

ECCLESIOLOGY:
THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH
Gulf Coast Baptist Church
Bible Institute

New Testament Metaphors for the Church

- A. Introduction: The New Testament writers used four different metaphors in their letters to describe various aspects of the Church: the Body, the Building or Temple, the New Creation, and the New Man. These four metaphors focus on the interdependence of all believers within the Church, the perfect placement of believers within the Church and the “good works” they accomplish as part of the building process of this yet completed structure, and lastly the shared position in Christ enjoyed by all believers as being made part of this one new thing. These metaphors are designed to provide believers with a well-rounded appreciation for being a part of the Church.
- B. The Body of Christ - **The inter-dependence of the various parts**
1. **The Body which is the Church**
 - a) Eph. 1:22-23 - “*And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*”
 - b) Col. 1:16-19 - “*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and He is before all things, and by him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*”
 - (a) The Father has placed the Son as the head of all things, including the Body
 - (b) The Father’s desire is that the Son would hold first place within the Body - He is of primary importance
 2. **Christ is the Head of the Body, providing the Body with direction**
 - a) Eph. 5:23, 30 - “*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.*”
 - (1) Christ is the head of the Body - the constituent parts of the body get their direction from the head - the Body is to carry out His will
 - (2) Paul calls the marriage relationship’s similarity to Christ’s headship of the Church a mystery. The husband being the head of the wife does not denigrate the inherent worth and value of the wife, it is simply the roles God has established for the husband and wife to accept by faith. The believer’s value is found in who they are in Christ, they’re enjoyment of the Christian life will be partly dependent upon how they submit themselves to God’s revealed will for their lives.
 - b) Eph. 3:1-6 - “*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets*

by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:"

- (1) Through the revelation that God provided Paul, it was revealed that Jews and Gentiles were made equal partners in this Body
 - (2) As being members, with equal standing in the Body, they enjoy the same promises as the Jewish believers
3. Eph. 4:11-13, 15-16 -
- a) *"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: til we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ...But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every part supplieth, according to the effectual working in thee measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."*
 - (1) God provided the teaching gifts to the members of the Body:
 - (a) Spiritual maturity
 - (b) To prepare believers to redo the work of the ministry
 - (c) To build up the entire body
 - (2) Believers are closely joined and knitted together in Christ
 - (3) Christ causes His Body to grow to the degree by which they minister their gifts to one another by love
 - (4) Col. 2:16-19
 - (a) *"Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."*
4. Ro. 12:3-6a - **The Body consists of individuals with a variety of spiritual gifts which causes the Body to grow**
- a) *"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us,..."*
 - (1) The different gifts have been graciously provided therefor there is nothing to be proud about - no one deserved the gift
 - (2) Although all members make up the one Body, not all members have the same function within the Body
 - (3) God has determined what role each individual believer is to play within the Body
- b) 1 Co. 12:12-27 - *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the*

hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not of the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffers with it; or one member be hounoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

- (1) All believers in Christ are placed into the Body as a result of Spirit baptism
- (2) The Body is comprised of various parts, each with different but complimentary functions
- (3) The Body would be incomplete without the various members
- (4) The individual’s gift is exactly what God wanted them to have
- (5) Every member needs each other to function as a whole
- (6) The part of the Body with seemingly little outward significance are extremely important
- (7) Purpose: that all members would “have the same care for one another.”

5. Eph. 3:1-6 - **Jews and Gentiles enjoy equal standing with the Body**

a) *“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:”*

- (1) Through the revelation that God provided Paul, it was revealed that Jews and Gentiles were made equal partners in this Body
- (2) As being members, with equal standing in the Body, they enjoy the same promises as the Jewish believers

6. 1 Co. 10:16-17 - **All members of the Body share in the benefits of Christ's crosswork**

a) *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”*

- (1) The Lord’s supper celebrates that every member shares equally in the benefits of Christ’s crosswork as a part of the Body

7. Col. 3:13-16 - **Peace and Unity within The Body are of primary importance**

a) *“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all things put on charity, which the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your*

hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

- (1) What makes for peace within the Body should umpire our decisions and emotions because this is why God has summoned us
- (2) Believers are to allow the words concerning “the Christ” to settle down and be comfortable in our minds
- (3) The Lord’s supper celebrates that every member shares equally in the benefits of Christ’s crosswork as a part of the Body

C. The Building or Temple of God - **What God hath constructed for the purpose of “good works”**

1. 1 Co. 3:9-16

a) *“For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. 14 If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”*

