

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session XXVII

May 1, 2011

“The Church”:

The “Body” and “Bride” Of Jesus Christ!

Part Three: “Biblical Word-Pictures Of The Church.”

The New Testament Church, the “called out” Body of Christ, was born on the Day of Pentecost shortly after Jesus’ ascension back to “the right hand” of the Father in heaven. This event had been promised by Jesus to his disciples in Matthew 16:18, where He promised, “I will build My Church.” While the disciples did not understand the words Jesus spoke on that day, they understood clearly after their fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost. Peter then preached a powerful message to the Jewish nation which interpreted the events that had taken place in Acts 2:14-36.

“But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: ‘Men of Judah and all you who live in Jerusalem . . . Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs . . . this man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. . . . This Jesus, God raised up again, to whom we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.’ ”
Acts 2:14, 22-24, 32-33

In our previous study, we saw the immediate and long-term significance of the “birth” of the Body of Christ on the Day of Pentecost:

- 1) Every Believer in Christ experiences the ministry of the Holy Spirit at salvation!
 - a. We are “regenerated” (“born again”) by Him, John 3:5-8.
 - b. We are “baptized” into (placed into) the Body of Christ by Him, I Cor. 12:13.
 - c. We are “indwelt” by Him, Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 6:19-20.
- 2) Every Believer in Christ is given enablement for life and ministry at salvation!
 - a. We are given power for “witness”, Acts 1:8.
 - b. We are given power for “faithfulness”, Phil 4:13.

“Word-Pictures” Of The Church

A metaphor is a figure of speech which is like a “word-picture”. It takes an object or idea and uses it in the place of another object or idea to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. The following are the most important “word-pictures” of the Church found in the New Testament:

A. “_____”:

1. We are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the “Body” of Christ at salvation,

I Cor. 12:13, 18, 20, 27.

--Every Believer is a part of Christ’s body!

a) This is the “Universal” Body of Christ which is composed of all Believers in Jesus Christ from the Day of Pentecost until the “Rapture” of the Church at the end of this present age or dispensation.

b) The “Local” Body of Christ is the local “Assembly” of Believers. All Believers in Christ are instructed to be faithful members, Heb. 10:24-25, 13:17.

2. Jesus Christ is the “Head” of His Body, the Church, Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18.

--The Body of Christ is a “living organism” – marked by life and growth!

“As the head has authority over the physical body and gives direction to it, so Christ is the head of the Church, having authority over it and giving it direction.”

--Paul Enns

3. Christ’s Body should be marked by “unity” and mutual “respect”, I Cor. 12:12-27.

--Every member of the Body has God-given purpose and value – they contribute!

--Believers are not to be evaluated by “worldly” standards! (See James 1:1-4, 9)

B. “_____”:

1. The Church or Body of Christ is said to be His “Bride”, Eph. 5:23.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the Church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she might be holy and blameless. . . . This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church.”

Ephesians 5:25-27, 32

2. The Jewish wedding custom pictures the Church as Christ’s “Bride”: John 14:1-3.

a. The “betrothal”/“engagement” of the Bride and Groom -- He makes promises;

b. The Bride “waits” for the fulfillment of the Bridegroom’s promises;

c. The “wedding ceremony” – the Bridegroom returns and fulfills His promises;

d. The “wedding banquet” – the Bride enjoys “union” with the Groom! (Rev. 19:7)

C. “_____”:

1. Like a stable building, the Church has a solid “foundation” → “Jesus Christ”, I Cor. 3:10-15.
 - The implication here is that the Apostle Paul is following a master blueprint as a “master builder”, I Cor. 3:10.
 - Warning:** There is no other foundation for the Church, I Cor. 3:11.
2. As faithful “fellow workers” the Apostles and Prophets “built” the foundation upon Jesus Christ.
 - “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been **built** upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets . . .* Ephesians 2:19-20
3. Jesus Christ is the “**Cornerstone**” of this “**Building**”.
 - “ . . . Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being **built together** into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”* Eph. 2:20-22
 - Cornerstone:** “The stone built into one corner of the foundation of an edifice as the actual starting point of a building.” --Merrill F. Unger
 - Note:** All parts of the building are measured from or aligned with this stone!

D. “_____”:

1. Every N.T. Believer is a “**priest**” with the privilege of offering spiritual sacrifices.
 - “You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”* I Peter 2:5
 - a. Believers willingly “offer” themselves as a “living sacrifice”, Rom. 12:1-2.
 - b. Believers joyfully “offer” the sacrifice of “praise” and “worship”, Eph. 5:18-20.
 - c. Believers have “unhindered access to God on the ground of the blood of Christ . . . to minister in intercession (Rom. 8:26-27; Heb. 10:19-22; I Tim. 2:1; Col. 4:12).” --Lewis Sperry Chafer
2. Every N.T. Believer is part of a “**Royal Priesthood**”.
 - “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* I Peter 2:9
 - “Church age Believers are both kings and priests (cf. Rev. 1:6). . . . The entire Church functions as a priesthood, whereas in Israel only the Levitical line had that privilege. All Church age Believers have access to God through Christ, the Church’s High Priest . . . All Church age Believers may approach God boldly at any time (Heb. 4:14-16).* --Paul Enns

E. “_____”:

1. The Church is composed of those Believers “given” to the Son by the Father, John 17:2, 6, 9, 24.
2. These Believers are referred to by Jesus as His “**Flock**” – He is their “**Good Shepherd**”, John 10:1-18.
 - Notice: This is a description of deep intimacy and is based on a familiar picture in N.T. times – the intimacy established by a shepherd with his sheep!
 - Notice: This “**Flock**” is composed of Jews and Gentiles.

“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.” John 10:16
 - Notice: This “**Flock**” is sensitive to the “voice” of the Good Shepherd!

“... and the sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He puts forth all His own, He goes ahead of them and the sheep follow Him because they know His voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” John 10:3-5
 - Notice: This “**Flock**” is secure in the Shepherd’s hand!

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” John 10:27-30
3. Paul and Peter also refer to the Church as Jesus’ “**Flock**”, Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:3.

F. “_____”:

“This figure . . . is addressed to Believers (John 15). . . . This discourse is, more than any other portion of the Scriptures, the clearest and dearest message to Believers in this dispensation. . . . the purpose of this figure is to develop the underlying truth respecting ‘communion’ with Christ, and that ‘union’ with Christ is assumed—as evidenced by the words, ‘every branch in Me’.” --L.S. Chafer

1. The N.T. Believer is pictured as a “**Branch**” in the “**True Vine**” – **Jesus Christ**.

“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.” John 15:5

“Church age Believers are the branches that draw their life from the vine because they are ‘in Him’ (John 15:4, 5). The branches receive their life-giving nourishment in their attachment to the vine; as they remain in the vine, they are able to grow and bear fruit.” --Paul Enns
2. The N.T. Believer is admonished to “**abide**” in the sustaining relationship.
3. The N.T. Believer is sovereignly “**pruned**” by the Father to bear more fruit, 15:2.