

# HOW IMPORTANT IS UNITY AMONG BELIEVERS?

## **NOTE: VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE USED**

King James Version – (KJV)

New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update - (NASB95)

New International Version – (NIV)

## **INTRODUCTION:**

1. If you see two houses that are identical in every way, what conclusion can you come to?
  - a. That two people just happened to have the exact same ideas about how to build the house?
  - b. That two people or maybe the same builder used the same blueprint to build both houses?
2. If you see two, ten, or hundreds of thousands of people who claim to believe in only one God and that He revealed His will and had it recorded in one book (the bible) for everyone alike to follow and then you see (just to pick a number) 1,500 different groups of these people who are practicing many things diametrically opposed to each other and to the book they claim as their authority, what can you deduct from their divisions, practices and doctrines?
  - a. That none are following the same instruction book?
  - b. That possibly one of the groups is following the book?
  - c. That if they say they are following the same book, while going in directions completely different and contradictory to the one book they claim to follow, they have been somewhere misdirected, led astray, or falsely taught and are blind to that fact?
4. If everyone followed the same inspired book revealed by God for His followers to follow would there be unity among believers?
5. What is unity?

**The words Jesus used in the Greek was; **σύμψυχος, ον**: pertaining to similarity of attitude and spirit—‘harmonious, united in spirit, being one in spirit.’ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι ‘having the same love and being one in spirit’ **Philippians 2:2 (NASB95)** “make my joy complete by **being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.**”**

**ἐνότης, ητος**<sup>f</sup>: **a state of oneness—‘unity, oneness.’ τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος** ‘to keep the unity of the Spirit’ or ‘... the unity which the Spirit causes’ Eph 4.3; **καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως** ‘we shall all attain to that oneness in our faith’ Eph 4.13. In some languages it may be strange to speak of ‘that oneness in our faith.’ The closest equivalent may be ‘we believe just as though we were all one person’ or ‘we believe in one and the same way.’<sup>1</sup>

- a. This is what the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to write in **1 Corinthians 1:10 (NASB95)** 10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that you all agree and that there be **no divisions among you**, but that you be made complete in the **same mind and in the same judgment**.* And again in **Romans 15:5-6 (ASV)** 5 Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to *be of the **same mind** one with another according to Christ Jesus: 6 that with **one accord** ye may with **one mouth** glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

## **CHRIST’S PRAYER TO THE FATHER:**

**John 17:1 (NASB95)** 1. **Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,**

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f feminine

1Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (1:612-613). New York: United Bible societies.

**John 17:17-23 (NASB95)** 17 “Sanctify them (the apostles [John 17:6-10]) in the truth; Your word is truth. 18 “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. 20 “I do not ask on behalf of these (apostles) alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word (all those who have been taught by the apostles whether by them personally or through their writings); 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

1. Who is praying this prayer (John 17:1)? \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Do you suppose that He expected that this prayer for unity could and should actually happen? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What reason does the one praying the prayer give for all believers being one (in verses 21-23 above)? \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If everyone followed God’s teaching in His word (which Jesus said was *truth* [John 17:17]) would we see unity among believers? \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read John 1:1-4, 14 (NASB95)** 1 ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*** 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 ***All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*** 4 ***In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.***

**John 1:14 (NASB95)**14 And ***the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

1. From the above scriptures, who is the Word, the one who was in the beginning with God who became flesh and “dwelt among us,” and people saw His “glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth?” (John 1:14) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Is the one who prayed the prayer in **John 17:1, 17-23** for all believers to be one, the same one who was with God in the beginning, and the one who created everything that has been made (Read **John 1:1-4, 14** above) ? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. If He could *create everything that has been made* , and is *one* with the Father (**John 17:21-22**), do you think He *knew* that **the prayer He prayed concerning all believers being one could actually be accomplished?** \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Would this one who prayed to the Father for all believers to be one with Him and with the Father help believers accomplish this prayer? \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read Philippians 4:13.**

**Read John 3:1-2 (NASB95)** 1 ***Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;*** 2 ***this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”***

1. Who was Nicodemus (verse 1)? \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Were the Jews looking for a Messiah (a Savior)? \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Did Nicodemus believe that God was with Jesus; that He came from God (verse 2)? \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read John 3:3-12 (NASB95)** 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot

enter into the kingdom of God. 6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” 9 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?” 10 Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? 11 “Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and **you do not accept our testimony.** 12 “If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

