

The Body, The Church, The Kingdom

Last week I mentioned that I would say a little about the body of Christ, the church and the kingdom this week. A couple of scriptures will give us the understanding that the New Testament speaks of the 'church' and the 'body of Christ' as one in the same. In Colossians 1:18, Paul speaking of Jesus said, "He is also head of the body, the church;..." and in Colossians 1:24, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church,..." Both verses plainly state that the church is His body. Also in Ephesians 1:22-23, we again have Paul's words, "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all". Again, the church and His body are same in same. But, what about the kingdom?

Jesus says, in John 18:36 that His kingdom is "not of this world". Paul states in Romans 14:17 that it is a "spiritual kingdom". Peter tells us in 2 Peter 1:11, that it is an "eternal kingdom". So we have the church which is the body of Christ, and we have His body which is the church, but how do we connect the two of them with the kingdom?

Remember what Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19? "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." Jesus spoke of His church and the kingdom as if they are one in the same. We have seen in previous articles that Jesus said that the kingdom would come during the lifetime of many who were alive when He was (Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1). Remember also that Peter used the "keys to the kingdom" in Acts 2 when he preached the first gospel sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36). So now we have the kingdom and the church connected by the words of Jesus and Peter. To validate this idea in our thinking, let's turn once again to Paul's words in Colossians 1:13-14. "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Notice that the words "rescued" and "transferred" are in the past tense. Those Christians in Colossian church had already been rescued and transferred into the kingdom of Christ before Paul wrote to them. How then, did they get into the kingdom, which is the church, which is the body of Christ? Luke tells us, "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls... "And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved". (Acts 2:41,47) Are you in the kingdom? Until next time, God bless.