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The Herald of His Joy!

Showcasing all humanity finished in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28 Volume 46 Issue 1137

There is still much light to break forth from the Scriptures. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

Why I am Not a Member of "the Body of Christ"

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A Consideration of "Body" Figures

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

We must not force words beyond their biblical usage. – F.H. Robison (1885–1932)

Figures of Speech Can Wreak Havoc



It is interesting that Christianity bases the core shared spiritual and scriptural identity on a figure of speech, and even that expression is from the prior administration: "*The Body of Christ*."

In his article "Reasoning from Figures Wrecks Reason," A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) wrote,

> Juggling with figures of speech is one of the saddest and most serious sources of error among the saints. … **Almost every occurrence of the figure of the *'body'* has a setting of its own**, and we ought always to regard it in our expositions. … Let us always keep the many aspects of this figure distinct. Let us never confuse the body *of* Christ, and Christ as the Head of the body. The figures are very different, even if the word *"body"* is used in both. In one, Christ is one of the members of the body, the Head, and the rest is *subject* to Him. In the other *all* the members, including the head, are Christ's body, through which He works … **Figures are not facts**. – *Unsearchable Riches*, Volume 31 (1940).

Figures are metaphors, imagery and word pictures. They are *not* facts and must always be confined to the context of their own settings.

To highlight this point, consider the illustration of a "lion," a figure of speech used of both Christ and Satan.

Revelation 5:5 refers to Christ as the "*Lion out of the tribe of Judah.*"[1] Yet, in I Peter 5:8 the same figure is likewise used for the Adversary: *"as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour."*

In these two verses it should not be hard to see the importance of recognizing that the *figure* of a *"lion"* is not a *fact* but merely an illustration of *(continued on page 9521)*

1. Interestingly, in the very next verse He is also referred to by the figure of a "lamb": "a Lamb as it had been slain" (:6).

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Bible Student's Notebook™
Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal
ISSN: 1936-9360
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Scripture education in a weekly format!

This *free* electronic publication is dedicated to:
- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding joy (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3-4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
  - adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of saints intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

We're just presenters, not persuaders. – Steve Martin
We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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some aspect of a truth.

Failure to ***"distinguish** between things that differ"* (Philippians 1:10, *MKJV*) obscures truth. Therefore, it is critical to note the vital distinction between doctrine and illustration, all the while keeping the figures within their own individual Scripture contexts. Indiscriminate use of *"lion,"* especially as the figure relates to its separate contexts and subjects, would only wreak havoc upon understanding. Are Christ and Satan one and the same being? Absolutely not! Are the roles of Christ and Satan as illustrated by the figure of a *"lion"* one and the same? Certainly not!

The same is plainly true for the figure *"The Body of Christ."* To lift *"The Body of Christ"* out of its specific context and indiscriminately use it as a label of corporate identity and union is a serious error.

The exact phrase *"The Body of Christ"* is found only four times in all of Scripture.[2] It is used twice as a reference to Christ's physical body (Romans 7:4; I Corinthians 10:16), and it is used twice as a figure from the Acts Administration (I Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:12[3]). Both uses of this figure are firmly within the context of Ascension Gifts. It is critical that the contextual setting of this figure not be overlooked or minimized. *"The Body of Christ"* is a clear and plain figure related to use of the Ascension Gifts in their local, corporate setting of the Acts Administration.

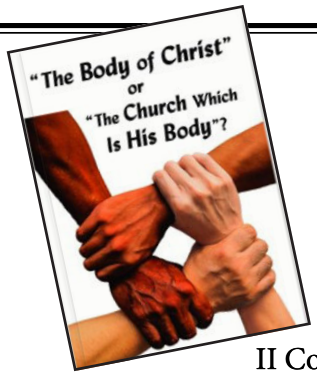
Unlike the *"One Body"* of Ephesians, whose Head is Christ ALONE, *"the Body of Christ"* of the Acts Administration was headed up, not by Christ, but by a *corporate head* made up of the Ascension Gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers). For the head of *"the Body of Christ"* was NOT Christ, but individually the eyes, ears and nose members (I Corinthians 12:16-17).

"The Body of Christ" was not some all-encompassing label of corporate identity spanning the entirety of Paul's ministry.

