

The One Body  
(Ephesians 1:22-23)

Introduction:

1. This morning we examined a number of passages that relate to the "one body" mentioned in Ephesians 4:4.
2. According to Ephesians 1:22-23, the "one body" is the Lord's church.
3. When we study verses that relate to the Lord's church we are learning what He wants us to know about the "one body."
4. This evening we are concentrating on some important principles that relate to restoring the Lord's body.
5. Let us begin our study with a reminder of several . . .

Discussion:

- I. GENERAL MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE LORD'S BODY
  - A. (Matthew 16:18) Jesus told His apostles that He would build His church.
    1. The foundation: He is "*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"
    2. The "gates of Hades" would not prevent Jesus from building it.
  - B. According to Acts 2, the Lord's church was established in Jerusalem on Pentecost.
  - C. We learn from Acts 2:47 that the Lord's church consists of those who have been saved (see 1 Corinthians 12:13).
  - D. The book of Acts shows how the Gospel spread forth from Jerusalem, and congregations were established in different areas.
  - E. There were no denominations -- the Lord only has "one body" (Ephesians 4:4), His church.
  - F. The Lord's will for His body is revealed in Acts and the New Testament letters.
    1. The Lord wants us to understand His will (Ephesians 5:17).
    2. He requires His people to submit to His will (Ephesians 5:24).
    3. The Epistles and the messages in Revelation 2-3 indicate that the Lord does not approve when His people deviate from His plan for His body.
- II. SEVERAL WARNINGS WERE GIVEN ABOUT A FUTURE APOSTASY
  - A. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 [cure -- vs.15]
  - B. 1 Timothy 4:1-3
  - C. 2 Timothy 4:3-4
- III. THIS APOSTASY OCCURRED
  - A. Gradual changes began to take place in:
    1. the organization of the church [result: pope ruling in 606 AD]
    2. doctrine [sprinkling instead of immersion, baptizing babies, sale of indulgences, etc.]
    3. worship [mechanical instruments about 670 AD].
  - B. In the 1500's a number of men such as Martin Luther and John Calvin tried to "reform" some of the abuses that had developed.
  - C. Unfortunately, their efforts led to the establishment of many denominations with different doctrines and different practices.
  - D. This never was the Lord's will for His church.
    1. John 17:11, 20-21
    2. 1 Corinthians 1:10
  - E. The Lord has revealed His will for His body, but men have not submitted to it, and the result has been confusion and division.
- IV. WHAT ARE WE TO DO?
  - A. The Lord's plan for His body must be "restored" [returned to its original state].
  - B. The Old Testament provides valuable lessons about restoring God's way.
    1. God revealed His will to His people about circumcision.
      - a. God gave instructions to Abraham (Genesis 17:12).
      - b. God included circumcision in the Law of Moses (Leviticus 12:1-3).
      - c. For a time the Israelites did not follow God's instructions.

- d. God had Joshua "restore" circumcision (Joshua 5:2, 4-5, 9).
2. God revealed His will about Passover (Exodus 12).
  - a. There were several times when the Israelites did not observe Passover.
  - b. Hezekiah restored Passover (2 Chronicles 30:5, 25-27).
3. God revealed His will about the feast of tabernacles (Leviticus 23).
  - a. For a time the Israelites did not observe this feast.
  - b. They kept it after Ezra read to them from the law (Nehemiah 8:1, 8, 14-17).
- C. Restoring the Lord's plan for His body involves:
  1. understanding the Lord's will
  2. examining ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5)
  3. putting away unauthorized practices
  4. complying with the Lord's will.
- D. We must never forget the instructions revealed in Colossians 3:16-17.

Conclusion:

1. Many people today have adopted the philosophy expressed in Acts 17:21: the Athenians *"spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing."*
2. Let us adopt the philosophy expressed Jeremiah 6:16: *"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."*