

The Body of Christ:
What Is This All About ?

* Do we really understand and appreciate the privilege of being a part of the Body of Christ??

Ephesians 5:29-30 (NIV)

No one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— **30** for **we are members of his body.**

- * Should we not be in complete amazement with this statement????
- * What a privilege to be a part of something bigger than ourselves!!!!
- * We are together being **nurtured and cherished** by the Lord Jesus Christ!
- * Paul calls this existence and relationship **“a great mystery”**.

Ephesians 5:32 (NIV)

This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

- I. Let’s look at the historical aspects of what is going on here!
 - A. Ever since Man was driven out of the Garden, God had wanted to fellowship with His creation!
 1. God spoke to the Serpent after the distraction of the Fall and said, “There is One coming, and He will deal with this act of sin and separation”!
 2. Because of Man’s fallen, sinful and unholy condition, God drove Man out of the Garden of Fellowship.
 3. From that time until Moses, God had wanted to fellowship with His creation!
 - B. After some time of dealing with Man, God spoke to Moses and told him to.....

Exodus 25:8 (NIV)

“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.”

1. Notice that God didn't say, “Build a tabernacle to please Me.”
2. He didn't say, “If you do these works I'll accept you.”
3. God wasn't interested in the “Traditions of worship life.”
4. He said, “Build Me a place to come be with My creation!!”

C. After many years of wandering in the desert wilderness and moving the tabernacle around, Israel build a permanent structure, The Temple of God!

1. Notice what happened when this amazing structure was completed and the Lord was worshipped and invited to come!

2 Chronicles 7:1-4 (NIV)

7 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. **2** The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. **3** When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, “He is good; his love endures forever.”

4 Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the Lord.

2. God was among His people again.
3. Offering and sacrifice was a “type and shadow” of the coming sacrifice of Jesus so that God could not just “come to” His people but rather could “dwell in” His people!!

Acts 17:24 (NIV)

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NLV)

“ Do you not know that you are a house of God and that the Holy Spirit lives in you?”

II. The Body of Christ, The Church is the dwelling place of God!!

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NIV)

“You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also **members of his household, 20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. **21** In him the whole building is joined together and **rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22** And **in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.**”

A. Okay, take a breath.....think about that statement!

1. Remember what we read about in Chronicles.
2. With the preparation and completion of the Temple, the presence of God came!
3. Well, brother Jimmy, that was the Old Covenant! We live in the New Covenant!
4. You are correct.....a better Covenant, based upon better promises!
5. The promise of relationship, fellowship and God’s presence!

Hebrews 8:5-7 (NIV)

They serve at a sanctuary **that is a copy and shadow** of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” But in fact **the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs** as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since **the new covenant is established on better promises.** For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.

B. You and I are “living stones” and are part of this new dwelling place of God!

1 Peter 2:5 (NIV)

You also, like **living stones**, are **being built into a spiritual house** to be a **holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1. We MUST realize that the Church is the dwelling place of God on the earth!
2. We are His expression to the world of what He is like!!
3. Think about that!!! How well do we do that???

C. Think about this for a minute:

1. In Chronicles at the dedication of the Temple, fire fell from heaven!
2. At the dedication of the Church of Jesus Christ, fire fell from heaven!
3. In both cases a “little bit of heaven” had come to the earth and caused a disruption so powerful it was represented by fire!

D. So, are we just saying this for the element of the “sensational”?

1. Not at all!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
2. I’m saying this to let us know how important the “gathering of the saints are”!
3. We don’t “come to church””we are the Church”!!!!!!!!!!

Ephesians 3:8-10 (NLT)

8 Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. **9** I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

10 God’s purpose in all this was to **use the church** to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.