Yet, Paul also uses the figure of a *"body"* to illustrate the union of the out-called during the Secret Administration – but never by the contextually limited *"Body of Christ."* His symbolic *(see WHY, next page)*

2. This does not diminish that the figure is also, within the same context, referred to simply as "the body."

3. While Paul uses "the Body of Christ" in Ephesians 4, he does so, not as a illustration of the Secret Administration, but to highlight the historical aspect of the Ascension Gifts. He explains how these gifts had worked "toward the adjusting of the saints for the work of dispensing, for the upbuilding of the body of Christ" (:12) "unto the end that we should all attain to the unity of the faith" (:13) found in Ephesians and Colossians. They were gateway gifts leading the out-called to the pinnacle of Paul's revelation. These gifts were given historically to the local assemblies (synagogues) of the Pentecostal Era. "The Body of Christ" is an illustration of the prior dispensation when ministry gifts were given to the saints upon Christ's ascension. For more information see, "Pastors" – The Ascension Gifts, the Higher Powers of Romans 13, and the Secret Administration, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Press.



"The Body of Christ" or "The Church Which Is His Body"?

A Compilation on the "One Body" of the Current Administration

In the Pentecost Administration, during the Acts period, there were many ecclesias, in the plural – "all the ecclesias" (Romans 16:4, 16; I Corinthians 7:17; 14:33; II Corinthians 8:18; 11:28, CV). Each of these ecclesias were, in and of themselves "the body of Christ" – an integrated "one body," while today in the Secret Administration there is but one single ecclesia, in the singular – "the Ecclesia which is His Body" (Ephesians 1:22-23, CV). This ecclesia is universal and not local. This ecclesia of the Secret Administration has no bearing whatsoever on locality, and is of necessity, the only "One Body" universal (Ephesians 4:4). This "One Body" of Ephesians and Colossians (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; Colossians 3:15) is the Post-Acts "church," of which Christ alone is Head (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:24; 2:19). This is the only Ecclesia of the Secret Administration. This short compilation has works from three authors: Tom L. Ballinger, G.J. Pauptit (1889-1962), and Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. 49 pages.

Use of the Words "Body" and "Head" as Figures of Speech

Click here to listen to this article

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

In anatomy, the word "body" refers to the physical structure of a human or animal, while "head" refers to the upper part which contains the brain, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth.

Yet, both the words "body" and "head" are often used as figures of speech, both in English as well as Greek. Paul made ample use of both words, using "*body*" 95 times, and "*head*" 19. He used them both with literal and figurative intent. As with all word meaning, context of usage is key.

"*Body*" as a Figure

For example, as a metaphor, "body" can refer to a distinct, non-physical concept, such as "the body of the letter," "the body of work" in research, or "the body of evidence" in a trial. In these examples, "body" represents the main, substantial part of anything.

"*Body*" can also represent a unified assembly of individuals, such as "student body", or "governing body." It can also be used of other unities, such as a "body of water." It can also carry the sense of fullness, richness, such as wine having "body."

"*Head*" as a Figure

"Head" can mean, leadership, authority, and control, such as in "head of state" or "head of the company." It can mean the foremost position in sequence, such as in "head of the line." It can also mean the beginning or source of something, such as the "head of a river." BSN

Topics:
Major: Body; Figures of Speech; Head

Why (continued from previous page)

phrasing of *"body"* must not be taken out of the secret context in which they were given, any more our previous example of *"lion"* must not.

Examples of Other Figures Found in Ephesians and Colossians

Agriculture (Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 2:7)
Architecture (Ephesians 2:21)
Armor (Ephesians 6:10-17)
Baptism (Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12)
Circumcision (Colossians 2:11-12)
Clothing (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-12)
Family (Ephesians 2:19)
Marriage (Ephesians 5:25-32)
Shadow (Colossians 2:17)
Temple (Ephesians 2:21)
Wall (Ephesians 2:14-15)
Walking (Ephesians 4:1, 17; 5:2; Colossians 1:10; 2:6; 4:5)

While Paul used many figures in Ephesians and Colossians, *none* of these are *facts,* but truth illustrated. Neither did he put forth any of them as labels of identity.

Instead of figures, Paul used facts as words of identity. He repeatedly tells us who we are, but in every case he described God's actions on our behalf. With the constant emphasis upon divine action, he does not even use the term "believer(s)" in Ephesians and Colossians, except once (Ephesians 1:1).

