the "called out" people of God. The Scriptures speak of this calling in various concepts. The following will illustrate:

- 1) It is a heavenly calling. (Hebrews 3:1)
- 2) It is a holy calling (1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:15).
- 3) It is a divine calling (1 Peter 5:10; 1 Corinthians 7:15; 2 Timothy 1:7-9)

**How are these people called out?** Does God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit call people directly by a "still small voice" inside of our being or an audible voice that we can hear with our ears? The Bible states that men have a divine calling, but does not stop there. It makes it clear how this calling is accomplished. It is done by Jesus when He expressed His loving invitation in these words: ***"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*** (Matthew 11:28). Or, as He stated to the church at Laodicea: ***"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."*** (Revelation 3:20) Thus, God's call to man is in the normal way of communicating to one another—by words! But God's call is accomplished today by some very special words that is called "the gospel!" We are called by God through the preaching of this gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). He does this calling through His servants' preaching or teaching His message of hope to others (2 Corinthians 5:20). Neither God, nor Christ, nor the Holy Spirit come to each individual directly,

but calls each through His revealed Will to man (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:21-24).

**Into what are people called?** This calling of God is for men to leave something and come into something. It is to be called out of the world (2 Corinthians 6:17) or darkness (Colossians 1:13) so that redeemed men can come into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13-14). Men are called into a fellowship with God and other redeemed people into the "one body" of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9; Colossians 3:15). Men are called to be saints (sanctified, cleansed, set apart people) of God (1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Romans 1:7). It is lost prodigal mankind that is being called to be the children of God (Romans 9:25-26; 1 John 3:1). And such are called upon to live worthily of such a calling by God (2 Thess. 1:11-12). The church is made up of a separated people unto God (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

### **THE CHURCH IS A UNIVERSAL BODY OF REDEEMED PEOPLE**

**All Nations were to flow into it.** This new church of God was to be made up of people from all nations, tongues, and kindred (Revelation 5:9-10). Isaiah foretold of all nations flowing into the Lord's house (Isaiah 2:2-3). The Revelation letter pictures it as a reality (Revelation 7:1-12). The Jews made up the kingdom of God under the Old Covenant as a special people of God on earth. Jeremiah foretold of a New Covenant to be given to the Jewish people (Jeremiah 31:31-34) that would replace the Old Covenant which they had broken. But, in addition, the Gentiles were also to be brought under this New Covenant, as well, and both Jew and Gentile would make up the new kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:16). Following are the prophecies that show this: 1) Hosea 2:23 (Romans 9:25); 2) Hosea 1:10 (Romans 9:26); 3) Isaiah 11:1 (Romans 15:12); 4) Isaiah 42:6 (Acts 13:47); 5) Isaiah 42:7 (Matthew 4:15-16); 6) Amos 9:11 (Acts 15:16-18).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

**A universal body under Christ as Head.** A body has **ONE** head and a head has only **ONE** body. Yet, the body is made up of "many members" (1 Corinthians 12:14). Each local congregation is made up of "many members." Each member has its special function; yet, they are all members of the same body (1 Corinthians 12:12). The same would also be true of every congregation of God's people. They have the same head and are the same body of Christ as any other congregation. The word of God does not advocate a church for Jews and a church for Gentiles that is different, but they are both in the one body of

Christ (Ephesians 2:16). It is to be the same body or church throughout the world—it is a universal body of saved believers.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. What is meant by the expression "called out people of God?"
2. What is the privilege we can enjoy as a branch tied to Christ as the Vine?
3. What do priests do in a temple?
4. What kind of calling has the church received?
5. How are people called into this kingdom?
6. What made it possible for Jew and Gentile to be in One Body in Christ?
7. Is it possible to trace Christ's kingdom through the centuries....that is, His faithful people?

