

February 1994

Frank W. Nelte

THE MEANING OF 'EVEN AS WE ARE ONE' (JOHN 17:22)

The Church of God is being pressured to accept a false teaching about the nature of God. That false teaching has been disguised by an appeal to the Greek word "hupostasis", or in English "hypostasis". In an attempt to persuade God's people to accept this false teaching, the leadership of the church has appealed to biblical statements about God being "one". One such statement that has specifically been presented as supposed proof for this new teaching is found in John 17:22, where Jesus Christ made the following statement:

And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE: (John 17:22 AV)

Exactly what did Jesus Christ mean here? Did Jesus Christ mean that He and the Father are ONE Being, somewhat like the trinity teaching of many churches? Let's see if we can understand these words spoken by Jesus Christ.

In the New Testament the Greek word for "one" is "heis" and this is used, in its various forms, 271 times in 234 different verses. These numbers are not important in themselves but they DO illustrate very clearly exactly how God inspired this word to be used and the meaning that God wants us to derive from its usage.

So let's look at how the New Testament uses the word "one".

I and [my] Father ARE ONE. (John 10:30)

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they MAY BE ONE, AS WE [ARE]. (John 17:11)

That they all MAY BE ONE; AS THOU, Father, [ART] IN ME, and I in thee, that they also MAY BE ONE IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (John 17:21)

Notice, we are to be (become) one WITH GOD AND CHRIST JUST LIKE THEY ARE ONE WITH EACH OTHER!

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So WE, [being] many, ARE ONE BODY in Christ, and every one members one of another. (Romans 12:4-5)

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to BE LIKEMINDED one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may WITH ONE MIND [and] one mouth glorify God, even the

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6)

The clear usage in all of the passages we have looked at so far refers to "BEING ONE MIND" or "like-minded". That is how the scriptures use the word "one"!

Now he that planteth and he that watereth ARE ONE: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. (1 Corinthians 3:8)

They really are still TWO different individuals, but they are "of one mind" as far as doing God's work is concerned.

What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is ONE BODY? for two, saith he, shall be ONE FLESH. But he that is joined unto the Lord is ONE SPIRIT. (1 Corinthians 6:16-17)

Physically they are still TWO separate individuals, aren't they? Likewise, we can be one in spirit with God, yet still be separate individuals.

For WE [being] many ARE ONE BREAD, [and] ONE BODY: for (i.e. because!) we are all partakers of THAT ONE BREAD. (1 Corinthians 10:17)

Now what did Paul himself think he was writing in the above verse?

Did he want to say that we all become ONE ENTITY OR did he want to tell us that we are to have a UNITY OF SPIRIT IN THE SAME WAY AS GOD THE FATHER AND JESUS CHRIST HAVE A UNITY OF SPIRIT?

For as THE BODY IS ONE, and hath MANY MEMBERS, and all the members of that one body, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY: SO ALSO [IS] CHRIST. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

What kind of "oneness" did Paul have in mind here? Becoming physically one entity ... or unity of mind?

For by ONE SPIRIT are we all baptized INTO ONE BODY, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink INTO ONE SPIRIT. For THE BODY IS NOT ONE MEMBER, BUT MANY. (1 Corinthians 12:13-14)

Paul is telling us that what makes us "one" is the fact that WE ALL HAVE THE ONE SAME SPIRIT from God.

But now [are they] MANY MEMBERS, yet but ONE BODY. (1 Corinthians 12:20)

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

This is how becoming one works out in practice: we are all AFFECTED by what happens to any other member, be it good or be it bad. But we are all still separate individuals.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS. (Galatians 3:28)

Of course, there are still Jews and Greeks and males and females. Paul is clearly talking about UNITY OF MIND AND PURPOSE!

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, [so] making peace; (Ephesians 2:15)

Reconciling Jews and non-Jews into one body, the Church.

And that he might reconcile BOTH UNTO GOD IN ONE BODY by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: (Ephesians 2:16)

Both, Jews and non-Jews, NEED to be reconciled to God. And the key is verse 18:

For through him we BOTH HAVE ACCESS BY ONE SPIRIT unto the Father. (Ephesians 2:18)

We become one because God's Spirit gives us a common perspective.

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. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

Even here we see TWO different individuals referred to ... one is God the Father and the other is the "one Lord".

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, OF ONE MIND. (Philippians 2:2)

That is what Paul means all the time by the word "one", becoming of one mind.

For [there is] ONE God, and ONE mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (1 Timothy 2:5)

Again the TWO members of the Godhead are mentioned.

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified [ARE] ALL OF ONE: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, (Hebrews 2:11)

All are one, yet obviously still many separate members.

Now let's look at the correct text for 1 John 5:7-8:

For there are three that bear record : the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and THESE THREE AGREE IN ONE. (1 John 5:7-8, corrected text)

Now think! How can "water" and "blood", which are PHYSICAL, be "ONE" with "spirit", which is NON-PHYSICAL?

[COMMENT: We don't need to concern ourselves with the spurious words in the KJV here, which have been traced to Cyprian's comments on this verse, via a late scribe of the Latin Vulgate writing Cyprian's exegesis into the margin of his text, whence it got into late copies of the Vulgate, and then into two late cursives of the Greek ... #162 from the 15th century in the Vatican Library and #34 from the 16th century in TRINITY College, Dublin. It was from this last mss that it made its way into the TR via Erasmus' second edition.]

These three (water, blood and spirit) cannot be one "IN THE STRICTEST SENSE OF THE WORD"! They can only be one in the sense of UNITY OF PURPOSE ... they all work towards one goal.

But be not ye called Rabbi: for ONE is your MASTER, [even] CHRIST; and all ye are brethren. And call no [man] your father upon the earth: for ONE is your FATHER, which is IN HEAVEN. Neither be ye called masters: for ONE is your MASTER, [even] Christ. (Matthew 23:8-10)

TWO God-beings again ... God the Father in supreme authority and Jesus Christ the Master, the Executive on the Father's behalf.

You don't have to go into the Greek for all these passages, and many others like them. We've now looked at about 25 verses, where the word "one" is used; and none of them tie in with the meaning that God is supposedly some kind of trinity, with God the Father and Jesus Christ somehow being ONE being. Nowhere does God say that two separate beings ever become one "in the strictest sense of the word one"! A husband and wife are still two separate physical beings; church members are still separate beings from one another, and God the Father and Jesus Christ are still separate individual beings.

The whole Catholic idea of "three hypostases in one God" is nothing more than outright heresy.

The whole thing with this "hypostasis" teaching is just a sham, just a transition until "the time is right" to introduce to the Church of God the statement of belief that:

"GOD IS ONE BEING IN THREE PERSONS!"

The above list of Scriptures speaks for itself as to exactly what God means when He uses the word "one" in relation to two or more individuals. It is ALWAYS a matter of becoming one in outlook and perspectives, in goals and intentions, in purposes, and in the way of thinking.

Frank W. Nelte