

Be Of One Accord

In Matthew 21, we read of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. After the disciples brought the donkey to Jesus for Him to enter the city upon, we read, starting in verse 7, *"they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and He sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of Him and that followed were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'"*

"When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

"Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, 'It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers.

"The blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He cured them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that He did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they became angry..."

The population of the city of Jerusalem, at the time, is estimated to be about 600,000 people. As Jesus entered the city, riding on a donkey, the vast crowds went ahead of Him, spread their cloaks on the road, cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road and they were all shouting with joy: *"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"*

But when Jesus entered the temple and found it defiled by the religious leaders, who were profiting by God's House being turned into a den of thieves, He was righteously indignant. He proceeded to cleanse the temple from those who had defiled it, and because this was costing the religious leaders MONEY and POWER, they became infuriated... even though Jesus then began healing the blind and the lame – and I would assume – others, who came with all sorts of problems.

When He entered the city, the Bible tells us there were huge crowds worshiping and honoring Him. Obviously, they knew Him – Who He was (the Messiah, God's chosen Lamb) – and they all acknowledged that publicly. Jesus further demonstrated His Holy power – which could ONLY have been of God Himself – by healing all those who came to Him.

But it wasn't long before those same crowds – more than a half million people – who just days before were shouting "*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!*" – turned on Him, and those same crowds began shouting "*Crucify Him!*" They had been profoundly influenced by the false religious leaders, the Scribes and Pharisees – the priests and those who truly SHOULD have known the Scriptures well enough to KNOW EXACTLY Who Jesus was.

In the end, all the disciples abandoned Him – even Peter, who vowed he would never deny Him. He was left alone, to carry the heavy burden of the cross. All had left Him, for fear of their own lives. And I would guess that many who had previously followed Jesus, witnessed His many miracles – and were direct beneficiaries of those miracles themselves – also began to doubt that Jesus was the One who had come in the name of the Lord.

Of course, many wept and mourned as Jesus was tortured and crucified. But they felt helpless to do anything about it; nor would Jesus have allowed them to intervene. He had come to fulfill His mission, and His final words, as He died there

on the cross were, "It is finished." He had accomplished His mission. He had defeated the enemy, serving as God's spotless Lamb of sacrifice, giving His earthly life after unspeakable torture and disdain – from even those who had previously claimed to be His best friends.

When He rose from the grave, He had TRULY finished His mission, by defeating death and hell – and the enemy of our souls. Afterwards, He spent many days with His disciples before ascending into heaven to take His rightful place at the right hand of God. But not before promising to send the third Person of the Trinity into the hearts of those true Christ-followers. Yes, the Holy Spirit would descend upon them, and instead of having "God with us," all true Christ-followers can likewise, even today, have "God IN us," through His Holy Spirit.

Now, let's pick up the story in Acts, Chapter 1, where we find that out of those 600,000 who had worshiped Jesus when He entered the city – even after all the miracles they had witnessed and received; even after they had seen Him rise from the grave, even after Jesus had spent many days witnessing and PROVING His divinity – only about 120 were still His true disciples. In Acts 1, we read that following Jesus' ascension into heaven, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and went into the Upper Room.

In verse 14 we read, "*These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and with His brethren.*" Then, Peter, (who had formerly denied Jesus three times), finally understood all that had taken place, and he explained it all to the 120 disciples assembled there. Later, after those 120 had received the promised Holy Spirit, Peter became even more bold, and THROUGH the power of the Holy Spirit, had the courage to stand before the city and declare the TRUTH of the Gospel to the crowds, BOLDY and without apology, even knowing doing so could cost him his life.

But God worked mightily through Peter and the disciples – even with all their flaws and shortcomings. And Scripture tells us that following Peter’s sermon, 3,000 souls were added to the number of true Christ-followers. Yes, 3,000 had repented, and called upon the name of the Lord and were saved that day.

I often wonder what it was like in that upper room. Jesus, their Leader, their LORD, was gone from this earth now, yet the Bible tells us, they were gathered together and all were in “one accord.” They KNEW what they KNEW and nothing could change their minds. They were deeply committed to Christ. Suddenly, all the Scriptures and prophecies made sense. Finally, they “got it.” There was no division among them, even though there most certainly were men and women of all different backgrounds, gifted with different abilities, strengths and weaknesses. They were ONE, just as Jesus asked His Heavenly Father that they would be.

