

What Does “One” Mean?

- God Defines “One”
- God Joins Many Souls Into One Spiritual Body
- God Gives One Faith and One Baptism
- God Keeps His People One By Truth & Hope

The question before us, is simple to ask, but important to answer:

- **What does God mean when He says “one”?**

If God refers to spiritual things as “one”, then we must not turn them into many.

At the same time, we must let Scripture show us, what kind of “one”, God means in each case.

The Bible shows that “one”,

- can describe what is single and without rival, such as **one God**.
- & what God joins together into one united whole, such as **one body IN Christ**.

God willing, this morning we’ll see that,

- **God defines “ONE”,**
- **God joins His people into ONE spiritual body,**
- **God gives ONE faith and ONE baptism,**
- **and God keeps His people ONE, by truth and hope.**

Before we speak about God's people being one,

we must begin with God Himself, because all true unity, starts in heaven.

I. God Defines “One”

Scripture reveals, Paul urging Christians to walk worthy and to keep the unity of the Spirit.

He begins by naming the seven things, God has made “one”.

- He said, "There is **one body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in **one hope** of your calling; ⁵ **One Lord, one faith, one baptism**, ⁶ **One God and Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." ([Eph.4:4-6](#))

Explanation:

- Paul is not guessing at unity — he is declaring it.
- “One” means — singular or united, exactly as God defines each matter.
- These seven ones, are heaven's pattern — not man's invention.

With that foundation laid, let’s start where Scripture starts, with:

A. One God and Father of All

Moses called Israel to hear and obey the Lord.

Before God gave commands for life and worship, He declared who He is.

- Moses said, "**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD!**" ([Deut.6:4](#))

Explanation:

- “Hear” means — more than hearing sound; it calls for listening with obedience.
- “One LORD” means — God alone is God; He has no equal and no rival.

Through Isaiah, the Lord spoke to a world surrounded by idols and false gods.

He left no room for confusion about His uniqueness.

- God said, "I am the LORD, and there is **none else**, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me: ⁶ That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is **none beside Me**. I am the LORD, and there is **none else**." ([Isa.45:5-6](#))

Explanation:

- “None else” and “none beside Me” means — there is no other God besides the Lord; none apart from Him, none except Him, and none equal to Him.
- The Lord is exclusive, in His divine identity.

If there is one God, then worship must not be scattered.

A heart cannot bow to the Lord and still leave room for another god ([Matt.6:24](#)).

Biblical oneness begins with exclusive loyalty, to the one true God.

From the one God, the lesson moves naturally to the,

B. One Lord and One Spirit

On Pentecost, Peter preached the risen Jesus, to the very people who had rejected Him.

He concluded by declaring Jesus' God-given position.

- He said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both **Lord** and **Christ**." ([Acts 2:36](#))

Explanation:

- "Lord" means — ruler and master.
- "Christ" means — the Anointed One, appointed by God.

Before the cross, Jesus told His apostles what the Spirit would do, when He came.

The Spirit would not invent a new message, independent of Christ.

- Jesus said, "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. ¹⁴ He shall glorify Me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." ([Jn.16:13-14](#))

Explanation:

- "Guide" means — to lead the way.
- "Truth" means — what is true, real, and in accord with fact — God's Word is Truth ([Jn.17:17](#)).
- "All truth" means — the complete truth, that Christ intended His apostles to receive and teach.
- "He shall not speak of Himself" means — the Spirit would not speak from Himself, as an independent source, or bring a separate message of His own.
- The Spirit glorifies Christ, so the one Spirit, never leads people away from the one Lord, or away from the one truth He revealed.

This truth deserves careful thought.

If the Holy Spirit Himself, did not speak independently,

then what man, has the right to come along later and preach another gospel?

Paul warned plainly:

- "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." ([Gal.1:8-9](#))

If the Holy Spirit did not speak independently,

and if even an apostle or an angel from heaven had no authority to alter the gospel,

then how dare any man or religious institution, in any age, change the gospel?

This applies to every claimed authority after the apostles — whether a later revelation, a human tradition, a catechism, a creed, or a denominational confession of faith. None of these has the right to add to, replace, or filter the gospel, revealed by the Spirit through the apostles.