1. Even though Nicodemus was a “Pharisee, ...a ruler of the Jews” (verse 3), “the teacher of Israel,” (verse 10) did he believe and understand what Jesus was teaching (verses 10-11)? \_\_\_\_\_.
2. (**Opinion question**; what do you think?) Why do you think Nicodemus did not believe and understand Jesus even though he had acknowledged that Jesus was a Rabbi (a teacher from God), one whom God had sent (**John 3:2**)? Nicodemus, after all, believed that Jesus came from God because of the miracles Jesus was performing (**John 3:20**)? Why would he not fully believe and understand what Jesus was saying if he knew Jesus was sent from God?

(To better understand, reading **Luke 24:1-11** might help. This is a case of Christ’s closest followers doubting that which had taken place as prophesied).

**Your answer:**

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Read **John 8:31-32 (NASB95)** 31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had **believed Him**, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

1. Were the Jews to whom Jesus spoke in this verse believers or unbelievers (verse 31) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Definition of the word disciple.

**In the original Greek word translated into English, a disciple is the following:**

**MATHĒTĒS** (μαθητής, (3101)), lit., a learner (from *manthanō*, to learn, from a root *math*—, indicating thought accompanied by endeavour), in contrast to *didaskalos*, a teacher; hence **it denotes one who follows one’s teaching**, as the disciples of John, **Matt. 9:14**; of the Pharisees, **Matt. 22:16**; of Moses, **John 9:28**; **it is used of the disciples of Jesus... (c) of all who manifest that they are His disciples by abiding in His Word, John 8:31; cp. 13:35; 15:8**; (d) in the Acts, of those who believed upon Him and confessed Him, **6:1, 2, 7; 14:20, 22, 28; 15:10; 19:1** etc.

**A disciple was not only a pupil, but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher; cp. John 8:31; 15:8.**<sup>2</sup>

Read **John 8:31-36 (NASB95)** 31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” 33 They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free?’” 34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 “The slave does

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lit. literally

cp. compare, see also

etc. *et cetera*, and others

2Vine, W.E.; Bruce, F.F.: *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Old Tappan NJ : Revell, 1981; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996, S. 2:I-316

not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

1. Why did the Jews who **claimed to believe in Jesus** not readily accept what He said about them knowing the truth and the truth setting them free from sin (**John 8:32-33, 34-36**)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Did these Jews really believe they were lost in sin and that Jesus was the Savior who had come to set them free from sin or does it seem they thought they were not really in bondage to sin (**John 8:33 above**)? \_\_\_\_\_
4. These Jews believed in Jesus to some degree, but, by their response to Him, **did they believe to the point of trusting in what He said that would set them free (verse 32)**?  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Read John 8:38-44 (NASB95) 38 “I speak the things which I have seen with **My Father**; therefore you also do the things which you heard from **your father**.” 39 **They answered** and said to Him, “**Abraham is our father**.” Jesus said to them, “**If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham**.” 40 “But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. 41 “**You are doing the deeds of your father**.” They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; **we have one Father: God**.” 42 Jesus said to them, “**If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me**.” 43 “**Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word**.” 44 “**You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father**.” He was a murderer from the beginning, and **does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies**.

1. What ([who] **John 8:39**) were these Jews trusting in to inherit the promise made by God to Abraham? (**Genesis 12:1-3 (NASB95)**) 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And **in you all the families of the earth will be blessed**.” **Genesis 22:18 (NASB95)** “**In your (Abraham’s) seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice**.” \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. To see who God was speaking of when He spoke of the seed of Abraham, look at **Galatians 3:16 (NASB95)** 16 Now **the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed**. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “**And to your seed,**” that is, Christ.
  - b. **Galatians 3:26-29 (NASB95)** 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.
2. Why couldn’t these Jews “*hear*” what Jesus was saying (**John 8:43-44**)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When we hear something proclaimed as truth that does not **exactly go along with the teaching of the word of God, is it truth** (**John 17:17**)? \_\_\_\_\_

4. If something is taught as truth from God but does not agree with what God teaches in the Bible, where does it come from (**John 8:43** above)? \_\_\_\_\_

Read (John 12:48-50 (NASB95) 48 **“He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.** 49 “For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. 50 “I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