For examples of identity-facts, he uses *"ecclesia"* (church/out-called) and *"hagios"* (saint/separated-ones) thirteen[4] times each. These are *facts,* NOT *figures.*

BSN

Topics:
Major: Body; Body of Christ; Colossians; Ecclesia; Ephesians; Figures of Speech
Minor: Right Division

4. In this aspect, thirteen is a number of oneness and love. The Hebrew numerical value of echad (meaning "one" or "unity"; as in referencing the oneness of God), and ahava (meaning "love") are both thirteen.

"He Gave Gifts" – "God Placed Some"

Ephesians 4:11 & I Corinthians 12:28 Should Contextually Be Read Together

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Click here to listen to this article

He gave [aorist/past tense] *some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as proclaimers of good news, and some as shepherds and teachers* (Ephesians 4:11, *YLT*).

God, indeed, placed [aorist/past tense] *in the ecclesia, first, apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers …* (I Corinthians 12:28, *CV*).

"*Gave*" and "*placed*" are both in the aorist tense. They "describe actions of the past tense" (*AGE*). The use of the aorist tense suggests "a single, decisive, completed event in history" (*ATKG*), a "completed occurrence or a single fact rather than an ongoing process" (*GGC*), "an action simply as occurring, serving as the 'once-for-all' tense that avoids showing an action as continued or repeated." (*CD*)

That Ephesians 4:11 is a past-tense action is supported by standard Greek structure, immediate contextual syntax, and comparative biblical doctrine. This is confirmed by the two parallel Scriptures. When discussing the Ascension Gifts in the corresponding passages Paul wrote of a completed, historical past action.

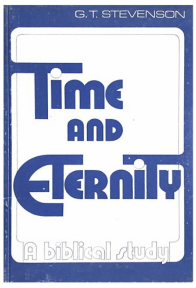
In Ephesians 4:11 Paul tells us that Christ "*gave*" these gifts "*when He ascended up on high*" (:8). In I Corinthians 12:28 he tells us that God "*placed*" these gifted individuals in the local *ecclesias*.

Christ no longer gives or places such gifts, as their need has been replaced by Ephesians and Colossians – the completion of the Word of God (Colossians 1:25).

Further support of the past tense of these words is found in Ephesians 2:20, which states that the ecclesia is "*built upon the* ***foundation*** *of the apostles and prophets.*" These were Israel's apostles and prophets. These were the foundational ministries of Ascension Gifts. No new apostles or prophets have been given or placed since.

These foundational gifts were a definitive, historical and decisive act accomplished by the ascended Christ (*GGBB*). The aorist tense underscores that these gifts are anchored in the completed, unrepeatable victory of Christ's work (His death, burial, resurrection and ascension), even as the *effects* continue to operate sequentially in history (Bruce).

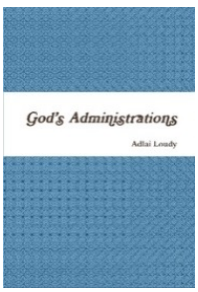
While most literal translations have "*gave*" (*REB; YLT; MLV; ALV; ED; EB; LEB; GLT; LSV; UL*), a few have rendered it "*gives*" (*CV; DV; DV; GHT*), yet this in no way contradicts the past tense of their Scripture contexts. Therefore, we do not suggest error in such translations, but caution that context is always strictly and faithfully observed.



Time and Eternity:
A Biblical Study

by — G.T. Stevenson

The research in this book is offered in the hope that it may contribute a little to the strengthening of faith in the readers as it has done for the writer. 74 pages, facsimile paperback.



God's Administrations

by — Adlai Loudy
(1893-1984)

A look at the administrations of Scripture. 54 pages, facsimile paperback.

When considering the rendering of *"gives,"* by way of example, we may say that "Paul ***writes*** of a Secret Administration in Ephesians and Colossians." Yet, by "writes" we do not mean to diminish the fact that this action happened nearly two millennia ago.

What we mean, in the most literal sense, is that "Paul ***wrote*** of a Secret Administration in Ephesians and Colossians." Thus, whether we use "writes" or "wrote," everyone should understand that we are referring to a past action within the context of our usage.

