

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Unity of the Gospel Ministry

In the book of Ezekiel the prophet describes four living creatures and each one had four faces. This description is typical of the gospel ministry:

1. Ezek 1:6 "And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings."
2. Ezek 10:10 "And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel."
3. Ezek 10:14 "And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle."
4. Ezek 10:21 "Every one had four faces apiece, and every one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings."

Each creature was typical of a gospel minister. The description was the same for each of the four creatures. When we look at the association of the number four and the work of the Holy Spirit, we will consider the faces of the living creatures, as well as the four living creatures.

Eph. 4:11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." This description of the four types of gospel ministers shows us a unity of work of the gospel ministry. Whether the minister was a apostle, or prophet, or evangelist, or pastor and teacher, they all had the same job description. They were given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Furthermore, the qualifications of a gospel minister whether he was an apostle, or prophet, or evangelist, or pastor and teacher are identical and set forth in the following passages:

1. 1 Tim. 3:1 "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of

the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

2. Tit. 1:7 "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

In addition, the gospel ministry are to preach the same gospel regardless of whether they are an apostle, or prophet, or evangelist, or pastor and teacher. Paul warned against preaching any other gospel: Gal. 1:6 "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Again, the gospel ministry are all to follow the Spirit of the Lord in their ministry. This is illustrated in the description of the four living creatures: Ezek. 1:12 "And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went." The gospel ministry are to preach in power and demonstration of Spirit and they are to be led of the Spirit of God both in their preaching and to whom they are to preach and to where they are to preach.