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# Words of Truth

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## Unity Is Not The Standard By Which Truth Is Determined

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In a congregation a Scriptural question is asked. The brethren come together and study the matter. After months of study and reflection from the Scriptures, they form a conclusion. That conclusion becomes the doctrinal position of that congregation. When they speak of their conclusion they say: “we have studied this question and are unified in our conclusion.” Does that statement mean their conclusion is correct? NO! Let’s consider why unity in a matter doesn’t make a conclusion right or wrong.

There was once a blind man in the days Jesus walked this earth in the flesh. Jesus healed that blind man miraculously (John 9:1-14). After that, questions arose. Notice a statement in the context of those questions: *“Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue”* (John 9:15-22). Did the agreement among the Jews make their conclusion right? NO (Acts 8:37, Romans 10:9-10, I John 2:23, and I John 4:15)!

There was a man named Stephen. He was among the seven men chosen to look after the Grecian widows (Acts 6:1-6). He was full of faith, power, and did great wonders and miracles among the people (Acts 6:8). When certain people could not resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake they opposed him and made false charges against him (Acts 6:9-15). He preached the truth unto them (Acts 7:1-53). Notice what this disobedient people were unified in doing to Stephen: *“When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*

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*And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:54-59). Did their being in “one accord” make their conclusion right? NO (Galatians 5:19-21, Revelation 21:8, and Revelation 22:14-15)!*

The Gospel of Christ had spread through Asia (Acts 19:8-10). God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul (Acts 19:11-16). This confirmed the message of the Gospel and many believed and showed repentance (Acts 19:17-20; cf. Mark 16:15-20). As Paul continued to work in Asia (Acts 19:21-22), there arose a great problem (Acts 19:23). Notice what was agreed upon by the masses here: *“For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (Acts 19:24-34). Did their unified conclusion make Diana a great god? NO (Malachi 2:10, Ephesians 4:4-6, I Timothy 2:5, and James 2:19)!*

### **Conclusion**

Unity is certainly commanded and therefore expected amongst God’s people (John 17:20-23, I Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 2:2, and Philippians 3:16). However, unity is not the standard that we measure things by. There is one standard by which we are to live by (Luke 4:4, John 6:63, John 17:17, Acts 20:32, Colossians 3:16-17, and II Timothy 3:15-17). That same standard is what we will be judged by (John 12:48, Romans 2:1-16, and II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Whether we agree with that standard or not doesn’t matter. The word of our Lord is unchangeable (Psalms 89:20-37, Matthew 24:35, James 1:17-18, and I Peter 1:22-25)!