

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

Volume 32

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

November 1998

No. 11

A PLEA FOR NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIANITY

Part Two - Seven "Ones" of the Church

Number 4 - "One Lord"

by Ted J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION

These seven "ones" which the apostle Paul enumerates gives us an outline of major points of concern when attempting to identify the church for which our Lord died (Ephesians 4:4-6; cf. Matthew 16:18). If a person is not concerned to be guided by these principles, that person is not seeking the "one body," revealed by the "one Spirit," and the promise of eternal life in the "one hope" offered to all men (Ephesians 4:4).

Paul had written to the Corinthians: "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:4-6). Paul identifies the "one Lord" as Jesus Christ.

"ONE LORD"

Ephesians 4:5 states clearly that there is only "one Lord." As we have mentioned before, "one" means we have no choice! To be pleasing to God we must accept the "ones" He has given. The word "lord" was sometimes used in Scripture as a term of respect or superiority, much like we use the word, "Sir." In a higher sense, "Lord" was used by slaves to speak of their masters and owners. In its most exalted sense, "Lord" refers either to God the Father or to Jesus Christ. In reference to Jesus Christ being called "Lord," it is used to identify Him as God or the one sent by the Father as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies (cf. Matthew 2:1-6; 3:3; et.al.).

Jesus applied the title "Lord" to Himself in Matthew 7:21-22 and elsewhere. In

John 13:13, He said to His apostles, "Ye call me Master [literally, Teacher] and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." However, merely calling Jesus "Lord" was not and is not a magic word which instantly brings us His approval and salvation. Christ noted that on the judgment day many who call Him, "Lord, Lord," would be rejected by Him, because, "Not everyone that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven'" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Also, before "a great multitude of people" Jesus said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?" (Luke 6:17,46). Anyone may call Jesus "Lord," but only those who do the Father's will by doing what Jesus says truly accept Christ as their Lord and Master. Notice the "heareth" and "doeth" versus the "heareth" and "doeth not" of Luke 6:47-49. **It is impossible to separate true faith in Christ as Lord from the obedience which demonstrates that faith!** "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). If you accept Jesus as Lord, you must be willing to do as His words direct. No matter how much you may protest to the contrary, He is not really your Lord and Savior unless you obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

Additionally, calling Jesus "Lord" and loving Him are impossible without keeping His commandments. The disciples called Jesus "Lord" several times in John 14, and Christ reminded them, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (verse 15). See also verses 21, 23-24. One simply cannot call Jesus "Lord" and have it mean anything if one does not submit to His word.

LORD AND "CHRIST"

Jesus' right to be Lord is inseparably connected with His role as "the Christ." The term "Christ" is the New Testament (Greek) equivalent of the Old Testament (Hebrew) "Messiah." It means "anointed one," in reference to one specially chosen by God for a holy task. Daniel 9:25-26 are the only two Old Testament verses which specifically mention the "Messiah," although the idea of His coming runs from Genesis 3:15 throughout the Old Testament. In the New Testament Andrew identified Jesus as the Messiah in John 1:41, and Jesus points to Himself as the Messiah in John 4:25-26. However, Jesus is frequently identified as and called the "Christ" in the New Testament. As the apostle Peter preached the first gospel message he said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Jesus, as Lord and Christ, was God's all in one. He is the Prophet and Lawgiver as Moses was (Acts 3:20, 22; 1 Corinthians 9:21); He is the continuing King who sits on David's throne (Acts 2:29-32; Colossians 2:13, 18); and He is the High Priest whose sacrifice atones for our sins (Isaiah 53:5-10; Acts 8:30-35; Hebrews 2:17; 9:11,14). Christ is the culmination of God's plan for saving man after sin raised its ugly condemning head in Eden (Genesis 3). In speaking of God's plan having come to its completion, Paul noted, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Ephesians 1:10). The American Standard Version says, "that he [God] might sum up all things in Christ." That is why this period in which we now live is called "the last days" (Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:2). God has no other plan by which to save mankind than that which Jesus has enacted as "Lord and Christ." Jesus will come again, but not to offer Himself for sins. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto

(Continued on page 2)

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication # 211780

...is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

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salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

THE IMPLICATIONS OF "ONE" LORD

Years ago I heard a radio broadcast which I will never forget. A loud-mouthed, arrogant radio talk show host, who happened to be Jewish, was interviewing a popular denominational preacher in Chicago. Not long into the program the talk show host said to the preacher, "I'm Jewish and I don't believe in your Lord Jesus Christ. Do you think I'm lost and going to hell?" The Protestant preacher was surprised by the questions and struggled for something to say. The host repeated his statement and question, obviously delighted to have his guest on the hot seat. Again the preacher stuttered and stammered, not knowing what to say. The talk show host said to the preacher in a loud voice, "You're disgusting. You don't even believe your own Bible. Get out of here." The radio host went on to say that he couldn't stand a "phony." I do not know for certain what the host meant by, "You do not even believe your own Bible," but he had obviously read something in it which he thought condemned his own unbelief in Christ. He was right! What would you have said if you had been the guest on that talk show?

