

Biblical Perspectives from God's Word

The Glorious Body of Christ

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I. Introductory Remarks.

This study will focus on the "Glorious Body of Christ" beginning with "Christ's Many Membered Body," and then showing how our personalities, relationships, giftings and servanthood all work together to produce the Glorious Body of Christ in the earth.

Hebrews 10:5 *Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.*

When Jesus walked on this earth almost 2,000 years ago, He was the full embodiment of Christ, the manifestation of God in the flesh. He came in the express image of God the Father with the brightness of the Father's glory indelibly stamped upon His personage. He was given the Spirit without measure that He might fully express the Father's image and glory to all who witnessed His coming.

John 3:34-35 *For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.(NIV)*

I. Jesus, the Manifestation of the Body of Christ.

- **Jesus was the anointed One sent from God to show us God in all of His majesty, power and grace.**

John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Jesus showed us the true character of God and what it means to truly love, care and minister to others with the fruits of the Spirit pouring forth out of His life. He showed us the awesome power and majesty of God through the gifts of the Spirit that were manifested in His life. He showed us what it is to operate in the authority of God through His anointed teaching, casting out demons and speaking with wisdom to those who opposed Him. He was certainly the embodiment of God in the flesh. He manifested God's power, character and authority in an amazing way. Yet He did all of this as a man totally submitted to the fullness of the Spirit working through His life.

Philippians 2:5-7 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men.*

It's important to understand that when Jesus came to earth, He never ceased being God. He was and is the second person of the Godhead. But what He did do was this; He made Himself of no reputation by allowing Himself to be stripped of His power to act as God. He became dependent upon the Holy Spirit working through Him just as you and I must do. That's why it says, "*Let this same attitude be in you*". You see Jesus came to show us how to be the many membered Body of Christ.

- **The Divine Seed had to be planted in the earth.**

The time came when the Divine seed of God that had come to fruition in the life of Jesus had to be buried in the earth, so that it could bring forth a more glorious expression of God's fullness.

You see Jesus was limited by space and time. God needed a vehicle or expression of His image that was not limited by space and time. And for this reason Jesus had to die so that the Divine seed could multiply and bring forth a greater harvest of sons. His purpose was to bring forth a many membered body that would be much more glorious than the single expression of His Body in Jesus.

John 12:23-24 *But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.*

II. The Purpose of Christ's Death.

- **Our sins had to be purged and atoned for.**

The death of Christ was an eminent part of God's overall plan to bring many sons to glory. In order for us to be made acceptable in God our sins had to be atoned for.

Hebrews 2:10-11 *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,*

Hebrews 1:3 *...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself*

purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...

Revelation 1:5-6 *...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Before God breath His Holy Spirit into us and cause us to be born again of the incorruptible seed of God's own Divine nature, we, first of all, had to be cleansed by Christ's blood.

- **He broke down the middle wall of partition between us.**

Because mankind is made up of many races, tribes, cultures and other things that divide, the wall of partition between us had to be broken down. If we are to be united together in Him to bring forth a more glorious body than the body of Christ Himself, all of the issues that divide mankind had to be broken down. This too, was accomplished through His death!

Ephesians 2:14-16 *For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.*

Through the death of Christ, God provided the means for the two greatest obstacles of His body coming together in the fullness of Him -- our sin and our differences.

III. The Many Membered Body.

- **God is calling for unity out of diversity.**

Romans 12:3-5 *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

When God's call of salvation goes out to people, it knows no boundaries. It goes out to all peoples of all races, cultures, backgrounds, genders, personalities, classes, political backgrounds, etc. God's idea is to create one new man out of all these

diversities of people. This is where the fun begins and where the work of the cross comes into play.

God has given to each person in the body a measure of faith and gifting in Him, but for the body to come together as the glorious body of Christ that He has destined it to, there must be a meshing together.

1 Corinthians 12:13-14 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.*

- **We must endeavor to walk together in unity now that we have been baptized into one body.**

Ephesians 4:1-7 *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*

In the midst of all of our diversities, we must now learn how to walk together in unity and have the same care for one another. This is what knits the body together and causes it to be the glorious body that God has ordained. We have many differences such as:

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|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|
| ▪ personalities | ▪ race | ▪ politics | ▪ weaknesses |
| ▪ backgrounds | ▪ gender | ▪ giftings | ▪ class, eg. rich, |
| eg. drug, gang,
good kid, etc. | ▪ culture | ▪ strengths | poor |

1 Corinthians 12:25 *...that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.*

- **How is this accomplished?**

In Christ we are not to know each other after the flesh, but rather after the new creation we have become.

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 *Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things*

have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

God's desire is to have a fully functioning body that continually edifies itself in love with each member contributing to the overall growth and encouragement of the body.

Psalms 50:2 *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth.*

IV. Concluding Remarks.

As we seek to find that place in the Body of Christ that God has so perfectly designed for us, we will be contributing to fullness that God has ordained for the Body to come into.

Ephesians 4:16 (NLT) *Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*

Ephesians 1:22-23 *And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*