



## A NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH – STUDY # 6

### THAT THEY MAY BE ONE

**In the Gospel of St. John the seventeenth chapter is referred to as “Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer”. Focus in on vs. 11b where Jesus prays, “Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” And then the same thing is prayed in vs. 21 where Jesus continues to pray: “...that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you....”**

Jesus prays for spiritual unity for his church. This unity can be expressed on three levels.

First there is the *doctrinal unity* where we the church are to speak and confess the same things as the Son and the Father also speak the same things. This precludes the diversity of false doctrine which leads us astray from life and truth. St. Paul urgently prays for this unity in 1 Co 1:10 and labors for it throughout his letter to the Corinthians. As a matter of fact, all the New Testament epistles were written for the purpose of bringing Christians into doctrinal unity!

On a second level Jesus’ desire is that we have unity of *purpose*. As a church our united desire and purpose is to share the Gospel with all whom we meet. How does St. Paul express and encourage this unity of *purpose* even in Phil 1:15-18?

Even if people proclaim that Gospel out of selfish ambition Paul still rejoices that the Gospel is being proclaimed!

Thirdly, Jesus and the Father are one in *being*, one in *essence*. Jesus prays that we his bride be one in *being* just as he and the Father are. The church is one in being when she is blameless and holy. This is accomplished solely by Christ in the rejuvenative powers of Holy Baptism.

Hear how the *American Luther*, the founder of the Missouri Synod, C.F.W. Walther spoke of the giftedness in which we Christians live so that we may be one in Christ.

**The Gospel does not require anything good that man must furnish: not a good heart, not a good disposition, no improvement of his condition, no godliness, no love either of God or men. It issues no orders, but it changes man. It plants love into his heart and makes him capable of all good works. It demands nothing, but gives all. Should not this fact make us leap for joy?... Observe that the Gospel bestows the faith which it demands.** [*The Lutheran Study Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), p. 1870, n. Acts 16:30-33.]

Now we turn to a familiar text which shows that it is Christ who has supplied all that we need and that it is the Gospel that bestows Christ's righteousness to the believer.

## WHITE ROBES

### Please turn to Rev 7:13-14

This verse is frequently the epistle lesson for which Sunday in the Church Year?  
All Saints' Sunday.

This day commemorates the faithful who have been delivered from the tribulation. The tribulation is not to be understood in the sense of the rapture, seven years of tribulation, or where Jesus sets up a literal thousand year reign here on earth. When the Bible speaks of the tribulation it refers to the suffering and persecution Christians experience here on earth as we seek by the Spirit's aid to remain faithful to Jesus in the midst of great suffering.

The Gradual for "All Saints' Sunday", used throughout the last Sundays of the Church Year sums it up well:

### GRADUAL

*Rev. 7:14b; Ps. 84:5*

These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.  
They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.  
Blessèd are those whose strength is in you,  
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

All the dear saints who have gone before us and trusted Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins in this life have come out of the great tribulation. The color "white" in the Scriptures is often the color for purity. What "instrument" made their garments / clothes, white? The blood of the lamb. The normal ordinary means whereby Jesus clothes us in the purity of his righteousness is through baptism.

In liturgical churches an option is present. After the infant has been baptized he or she may be clothed in a white robe to symbolize the righteousness of Christ that now clothes this infant / person.

At the other end of life there is an option present among liturgical Christians to drape a funeral pall over the coffin to again symbolize what we know by faith; our loved one is clothed not in their own righteousness fig leaves (Gen 3:7), but in Christ's righteousness (Gen 3:21). You may want to look at other verses that affirm this truth: Gal 3:27; Eph 5:25-27; Col 3:9-10.

Where in the Scriptures did God first announce by *actions* that he would be the one to dress us with *his* righteousness and not ours? Gen 3:21.

## REDEMPTION FOR ALL

The first shadowy proclamation of the crucifixion in Scripture is found in the Passover liturgy. In the Passover liturgy faithful Israelites would confess Ex 6:6-7 as they would joyously drink their four cups of wine through the course of the liturgical meal.

“6Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and **I will** bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and **I will** deliver you from slavery to them, and **I will** redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. **7I will** take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” Ex 6:6-7.

With what words is the crucifixion alluded to in Ex 6:6-7? I will redeem you with an outstretched arm. (If a hint is needed you may wish to see Jn 21:18.) This cup (the third *I will* in Ex 6:6) is referred to as the cup of redemption. Where in Jesus' ministry did He drink or face this third cup? In the Gospels it comes right after the institution of the Lord's Supper. Need a hint? see Mt 26:36-46. Garden of Gethsemane.