The **one** Lord and the **one** Spirit, speak with **ONE** heavenly voice — Heaven is not divided.

The Spirit does not glorify man, and the Lord does not contradict the Father.

God defines "**one**", before man ever speaks about it.

There is **one** God and Father, **one** Lord, and **one** Spirit.

So, the source of biblical oneness, is not human agreement, but divine truth.

Now that the source of biblical oneness is clear,
we must ask how that oneness appears, among God's redeemed people.

The Lord did not purchase a divided, self-defined religion.

II. God Joins Many Souls Into One Spiritual Body

Before we speak of the church as one body, we must first see, that,

A. Christ Purchased a People for His Own Possession

As Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders,
he reminded them of the value of the church and the price paid for it.

- He said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the **church** of God, which He hath **purchased** with His own **blood**." ([Acts 20:28](#))

Explanation:

- "Purchased" means — bought at a cost.
- The price was not silver or gold, but the **blood** of Christ.
- Therefore, the **church** does not belong to man — it belongs to the Lord who bought it.

Paul says the same thing to Titus, when he describes what Christ died to obtain.

- He wrote, Christ "gave Himself for us, that He might **redeem** us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a **peculiar people**, zealous of good works." ([Tit.2:14](#))

Explanation:

- "Redeem" means — to buy back.
- "Peculiar people" means — a people for His own possession.
- Christ did not die to purchase a people, who would belong to themselves.

Peter also describes the Lord's people, in language of belonging and purpose.

- He said, "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him, who hath called you, out of darkness, into His marvelous light:" ([1Pet.2:9](#))

Explanation:

- God's people are not self-defined — they are called out and claimed by Him.
- The church is a people set apart, for the Lord's own possession.

Paul then reminds Christians personally, that this same truth, applies to every member.

- He said, "Ye are **not your own**... For ye are **bought with a price**:" ([1Cor.6:19-20](#))

Explanation:

- "Not your own" means — we do not belong to ourselves.
- "Bought with a price" means — ownership has changed, because Christ paid the cost.

The church, therefore, is not a human society formed by men — It is a purchased people.
The price paid, establishes both its value and its ownership.

If Christ purchased a people, for His own possession, then an important question must now be faced: Which church was it, that He purchased?

B. The Church He Purchased Is the One Body, That Belongs to Christ

Paul has already answered how many bodies there are.

- He said, “**There is one body...**” ([Eph.4:4](#))

Explanation:

- “**One body**” means — not many bodies, but the single body God has revealed.
- Christ did not purchase many churches, with many heads.

Scripture also tells us plainly, what that one body is.

- The Bible says, “**He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things, He might have the preeminence.**” ([Col.1:18](#))

Explanation:

- “**Body, the church**” tells us plainly that — the one body is the church.
- Christ is the **head** — therefore the church, is under His authority alone (see [Matt.16:18](#) – “**My Church**”).

Paul further shows that many people, can be joined into that one body.

- He said, “**For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.**¹³ **For by one Spirit, are we all baptized into one body...**” ([1Cor.12:12-13](#))

Explanation:

- Paul uses the human body, to illustrate the spiritual body of Christ.
- Many members, do not create many bodies.
- God joins many souls, into one spiritual body, under Christ through baptism.

So when we place these passages together, the truth becomes plain:

- Christ purchased the church with His own blood.
- There is one body.
- And the one body is the church.

That is why Paul could speak of congregations, that belong to Christ.

- He said, “**The churches of Christ salute you.**” ([Rom.16:16](#))

Explanation:

- This is a description of ownership.
- [Acts 20:28](#) says “**church of God,**” and [Romans 16:16](#) says “**churches of Christ**” — both speak of divine ownership, not different bodies.
- Local congregations that belong to Christ, are rightly described as churches of Christ.

No man, therefore, has the right to

- invent another church, name another head, or multiply what Christ has made one.

Christ purchased His people — His church.

It was not the Baptist church, the Catholic church, the Mormon church, or any other church that man can invent.

He purchased the one body,
and that one body is the church that belongs to Christ.

