

THE BODY AND THE KINGDOM

We have looked at the body of Christ, the true church, from a practical viewpoint of the natural body as a picture of the spiritual body and every member functioning so the body can do the will of the head. We are exhorted to not forsake the assembling together with other believers and to encourage the others to stand fast in the faith.

God, the Father, will have a vast family, God, the Son, will have a bride and God, the Holy Spirit, will have a temple, all throughout eternity. Each of these fulfillments are directed at a corporate group of believers.

Multitudes will be accepted into the Father's family through faith in Jesus Christ and by the forgiveness of their sins. Some as living stones will be built into a temple of the Lord and become a royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Some will give themselves completely to the Lord Jesus Christ and become one with Him in character, goals, personality, attitudes, humility, love and obedience. This is the formation of the bride of Christ who grows up in all things into Him. This bride will be called "the city of God". The Lord God and the Lamb will be the temple of that city. REV 21:22 And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple.

However, there is a temple in heaven. REV 7:14 And I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. REV 7:15 "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. REV 11:18 "And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time {came} for the dead to be judged, and {the time} to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth." Those who were not ready for the catching away of the bride went into the great tribulation. In the middle of the tribulation a great multitude was received into heaven. Not to sit on the throne but to be before the throne to serve God day and night in His temple. REV 22:5 And there shall no longer be {any} night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever. In the New Jerusalem there will not be any night. REV 11:19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

REV 3:12 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. The overcomers will not go out of the temple of God but will become one with the Temple. They will have the name of the New Jerusalem, the name of God, the Father and Jesus' new name. The Lord God, almighty and the Lamb are themselves the temple of the city. The whole city is in the temple. This temple is not a place but a person, God, himself.

What we see in the eternal realms of The Tabernacle of God are different corporate groups. Each group has grown to a certain maturity and character. God, in His great mercy, has a place for all true believers and will receive them into the eternal realms but all will not be in the same place because all are not of the same maturity. It is evident to all who have spiritual eyes that all of God's people are not "bondservants" who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. Some believe but follow nobody. Some believe but do not obey. Some believe but only serve themselves. Each of the eternal realms requires it's own maturity. That is the introduction for the study of the true church, the body of Jesus Christ which faithfully does the will of the Head. A disobedient member cannot be a functioning member of Christ's body. A "member" that only lives to please himself and takes no thought of other believers cannot be a member of His body. That person may have met all the other requirements to be accepted as a believer but still cannot qualify as a member because he refuses to function within the corporate group.

The one great problem of the Christian life is how to get from the place we begin to the place God has predestined us to be. One error of the doctrine of predestination is that it is taught that when God has predestined us and chosen us and called it is impossible to resist. Therefore, all those who are predestined will arrive at God's eternal purpose. In other words, if God has predestined you, you will follow the Lamb wherever He goes. You will grow up in all things into Christ and you will be conformed to the very image of Jesus. Our position has always been that God predestines, chooses and calls but man has the responsibility to respond to God and to be led by the Spirit and to submit to whatever changes are necessary. We must not receive the grace of God in vain but use the grace of God to grow up into Christ.

The doctrine of growth, which is quite extensive in scripture, all focuses upon man's responsibility. For example: HEB 5:11 Concerning him we have much to say, and {it is} hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. HEB 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. HEB 5:13 For everyone who partakes {only} of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. HEB 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. HEB 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, HEB 6:2 of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. HEB 6:3 And this we shall do, if God permits.

The scriptures are full of exhortations such as these and puts the responsibility on man to not be apathetic but to continually grow and take your place in God's purpose. If the whole responsibility was upon God to complete His eternal work without our cooperation, these scriptures would have no purpose. All the warnings would be idle words without power. If man has no responsibility for his own actions then the judgement seat of Christ is without warning and without power. ROM 14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. ROM 14:12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. 2CO 5:9 Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be

pleasing to Him. 2CO 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

If man has no responsibility before God, except to believe, how can God judge us if we don't obey what He says? LUK 6:46 "And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? LUK 6:47 "Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like: LUK 6:48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood rose, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. LUK 6:49 "But the one who has heard, and has not acted {accordingly,} is like a man who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great." All the responsibility for obedience is placed upon man. God's gives abundant grace but man will be judged by what he does with what he has received.

MAT 25:18 "But he who received the one {talent} went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. MAT 25:19 "Now after a long time the master of those slaves *came and *settled accounts with them. MAT 25:20 "And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' MAT 25:21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' MAT 25:22 "The one also who {had received} the two talents came up and said, ' Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents. ' MAT 25:23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' MAT 25:24 "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no {seed.} MAT 25:25 'And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.' MAT 25:26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no {seed.} MAT 25:27 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my {money} back with interest. MAT 25:28 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' MAT 25:29 "For to everyone who has shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. MAT 25:30 "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. To even imply that man is not responsible for what he has been given is to ignore the clear teaching of scripture. To divide this clear teaching up into saved and unsaved is ignorance of God's eternal purpose.