Without trying to give an impression that I was happy about it, I would have to

have noted that Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6). I then would have to have concluded, "If you do not believe that Jesus is Lord and Christ, you are lost, and unless you believe and obey His gospel you will condemn yourself to hell." The apostles Peter and John once stood before angry Jewish leaders who were *"grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead"* (Acts 4:2). Upon being questioned by these Jewish leaders and threatened, the apostles said that they did their preaching and works in the *"name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth"* (Acts 4:10). They continued with the exclusive claim that, *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

If men are going to preach the gospel today as it is revealed in the Scriptures, they will have to preach that **no one** can be saved apart from recognizing and obeying Jesus Christ as the "one Lord" through whom salvation comes! There is no future Messiah or Savior to come, as Judaism hopes for. Jesus is Savior of all, Jew or Greek, slave or freemen, male and female (Galatians 3:26-28). He is **the way** and the only way.

Furthermore, there is a movement among some denominational leaders to teach that people can find God through Muhammad of Islam, Buddha of Buddhism, Brahman of the Hindus, or some so-called Spirit Guide of the New Age movement. Others, not quite so boldly, say that "perhaps some men can come to God without Christ." However, to contend that **anyone** today can be saved and come to God except through Christ makes the Bible's statements of Christ's teaching in John 14:6 and the apostles in Acts 4:12 false. If the Bible is not right regarding Jesus being the only Lord and Savior, you might as well throw it away. However, the Bible's teaching about Jesus as Lord cannot be falsified. If you read the Scriptures and compare Christ and His teaching against all the other supposed saviors and ways of salvation, you will see that there is no genuine rival to the "one Lord" of the Bible, Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

Christianity is an exclusive religion which makes no acceptance of other religious systems. It teaches a "narrow way" (Matthew 7:13-14) that Jesus alone is its "one Lord" through whom one must be saved

(John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 4:5). Recognizing Jesus as that "one Lord" means hearing His word and doing what He says to do (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46-49). One does not love Jesus as Lord if one does not keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21-23). You simply cannot claim faith in Jesus as Lord or Savior if you do not honor Him as Master over you and your entire life.

To honor Jesus as Lord means that we will submit to **His plan of salvation** (John 8:24; Luke 13:3, 5; Matthew 10:32; Mark 16:16). Having done so we will **serve Him in His church**, His "one body" as directed by the revealed teaching of the "one Spirit," holding to the "one hope" of eternal life in heaven (Ephesians 4:4). Is Jesus Christ "Lord" of your life? Contact a faithful member of the Church of Christ near you and study with them how you can be certain that you are honoring Jesus and the "one Lord" of the New Testament.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

by Thomas F. Eaves Sr.

Perhaps it is the immoral escapades of the leaders of our country, drive-by shootings, children giving birth to children, sexual immorality, abuse of drugs, school children shooting their classmates or a number of other things which have Americans seeking a solution for America's rapidly disintegrating moral standard.

Numerous programs have been suggested and most are concerned with environment, recreation, stricter gun control laws, etc. One lady remarked that the answer to America's moral problem is for everyone to keep the ten commandments. In 1997 and 1998 a remarkable amount of attention has been given to the ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-21). One concerned citizen, George Kelly, has established "The Ten Commandments Foundation" which offers young people \$10.00 to recite the commandments hoping that the famous Bible moral code rubs off on them. In the past year 1,800 youngsters accepted his offer. (*The Tennessean*, September 12, 1998, p.1). **There is no doubt that if everyone obeyed the ten commandments the moral climate of America would be greatly improved**, but what are the full consequences of following the ten commandments in this the Christian age?

1. One can keep the ten commandments

and not believe in Jesus Christ because this is not one of the commandments. The New Testament teaches that if one is to be saved he must believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 8:24, 21).

2. Keeping the ten commandments would be keeping a moral standard which was given to a specific nation (Israel, the Jews) at a specific time in their history, when they were escaping Egyptian bondage (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6). The ten commandments was a part of the covenant made with Israel (Exodus 34:27-28; I Kings 8:9, 12). While the Old Testament, old covenant, law of Moses is inspired by God, and serves a useful purpose (Romans 15:4), the New Testament teaches that Christians are not under its authority (Galatians 4:21-31, 5:4; Colossians 2:14).

3. One can keep the ten commandments and not be a member of the church (the spiritual body of Christ, Ephesians 1:22) to which the saved are added (Acts 2:47).

4. Following the ten commandments today would be following the Jewish religion (Judaism) which, as the apostle Paul in Galatians and Hebrews points out, is grossly inferior to Christianity.