1. What will judge us in the last day (verse 48)? \_\_\_\_\_  
After reading the following scriptures;  
**John 17:17 (NASB95) 17 “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”**  
**James 1:18-21 (NASB95) 18** In the exercise of His will **He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.**  
19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility **receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.**  
Why will this judge us in the last day? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Galatians 1:6-9 (NASB95) (which is written to the churches of Galatia; to those who had become Christians; followers of Christ) 6 I am amazed that you are so quickly **deserting Him who called you** by the grace of Christ, for a **different gospel** ; 7 **which is really not another** ; only **there are some who are disturbing you** and want to **distort the gospel of Christ.** 8 But **even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!** 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, **if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!**  
**ACCURSED – Greek - anáthēma**

Paul uses the term for the object of a curse (Gal. 1:8, 9; Rom. 9:3).

1. How were the Galatians **deserting Christ** (Galatians 1:6-7 above) \_\_\_\_\_
2. If we believe false teachers who are perverting the gospel of Christ will we be accursed? \_\_\_\_\_

### **HOW CAN ALL BELIEVERS BE ONE AS CHRIST AND THE FATHER ARE ONE?**

John 8:31-32 (NASB95) 31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, **“If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;** 32 **and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”**

1. Since Jesus prayed that all believers be one, do you think that there is some way for this to come about! \_\_\_\_\_
2. After reading the above scripture **does Jesus say that we can know the truth?** \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the result of following Jesus’ teaching – what will it do for us (verse 32)? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Will something being taught about the forgiveness of sin that is untrue set us free from sin? \_\_\_\_\_

Read John 8:34 (NASB95) 34 Jesus answered them, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.**

1. When Jesus said the truth would set one free, what were they in bondage to, or slaves to?

**NOTE: COMMITS IN John 8:34 is translated from the Greek word ΠΟΙΕΩ (ποιέω, (4160); “continue” is perhaps the best rendering. One who continues in sin is walking in sin. (W.E. VINE’S EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS).**

**John says “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet *walk* in the darkness, *we lie and do not practice the truth*; (1 John 1:6 (NASB95)).**

**Read Philippians 2:1-5 (NIV) 1 If you have any encouragement *from being united with Christ*, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being *like-minded*, having the same love, *being one in spirit and purpose*. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus*:**

**Read 1 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV) 10 I appeal to you, brothers, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought*.**

**FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW FROM THE SCRIPTURE ABOVE:**

1. How are we to be like Christ according to Philippians 2:1-5?
  - a. Verse 2? Being \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ being \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Verse 5 Your attitude \_\_\_\_\_ be the \_\_\_\_\_ as that of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read Romans 1:16-17 (NASB95) 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”**

1. If we follow the teaching of the inspired apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Ephesians 3:3-6) and allow no divisions develop among us but follow only what Christ taught, following the true gospel (Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 1:6-9), can we be united with Christ and His Father as Christ prayed for in John 17:22-26? \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read 1 John 1:6 (NASB95) If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;**

1. If I walk in the light and have fellowship with God as a result of that and you walk in the light and have fellowship with God; will we have fellowship with each other because we are walking in the light of God’s teaching? \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read John 17:21 (NASB95) 21 *that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me*).**

1. By being one with the Son and the Father, teaching and believing only what they and the apostles they inspired taught, will give testimony that the Father sent the Son to lead all people to salvation  
**True** \_\_\_\_\_  
**False** \_\_\_\_\_
2. When people claim to be believers (as the Jews Jesus talked to in John 8:31-45 who claimed to believe Him) and yet follow after different teachings than what Jesus taught New Testament Christians should follow, are they true believers? \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read John 14:15 (NASB95) 15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments**

1. What does Jesus say will happen if we love Him)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read 1 John 2:4 (NASB95)** 4 The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1. What does the inspired apostle John say about those who claim to know Christ and yet do not keep His commandments? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Matthew 28:18-20 (NASB95)** 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.** 19 “Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,** 20 **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

1. This is one of the last things Jesus said before leaving the earth! If we do not submit to the authority of Jesus and obey what He commands – do we really believe in Him? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Mark 16:15-16 (NASB95)** 15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and **preach the gospel to all creation.** 16 “**He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.**

1. What will happen to those who do not obey the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Romans 1:16-17 (NASB95)** 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

1. What is God’s power for salvation (v.16)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 (NASB95)** 6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well **when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,** 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

1. Why will those who do not obey the gospel (cf. Romans 1:16) be condemned?
2. Is it because they are **like the Jews who claimed to believe Jesus but would not accept and obey what He (who has all authority) told them** – “You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.” \_\_\_\_\_

Because they argued with Jesus and refused to submit to Him they were guilty of three things for sure.

