

ONE BODY...ONE SPIRIT...ONE HOPE...ONE LORD,  
ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER...  
4:4-6.

I. There is one body in the dispensation of the mystery church. It is not made up of *bodies* as is Christendom. This one body is a new creation, made from Jew and Gentile reconciled together so that they have lost their identity as such. All members are on perfect equality, no one having advantage over another, dispensationally or otherwise. This was not true of the church during Acts (Rom. 3:1,2; 9:3,4).

II. There is one Spirit. Here it is the *Giver*, not the gift as in Acts 2:17, or the Holy Ghost in Acts 2:4. This Spirit is the Spirit of revelation (Eph. 3:5). By Him we have access, 2:18. He is the Sealer, 1:13. He is the Strengthened, 3:16.

III. The one hope is the ascended glorified Christ. He is not the hope as a King. He is not the hope as the Messiah. He is the hope as the Head of the church which is His body. That hope will be realized when He is manifested far above all where now is the citizenship of the members.

IV. There is one Lord. If you were to make a structure of this 7-fold unity, you would have to place this member at the center. The word *Lord* as used in the NT is the equivalent of *Jehovah* in the OT. Whenever a ruler adopted this title, it was a claim to deity. The early Christians refused to recognize any earthly ruler as Lord (*Kurios*). If He is our Lord, then He is our Ruler. Thru the various phases of the revelation of the mystery of Christ, the last and greatest is that He is *Head*, not only of the church which is His body, but His Headship will include all creation.

V. There is one faith (or creed, as some might put it). This balances *hope* in the structure. Paul said he had kept the faith. Here it is to be kept as a part of the unity of the Spirit. It is defined in verse 13 for us. It is the knowledge of the Son of God. There is a vast field. But we need no other creed. If we know what being the Son of God involves, all of it, we have all the creed we will ever need. This is to be kept as something precious.

VI. There is one baptism. This balances *one Spirit* in the structure. Since this is not to be made, but kept, it is not something that we do, but is done for the members of the body. It is their identification with Christ in His death (Rom. 6). Like our circumcision, it is something not made with hands (Col. 2:11).

VII. There is one God and Father (of all, i.e., of all the body). We can say this with confidence since this member is over against *body* in the structure. He is not the God of those who are not His. Satan is the god of this world, of those that are his. So God is not the Father of all men, but only those who have the Spirit of adoption can call Him *Abba* (Father).

All 7 items belong to the unity of the Spirit and not one can be slighted or left out. There is nothing that man can ever do to make these things or even change them the slightest. But the believer is urged to keep them in the bond of the peace.

God is holy. And if properly understood, that can explain a great deal.

When man sinned, and forgot God, and went his own way, God could no longer walk and talk with him. He could not reveal His ways and Himself to man.

God gave the nations up (Rom. 1:18-32). But it was not till they had changed first. So if the plans and purposes for the earth were to be realized, there would have to be some way for God to approach these nations.

In Abraham a nation was chosen. This was to be a holy nation. They were to occupy a holy land. One tribe was to be holy and be servants of God in teaching and being priests to the other tribes. One family had the holy office of the priesthood. One holy man was to be the high priest. One day of the week was to be holy. There was a holy place in the tabernacle, as well as a holy of holies.

All these things were to teach concerning the holiness of God. There can be no true worship or service until man realizes the holy character of God. First and foremost, God is holy. Man can never realize his own need and lack till that fact is known and acknowledged.

So the Age-People were chosen for a special mission to the other nations; that God's program for the earth might be carried out.

It is to be noted that God did not choose one of the 70 nations that descended from Noah and his 3 sons. All these were given up because they sinned and became alienated from the life that is in God. A new nation was born. Abraham was the father. It was narrowed down so that there were 3 fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was thru these that the Seed was to come and the nations of the earth to be blessed.

This nation was to be a great nation. It was blessed in that God was to be nigh to them. They were not reckoned among the other nations (as they are now). They were to reign over many nations. This nation was to be a kingdom of priests (priestly kingdom). Above all, they were to be a holy nation.

Now note the combination. Israel was the Age people. Their God was El-Olam (The God of the Age).

Why an Age people? Why a holy people? What is the purpose?

