

## The Body of Christ and Universal Salvation

**Commentary for September 1, 2024 — by Dr. Ernest L. Martin** (date unknown)

The apostle Paul gives us an illustration about those who are the Body of Christ. It is an illustration which, when carried to its fullest and proper interpretation, demands that all people will securely retain their positions for ever. Paul said: **“Now concerning the spiritual endowments, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.”** (1 Corinthians 12:1 CLV). Then read verses 13 to 27.

In a symbolic but real sense, Christ’s body is now made up of all living believers who have been baptized by the Spirit into Him (verse 13). This means that when the Father looks at Christ who is sitting on the right hand of the throne of the Father, He sees all the redeemed as being there as well!

We are at present reckoned as being in Christ and already sitting with Him on that heavenly throne! **“... and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus”** (Ephesians 2:6 CLV). This is, of course, only a symbolic position, but such figures portray realities. And our being in Christ’s body makes us part, legally, of Christ Himself!

What is Christ’s body like? It is perfect and without blemish! All the animal sacrifices of Moses symbolically denoted the faultless and sin-free **“Lamb of God”** (Jesus Christ) when He was on earth in the flesh. Those animals had to be undefiled in all outward appearances — not a speck of irregularity was permitted (Leviticus 22:19–25; Malachi 1:8). This physical condition of perfection was a fit symbol of the sinless body of Christ. Christ, in the flesh, showed no outward deformities!

What has this to do with the salvation of all who are the present Body of Christ? Very much! We are all members of His body (a finger, a toe, or ear), we must be properly attached to Him or He is deformed — and unacceptable to God the Father.<sup>1</sup> That is why Christ gave the parable of the sheep. While 99 sheep remain obedient to the shepherd, when one goes astray, what happens? The shepherd (Christ) goes after that lost sheep with more energy and concern than with all the other 99. He does not want to lose a “finger” of His body!

**“If ... any man, with a hundred sheep, that even one of them should be led astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine sheep on the mountains, and go and seek the one which is straying? And if he should come to find it ... he is rejoicing over it, rather than over the ninety-nine that have not strayed. Thus it is not the will in front of your Father ... that one of these little ones should be perishing.”**

• **Matthew 18:12–14 CLV**

Speaking of His sheep, Christ said:

**“I am giving them life eonian, and they should by no means be perishing for the**

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<sup>1</sup> People making up the Body of Christ can become reprobate (a terrible thing because real judgment awaits them), but they will be corrected and returned to form His perfect Body of Christ.

**eon, and no one shall be snatching them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to be snatching them out of My Father's hand."**

**• John 10:28–29 CLV**

And when will eonian life be given to people, and they will not perish anymore?<sup>2</sup> This will occur in the last day when Christ raises them from the dead. **"And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise it up the last day"** (John 6:39 CLV). There is not one thing in the entire creation that will stand in the way of obtaining our salvation in Christ which was given us before the world began (2 Timothy 1:9). Paul said:

**"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties [Satan or any evil spirit], nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."**

**• Romans 8:38–39 CLV**

In fact, the ones foreordained to be called (some in this age, others in later ages), are all assured of a justification (being made righteous), and glorification to become one **"among many brethren"** (Romans 8:29). The apostles were fully aware that our future inheritance was preserved and permanent, sealed by God's Holy Spirit. **"... an allotment ... kept in the heavens for you, who are garrisoned by the power of God, through faith, for salvation ready to be revealed in the last era ..."** (1 Peter 1:4–5, CLV). God's Spirit seals us (Ephesians 1:13).

Christ and His apostles realized that one's everlasting life (salvation) would only be given by God at the last day — when they are resurrected from the dead to glory. Someone can be told that they will never die, and this is true, but immortality will not be granted until that occurs. **"And I will raise him up at the last day"** (John 6:44 CLV). But there is no doubt our salvation is utterly secure. **"Who will be confirming you also until the consummation, unimpeachable [blameless] in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (1 Corinthians 1:8 CLV).

We have **"this same confidence, that He Who undertakes a good work among you, will be performing it until the day of Jesus Christ"** (Philippians 1:6 CLV). All who are part of the Body of Christ will be fully guarded to the end, that His Body will be perfect and entire! In no way will Christ's glorious body be deformed. If you are or will be part of that Body, you will be retained by the power of God unto a complete salvation in Christ. This includes, eventually, the salvation of all the world.

**"For God does not dispatch His Son into the world that He should be judging the world, but that the world may be saved through Him."** (John 3:17 CLV). **"God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, **NOT** reckoning their offenses to them"** (2 Corinthians 5:19 CLV). God **"wills that all mankind be saved ..."** (1 Timothy 2:4 CLV). We can be assured that very human being will become members of Christ's body **"that God may be All in all"** (1 Corinthians 15:28 CLV). Christ's body will be complete!

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<sup>2</sup> Just because the reward of the saved is termed **"eonian life"** does not mean it lasts only for the eons. The eons end, but our life continues. We will have immortality resident within us as Christ has now.