In the eternal realms of God's eternal purpose, God must have His own standards of excellence established in His Kingdom. God threw out of heaven a whole group of angels, along with Satan, because they refused God's authority and His standards of conduct. God is not going to bring in another group ("of saved ones") who are just like the group He threw out. 2CO 11:2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you {as} a pure virgin. 2CO 11:3 But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds

should be led astray from the simplicity and purity {of devotion} to Christ. Betrothal is one thing and the presenting is another. In between is the deception of the Devil. If the Devil had no power to deceive believers as HE DECEIVED EVE this warning is lost. Paul was speaking about some Hebrew preachers that had come and preached some "gospel" that obviously was mixed with something else. He called them servants of Satan. The deception was in the pulpit. The once saved always saved doctrine, as it generally is presented, is of this kind of deception. It ignores the clear warnings of scripture. It is true that those who come to the final salvation that Peter speaks about will be eternally saved but to say that all who are born again cannot be lost just closes the eyes to the warnings.

1PE 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. 1PE 1:5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. The doctrine of the shed blood has ignored the doctrine of the sprinkled blood. The shed blood requires faith while the sprinkled blood requires obedience. HEB 9:18 Therefore even the first {covenant} was not inaugurated without blood. HEB 9:19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, HEB 9:20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you." HEB 9:21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. HEB 9:22 And according to the Law, {one may} almost {say}, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. EXO 24:6 And Moses took half of the blood and put {it} in basins, and the {other} half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. EXO 24:7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read {it} in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the \Lord\ has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" EXO 24:8 So Moses took the blood and sprinkled {it} on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the \Lord\ has made with you in accordance with all these words. " HEB 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, HEB 12:23 to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, HEB 12:24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than {the blood} of Abel. HEB 12:25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned {them} on earth, much less {shall} we {escape} who turn away from Him who {warns} from heaven. The blood of Abel speaks of sacrifice while the sprinkled blood speaks of further things that come by obedience. The New Jerusalem is identified by the sprinkled blood and the spirits of righteous men that have come to maturity.

The theme of this study then is "How do we get from here to there"?

As we saw, the responsibility of each believer is to grow up in all things into Christ, who is the Head. To doctrinally remove the responsibility from man is to doctrinally remove dozens of scriptures from the Bible. Even though God predestines, man must respond and take responsibility for his actions. This is a great problem in our society. Man wants to blame someone else for his bad conduct and be excused. Some of the church has taken this same approach to God's predestined plan. If we don't fulfill God's

purpose it is all God's fault. I take no responsibility. I will just do my own thing and live to please myself and blame God if I fall short. Revelation, chapters 2 & 3, are very clear that the responsibility for overcoming is fully upon the churches. Jesus Christ gives the clear warnings about neglecting God's explicit requirement for all believers to overcome. He makes it clear that there are rewards for those who overcome but He also makes it clear that no believer should fall short of overcoming. REV 2:16 'Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. REV 2:22 'Behold, I will cast her upon a bed {of sickness}, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. REV 2:23 'And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. REV 3:2 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. REV 3:3 'Remember therefore what you have received and heard; and keep {it,} and repent. If therefore you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you. REV 3:15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. REV 3:16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. REV 3:17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, All these things were written to the churches so to make this saved and unsaved is ignorance.

To teach that overcoming is just a matter of rewards and has nothing to do with our with God's eternal purpose and His predestined plan is blind ignorance. If Jesus spits or vomits us out of His mouth that means we are vomited out of His body. If we don't wake up and Jesus comes as a thief and falls upon us, this is not just a matter of rewards but is a matter of getting ground to pieces. MAT 21:43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. MAT 21:44 "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

One preacher said "So we work our whole life to receive a crown and at the end we all have to throw the crown at His feet so why work? The rewards are nice but we can live our own lives to please ourselves and have a good time and enjoy all the benefits of heaven so why strive for rewards?" Some refuse to believe that a believer can be thrown into outer darkness. MAT 8:11 "And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline {at the table} with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; MAT 8:12 but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. " MAT 22:11 "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, MAT 22:12 and he *said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless. MAT 22:13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' MAT 22:14 "For many are called, but few {are} chosen." MAT 25:28 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' MAT 25:29 "For to everyone who has shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. MAT 25:30 "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Even the slaves or servants of the Lord who are worthless will be cast

into outer darkness. This is not just a matter of rewards or lack of them but this is a matter of outer darkness. Even those who were predestined to the Kingdom can be cast into outer darkness. Even those who sit at table at the King's wedding can be cast into outer darkness. Even those who minister and call Jesus Christ Lord, Lord may not participate in the Kingdom of God unless they do the will of God. MAT 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. MAT 7:22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' MAT 7:23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; \depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness\.' Doing your own will in the name of the Lord will qualify you for nothing even if you believe.