The conflict of the ages will culminate in the great conflict of the seed of the evil one with the true Seed. Remember, this is in the earthly sphere. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. The tares are the children of the evil one. It is in preparation for this great conflict that Israel were chosen. They are the go-between from God to the nations, to teach them the ways of God. That is the great commission of the nation as given at the end of Matt. and Mark.

Satan has his teachers too. As always, he deceives. God sent grace and truth in the person of His Son. The conflict is on. It will be fierce and long.

The holy of holies could be entered but once a year, and not without blood. There is a great lesson for us even today. God is holy.

## OUTLINE STUDIES IN ROMANS #5

## IMMORTALITY

This time we take up chapter 7. There is an item or 2 that we might review first. There is an answer to the question, How can we be freed from sin and death? God has united us with His Son in His death, burial, and resurrection. Therefore there is no more dominion or lordship of sin over us (6:9-11). Then follows the exhortation, LET NOT SIN THEREFORE REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL BODY.

In chapter 6 the Gentile is addressed. He would understand the figure of being a slave to sin and the being made free. But he is to understand that in being made free he has changed masters. He is not free to serve God till he is made free from sin.

In chapter 7 the Jew is addressed. He is familiar with the terms of the law, so the figure of man and wife is used to explain the same thing. The law binds a woman to her husband as long as he lives. She is not free to remarry till he dies. So in like manner the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. But in identification with Christ, the believer died when He died, was buried with Him, and then stands on resurrection ground with Him, free from the law, but a servant of Christ.

Both Jew and Gentile are to remember that the practical outworking of sanctification is *obedience*. How many have missed that!

Is the law sin? It brot the knowledge of sin, but could never free one from sin. Yet it is declared to be holy, just and good, and even *spiritual* (7:12,14). What then was wrong with the law? It was weak thru the flesh (8:3).

The somewhats of Christendom have had a bad time with Rom. 7. Those who do not know about the new nature think maybe it is a picture of a man under conviction. Others think that it is the Jew under the bondage of the law. Then there are some who think that it is the normal experience of the Christian; the two natures warring against each other. Considering the context, which do you think is right?

The law could never justify. It could never give an inheritance. It could never give life (Gal. 3). It was added to the old covenant because of transgressions. It did not in any way supercede or do away with the covenant or the promise. It revealed the holiness of God and at the same time revealed sin, what it was. The simple command, THOU SHALT NOT, brot in enmity and rebellion, and so intensified sin. The old nature is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. Many do not know that.

So in this chapter we find a double ego, one on the side of God and the other on the side of the flesh. In the believer there is the law of sin. He is not freed from that law till death. But he can reckon himself dead to it. Also there is in the believer the law of the spirit of life. But we anticipate. This is the answer to the question of 7:24, WHO SHALL DELIVER?

The saved man hates sin and delights in the law of God; the unsaved does not. Now it is only a part of one that is on the side of God, free from sin. But in resurrection we shall be conformed to the image of His Son; and the whole, not part, will be free.

The most precious gift of God, also the most misunderstood, is immortality. Satan has led the race astray with his dogmatic lie, YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE (GEN. 3:4). The Heb. is very emphatic, YE SHALL POSITIVELY NOT DIE.

I. *God Alone Has Immortality*. In speaking of THE MANIFESTATION, *epiphaneia*, of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul says of Him, WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY (1 Tim. 6:16), *athanasia* from the adjective *athanatos*, UNDYING (Abbott-Smith's Lexicon). We might translate it, WHO ALONE POSSESSES DEATHLESSNESS. It is only here and in 1 Cor. 15:53,54 where we read of this mortal putting on immortality.

II. *Man Lost Immortality*. Adam and Eve lost their opportunity for such. No, they did not possess immortal souls; neither do we! The expression is not found in the Word. They might have remained in the garden and sustained themselves in an undying condition by feeding on the tree of life. God told them they could FREELY EAT of every tree except one, THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL (Gen. 2:16, 17). They disobeyed. God put them out of the garden so that sinning dust could not sustain itself in an undying condition.

Neither sin nor the sinner is immortal. Both shall be removed from the universe. The soul that sinneth it shall die (Ezek. 18:4,20), not live forever in some special place. Read carefully Rev. 21,22. A minister friend of mine once said, "What would God want with a bunch of immortal spooks caged up somewhere thru all eternity anyway?" No, God says, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW, *kainos* (brand new, not patched up). Man became SHUT OUT FROM THE LIFE OF GOD. (Eph. 4:18).

