

What Is The Body Of Christ?

In this country there are literally hundreds of denominations and even more worldwide. Yet when you talk to people who are of those denominations, they all claim to be the same. They have different creeds, confessions, structures, and names. But, it is interesting how they all say that they are of the body of Christ, that when it comes down to it on judgment day, they will all be accepted as faithful servants that have done Christ's will.

To the casual observer who attends two group's worship services, they would see that they are completely and totally different. However, when both are asked if they are the body of Christ, or members of the Lord's church, they both proclaim, "Yes!" Now, there seems to be an inconsistency here; the puzzle pieces do not match up. It seems that the subjects under this impression have a different definition of the "body of Christ." To correct the inconsistency, we must go to the scriptures of God.

When Paul was writing his letter to the Corinthians, he stated, "*Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually*" (1 Cor. 12:25). So, the body of Christ is people. The scriptures also declare that the body of Christ is the church, and that Christ is head over the church and the body, both are one in the same (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The body of Christ being the church of Christ ("church of Christ" signifying that it is the church belonging to Christ, not a denomination), we must also find how we can be a part of the body of Christ (church). We learn from the book of Acts that Peter told the Jewish brethren that they needed to "*repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.*" After this these souls that obeyed this command were added to them. In fact, the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:37-47). Mark 16:16 further tells us that "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned.*" So, the body of Christ is a group of people that have obeyed Christ's commands for salvation, and continue to follow in His doctrine, which He established through His apostles (John 16:12).

When these words of God are matched up with what men say of their denominations, we see that the problem is solved, and things become consistent again. These denominations that all claim allegiance to Christ really do not have allegiance at all. The reason being is that they do not follow the doctrine of Christ, but rather *their* creeds and confessions of faith, and *their* own structure of *their* church! Does not history prove this very case? Every denomination was started by men after Christ established His church.

The Roman Catholic Church had its beginnings in the mid 2nd century when the bishops of the churches started investing more and more power in their positions, changing the structure of the church and creating a hierarchy of power. However, the church Christ built is a monarchy (Matt. 16:18). With the creation of the Nicene Creed in A.D. 325 the Roman Catholic Church became first apostate church of man. God's word declared this would take place (1 Tim. 4:1-5). The remainder of these denominations have their roots in the 16th century Reformation. Coming out of this change were the Lutherans, Anglicans, Episcopals, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and later Pentecostals.

Even though we have many different "churches" today, there still is only one body of Christ which was started on Pentecost (Acts 2). Those of the New Testament were baptized into one body and one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-14; Eph. 4:4). There were those even in Jesus' day that thought they were doing Christ's will, but they really weren't (Luke 6:46). The only way to know if you are a part of the body of Christ spoken of in the New Testament is to compare your salvation with how the scriptures say to be saved, and then when you obey, the Lord will add you to His church, the body of Christ.

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