**This Garden is located near the Mt. of Olives. It is called “Gethsemane,” and in Aramaic it means, “olive press.” In this Garden large stones were used to crush olives. As the olives were crushed the juices were squeezed out and collected to make olive oil and such. As Jesus prepared to drink that third cup of redemption the weight of the sins of the world were so pressing down upon him that the juice of Jesus' blood was being squeezed from him.**

With what words or with what “Ordinary” in the liturgy do we as liturgical Christians have the opportunity to sing about this cup of redemption every Communion Sunday? “...I will take the cup of salvation and will call upon the name of the Lord. Hint: In *LSB* see pp. 159-160. Where does this Ordinary come from in the Scriptures: Ps 116:12-13.

## MARKED FOR LIFE

### **Please turn to Ez 9:1-8.**

At this time in history Jerusalem had become so apostate that judgment was at hand. God commanded men to go throughout the city. What were these men to do for the righteous, to those who had not broken covenant with the Lord? See specifically vs. 4. Place a mark on the foreheads of the righteous.

In Hebrew the word for *mark* is *tau*, the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The *tau* is made in the form of an English “X,” or a “+” (plus) sign, or even a “✕”—a cross. This symbolism is carried through in Revelation. In Rev 7:1-4 no one is to be touched or who has received the mark.

Without much effort we can list many acceptable forms or postures of prayer that have been used by the faithful down through the centuries. These postures of prayer are employed by people of every religion and culture. Please list some of these postures of prayer that come to your mind. 1) eyes closed, 2) head bowed, 3) hands folded, 4) kneeling, 5) making the sign of the cross, 6) prostrate on the ground, 7) hands held high above the head.

All these forms of prayer listed above are used by non-Christians as well as Christians alike. For the Christian they are all acceptable and have been used more or less extensively at different times in church history. However, which form of prayer is so uniquely Christian that a non-

Christian would never-ever be caught dead using or making it? What form traces the outline of a *tau* upon the one marked for life since Baptism? Making the sign of the cross .

Prior to the washing with water and the saying of the Triune name the baptismal candidate is *marked* to show that judgment will *Pass over* this individual. How, or in what manner is the candidate marked in Holy Baptism? Prior to being washed with holy water the pastor says over the one to be baptized: "... receive the sign of the holy cross both upon your ✕ forehead and upon your ✕ heart to mark you as redeemed by Christ the crucified" . [Commission On Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 268.]

In the Passover the faithful were *marked* by lamb's blood touched to the lintel and the two doorposts at either side (Ex 12:22). As blood was applied above and to the two sides of the doorposts what sign would the Israelites have seen being made? Blood was applied in the form of a cross .

## BACK TO THE BEGINNING

**In Eden a spring flowed up out the ground. The spring flowed out of Eden and then divided into four rivers. This shows us that Eden was on a mountain (Gn 2:10). In Eden there was a Garden. This Garden was placed on what side of Eden? Need a Hint: See Gen 2:8. East .**

When man sinned he was driven out of the Garden that lay in Eden and at the east side (Gen 3:24) was the entrance into the Garden. Here God placed a cherubim with a flaming sword to guard the entrance. In the Old Testament the God who is everywhere desired to meet his people. So he instructed them to build a Tent of Meeting—a tabernacle—that he might commune with them. (See Ex 25). The entrance to this Tabernacle and Courtyard lay on which point of the compass? east . Hint see Ex 27:13, 38:13.

Please turn to Ezk 47:1-2. From the movement of the water we see that Ezekiel's temple was on a mountain . The temple in Ezekiel's vision faced in what direction? east .

The Temple in Jerusalem was built upon a mountain, Mt. Jerusalem . This shows that the Tabernacle and later the Temple in Jerusalem were viewed as a type of restored Garden in Eden . Now you understand why traditionally churches were built facing east and why at funerals the deceased in the coffin were situated facing the altar—facing east! The Church was viewed as a restoration, albeit in a limited manner, of the Garden of Eden, fellowship with God!

**Now please turn to Rev 22:1-5 and we will see how we have come full circle back to the Garden of Eden in Gen ch. 2 before sin intruded. What clues show us that the Garden in Eden—paradise—is restored through the work of Jesus Christ?**

- 1) A river flows from the throne of God into the middle of the city;
- 2) the trees yielding fruit each month show us the curse has been reversed, and,
- 3) in verse 5 there is light in the city of God without the sun, just like there was light on the earth from Gen 1:3 prior to the sun being made on the fourth day (Gen 1:16-19).