

## PRESCRIPTION FOR UNITY: ONE FAITH

### PART 2

We began a study of the one faith spoken of in Ephesians 4:5 last week. It would seem a truism that for people to be united they must also be of a single faith. Christians almost universally agree that salvation is found in Christ Jesus alone, after all that is what our Lord said in John 14:6, “*no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*” But within the community of people who believe that Jesus is the Savior, the only savior, there exists great differences of thought and belief on almost every possible doctrine. We believe the differences are between honest people of faith and there is no desire to cast any charge of insincerity their way. Nevertheless, someone is incorrect; someone has made an error in interpreting the truth of God’s Scripture.

We cannot be satisfied with the oft repeated assertion that “everyone has his own interpretation.” Such a suggestion implies the impossibility of an objective standard (because a standard open to any interpretation is useless) and, by extension, the inability of God to communicate with his creation. “*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation...*” (2 Peter 1:20). Jesus said we should “*know the truth*” (John 8:32) which certainly demands that the truth be knowable. In reality, we can all discover the accurate and precise interpretation of God’s word and we can erase those great differences of thought and belief.

So what defines the “one faith?” Throughout history man has tried to enumerate his beliefs about the one faith in a series of creeds or confessions. While it is the case that we agree with almost every postulate within the creed we do not accept the creed itself for it is the creation of man and not God. Therein lies the problem of this study: We cannot delineate a set of doctrines without creating a creed of our own.

We can argue that the one faith is set forth in Scripture (Ephesians 4:5) and is the subject of apostolic writing and encouragement. For example, Paul wrote to the Galatians of his amazement that they so quickly moved away from the gospel message he had delivered. He called this new teaching a perversion and warned that those teaching it were to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9). It seems that one of the hallmarks of this departure from the one faith was a reliance on the doctrines of men (Galatians 1:10-12, c.f. Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7; Titus 1:14).

This opposition to human doctrine, coupled with the Biblical commands to respect the Scriptures (2 John 9; Revelation 22:18-19) ought to cause us to understand that the one faith is of God alone and not from any individual or committee. Perhaps we can agree that one identifying characteristic of a false faith is the inclusion of any human doctrine or the discarding of any Biblical teaching which does not suit or desires, needs or understanding. Closely connected to this is the idea of the all sufficiency of Scripture. Jude writes, in verse 3 of his short epistle that Christians should “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.*” Jesus himself had said that the apostles would be taught “*all things*” (John 14:26; John 16:13). Paul declared that the deeper things of God had been delivered to us by God (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). There is nothing to come. All revelation has been given to men. What remains is abide in his word.

To discover what the “one faith” teaches on a given subject one only needs a Bible and a mind free of preconceptions and prejudices. The one faith is knowable by all men and can be applied to how we live, how we worship and even how we die.

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