

The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON LXVI : UNITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN THE CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS (4:1-16)

Ephesians 4:4~6 —

beynge one body and one sprete even as ye are called in one hope of youre callynge. Let ther be but one lorde one fayth one baptism: one god and father of all which is above all thorow all and in you all. (Tyndale's New Testament, 1524)

There is one body, and one Spirit, euen as yee are called in one hope of your vocation. There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptisme, One God and Father of all, which is aboue all, and through all, and in you all. (Geneva Bible, 1599)

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. (King James Version, 1769)

one body and one Spirit, according as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in you all, (Young's Literal Translation, 1898)

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. (Revised Version, 1885)

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. (American Standard Version, 1901)

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. (Revised Standard Version, 1952)

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were 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. (New King James Version, 1982)

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (New American Standard Version, 1995)

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (New International Version, 2011)

There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (English Standard Version, 2011)

ἓν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν· εἷς κύριος μία πίστις ἓν βάπτισμα εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πάσιν ὑμῖν. (Stephanus Greek NT, 1550)

Ἐν σῶμα καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα, καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν· εἷς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἓν βάπτισμα, εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πάσιν. (NA28 Greek New Testament)

JUST AS YOU WERE CALLED IN ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING

καθὼς καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν·

[kathōs kai eklēthēte en mia elpidi tēs klēseōs humōn]

IMPORTANT PHRASE — Paul breaks from the pattern of acclamations in verses 4a, 5 and 6 and repeats the idea of calling from v. 1. This provides a conceptual framework within which the rest of the exhortation is to be understood. “The hope of *His* calling earlier in the letter in 1:18 is a reference to the same reality as the hope of *your* calling here. It is simply that the former describes it in terms of the one who calls; the latter, in terms of those who are called.” [Lincoln, 238; see also Hoehner, 515]

JUST AS — καθὼς καὶ [kathōs kai] — The earlier translations render this adverb ‘*even as*’ (Tyndale, Geneva, KJV, RV, ASV) while the newer translations render it as ‘*just as*’ (RSV, NKJV, NASV, NIV, ESV). The gist of the conjunction is that it is making a comparison (or possibly denoting cause) by showing that the following clause illustrates unity which was expressed by the terms ‘one body’ and ‘one Spirit.’ “The conjunction καὶ [kai] being used adjunctively, ‘*also,*’ supports the idea of it *being an illustration or proof.*” [Hoehner, 515f]

YOU WERE CALLED — ἐκλήθητε [eklēthēte] — *This word is aorist passive, which most simplistically indicates a single event in the past in which the one who was called was passive; i.e., another Agent (the Holy Spirit) was active in this calling. This refers to the sovereign call of the believer.*

IN ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING — ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι τῆς κλήσεως ὑμῶν· [en mia elpidi tēs klēseōs humōn] — **HOPE WAS RECEIVED WHEN WE WERE ‘CALLED’** — Grammarians refer to this as a ‘*genitive of origin or efficient cause*,’ meaning merely that our hope was wrought or originated in us by our sovereign call to salvation. “[Paul’s] readers received their hope simultaneously with their call. They are not called to hope but as those who have been called given hope. Previously as Gentiles they had been without hope (2:12); now hope is a part of their inheritance (1:18). ‘Hope’ is not the feeling of hopefulness but is the content of their hope.” [Best, 367] “Paul says that his readers were called [in] this hope. This means that hope accompanied God’s call, as an integral part of it. Like Abraham, their trust in the good news that God has included them in his people and reconciled them to himself is a trust in something they cannot see. It is the conviction that one day what they can now see only with the eyes of their hearts will be concrete, and they will experience for all time ‘the surpassing wealth of his grace by kindness ... in Christ Jesus’ (2:7).” [Thielman, 257] “[W]e are not to interpret ‘hope of your calling,’ or ‘the hope arising from your calling,’ which is hardly consistent, by the way, with the idea that hope is the ‘element.’ It is rather the hope belonging to your calling.” [Abbott, 108]