1. *They didn’t love Him or they would have obeyed Him (John 14:15).*
2. He was not their **Lord** (Luke 6:46 (NASB95) “**Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?**”).
3. They obeyed Satan, their father rather than God! (John 8:44-47 (NASB95) 44 “**You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 “**But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.** 46 “Which one of you convicts Me of sin? *If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?* 47 “**He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.**”

## CONCLUSION

1. If Christ was in the beginning with the Father and through Him all things were made that has been made He is superior over all!
2. If the Word (later to be known as the Christ) became flesh for the purpose of seeking and saving the lost, is it reasonable to believe that Christ gave us the teaching and instruction that would bring about His purpose to save and be united in one body of believers?
3. In order to obey His commands:
  - a. They must be easily understood by all people irregardless of their educational background.
  - b. They must be “obeyable.”
4. There must be truth (John 8:31-32), the same for all.
  - a. **Acts 10:34 (KJV)** 34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons:**
  - b. **Ephesians 4:4-6 (NASB95)** 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.
  - c. **Jude 3 (NASB95)** 3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.
  - d. **Romans 1:16-17 (NASB95)** 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”
  - e. **Romans 10:17 (NASB95)** 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
5. God chose the gospel to save all men; The same gospel for all with a curse upon anyone who preaches “another gospel,” which can not be the true gospel if there is only one.
  - a. **Galatians 1:6-9 (NASB95)** 6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!
6. When people obeyed the preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins on the day of Pentecost, the Lord added them to the church (His church, the one He promised to build in **Matthew 16:18**).
  - a. **Luke 24:45-49 (NASB95)** 45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 “You are witnesses of these things. 49 “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”
  - b. In Jerusalem Peter answered the question of the Jews who were convicted of their sins; **Acts 2:37-41 (KJV)** 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* 38 *Then Peter said unto them, 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 Ghost.* 39 *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Acts 2:47 (KJV) 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And **the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

8. Paul explained that when one is baptized to remove his sins, the Lord adds them to the one body (which is the church [Ephesians 1:22-23]).
- a. **Ephesians 2:11-16 (NASB95)** 11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands—12 *remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.* 13 **But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.** 14 **For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups (Jew and Gentile) into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,** 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that **in Himself He might make the two into one new man** (a Christian) , thus establishing peace, 16 and might **reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross,** by it having put to death the enmity (between Jew and Gentile).
  - b. **Colossians 2:11-13 (NASB95)** 11 and **in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.** 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,**
    - 1). Notice **when Christ circumcised (cut away their sin) Verse 12 above** – it took place **“having been buried with Him in baptism. This is when He raised us up with Him through our faith in the working of God.** God does His work of removing our sins in baptism. It is here that we contact the blood that takes away our sin!
      - a). Without the shedding of **blood** there is no forgiveness, **Hebrews 9:22.**
      - b). We have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins through His **blood** **Ephesians 1:3-7.**
      - c). We are buried with Christ in baptism, raised (by God) to walk in newness of life (forgiven, receive the new birth) **Romans 6:3-7; Colossians 2:12-13.**
  - c. **Ephesians 1:22-23 (NASB95)** 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and **gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**
    - 1). The church, which is the one body of saved people, is the **fullness of Christ**, showing that what Christ came to do (seek and save the lost **Luke 19:10**) was accomplished. The church stands as a testimony that Christ saved people and built the church He promised to build (**Matthew 16:18 (NASB95)** 18 “I also say to you that you are Peter, and **upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.** The **rock** (mentioned in this verse) was the **fact** Peter stated in **Matthew 16:16 (NASB95)** Simon Peter answered, **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** This is the foundation upon which the church is built.
9. Christ, who was with the Father in the beginning (before the foundation of the world) and who created everything that has been made (**John 1:1-4**), determined to **place the saved in His church or kingdom** (Acts 2:47 KJV; Colossians 1:13-14) **into that one body** (Ephesians 2:11-16; Ephesians 4:4-6) and **prayed that we all be one as He and the Father are one** (John 17:21). If Christ prayed this prayer to the Father then it is not only possible for all

**believers to be one but necessary since He has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18-20).**