To improve the morality of America, let all men become servants of Jesus Christ. This involves faith in God and His son (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24 and 21); repenting of sins (Luke 13:3), which is a change of mind which leads to a reformation of life; confessing Christ as the Son of God (Acts 8:36-38; Romans 10:10); and being baptized for remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Following obedience to the word of God the Christian (the forgiven, saved) is added to the spiritual family of God, which is the church of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:47). As one who belongs to Christ (Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 1:21), the Christian follows the moral standard of King Jesus which is set forth in His New Testament. While not an exhaustive list, Galatians 5:19-26; I Corinthians 6:18; Colossians 3:1-11 are examples of the moral standard of Jesus Christ.

May we all work to improve the morality of America for our own salvation and to influence others for righteousness.

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"You need not confess the sins of others."

REIGNING GRACE

by Robin W. Haley

"That, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21). The book of Romans teaches us the necessity of Christianity. Without Christ and his law of faith, we could not be justified before God. This is the meaning when Paul wrote *"For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith"* (Romans 1:17). Simply put, Paul is quoting from the Old Testament and declaring the age-old truth that the only ones that are going to live forever are those who are made righteous (justified) by means of the faith. There is no other way to be made just (right) in the sight of God.

Let us take note of two "reigns" in our title verse. The first is that of sin. Sin is supreme in death. That is, sin brought death (Romans 5:12) and continues to reign in the sphere of death. In this case, the key to this reign is the preposition "in" (ASV). The KJV has "unto" and the lexicons tell us this word has reference to "fixed position, instrumentality." It describes the relationship between a noun and its actions. Here we find that sin reigns as the instrument or vehicle of death, which is the result of sin.

The other "reign" is that of grace. Our key word here is "through." This preposition tells us of the relationship between nouns and pronouns. It says something does something else "by means of" another thing. In this case, grace is able to reign "by means of" righteousness. Wherever righteousness dwells, or works, grace will be found. Grace will not "override" righteousness, nor will it exist nor work where there is no righteousness. If we can only discover what righteousness is, we will discover the vehicle for grace.

Some have the mistaken notion that grace is synonymous with God. That God is grace, as God is love or light. Not so. God is the God of all grace, has grace, shows grace...**but He is not grace.** Grace is that which God will exercise through a certain means. That means is **righteousness.** Grace is able to be grace, be available to man and help him, because of righteousness.

So, what is righteousness? The simplest answer is found in what David wrote, *"Let my tongue sing of thy word; For all*

thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172). Please notice that the singer of Israel did not say that God's commandments are *righteous*. They are, but he did not say that here. He said they are **righteousness**. The commands (the word) of God are the basis, the source, the meaning of righteousness. Where there is no word from God, there is no righteousness. Why? Because of what Jesus said, *"Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). God's word is truth and right and absolute. Again we read from the Psalms: *"The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever: The ordinances of Jehovah are true, [and] righteous altogether"* (Psalm 19:9).

Here is what we learn: God's righteous word is the basis and source for righteousness through which grace may reign. Where there is no command of God, there is no righteousness; where there is no observance of God's righteousness (obedience) there is no grace. Wait! Someone may well say, "Does God not show grace to mankind apart from the Bible?" Yes, as seen in the sun, rain, air, food, health, etc. But the context of our subject is not material things. Romans 5:21 is dealing with the spiritual blessings that are found only in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). The world cannot have these except through Christ. The world cannot have Christ except through obedience to God's word. In this way **only** will God show grace which brings salvation (Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11,12).

Let us read again what Paul wrote: *"that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 5:21). Do you want God's grace? Then keep his word. His word promises eternal life through Christ. When you are obedient to Him, by obeying the word, *then* God's grace will save...**and not until.**

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"Sustain me according to Thy word, that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope. The unfolding of Thy words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple. Establish my footsteps in Thy word, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me. Seven times a day I praise Thee, Because of Thy righteous ordinances:

(Psalm 119: 116, 130, 133, 164).

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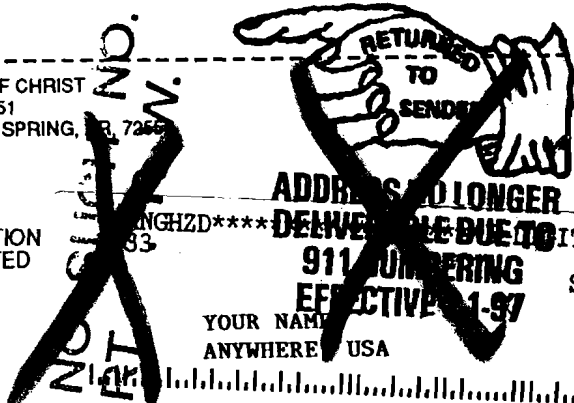
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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

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