IN ONE HOPE — ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι [en mia elpidi] — As has been discussed in previous lessons, the Christian ‘hope’ is not a mere wish; e.g., ‘I hope it does not rain. I hope Billy gets a good hit when he gets up to bat.’ The Christian ‘hope’ is a settled conviction, a certainty, an eager expectation of the outworking of God’s plan. “The hope presented in Ephesians is the reality that all things will be headed up in Christ (1:9) and though the believers are presently seated with Christ, in the future they will be displayed in heaven as trophies of his grace (2:7). Further, they have been brought near to God, united into one body in Christ and reconciled to God (2:11-3:13). Before this they were without hope and without God in the world (2:12). Hence, there is the element of objective hope which is laid up for the believers (cf. Col 1:5; Rom 8:24), and this serves as the basis of the subjective hope.” [Hoehner, 515] “God’s calling finds its origin in the choice of his people in Christ before the world’s foundation (Eph. 1:4) and becomes effective in their lives through the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 8:30). When God calls believers into a relationship with himself he calls them to a particular hope (Eph. 1:18) which is sure and certain since it rests on his faithfulness — previously the Gentile readers had been separated from Christ and had no real hope (Eph. 2:12). It is sometimes called ‘the hope of the gospel’ (Col. 1:23) because it is held out in the saving message of the gospel, and ‘the hope of glory’ (1:27; Rom. 5:2), the expectation of appearing with Christ in glory when he is revealed (Col. 3:4) and of sharing in his glory. In Ephesians this hope is particularly expressed in terms of God’s gracious purpose of summing up and bringing together all things in Christ, both in heaven and on earth (1:9-10).” [O’Brien, 282; see also Lincoln, 238f; Thielman, 257]

‘ONE HOPE’ IS NOT CONTRASTED WITH PAGAN ‘HOPES’ — Paul is not contrasting the Christian hope with other so-called ‘hopes’: “But what is the significance of the ‘one’? In modern terms we might speak of secular and humanist hopes as if there were several; [Paul] would not have regarded these as hopes since non-Christians are without hope (2:12). ‘One’ is part of the formula and is not used to contrast a Christian hope with a Jewish or secular.” [Best, 368]

THE CHURCH IS THE PLEDGE OF OUR FUTURE HOPE — “As a foretaste of this grand hope the very existence of the church, a society of pardoned rebels, a multiracial community in which Jews and Gentiles have been brought together in unity in the one body, is the means God uses to manifest his richly diverse wisdom to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm. Thus, Paul reinforces his admonition by reminding his readers of the hope held out in their calling. A sense of expectancy, therefore, should motivate and unify their actions.” [O’Brien, 282] “The Church is depicted as providing the powers with a tangible reminder that their authority has been decisively broken and that everything is going to be united in Christ. It can play this role because it is the one new humanity in place of two (2:15) and the one body (2:16). For [Paul] the existence of the Church, in which the basic alienation between Jew and Gentile had been overcome, is a pledge that the one hope in its full cosmic scope will also be brought into being. The one hope is an appropriate reality with which to undergird the call to maintain unity, because it is hope which, in giving men and women a sense of expectancy, directs and unifies their actions.” [Lincoln, 238f]

