

"There Is One Body..."

Repeatedly the scriptures declare "there is one body". "Now are there many members but one body..." and "By one spirit have ye all be baptized into one body..." (1 Cor. 12:13, 20) "Ye are called in one body..." (Col. 3:5). When Paul urged Ephesians to "endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace", he heads the list of seven things that make such unity possible by saying "There is one body" (Eph. 4:4).

There are three truths which are evident as we observe the scriptures and the religious world. First, it is undeniably true that Jesus desired and prayed for unity among His disciples. "Neither for these only do I pray but for them also that believe on me through their word that they may all be one..." (Jn. 17:20f). When Jesus declared himself to be the "good shepherd", he said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd" (Jn. 10:16). When Caiaphas sought the death of Jesus he said, "nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man shall die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. Now this he said not of himself, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not for that nation only, but that he might gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad" (Jn. 11:50-52).

The apostles of Jesus repeated his desire for unity. Hear Paul as he wrote to Corinthians: "Now we beseech you brethren,...that ye all speak the same things and that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:9). Paul's statement as to how Jew and Gentile had become one through the sacrifice of Christ says "and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross..." (Eph. 2:16). How could the desire of Christ for unity be any more clearly expressed?

Second, it is also clear that divisions, parties and sects are sinful. the works of the flesh and that those who practice such things cannot enter the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

Third, there are divisions among those who call themselves Christians. What is to be concluded from these evident truths? We must conclude that the desires of our Savior are being ignored and that those guilty of perpetuating and maintaining divisions are in danger of losing their souls. If not, why not?

Do we not understand what the one body is? Paul wrote "he is the head of the body, the church" and "God gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body..." (Col. 1:18f, Eph. 1:22). He also wrote "I fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, which is the church..." (Col. 1:24). The body is the church. There is one body. There is one church. How could it be otherwise if God's people are all joined together in one body? If there are to be no divisions among us, and God's people united, there must be but one church. And therein "is the rub" for there are few facts more clearly revealed that are more hotly denied by our religious world than the evident truth "There is one church."

Denial of God's truth will not make his truth false. Men have two options regarding God's word. We can believe and obey it or we can reject it and disobey it. But, there is one thing we cannot do, **WE CANNOT CHANGE GOD'S TRUTH**. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my world shall never pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

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