So the chain of truth is plain:

- Christ purchased the church with His own blood.
- The people He purchased are His own possession.
- There is one body.
- The one body is the church.
- Therefore, the one body belongs to Christ, and no man has the right to invent another.

With that truth before us, we must now ask what message guides this one body, and what response brings sinners INTO Christ.

III. God Gives One Faith and One Baptism

These are not minor matters, but part of the unity God has given.

- Scripture says, "**One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**" ([Eph.4:5](#))

Explanation:

- "**Faith**" here — points to what is believed and obeyed.
- "**Baptism**" is not a human ceremony or optional symbol — it is the one God-given immersion, for the remission of sins, by which the penitent believer is brought INTO Christ and His one body.

Let's now consider the revealed,

A. One Faith: One Message From Heaven

Jude had hoped to write about salvation more generally, but the need of the hour, was to defend the truth, God had already revealed.

- He wrote, "**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 1:3](#))

Explanation:

- "**The faith**" is the body of truth, to be believed and obeyed.
- "**Once delivered**" means — handed over fully; it was not meant to be replaced, again and again.

Paul tells us, where faith comes from.

It does not rise from personal feeling, but from divine revelation.

- The Bible says, "**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing, by the word of God.**" ([Rom.10:17](#))

Explanation:

- "**Hearing**" means — receiving the message.
- Faith comes from "**the word of God**", not from the changing ideas of men.

As Paul neared the end of his life, he told Timothy not to become loose with doctrine.

- He said, "**Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is IN Christ Jesus.**" ([2Tim.1:13](#))

Explanation:

- "**Hold fast**" means — keep a firm grip.
- "**Form of sound words**" means — a pattern of healthy (Biblical) teaching, that must be kept.

One faith means, God has spoken one message for all people.

We are not free to reshape that message each generation.

Our task is to receive it, hold it, and contend for it.

The one message of heaven, also includes one God-given response.

B. One Baptism: One God-Given Entrance Into Christ

When convicted hearers asked what to do, Peter did not give many different responses. He gave one God-authorized answer.

- He said, "**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](#))

Explanation:

- "Repent" means — turn from sin.
- "Remission" means — forgiveness.
- "Baptism" is immersion in water, joined here with repentance, for the remission of sins.

Paul explains what baptism joins us to.

It is not an empty act, but a union with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

- He said, "**Know ye not, that so many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? ⁴ 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.**" ([Rom.6:3-4](#))

Explanation:

- "Buried with him" shows — baptism is a burial (not a sprinkling).
- "Newness of life" means — a new manner of living, after being raised with Christ.

Paul also shows what happens, when a person is baptized into Christ.

- He said, "**For as many of you, as have been baptized into Christ, have **put on Christ.**" ([Gal.3:27](#))**

Explanation:

- "Into Christ" means — entering into Him.
- "Put on Christ" means — to be clothed with Him, belonging to Him openly and fully.

God did not reveal many entrances INTO Christ.

The same Lord who gave **ONE faith**, also gave **ONE baptism**.

We must not separate, what God joined together.

The one faith tells us, what God says, and the one baptism shows us, the God-given response, that brings us INTO Christ, Where all spiritual blessings exist ([Eph.1:3](#)).

Still, one more question remains: How is this oneness preserved among God's people, as they live and grow together?

IV. God Keeps His People One, by Truth and Hope

As Jesus prayed for His disciples, He did not ask the Father to unite them, by ignoring truth.

- He said, "**Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.**" ([Jn.17:17](#))

Explanation:

- "Sanctify" means — set apart for holy use.
- "Truth" is not opinion — Jesus said, "thy word is truth".

In the same chapter that lists the seven ones,

Paul calls Christians to work diligently, to preserve the unity God has given.

- He wrote, "**Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**
⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;" ([Eph.4:3-4](#))

Explanation:

- "Endeavouring" means — making earnest effort.
- "Bond of peace" is the tie that holds God's people together, as they submit to His will.

Scripture confirms that,

A. Truth Produces Real Unity

Jesus prayed not only for the apostles, but also for all who would believe, through their word.

He prayed for oneness, but notice the basis of that oneness.