So, while the action of Paul's penning of the epistles of Ephesians and Colossians was clearly in the past, its historically completed action does however effectuate on into the future. These Ascension Gifts were clearly a foundational gateway toward the epistles of the Secret Administration. BSN

Note: For more information on this vital topic, and in particular, support for the use of "*gave*" in the past tense, see the book,

– *"Pastors" – The Ascension Gifts, the Higher Powers of Romans 13, and the Secret Administration*, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Press.

Topics:
Major: I Corinthians 12:28; Ascension Gifts; Context; Ephesians 4:11
Minor: Colossians; Ephesians

Contrasting "Body" Figures

A Summary

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Click here to listen to this article

The figure, the *"Body of Christ,"* used during the Acts Administration is not the same figure as the *"Ecclesia which is His Body"* used of the Secret Administration revealed in Ephesians and Colossians. Their distinction is essential for correctly partitioning Scripture.

"*The Body of Christ*" During the Acts Period

- There were many local *ecclesias* (*"churches"*).
- Each local *ecclesia* constituted a corporate *"body of Christ"* within its locality.
- Believing Israelites and proselytes from among the Nations were united in these *ecclesias*, but Jewish priority still remained.
- The Ascension Gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd-teachers functioned throughout these *ecclesias*.
- I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 describe these local bodies using the illustration of the human body.
- In this figure: Christ is NOT presented as the Head of these bodies. The "head" is clearly a collection of members in this body illustration.

The "*Ecclesia which is His Body*" of Ephesians and Colossians

After Acts 28 God revealed an entirely new administration. Characteristics of this *"body"* figure include:

- Christ *alone* as its Head.
- It is universal rather than local.
- There is only *one* such body.
- Members possess complete equality, regardless of nationality.
- The truth illustrated by this figure had been hidden in God and was unknown previously.
- It is revealed only by Paul through Ephesians and Colossians.

Distinguishing Between the Two "Body" Figures

Paul frequently uses the *"body"* figure (such as *"the Church which is His Body,"* or *"One Body"*) in Ephesians and Colossians, yet he uses the exact expression *"the Body of Christ"* only once (Ephesians 4:12), plainly referring back to Acts Administration believers who were being *"adjusted"* to new revelation through the Ascension Gifts. *(see* ***Figures****, last page)*

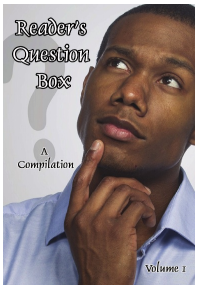
"The Body of Christ" & "The Ecclesia Which Is His Body"

Their Basic Contrasts

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

	"*The Body of Christ*"	"*The Ecclesia which is His Body*"
Scripture	I Corinthians 12:27	Ephesians 1:23
Scope	Local & Historical[1]	Universal & Sempiternal[2]
Number	Plural[3]	Singular[4]
Administration	Acts	Secret
Headship	Apostles & Prophets	Christ Alone[5]
Sphere[6]	*"The New Jerusalem"*	*"Far Above All Heavens"*
Message	"The Prophets & Moses"[7]	*"the untraceable riches of Christ"*[8]
Advantage	*"The Jew First"*[9]	*"Joint-Body"*[10]
Association	Abraham[11]	*"Before the Disruption of the World"*[12]

