

THE PLATFORM OF THE CHURCH (Ephesians 4:4-6)

I. One body.

- A. By inspiration, Paul states that the first plank in the platform of the church and one professing to be a Christian is that there is only one body.
 - 1. Sadly, many today believe there is more than one body.
 - 2. Even worse than that, many don't know what the body referenced here really is.
- B. Paul, in the letter to the Colossian Christians, plainly states for us what the body is (Colossians 1:18).
 - 1. He also plainly stated this fact earlier to the Ephesians (1:22-23).
 - 2. Both of these great letters, which deal largely with what the church is and Who is its head, plainly tell us that the word "body" is synonymous with the word "church."
- C. Also, to know how many bodies there are, we need to know how many churches there are.
 - 1. Jesus told us the number of churches when speaking to His disciples (Matthew 16:18).
 - 2. Jesus built only one church.
 - 3. Jesus has only one body.
- D. Paul is speaking of the universal body of Christ.
 - 1. There are many local congregations of the church which belongs to Christ.
 - 2. However, there is only one church that belongs to Christ.
- E. This body has several significant marks of identification.
 - 1. It was created during the days of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:44).
 - 2. It was established in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3-4; Acts 2:5).
 - 3. It was begun with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28f.; Acts 2:1-4).
 - 4. It was purchased by the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:28; Acts 20:28).
 - 5. It was built by Jesus (Matthew 16:18).
 - 6. It bears His name (Romans 16:16).
- F. If the body to which we belong does not bear all of these marks of identification, we are not a member of the one body about which Paul here speaks.

II. One Spirit.

- A. This is a reference to the Holy Spirit, Who is part of the Godhead (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).
- B. Paul has already spoken about the Holy Spirit to the Ephesians:
 - 1. He is the Holy Spirit of promise (1:13);
 - 2. He is the earnest of our inheritance (1:14);
 - 3. He allows both Jew and Gentile to have access to God (2:18);
 - 4. He revealed the mystery of Jesus to the apostles and prophets (3:5);

5. He is the One whose unity must be maintained in the bond of peace (4:3).
- C. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Bible, the word of God (2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Peter 1:21).
- D. The word of God is called the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17).
 1. It is through this word inspired by the Holy Spirit that we learn of the one body
 2. It would be false to claim that the Holy Spirit leads people to teach that which is not revealed in the word which He inspired men to write (Galatians 1:6-9).
- E. To preach any other message than the one delivered by the one Spirit is remove that plank so as not to be identified as the Lord’s church.

III. One hope.

- A. If one is part of the one body taught by the one Spirit, he or she has one hope of being raised from the dead and living eternally with the Godhead and all the saints.
 1. Paul, very pointedly, taught a resurrection of the dead (Romans 8:23-34; 1 Corinthians 15:19-23).
 2. Notice his words to Titus (Titus 1:2).
- B. Sadly, those outside of Christ have no hope (Ephesians 2:12).
- C. This idea of the resurrection to eternal life contains the concepts of salvation, faith and obedience.
 1. One has no hope is he is not saved.
 2. One has no hope if he has no faith (Hebrews 11:6).
 3. One has no hope is he is not obedient (Galatians 5:19-21).

IV. One Lord.

- A. Jesus is Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15).
 1. 1 Corinthians 8:5-6.
 2. God made Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).
- B. If Christ is not your Lord, He won’t be your Savior and He is your Lord when you are obedient to Him (Matthew 7:21).

V. One faith.

- A. This does not mean one belief, but rather, one system of belief, or the gospel.
 1. This faith is the message contained in the New Testament of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
 2. It has been once delivered (Jude 3).
- B. There is not a “my” faith and a “your” faith, there is only one faith.
 1. You can’t believe one thing and me another.
 2. To be in the church of the New Testament, all must believe the gospel alike.
- C. Paul taught the same message in every congregation he visited (1 Corinthians 4:17).
- D. We must understand the singular nature of this faith if we are going to be united in the church found in the New Testament.

VI. One baptism.

- A. The New Testament mentions several types of baptism but there is only one to which man must submit to be added to the Lord's church and that is immersion.
 - 1. This is the only way one can get into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).
 - 2. It is the way those about whom we read of in Acts were baptized (Acts 8:38).
- B. It is not Holy Spirit baptism as some say because:
 - 1. It was a promise, not a command;
 - 2. Was administered by Christ, not men;
 - 3. Was not for salvation;
 - 4. No record of it after Cornelius and household;
 - 5. Is not needed today.
- C. Immersion is the baptism that washes away sins (Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5).
- D. Without submitting to this one baptism, one cannot be added to the church we read about in the New Testament.

VII. One God and Father.

- A. God is the Father of all men in the sense that He created all mankind but is the Father of Christians in a special sense.
 - 1. We can approach Him in prayer (Hebrews 4:16).
 - 2. We obtain spiritual blessings from Him (Ephesians 1:3).
- B. God is still here today and His plan has not changed though the years have passed by.
- C. He still demands first place and our obedience.