- He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me **through their word**; ²¹ 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." ([Jn.17:20-21](#))

Explanation:

- "Through their word" shows that — future believers would be united, through apostolic teaching.
- "One" here means — harmony, grounded in what Christ revealed.

The church at Corinth had divisions.

Paul did not solve that, by saying doctrine does not matter.

- He said, "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." ([1Cor.1:10](#))

Explanation:

- "Speak the same thing" means — not teaching conflicting messages.
- "Perfectly joined together" means — fitted or mended together, in the same mind and judgment.

The psalmist tells us why God's people can trust God's word completely.

- "The sum of Thy word is truth; And every one of Thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever." ([Psa.119:160](#) ASV)

Explanation:

- "The sum of Thy word" means — God's truth is found in the whole of His revelation, not in one verse separated from the rest.
- No Scripture should be used to contradict another Scripture.
- Because God's whole word is truth, unity must be built on all that God has revealed.

Truth does not break God's people apart — truth is what gathers and steadies them.

Unity without truth is only a name — but unity in truth, is what Jesus prayed for.

Finally, God's people do not just stand together — they also walk together, toward a shared destination.

B. One Hope, Calls for One Walk

Paul describes the future, set before God's people.

The hope of a christian, rests on the character of God Himself.

- He wrote, "In **hope** of eternal life, which **God, that cannot lie**, promised before the world began;" ([Titus 1:2](#))

Explanation:

- "Hope" means — confident expectation of what God has promised, though not yet seen ([Rom.8:24-25](#))
- "God, that cannot lie" means — this hope, rests on a promise that cannot fail — it is an anchor ([Heb.6:19](#)).

Peter describes what this living hope, looks toward.

- He said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again, unto a **lively hope**, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ To an **inheritance** incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you," ([1Pet.1:3-4](#))

Explanation:

- "Lively hope" means — living hope.
- "Inheritance" is what God has kept for His children — incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading.

Because there is one hope, Paul urges Christians to live in a way, that fits the calling of God.

- He said, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye **walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called,** ² With all **lowliness** and **meekness**, with **longsuffering**, forbearing one another in love;" ([Eph.4:1-2](#))

Explanation:

- "Walk worthy" means — live in a fitting way.
- "Vocation" means — calling; the God-given calling Christians have received in Christ.
- "Lowliness", "meekness", and "longsuffering", describe the spirit needed, to live as **one people**, headed toward **one eternal home**.

A people marching toward the same inheritance, should not pull in opposite directions.
One hope, should produce one humble, patient, loving walk.

God keeps His people "one", by truth and hope.

Truth tells us how to live together now, and hope keeps our hearts fixed, on where God is taking us.

Let's now gather these thoughts into a,

V. Closing Summary

When we gather these passages together, the meaning of "one" becomes much clearer.

When God says "one", He does not speak carelessly.

Sometimes "one",

- **Means** one and only one, as with the **one God**.
- **Describes** persons whom God joins, into a united whole, as with **one body**.

In other instances, the word "one",

- **Marks** the single message and response God has given, as in **one faith** and **one baptism**.

...And in every case, this **oneness** must be kept by truth, while we press toward the **one hope of eternal life**.

Some Lessons learned:

- Let God define His own words.
- Do not multiply, what God has made one.
- Do not divide or separate, what God has joined together.
- Search the Scriptures carefully, so that our unity rests on truth (not opinions and not feelings).
- Walk worthy of the calling, with humility, patience, and love.

The Lesson is yours.

It is the Lord, who invites, and we await to assist.

Won't you come...

- Hearing the gospel ([Rom.10:17](#)),
- Believing in Christ ([Heb.11:6](#); [Jn.8:24](#)),
- Repenting of sins ([Lk.13:3](#); [Acts 17:30](#)),
- Confessing your belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ([Acts 8:37](#); [Rom.10:9-10](#)),
- and being baptized for the forgiveness of sins ([Acts 22:16](#); [Mk.16:16](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [1Pet.3:21](#); [Gal.3:26-27](#)).

...while we stand and while we sing.

Source: Adapted from an article by Jefferson David Tant
Compiled & formatted by Michael Wright