

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AS A BODY

INTRODUCTION

In studying the church of the New Testament, we learn of its **ORIGIN**, in that it originated with God, in eternity even before the world began. Eph. 3:10-11. We also learn that it was an **OBJECT** of Old Testament prophecy, as in Isa. 2:2-3 and Dan. 2:44. We also learn that it was **REVEALED** by New Testament writers for the benefit of the world for ages to come.

We learn also that the word for church in the original Greek language of the New Testament is the word *ekklesia*, which simply means "the called out". This word refers to the whole or **universal** people of God, and to the church **local** in a given city or community, and to the **assembly** of a local congregation that meets to worship God. 1 Cor. 1:2; 14:23

In our study today, we want to consider the role of the church as a **body**. When the United States senate assembles, it is considered a "body". ANY gathering of people can be considered a "body", whether scattered throughout the world, or in a given community or city.

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, we note that the words "body" and "church" are used interchangeably.

A. Paul writes to 2 different congregations and explains it in that manner.

1. To the Colossians, he said the body is the "church." Col. 1:18
2. To the Ephesians, he said the church is the "body." Eph. 1:22-23

B. Then, Paul makes the **comparison** between the church and a physical body.

1. A living physical body has one head, many members of the body (such as the hands, feet, ears and eyes, and the blood that flows through it.
2. Paul illustrates the importance of **all** members of one physical body. 1 Cor. 12:14-20..
3. Then, Paul shows that every member of the body functions together, and declares that he is making application to the **SPIRITUAL** body of Christ—the church. vs. 27

II. 2nd, we shall note a likeness between a physical body and the church.

A. We note that the church only has **one head**, and Christ IS that head, and He is the head of **only** the church He built. Matt. 16:18

1. A physical body has only one head, and that head only has one body—otherwise it would be a monstrosity.
2. The spiritual body as the church has only one head, who is Christ (and not the Pope or the Queen of England, or some president of a denomination in America), and He is not the head of one or all of the 35,000 denominations in the world today, which in reality have their own heads.

B. We also observe that the **church** of Christ is ONLY involved with Jesus' blood, which blood had absolutely nothing to do with the purchase of any political or social or civic or any human denomination or idolatrous religion, such as Hinduism or Mohammedanism

1. Jesus' blood was the purchasing price of His church. Acts 20:28
2. Jesus' blood is contacted when one is "baptized" INTO the church—by His authority. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3; John 19:34-35; 1 Cor. 12:13
3. His blood is **available** for "Christians" (members of the body) who walk in the light, and confess their sins and seek continual forgiveness. 1 John 1:7-9

4. Just as blood **keeps the physical body alive**, the blood of Jesus sustains His spiritual body, as “life is in the blood” (cf Lev. 17:11)

C. Now, just as each member of one’s physical body cares for and protects other members of the body, **so** each member of the spiritual body does the same. 1 Co. 12:24-27

1. The **feet** of the spiritual body are to be used to go and preach the gospel, and to do good. Mark 16:15; Rom. 10:15; Gal. 6:10

2. The **ears** of the spiritual body are to hear the cries of those lost in sin, or in physical distress. Acts 16:9-10, 12-15, 25-34

3. The **hands** of the spiritual body are to be used in helping others in need. Acts 2:44-45; Jas. 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17-18

4. The **nose** of the spiritual body is to be used to “smell a rat” (so to speak), when false teachers come in and attempt to change the teaching of the Lord. Rom. 16:17; Tit. 1:9-11

D. Then there are some other needs of both the physical and spiritual bodies.

1. Just as a physical body needs regular exercise, the spiritual body needs to exercise itself in righteousness. 1 Tim. 4:8

2. Also, just as the physical body needs food for survival, the spiritual body of Christ needs to feast on the word of God for spiritual life. Matt. 4:10; Acts 20:32; 1 Pet. 2:2

CONCLUSION

I. It is a wonderful thing to be a part of Christ and His spiritual body—the church.

A. In Christ we have and enjoy all spiritual blessings from God. Eph.1:3

B. In Christ we enjoy salvation and the hope of eternal life in heaven.

1. If we leave Christ, we lose these blessings.

2. If sin has separated you from Christ, you need to repent and pray.

II. If you have a need for the life that Christ offers for His spiritual body, we invite you to respond to heaven’s invitation, as we stand together and sing. Won’t you come?

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