### **TRUE OR FALSE**

- \_\_\_ 1. Christ is pictured as being many things in relationship to His church.
- \_\_\_ 2. The church is to come out of the world.
- \_\_\_ 3. The church is related both to God and Christ at the same time.
- \_\_\_ 4. The church has no ONE official name.
- \_\_\_ 5. Jew and Gentile have separate churches in the kingdom.
- \_\_\_ 6. A body can have many heads.
- \_\_\_ 7. A head can only be over one body.
- \_\_\_ 8. Christ is king over many different kingdoms, as well as head over many different churches.

## Lesson Six

***"The One Baptism into Christ"***

There has been for many years a question about the meaning of the word "baptism." People want to know how it is to be administered—is the person to be "**sprinkled with water,**" "**have water poured over him,**" or is the person to be "**immersed in water?**" What makes the answer to this question critical deals with another vital question about baptism—is it essential or necessary in order to be saved or to be made right with God? Both of these questions deal with the issue on how to approach and study the Bible to arrive at its vital truths. This lesson will deal with both of these questions.

**The Meaning of the Word "Baptize"**

Unfortunately, those who have translated the Bible into English have been a major cause of so much questioning over baptism. They could have easily solved the problem, but they have not done so (and will not do so!). The Greek word has not been translated, but merely "transliterated" into our English language. If you will look at the Greek word below and fill in the English equivalents, you can see the truth of this matter.

Greek Word-----**Βαπτίζω**

English Letters-----Baptizo

Most of us have been exposed to the Greek Alphabet so that we can pretty well figure out that the translators only transliterated and did not translate the Greek word. This leaves the average Bible reader with two choices: (1) To try to find if the Scriptures actually tell us how baptism is to be performed; or (2) To look up the meaning of the Greek word in a Greek Lexicon. Please look up the following Scriptures and see if they give an "indication" or a "statement" as to how baptism was performed.

**John 3:23** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 8:35-38** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 8:39** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 6:4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 6:5** \_\_\_\_\_

**Colossians 2:12** \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to the above Scriptures, the definition of the word makes it very clear how the act is to be administered.

1. *"to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge"*
2. *"To cleanse by dipping or submerging"*
3. *Metaphorically, "To overwhelm"*

----Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

Thus, not only does the Bible tell us the "how" to administer "baptism" but the meaning of the Greek word supports it clearly.

### **Three Different Actions: Sprinkling, Pouring, and Immersion**

Three different English words are used to describe how some feel that baptism is to be administered: Sprinkling, Pouring, and Immersion. However, these are three different actions and cannot be the same. An interesting fact about these three words is that the Greek language has three **different** words for these **different** actions.

**Rantizo** is translated "sprinkling" in such passages as Hebrews 9:13.

**Cheo** is translated "pouring" in such passages as Acts 2:17.

**Baptizo** is described as a burial in such passages as Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.

These are three different words and three different actions. God chose the Greek word that He commanded of men—**Baptizo—to dip, to submerge, to immerse**. If Jesus is Lord, then we will do what He commands (Lk. 6:46).

### **The Necessity of the "One Baptism"**

We now need to look into the necessity of water baptism. It is a command that we can obey and must obey (Lk. 6:46) in order to be acceptable to God. It is interesting to notice that in every case where "water baptism" is mentioned and "salvation" or its equivalent is mentioned in the same passage—that "salvation" or its equivalent always came to a person after being "immersed in water" in obedience to God's will. Notice these Scriptures:

**Mark 16:16**—*"He who believes and is baptized will be saved"*

**John 3:5**—*"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

**Acts 2:38**—*"Repent and....be baptized....for the remission of sins."*

**Acts 22:16**—*"Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins."*



**Rom. 6:4**—*"buried with Him through baptism.....walk in newness of life"*

**Rom. 6:17-18**—*"you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine...and having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."*

**Col. 2:12-13**—*"buried with Him in baptism.....made alive...having forgiven you all trespasses."*

**1 Pet.1:22-23**—*"you have purified your souls in obeying the truth..... having been born again."*

**1 Pet. 3:20-21**—*"eight souls, were saved through water.....an antitype which now saves us—baptism"*

### **Concluding Thoughts**

We believe that the evidence is overwhelming for immersion. However, a question could be asked: *"If the evidence is so overwhelming for immersion, then why do so many churches practice sprinkling?"* We believe the answer should be obvious—**The authority of men has replaced the authority of God and His Word!**

Which authority do you recognize, respect, and go by? Have you been immersed into Christ upon a confession of your faith in Him as being the Son of God....for the remission of sins? (Acts 2:38). God's word says that it is necessary—have you obeyed God?