THIS ‘ONE HOPE’ UNITES BELIEVERS — “[T]he glory hoped for, and which is laid up in heaven, and will be enjoyed there, to which the saints are called in the effectual calling, is one and the same: there are no degrees in it; it will be equally possessed by them all; for they are all loved with the same love, chosen in the same head, and secured in the same covenant; they are bought with the same price of Christ’s blood, and are justified by the same righteousness; they are all equally the sons of God, and so heirs of the same heavenly inheritance; and are all made kings and priests unto God, and there is but one kingdom, one crown, one inheritance for them all; and the holiness and beatific vision of the saints in heaven will be alike; and therefore they should be heartily affected to one another here on earth, who are to be partners together in glory to all eternity.” [Gill, Commentary on Whole Bible] “The meaning here is, that Christians have the same hope, and they should therefore be one. They are looking forward to the same heaven; they hope for the same happiness beyond the grave. It is not as on earth among the people of the world, where there is a variety of hopes — where one hopes for pleasure, and another for honour, and another for gain; but there is the prospect of the same inexhaustible joy. This hope is fitted to promote union. There is no rivalry — for there is enough for all. Hope on earth does not always produce union and harmony. Two men hope to obtain the same office; two students hope to obtain the same honour in college; two rivals hope to obtain the same hand in marriage — and the consequence is jealousy, contention, and strife. The reason is, that but one can obtain the object. Not so with the crown of life — with the rewards of heaven. All may obtain that crown; all may share those rewards. How can Christians contend in an angry manner with each other, when the hope of dwelling in the same heaven swells their bosoms and animates their hearts?” [Barnes’ NT Notes]

ONE LORD — εἷς κύριος [eis kurios]

‘LORD’ APPLIED TO JESUS CHRIST IN NT — In Ephesians alone Paul gives some twenty references to Jesus as Lord:

- the apostle has spoken of the *Lord* Jesus Christ as the one in whom every spiritual blessing comes (1:3)
- as the sphere in which faith is exercised (1:15)
- as the one in whom God’s new creation, the holy temple, is growing (2:21)
- God’s eternal purpose has been accomplished in Christ Jesus our *Lord* while Paul exhorts the readers as one who is a ‘prisoner in the Lord’ (4:1)
- Jesus is the Lord who fills the universe with his sovereign rule (1:23; cf. 4:10)
- Jesus as head has been given to the church (1:23; cf. 4:15, 16).

‘ONE LORD’ IN RELATION TO THE EARLY JEWISH BELIEVERS — To proclaim Jesus Christ as ‘Lord’ was no small thing to the early believers. Doing so declared the crucified, risen and ascended Jesus to be equal with Yahweh of the OT. The central prayer of the Jewish prayer book is the Jewish ‘*Shema*’ –

‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!’ (Deut 6:4 NKJV)

The ‘*Shema Yisrael*’ (often shortened to simply ‘*Shema*’) are the first two words in Deut 6:4, ‘*Hear, [O] Israel...*’. The Hebrew word for ‘Lord’ in this verse is ‘*Adonai*’ and is translated in the NT as the Greek word ‘*kurios*.’ This emphasis upon the monotheistic nature of our God is repeated throughout the OT, a couple notable passages being in Isaiah –

‘I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another’ (Isa 42:8 NKJV)

‘Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides Me there is no savior.’ (Isa 43:10b,11 NKJV)

Therefore to call Jesus Christ ‘*kurios*’ was ascribing deity to Him. [O’Brien, 283; Lincoln, 239; Thielman, 258] ***This should ascribe a deeper meaning to the verse we quote so mindlessly today, ‘if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.’*** (Rom 10:9 ESV)

‘ONE LORD’ IN RELATION TO THE EARLY GENTILE BELIEVERS — ***“What significance has ‘one’ here? ... It may be that we should see in it the church’s acknowledgement that it has only one Lord over against other religions which may have many.”*** [Best, 368] ***“His readers have ‘one Lord,’ the same Lord whom Paul serves as a prisoner (4:1) and who is identical with ‘Messiah Jesus,’ the one who stands at the center of God’s purposes for the universe (3:11). He is enthroned at God’s right hand with every other ‘lordship’ beneath his feet (1:21). These ‘lordships’ include that of ‘Nero, the lord of all the universe’, as one contemporary inscription described him (cf. Acts 25:26). Thus the early Christian confession of Jesus as the ‘one Lord’ excluded the Roman emperors and anyone else from legitimate claim to that title.”*** [Thielman, 257f] ***“From A.D. 81 to 96, Emperor Domitian continued the acts of Nero against the Christians. Domitian used the title ‘Lord and God,’ which Christians refused to acknowledge. The infamous ‘test’ of a Christian appeared during this time. Romans placed statues of the Emperor, and the Roman gods Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva before the suspected Christian. If the suspect denied the faith, officials required that he repeat a formulaic invocation of the gods, and then offer wine and incense to the Emperor’s statue. Lastly, the suspect was required to revile the name of Christ. Execution awaited anyone admitting to belief in Christianity or refusing any part of the test.”*** [http://www.cbn.com/special/DaVinciCode/GRobertson_Christianity_PaganRome.aspx; July 14, 2016]