1. Paul used the corporate-unity figure-phrase "one body" concerning both the Acts Administration (Romans 12:4-5; I Corinthians 10:17; I Corinthians 12:12-13, 20) and the Secret Administration (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; Colossians 3:15). Yet in the former, he illustrates the union of the members of individual, local ecclesias (synagogues); while in the latter he depicts the union of the non-geographical (universal) and non-generational (sempiternal) out-called of the Secret Administration.
2. Sempiternal is defined as: perpetual (*CED*; *WSD*); never-ending duration (*MWD*); eternal in futurity; having beginning, but no end (*SJD*; *ADEL*).
3. In Israel's prior administration, during the Acts period, there were many kingdom ecclesias (synagogues) in the plural – "all the ecclesias" (Romans 16:4, 16; I Corinthians 7:17; 14:33; II Corinthians 8:18; 11:28, *CV*). Each of these kingdom ecclesias were, in and of themselves, a "body of Christ" – an integrated "one body" of a particular geographic location.
4. The ecclesia (out-called) of the Secret Administration has no bearing whatsoever on locality, and is, of necessity, the only "One Body" universal and sempiternal (Ephesians 4:4). This "One Body" of Ephesians and Colossians finds its manifestation Post-Acts and is the only ecclesia of the Secret Administration.
5. Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:24; 2:19.
6. For a closer look at this important theme, see the comprehensive compilation, *The Three Spheres of Glory*, Bible Student's Press.
7. Paul declaring of his Acts Administration ministry, "saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22).
8. *Cf.* Ephesians 3:8; *i.e.,* "the Administration of the Secret … concealed from the eons in God" (Ephesians 3:9), "the secret concealed from the eons and from the generations" (Colossians 1:26).
9. The overriding Kingdom principle is, "to the Jew first" (Romans 1:16; 2:9-10). This makes a clear distinction between Israel and the Nations for it even to be possible that the Jews are "first." This dispensational distinction and administrative advantage prevailed in "the Body of Christ" of Paul's early epistles.
10. With the Barrier Wall now down (Ephesians 2:14), the kingdom distinctions between Israel and the Nations have been completely removed. Today there are no dispensational distinctions or administrative advantages. This made way for the Secret Administration of Ephesians and Colossians, with its "Joint-Body" (Ephesians 3:6, *ED, REB, CV, DT, MLV, FAA*; "co-bodied," *EB*) – a "body" without national distinction.
11. *Cf.* Galatians 3:27-29.
12. *Cf.* Ephesians 1:4.



Reader's Question Box (Volume 1)

A Compilation

This is a collection of the first fifty questions and answers from the Bible Student's Notebook feature by the same name. 191 pages.

Figures *(continued from page 9524)*

The Ascension Gifts of Ephesians 4

Historically, after Christ's ascension *"up far above all Heavens,"* He gave gifts to the local assemblies of the Acts Administration: apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd-teachers. The verb *"gave"* refers to a completed historical action. These gifted men were commissioned specifically to guide believers through the dispensational transition. They were not intended to be continually appointed throughout the present administration.

Equality in the One Body

The One Body of the Secret Administration is characterized by:

- Complete equality;
- No Jewish priority;
- No gifts of hierarchy;
- Christ *alone* as Head.

These are defining characteristics of the Secret Administration.

Historical Observation

Additionally, the Acts Administration *ecclesias* functioned as Jewish synagogues: with elders and overseers. These organizational structures do not characterize the *"ecclesia which is His body"* of the present Secret Administration.

Critique of Christianity

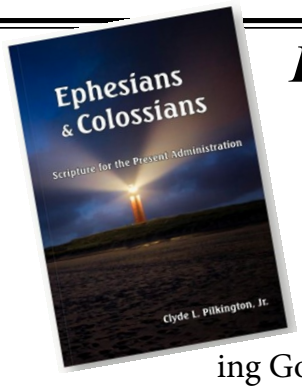
Not distinguishing between the *ecclesias* (plural) of the Acts Administration and the *ecclesia* (singular) of the Secret Administration has added to the great mix-up between Israel's Kingdom program and that of God's current program revealed exclusively in Scripture through Paul.

Failure to ***"distinguish** between things that differ"* (Philippians 1:10, *MKJV*) obscures many aspects of the unique truths revealed in Ephesians and Colossians.

The present *ecclesia* belongs exclusively to the Secret Administration, and its doctrine must be drawn primarily from Ephesians and Colossians. We say "primarily" because we are aware that there are trans-administrative truths that remain, yet great care must be taken in identifying such.

The figures "*Body of Christ*" and *"ecclesia which is His Body"* are not interchangeable. Distinguishing between the prior Acts Administration and the current Secret Administration allows for the embrace of a post-Acts identity for the present *ecclesia*, characterized by one universal Body under Christ alone as Head, with complete equality among its members, and doctrine centered in the epistles of Ephesians and Colossians. BSN

Topics:
Major: Acts Period; Body; Body of Christ; Colossians; Ecclesia which is His Body; Ephesians; Figures of Speech; One Body; Secret Administration
Minor: Dispensational; Right Division



Ephesians & Colossians: Scripture for the Present Administration

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"One God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:6, Concordant Version). Jesus Christ came to reveal God's true identity and nature as "Father." This was an advanced revelation concerning God, super-abounding that of any previous one. With radical boldness Christ called Him "Father," and Paul pressed this glorious truth to its grand ultimate, that God was the "Father of all." 31 chapters, 21 appendixes. Second Edition (2023). 76 pages.