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. "Baptizo" is a Greek word that **cannot** be translated!
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. There is no different between transliteration and translation.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. The New Testament no where tells us how "baptism" was performed.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Greek Lexicons translate the word "Baptizo" as a choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. This Greek word is used in a figurative or metaphorical way in the New Testament.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. There are no Greek words for "sprinkling" or "pouring" in the New Testament.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. It is not important to know what God is commanding of us in the Greek word "baptizo."
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. John's baptism did not end at the time of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. "Salvation" or its equivalent never comes before baptism, it is always (without an exception) after baptism.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Baptism in water has nothing to do with receiving the remission of our sins.

## Lesson Seven

**"One Hope That Sustains"**

Human beings are creatures of motivation—"What's in it for me?" We have to see some value or purpose for doing things. Why should I want to live a righteous life? Why should I deny myself the indulgence in all the tempting activities of this world? The question of why continually comes up and demands some kind of an answer because we are creatures of motivation. Our children continually remind us of this fact by their wanting to know why, why, why?

The Bible talks about the "one hope" (not many) of the Gospel—that is, the hope of Heaven. There are various Bible terms that express this idea of the "one Hope"—"everlasting life" (Matthew 25:46), "many mansions" (John 14:1), "new Heaven and Earth" (2 Peter 3:13), etc. If you were to ask someone, "Do you want to go to Heaven?"—I think that a large % would definitely say "yes!" A survey was conducted among 500 persons that desired to be preachers. Here are four of the questions and their response:

1) Is there life after death?	(No—8%)	(Yes—92%)
2) Is there a Judgment Day?	(No—39%)	(Yes—61%)
3) Is there a Hell?	(No—69%)	(Yes—31%)
4) Is there a Heaven?	(No—41%)	(Yes—59%)

While they seem to be confused on their Bible knowledge, it is hoped that they can become more knowledgeable before they begin to preach. Survey after survey shows a high % of people that do say "Yes!" Going to Heaven is one of the great motivating factors that God has placed before us to get us to live righteous.

We can be motivated by various things: money, desire for education, thrill or excitement, profit, fear, love, etc. We can also be motivated to do various things: to go to work, to go to school, to dress neat, to make plans and carry them out, to buy, to sell, etc. When you see a sloppy, lazy, spineless, dirty quitter—you see someone not motivated. Give him the right motivation and his life will be changed.

God uses many things to motivate us: fear of punishment, gratitude and thankfulness, sense of duty, rewards, blessings, etc. Possibly, our greatest motivation is Heaven. Heaven is God's "carrot stick" to lure us unto Himself. It is God's answer to man's question: "What's in it for me?" "Why should I serve God?" "Why should I want to be a Christian?"

### **One Hope**

*"...always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear"* (1 Pet. 3:15). "Hope" is a strong underlying concept in our lives whether we recognize it or not. However, the word is used in different ways, so it is necessary to clarify what we are talking about when we discuss the hope that is in us.

1. People often say: *"I hope you are okay"* (wishful thinking).
2. Others may say: *"I am hoping to inherit a lot of money"* (A desire, but not something that is certain).
3. When we talk about our hope in Christ, we are referring to a hope that is built upon strong evidence (certainty).