‘For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords” — yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.’ (1 Cor 8:5,6 ESV)

‘ONE LORD’ IN RELATION TO TODAY’S SECULAR BELIEVERS — In the middle ages of our Western culture it was not uncommon to have ‘serfs’ and ‘lords’. In such a culture, being under the authority of a lord would be acknowledged and understood. In our modern culture we do not consider the word ‘lord’ in light of being monotheistic versus polytheistic, nor do we immediately think of deity. In fact, in our independent / ego-centric society, we hardly give respect to those to whom it is due! Is there any wonder why so many professing Christians take the lordship of Christ so lightly? ***“Lordship includes the ideas of possession and authority. A lord, in proper sense, is both owner and sovereign. When used in reference to God or Christ, the word expresses these ideas in the highest degree. Christ is THE LORD. He is our Lord, i.e., our rightful owner and absolute sovereign. This proprietorship and sovereignty pertain to the soul and to the body. We are not our own, and should glorify him in our body and spirit which are his. Our reason is subject to his teaching, our conscience to his commands, our hearts and lives to his control. We are his slaves. And herein consists our liberty....*** It is analogous to absolute subjection to truth and holiness, only it is to a person who is infinite in knowledge and in excellence. This lordship over us belongs to Christ not merely as God, or as the Logos, but as the Theanthropos [‘God–man’]. It is founded not simply on his divinity, but also and specially on the work of redemption. We are his because he has bought us with his own most precious blood. For this end he both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of dead and of living. Such being the nature and the grounds of the sovereignty of Christ, it necessarily binds together his people. The slaves of one master and the subjects of the same sovereign are intimately united among themselves, although the ownership and authority are merely external. But when, as in our relation to Christ, the proprietorship

and sovereignty are absolute, extending to the soul as well as to the body, the union is unspeakably more intimate. Loyalty to a common Lord and master animates with one spirit all the followers of Christ.” [Hodge, 146]

‘ONE LORD’ IN RELATION TO THE JEWS / GENTILES — “Christ is the ‘one Lord’ who provided redemption (1:7), hope (1:12), and headship over the church (1:22-23). Indeed, it was Christ who brought the Jews and Gentiles into one body, both now having access to God (2:13-18; 3:6, 12).” [Hoehner, 516] “‘One Lord,’ that is Christ, He alone and He for all equally whether Gentile or Jew.” [Salmond, 322]

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD ‘LORD’ — *“The argument here is, that there ought to be unity among Christians, because they have one Lord and Saviour. They have not different Saviours adapted to different classes; not one for the Jew, and another for the Greek; not one for the rich, and another for the poor; not one for the bond, and another for the free. There is but one. He belongs in common to all as their Saviour; and he has a right to rule over one as much as over another. There is no better way of promoting unity among Christians than by reminding them that they have the same Saviour. And when jealousies and heart-burnings arise; or when they are disposed to contend about trifles; when they magnify unimportant matters until they are in danger of rending the church asunder, let them feel that they have one Lord and Saviour, and they will lay aside their contentions, and be one again. Let two men, who have never seen each other before, meet in a distant land, and feel that they have the same Redeemer, and their hearts will mingle into one. They are not aliens, but friends. A cord of sympathy is struck more tender than that which binds them to country or home; and though of different nations, complexions, or habits, they will feel that they are one. Why should contentions ever arise between those who have the same Redeemer?”* [Barnes’ NT Notes]