III. *Christ Brot Immortality To Light*. The situation is not hopeless. CHRIST...HATH ABOLISHED DEATH, AND HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT (1 Tim. 1:10). O, we must still die, for in the flesh we are IN ADAM (1 Cor. 15:22; Gen. 3:19). In resurrection we shall receive immortality, *apharsia*, INCORRUPTIBILITY. The Lord Jesus Christ has repealed the death sentence for the believer and provided a resurrection to incorruptibility.

The member of the church of the Mystery (Eph. 3) whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20) anticipates this in a secret, special resurrection revealed only to Paul after Acts 28, literally THE OUT-RESURRECTION. THE ONE OUT OF DEAD ONES (Phil. 3:11). Is this your hope?

IV. *Man May Regain Immortality*. Now is the time for him to do so! Now he may receive the promise and pledge of it. I AM THE LIVING BREAD WHICH CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN; IF ANY MAN EAT OF THIS BREAD HE SHALL LIVE FOREVER... (John 6:51). HE WHO HAS THE SON HAS LIFE; HE WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE SON OF GOD THE LIFE HAS NOT (1 John 5:12, my own translation).

V. *The Believer Shall Put On Immortality*. Thus the saved man, in a glorious day of resurrection shall put on his promised IMMORTALITY and INCORRUPTIBILITY. SO WHEN... THIS MORTAL SHALL HAVE PUT ON IMMORTALITY... DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY (1 Cor. 15:54).

## THE PLACE OF THE LAW

## BEGINNER'S CORNER #29

Most folks realize that if there was no wrong-doing or disrespect of the rights of others, we would not need laws in either communities or the nation. But human nature being what it is, we find no place where law is not needed in civil society.

Now this idea will introduce us to the place of law in God's economy. Looking back at the history of God's people, Israel, we find them redeemed and delivered from Egypt by grace. They were led to the foot of Mt. Sinai. There God made a covenant with them. If they would keep the 10 words, then He would do so-and-so for them. This was not law, but a covenant. Three times Israel said earnestly that they would do all these things. They agreed to the terms of the covenant.

This covenant did not make of non effect the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The promise was unconditional. They did not have to keep any bargain made with God to put it into effect. But the covenant was conditional. God would not be obliged to keep His part if Israel failed in their part.

Now the question comes up; *How long did the old covenant last? How long was it in effect?*

The answer might surprise a lot of good folks. But think it over. The old covenant lasted 39 days!

What happened? How can this be? The answer is simple. The old covenant was in effect just so long as Israel kept their side of the bargain. Moses went into the mount to get the terms written on stone. Forty days from the time they agreed to the terms, they were to be purified and God would bless them. It was to be a great day. When Moses came down at the end of this time of probation, and with the tablets of stone, he discovered that Israel had broken the covenant. They had made an idol, a golden calf, and were worshipping it as the god who had led them from Egypt. The great blessing that was to come the next day never came. It could have been a greater day of blessing than Pentecost. It would have been a day of preparation for their ministry to the nations. But they miserably failed.

So what had been simple terms of their part of a contract then was made a law unto them with many additions as we find them in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The law was added because of transgressions. They had to keep it or else!

In writing to Timothy Paul reveals the fact that the law was not made for a righteous man. It was for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, for anything contrary to sound doctrine.

The epistle to the Romans makes it clear that in olden times the law was designed to reveal the righteousness of God so that man might realize his depraved condition. But now the righteousness of God has been revealed in His Son. Identification with the Son in His death releases one from the demands of the law.

Furthermore, Paul speaks of this *body* as having a heavenly hope. Of all the points discussed, this appears to be the most emphatic and significant. Heretofore we have had the new heaven and earth in view, the New Jerusalem, the kingdom, but nowhere has it been recorded that a group would inherit a heavenly hope.

Perhaps the *body* we have been discussing in two previous articles appears to be a mysterious group somewhat intermingled with other bodies. However, when it comes to the hope of this body, the picture is clear cut. It is a heavenly calling and they, having died with Christ, are reckoned to be raised and seated with Him in the heavenlies. And not only are they seated with Him, but it is recorded that they will be made manifest with Him when He is made manifest. FOR YE ARE DEAD AND YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD. WHEN CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY (Col. 3:3,4). In the A.V. it is rendered APPEAR but in the Greek it is MANIFEST.