Biblical hope or the "one hope" of the Christian is based on firm evidences to give us assurance of what is ahead for us. This evidence is in various forms:

1. Old Testament passages that show the dependability of God's promises (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11).
2. The assurance that God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18).
3. The assurance of a resurrection unto Judgment (John 5:28-29; Rom. 1:4).
4. The assurance of a resurrection unto eternal life with God (1 John 5:13).
5. Our hope is also based on our belief (obedience) or faithfulness (Rev. 2:10).

We are actually being exhorted to give a defense for our hope (1 Pet. 3:15)—that is, to give reasons for having this hope (Rom. 8:24).

### **We are Saved by This Hope!**

Rom. 8:24 states that we are saved by hope! It gives us great motivation to continue faithful to the end. It is worth the price that must be paid to receive this hope at the end of life. However, it is important to note that we have not yet received what we hope for. Hope ends when we receive that for which we hope (Rom. 8:24-25). With a strong confidence in this hope, we can:

1. Live with confidence and face the future with courage;
2. We can meet life's trials and challenges triumphantly;
3. We can walk in the light daily (constantly) with assurance;
4. We cannot turn our back on God, but constantly submit to His will;
5. We can be assured of the continual cleansing by the blood of Jesus.

There has to be a reason for doing what we do. If we doubt our hope, there is a

grave danger that we will fall away and lose our hope. It is important that we hold our confidence steadfast to the end (Heb. 3:12-14). The Hebrew writer also reminds us that the Israelites that came out of Egypt did not get to receive their hope because of their unbelief (doubt) or disobedience (Heb. 3:18-19).

### **We have "One Hope" not many!**

One of the many grave problems with the teaching of "Pre-Millennialism" is that it advocates more than "one hope." We are promised eternal life with God if we are faithful to the end—**that is our "one hope."** All that Jesus went through or endured in His life was to make this hope a reality for us some day.

1. He was born as a human and developed as a man.
2. He enjoyed and endured all that humans experience.
3. His life was one of perfect obedience to His Father's will.
4. He died a horrible death for our forgiveness so we could have this hope.
5. He was buried and raised from the grave to give full assurance of our own resurrection unto everlasting life.
6. He ascended up on high in order to send the Holy Spirit back to us to teach us and guide us unto this everlasting life.
7. 1 Tim. 3:16

Thus, as the apostles went out to preach this inspired message to mankind, they did so not only with boldness, but certainty (Acts 4:17-20; 4:29-31). Jesus' resurrection from the dead is our assurance that death does not end it all for humans who believe in God. Thus, when death would visit a family in the 1st Century Church, they had hope that their loved one(s) (who was a faithful Christian) would spend eternity with God (1 Thess. 4:13-17).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

We all have learned that life is not just a "bed of roses!" It has its trials, tribulations, and heartaches. What is it that keeps us living, working, and striving to live righteous lives? It has to be the "one hope" that we hold on to desperately that gives meaning to all that we have to deal with in this life. This hope keeps us faithful to God! But so does the fear of facing God in judgment and being punished with everlasting death. We believe that we will be given either everlasting life (to be with God for ever) or everlasting death (to be away from God for ever) (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The two terms that the Bible has used and have become the most used by our generation are "Heaven" or "Hell!" (Matt. 25:41, 46). We determine our own destiny by what we chose to believe and how we chose to live. Have we chosen wisely? We need to keep our "one hope" strong!

**Questions for Discussion**

**True or False**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. We do not have to have reasons or evidence to believe in everlasting life.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. There is no way for us to know that God does not lie.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Believing in everlasting life is a matter of choice—not forced upon anyone.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. People cannot give a reason for their beliefs because they are not interested sufficiently to know the basis of their beliefs.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. The Scriptures do not teach that "hope" saves us.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Hope ends when we receive that for which we hope.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. The Christian's "one hope" is to be given everlasting life with God.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. To have doubts about our hope in Christ is to show our "unbelief!"
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 9. Pre-Millennialism teaches more than "one hope."
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 10. Heaven and Hell are the two terms that are used by our generation to indicate where one's final destiny will be after death.



