

## **“For In One Spirit ...”**

“... were we all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).

In this paragraph (which began with vs. 12) the first three verses each begin with the word “for.” Verse 12: “For as the body is one, and hath many members and all the members of the body being many are one body, so also is Christ ...” Verse 13: “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body ...” Verse 14: “For the body is not one member but many.”

The apostle emphasizes: “many, but one,” “many members, one body,” and “many gifts but one Spirit from whence they came.”

It is our conviction that Paul is not saying that the Corinthians were baptized in the Holy Spirit into one body; rather, that he names not the element through which they were baptized (that element being water), he rather relates that it was by the direction of one Spirit that they had been baptized into one body. The baptism of the Corinthians is alluded to both in this letter (1 Cor. 1:14-17) and in Acts 18:8: “many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.” Both these passages show human instrumentality involved in the baptism of the Corinthians, a necessary factor in water baptism but an item not only unnecessary, but absolutely no part in Holy Spirit baptism.

So, while the Corinthians were many, they had, by unity and oneness of purpose, been baptized into one body. It mattered not whether they were Jews or Greeks, whether they were slave or freedmen. All of these had been made partakes of one Spirit — the blessings which came from the Spirit. Some of these blessings were universal: forgiveness, fellowship with God, and heirs of one eternal hope of heaven. Some of these blessings were unique or special in nature — the differing nine gifts already named at the chapter’s beginning. But, just as a body has differing members which though different from another are yet still part of that body, so each of these may have had functions differing from the others but still were part of the one body. They had all drank of one Spirit.

In vs. 14 Paul says, “For the body is not one member, but many.” Just as the physical body is activated by one spirit which gives life to every part however diverse each may be from another, so the spiritual body was animated by one Spirit, although each member’s functions often are radically different from that of the functions of other members. Since that is true “If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not

therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, it is not therefore not of the body" (vss. 15-16). Here two members of the body deemed lesser members than the one each is compared with, is shown to be just as much part of the body as is the member it feels inferior to. Not only that, but properly its need is asserted as the apostle asks, "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" The "inferior" member performs a function which the "superior" member it envies cannot! Through the function and working of each part, the body superbly acts!

Jim McDonald