In Col. 1 Paul is speaking about the riches of the gospel of this mystery and in v. 27 he sums it up in this manner, TO WHOM GOD WOULD MAKE KNOWN WHAT IS THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES; WHICH IS CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY.

This can't possibly refer to a calling such as the one offered to Abraham, even tho he looked for a better one, or the promise to the 12 that they would be seated on 12 thrones in the great city judging the tribes of Israel.

The rapture, with which we are all familiar, is a point of question here. Part of this is given in 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15. Here we are told that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and then we which are alive will be caught up to meet Him and so shall ever be with Him. This has been misconstrued by many in believing that this is a heavenly calling. But the truth is that they will meet Him and then return to the earth. Rev. 5:10 reads, AND HAST MADE THEM UNTO OUR GOD KINGS AND PRIESTS; AND THEY SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH. While Isa. 2:2 says this, AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, THAT THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOUSE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED IN THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS, AND SHALL BE EXALTED ABOVE THE HILLS, AND ALL NATIONS SHALL FLOW UNTO IT...FOR OUT OF ZION SHALL GO FORTH THE LAW...

This then is part and parcel of the promise given to Israel, the 12, and part of the heavenly city for which Abraham looked. This we know is the beginning of the millennium and the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy which is most certainly earthly in character.

Then in Rev. 20 we have the description of the great white throne judgment. Here the earth and the sea give up their dead, but not until Satan has been loosed for a season after the thousand years.

So here again, in contrast, the unique character of the *body* of the dispensation of the mystery is revealed in its hope of an earlier resurrection than all of these, looking for all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies.

## THE PROBLEM OF BAPTISM

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

Baptism was well-known among the Jews of the OT. The whole nation was baptized at one time, yet none got wet (1 Cor. 10:1,2). They knew about the sprinkling of the water from the ashes of the red heifer. They had the brazen laver of the tabernacle. Moses washed Aaron and his sons for the priesthood. There were multiplied washings or baptisms, even in connection with the vessels used in the temple.

But the Jewish worship had become so corrupt that the washings at the brazen laver had lost about all their significance. So John came out of the wilderness and preached, not in the temple, but out in the open. He washed folks, not at the laver in the temple, but at the river Jordan. His baptism was unto repentance. His message was concerning the King and the coming kingdom, not the church.

Our Lord came to John to be baptized. Why? Was it because He needed to repent and wash away His sins? No, for in John 1:31 we find that this baptism was that He should be made manifest to Israel (not to Gentiles, or to the church). If that be true, (and who dares to doubt God on that score?), just why should anyone follow the Lord in water baptism as some argue today? Why not follow Him in circumcision? Why not follow Him in Synagogue attendance on the seventh day of the week?

It appears that Paul was commanded to baptize himself, washing away his sins. Now self baptism or washing was not unheard of by any means. But if men could baptize themselves at that time and wash away their sins, why could they not do it now?

The Bible says, HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED. But men today say, *Believe and be saved and then we will baptize you.* Who is right?

The 12 had a commission to go out and teach and baptize the nations. Baptism was clearly a part of their commission. But Paul said that he was not sent to baptize. Altho Paul did not baptize all the time, yet he did it on occasions. But why was he not commissioned to do it as the 12 were?

Men may teach that one has to be baptized to be saved, and so have all the little children baptized. But what about the dying malefactor? He did not have a chance to be baptized, yet he had the promise of resurrection and a part in paradise or the new earth. If baptism is so important, how did he get in?

In John's time there were many baptisms, but all were with water. During the ministry of the 12 and Paul during Acts, there was water baptism, baptism of the spirit, a baptism into the death of Christ, and a baptism by the Spirit into the body of believers then existing.

After Acts there is but one baptism, and there is ample evidence that it is an identification with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, quickening, raising, and being seated in the heavenlies (with the hope of being manifested with Him there). What has happened to the water baptism? Where would it fit in with a heavenly hope (in the holy of holies where there is no ritual)? Do you know? Sure?

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