

## Fundamentals For Unity

Ephesians 4:1-16

1

## Fundamentals For Unity

1. There Is An Absolute Truth
2. The Truth Can Be Known
3. Men Can Understand That Truth Alike

2

## There Is An Absolute Truth

### The Old Testament.

- ▶ *"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding"* (Proverbs 23:23).
- ▶ David *"walked in the truth"* (Psalms 26:3; 86:11) and taught the truth (Psalms 40:10).
  - *He identified the truth with the revealed word of God* (Psalms 119:43,151).
  - *He said, "The sum of thy word is truth"* (Psalms 119:160, NASB).

3

## There Is An Absolute Truth

### Jesus taught an absolute truth.

- ▶ He stated that men must know the truth in order to be saved from sin. John 8:32
- ▶ He revealed the truth. John 1:17
- ▶ He claimed to be the truth. John 14:6; cf. Ephesians 4:21
- ▶ Father's word is truth. John 17:17
- ▶ Furthermore, this absolute truth will be the standard by which all men are judged. John 12:47-48

4

## There Is An Absolute Truth

### The Scriptures are the absolute standard of objective truth.

- ▶ They are the word of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 14:37-38
- ▶ They are an all-sufficient revelation for all men. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

5

## The Truth Can Be Known

### The truth is a revelation.

- ▶ The fact that God has revealed His truth means that men can know it.
- ▶ Romans 16:25-26, *"Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the **revelation of the mystery** which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but **now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith"***
  - The word "**revelation**," *apokalupsis* means "to uncover, reveal."
  - By definition, a "revelation" is something that can be known.

6

## The Truth Can Be Known

The Scriptures expressly state that men can know the truth. Ephesians 3:1-5; cf. Ephesians 5:17

- ▶ “*prove all things and hold fast to that which is good*” presupposes that men can understand. 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- ▶ Paul said that men can “*know the truth.*” 1 Timothy 4:3
- ▶ Those who had fallen back into sin have departed from the truth previously known. Hebrews 10:26; 2 Peter 2:20-22

7

## The Truth Can Be Known

Jesus made salvation conditional upon one’s knowing the truth. John 8:32

- ▶ God made man as he is – and the Bible as it is.
- ▶ The Bible was intended to reveal God’s will to man.
- ▶ If man is unable to understand the Bible, there is either ...
  - Something wrong with man.
  - Something wrong with the Bible.
  - Either is to blame God!

8

## Men Can Understand That Truth Alike

▶ Every passage that condemns false doctrine affirms that men are expected to understand the Bible alike. Galatians 1:8-9; 2 John 9-11

- ▶ “*giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ...*”
- ▶ *till we all attain unto the unity of the faith*” Ephesians 4:3, 13

9

## The Devil’s Assault: “We Cannot Understand the Bible Alike”

1. Jesus was in the flesh. 1-3 John
2. There is no bodily resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15
3. The resurrection is already past. 2 Timothy 2:18
4. Man must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved. Acts 15; Galatians
5. Men should not eat meat. 1 Timothy 4:1-3
6. Men should not marry. 1 Timothy 4:1-3

10

## Application:

### If ...

- ▶ “We can no more think alike than we can look alike.”
- ▶ “All truths are equally true, but not equally important.”
- ▶ “We must agree to disagree on these areas.”

### Then ...

- ▶ God does not expect us to understand the Bible alike.

### But ...

- ▶ This approach was not followed conflicts in the Bible.
- ▶ Brethren worked to attain the unity of the Spirit – a unity grounded on revealed truth.

11

## Tolerance of all doctrinal differences is too broad.

These principles consistently followed would ultimately lead to universalism.

- ▶ Division over whether or not God exists, Jesus is the Son of God, the virgin birth, resurrection, etc.
- ▶ Division exists over church support of human institutions (missionary societies, hospitals, colleges, etc.), instrumental music in worship, choirs, women preachers, etc.
- ▶ To limit the application, those who embrace unity-in-diversity divide the Bible into two sections: “gospel” and “doctrine.”

12

**These three fundamentals are essential to attaining the unity of the Spirit:**

- 1. There is an absolute truth;**
- 2. That truth can be known; and**
- 3. Men can understand that truth alike.**

▶ Unless men can agree that these fundamentals are true, we cannot attain and maintain the "*unity of the Spirit.*" Ephesians 4:9-11

13