Look at John 17. Jesus, right before His betrayal, trial and crucifixion, prayed to His Father in heaven regarding His disciples, whom He loved so much: *“...I have given them the words that You gave Me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours...*

“Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While I was with them, I kept them in Your name...I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the

world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world...

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word... the glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one. I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me.”

Wow. There is a LOT here to meditate upon and come to understand. **1)** Jesus gave His disciples the message from the Father. **2)** the disciples believed Jesus, repented and believed the Gospel. **3)** Jesus was not praying for the whole WORLD, but only for His disciples, those who were true Christ-followers. **4)** Jesus knew He would soon be leaving this earth, and He prayed that the Father would KEEP them in His name, and most importantly, that they would all be ONE (in heart, mind and spirit). **5)** BECAUSE the disciples followed Christ, the world hated them. **6)** Jesus didn't ask the Father to remove them from the world, but that they would be kept from harm by the evil one. **7)** As Christ-followers, they were not of the world, just as Jesus was not of the world, but rather, they had the Spirit of God within them. **8)** Jesus sent them into the world (they were NOT to keep themselves – or the message of Christ to themselves, inside the four walls of their places of worship, but rather, Jesus sent them OUT. **9)** Jesus prayed not just for His disciples, but also for all those who would hear and BELIEVE the Gospel THROUGH THEIR WORD. And **10)** once again, He prayed that all would be ONE, even as Jesus and His Father are one.

But it was not long after the disciples went out to preach and teach – and turn the world upside down through the message of Christ – that division crept in. Paul addressed this very thing as he wrote to the believers in Corinth: *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as*

unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able.

“For you are yet carnal. For while there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, ‘I am of Paul;’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos;’ are you not carnal? Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are ONE: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: you are God’s husbandry, you are God’s building.” (NOTE HERE: “God’s BUILDING” does not mean the brick and mortar structure with a cross on it on the corner – the TRUE Church is made up of BELIEVERS and FOLLOWERS of Christ. **WE** are the Church. **WE** are God’s “Building!”

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Friends, believe it or not, we have come to the place today, where there are now 33,000 different so-called “Christian” denominations in the world. THAT does not sound – to me – like we, as Christ-followers, are ONE. That sounds like we have directly and purposely divided each other – against the will of Jesus, whom we all claim to serve, and against God the Father, who ALSO desires us to all be “of one accord.”

It’s interesting the strange alliances the God-haters build and maintain: LGBT people and feminists and pro-abortion

people aligning with Islam... could there BE anything more odd? Yet THEY all “play together” nicely and support one another out of their common hatred for God. WHY IS IT, then, that us Christians cannot seem to get along, or agree on the pure Word of God we all claim to follow? Why is it that we cannot all agree – be in one accord, and simply take God at His Word, BELIEVE His Word, and just OBEY His word? I believe the answer is that most who proclaim to be Christ-followers don't even know what His Word says. The pastors are not properly instructed in their seminaries, and therefore they cannot properly teach their congregations, and the people themselves have so little time for God, they are mostly biblically illiterate.

Surely, in that upper room, at the start, where the 120 faithful ones met “in one accord,” there were many different personalities, people of many different backgrounds, men and women with many different gifts and abilities. Yet they all agreed that Christ was LORD. WHAT A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH if we were able to get back to that place in our world today! “*Denominationalism*,” by it's very definition, means to DIVIDE... and THAT is the OPPOSITE of what Jesus wanted. So today, I beg you to get back into your Bible. I dare say for most of you, it's been a long time; TOO LONG. Read, Study, show yourself approved, so that you may be able to GO OUT and be world-changers. And STOP DIVIDING amongst yourselves over trivialities and out of pride. If we are going to be the Salt and Light of the world, we must all believe and OBEY the same thing: God's Word. It's time we abandon the traditions and teachings of men. Because while the enemy never sleeps and HIS followers are united against God (and US), it seems all we, as faithful church-goers can do is fight amongst ourselves. And THAT needs to STOP.

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