



BIBLE WORD STUDY

But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. (Isaiah 28:13)

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Eph 4:1-8US

Keeping the Unity of the Spirit

- 1 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;**
- 3 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;***
- 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.**
- 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**
- 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Ephesians 4:1-8).**

The passage is used by some to *prove* there is only one baptism in the present Church Age. This is not the purpose of Ephesians 4:1-8. Our obligation to "walk worthy" is based upon what has been done for us and in us. Our goal is to maintain "lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;" it is not to argue over whether there is "one body" we are to be in or claim there is only one baptism. Our "walk" is not to prove there is "one baptism" and define it; it is already done.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. The fact is already proclaimed and finished, whether we agree on the existence of these or the nature of them.

Paul's argument here is not for believers to go to war with each other over which baptism is to be observed, or if the "one body" is a generic use. It is not a list of items intended to exclude all others. These things are actions already settled by God and man cannot change, add to, or remove them. The passage favors neither Berean nor Baptist over what kind or number of baptisms. The passage favors neither "local church only" nor "universal church" proponents.

The passage is an exhortation for the believer, that regardless of what he believes, he is to exhibit lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbearance. This is "endeavoring to keep

the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The believer is given the grace to walk worthy of what God has done, based upon God's sovereign work for him and in him. Lesser issues of doctrinal beliefs such as "which baptism" are not in this context. This is why I understand the passage as emphasis upon essential work done by God, rather than a platform to argue over numbers--that is, should we practice water baptism or condemn it?

One may attempt to prove that water baptism during this age is non-essential, or that it is the one divisive factor among believers--but he must do it from other passages; he cannot find that argument here.

In order to refute the argument that God only accepts or approves one baptism in this present age, we need only to show that within this list of seven one of them can not apply to a sole approved entity. If there are more than one of these seven then the list cannot refer to a numerical listing.

4 *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...*

One body

It is significant that **one body** is found in this list of seven but no mention is made of "One Head" although surely there is One Head over the church. We believe "head" is omitted because it is understood within the term "body." A body without a head is a monstrosity and a head without a body is a mutilation. There is One King, but Christ is not called King of the body or church for obvious reasons. A King rules a kingdom, not a body.

There is more than "one body" if we are looking at quantity. There are many physical bodies and spiritual bodies. The believer (in a mortal body *and* the body of Christ now) will have a spiritual body *and* be in the body of Christ in eternity. (1 Corinthians 6:20; 15:44).

(continued...)