Doing the will of God, fulfilling the purpose of God, completing the predestined plan of God, growing up in all things into Christ and going on to maturity is all man's responsibility. There will be no appeals to the Supreme Court because of our environment or the attitude of our parents when we stand before the judgement seat of Christ. The sentence will be swift and eternal. We won't even be able to appeal because our preacher preached "eternal security". The bible is clear for anybody to read for themselves therefore there will be no excuses.

The comparison of the body to the Kingdom, and the Kingdom to the body has one common denominator and that is Headship. The head of the body speaks of the central control and decision making headquarters. The body speaks of the corporate group that does the whole will of the head and responds immediately in obedience to the head. The King is the head of the Kingdom and the subjects or citizens of the Kingdom all do the whole will of the King. The King is the government headquarters of the Kingdom and the corporate group of citizens all obey the King.

When we put the Kingdom in the context of the body it is clearer why no one can participate in the Kingdom who does not do the whole will of the head or the King. The "gospel of salvation" has made citizenship in the Kingdom a matter of faith or "believing in Jesus" or receiving Jesus as "personal savior". In "the gospel of the half priced sale" it is taught that we become members of the body of Christ simply by believing rather than by obeying the head and by submitting to other members. The "church" is those individuals who believe something about Jesus or who have received Jesus as personal savior.

The seven churches in Asia all believed in Jesus and had received Him as "the Lord" but were still in trouble because of character defects. They had a good personal testimony in their own eyes. REV 3:17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, REV 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and { that} the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. REV 3:19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.

We make up doctrines about "only believe" but we have little concept of how the Kingdom works or how the body functions. Both function from the headquarters downward. The "gospel of the Kingdom"

puts this in proper perspective. We cannot say Lord, Lord, without doing what He says. In the "gospel of salvation" obedience is optional and is just a matter of rewards. In the "gospel of the Kingdom" obedience is demanded and is a matter of citizenship.

In the "gospel of salvation" He receives all who believe. In the "gospel of the Kingdom" He receives all who obey. In the "gospel of salvation" we receive Him as personal savior. In the "gospel of the Kingdom" we kneel before Him as Lord and King. In the "gospel of salvation" all "works" are viewed as lack of faith. In the "gospel of the Kingdom" all works are just obedience to the King. Everybody in the Kingdom does the will of the King. MAT 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. LUK 6:46 "And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?

When we view salvation as it applies to the Kingdom, we wonder why all must do the will of the Father, rather than just believe. When we view salvation from the viewpoint of the body, we understand that every member must do the will of the head. Cancer is just some cells that are doing their own thing. There just cannot be an arm that acts on it's own. A mouth that speaks independently of the Head is speaking foolishness. JOH 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. In the "gospel of salvation" you can do everything just as long as you believe. Jesus stood firmly in the Kingdom. JOH 14:10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Jesus was not just a mouth speaking independently of the Father. All His words originated with the Father. This is the principle of the Kingdom and the principle of the body. JOH 5:19 Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless {it is} something He sees the Father doing; for whatever {the Father} does, these things the Son also does in like manner. The principle of the body is that no member can act on it's own or independently. The principle of the Kingdom is that no citizen can act on it's own or independently. All action involves the King or the Head. Independent "works" are nothing in the eyes of God except an offence to His headship. There was no conflict between what Paul was saying about faith and what James was saying about faith with works.

Then how do believers become bondservants? By doing the will of the King. How do believers become the bride which is His body? By believers doing the will of the Head. This is not a matter of knowledge but it is a matter of obedience. All knowledge is in the Head! Kingdom obedience is an offence to those who preach a "gospel of salvation" because "we are saved by faith through grace and not by works lest any man should boast. We must be saved "from" SIN and then we must be saved "unto" the KINGDOM. SIN is related to faith and the KINGDOM is related to obedience. There is no conflict!

True consecration has to do with each member doing the will of the Head. Consecration is not related to giving up certain things that God has ordained. The primary requirement of the Head is that each member do His will. Whatever that means and wherever that may take you. Regardless of what we give up as an act of consecration, that is not the same thing or synonymous with doing His will. It is

ignorance to require the same thing of a hand that is required of the stomach. The only universal requirement is to do His will. No one can predetermine what His will is for you because it depends upon where He sets you in His body. What He requires of one may not be required of another. Man made consecration supplants the prerogative of the Head to build His own body, the church. No matter what we give up, the basis of consecration is "DOING HIS WILL". Giving up something and doing our own will or the will of some man is nothing. While there is universal submission of one member to another member in the body, all loyalty and obedience is to the Head. Doing the will of another member without consulting the Head is anarchy. The Kingdom does not function that way. There is divine order in the Kingdom but all direction must come from the King.