- (1) Christ is the foundation (Eph. 2:20) - He provided the basis for the building through His crosswork
- (2) Paul, as the minister of the dispensation of grace, along with the other apostles and New Testament prophets taught the early Church about the all-sufficiency of Christ and what His grace has provided
- (3) Faithful men continued to teach and live out what they had learned and so on and so on.
- (4) Believers are warned not to deviate from the foundation: Christ is enough
- (5) Believers are being perfectly joined together by God as part of the building to offer spiritual sacrifices - opportunities for good works with eternal value
- (6) Although believers are fitted pieces in the building of God they are also working on the building
 - (a) It’s possible to build up with gold, silver, and precious stones - these works must pass the refining inspection of the Christ
 - i) These works will be judged based on (1) motivation (2) empowerment
 - (b) It’s possible to build with worthless materials - wood, hay, stubble (no lasting value)
 - i) Christ is judging the believer’s works, not their sin
 - ii) Sin has already been judged on the Cross

2. Eph. 2:20-21

a) *“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”*

- (1) Chief corner stone - the stone upon which the entire building rests
- (2) Christ laid the foundation for the building through His crosswork. He is currently working on the building (Phil. 1:6), fashioning it into something

glorious. Christ will complete the work of building in the future (Heb. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Th. 5:24)

3. 1 Pe. 2:4-8

a) *"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but not them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."*

(1) Lively stones - living hewn stones - shaped by God to fit perfectly within the building

(2) It is a spiritual house - seen in the mind of God

D. New Creation - **all believers' new position in Christ in contrast to their previous position in the old man**

1. Eph. 2:10, 13-15

a) *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them...But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [between us]; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man. [so] making peace;"*

(1) We (plural) are his workmanship (singular), created in Christ Jesus (believer's position)

(a) Created - *kitzo* - used of the Greeks for the founding of a city, colony, or place

(b) A single entity comprised of many

(2) For to make (create - *kitzo*) in himself (believer's position) of twain one new man

2. Eph. 4:21-24

a) *"If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."*

(1) The new man is created (*kitzo*) in a quality of righteousness and holiness

(2) In the believer's position they have been created in righteousness and holiness

3. Gal. 6:15-16

a) *"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace [be] on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."*

(1) A new creature (*ktisis* - noun form of *kitzo*) — a creation; not the swamp thing

(2) Context: insignificance of Gentile and Jewish distinctions in the new kind of creation

4. 2 Co. 5:17
 - a) *“Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*
 - (1) Literally, in Christ, a new kind of creation (*ktisis*)
- E. New Man - **the shared position of all believers in Christ**
 1. Eph. 2:15
 - a) New - *kainos* - new in quality or essence; not in number
 - b) *“The one new man is the new creation. It is a singular entity comprised of all believers seen as one united to Jesus Christ as the head. It is the Christ, the new creation, the one new man.”* - Hoelscher
 2. Eph. 4:24
 - a) Encourages these believers to distance themselves from their lives in the “old man” by recognizing who they are together with all other believers in Christ
 - (1) The “old man” relates to the identity of all those separated from God because of their identity with Adam (all are seen by God as having participated in Adam’s sin) by which they are enslaved to the desires of their sin nature
 - (a) Eph. 4:22 - *“That ye put off the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”*
 - i) dominated by the desires of the sin nature
 - (b) Tit 3:3-5 - *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, [and] hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”*
 - i) Those in the old man demonstrate a lack of concern for others
 - (2) The “old man” is in direct contrast to the “new man” - who we are together with all believers in Christ
 - b) *“Once again, this new man is not who the believer is individually, but who he is corporately with all other saints of this present dispensation.”*
 - (1) Paul’s instruction regarding the “new man” is not dealing with personal sanctification on the individual level but the proper perspective all believers should have of one another
 - (2) Believers are infamous for separating from each other over TV shows, different appearances and clothing styles, family standards, personality types, etc. View each other as distinct, different based on these things which inevitably results in a lack of unity within the Body
 - (3) Paul encourages the Ephesians to not divide over their very different and previously divisive Jewish and Gentile backgrounds but to view each other as being equal members of the “new man”
 3. Eph. 4:13
 - a) *“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of god, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”*
 - (1) One day in the future, the “new man” will be mature or made complete when all those that will believe do
 - b) Who we all are together as part of this new kind of creation. What we share in together as part of the new man should obscure all the things which divide, frustrate, and cause division among members of the body