***Christ is our Cornerstone

Colossians 2:18-19

COL-452***

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Our subject is "The Error of Angelic Worship," number 9, in Colossians 2:18-19.

**Guard your Treasure**

The Christian’s church-age prize from the grace of God; that is, what we have been talking about. We have been explaining the background of Colossians 2:18, where the apostle says, "Let no one keep defrauding (or to rob) you of your prize." We also notice that the last letter that the apostle wrote to his associate, Timothy, in 2 Timothy 1:14, make this same principle (same emphasis). Paul says, "Guard through the Holy Spirit, who indwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you." What is the treasure?

**The Treasure**

Well, we saw that it was – at least eight specific gifts (eight specific valuable riches) that come to us as members of the church age body of Christ. And here they are. This is the prize (this is the treasure) that Satan would take from us, and that we are to protect. Number one is the reality of positional sanctification – of being in Christ, and thus, having eternal security in salvation, permanently in Him, and along with it the spiritual power system of the Holy Spirit. Number two: the treasure includes the union of all church believers as one in the body of Christ, the church. Number 3: Our prize is that every Christian is indwelt permanently by the Lord Jesus Christ for fellowship in daily walk. Now, there's a thought that was completely foreign to any Old Testament Jew under Judaism. He would never have conceived that God would indwell him permanently, so that, as he walked through life, God Himself was in his physical structure. That's very clearly a difference in this church-age.

Then number four: Every church-age saint is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit for spiritual power in godly living, and for divine good service. Here again, this was inconceivable in the Old Testament under the Mosaic Law, that the Spirit of God would take up permanent residence within the body of the believer. Why would anybody want to go back to the Mosaic Law system? But they do it all the time. And because the people have never been taught the Word of God, they're dumb sheep, and they follow. Number five: The prize includes a universal priesthood of all church-age believers, offering spiritual sacrifice, and being able to intercede at God's throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). Every now and then, there was a Jew who decided: "I'm as good as Aaron and the Levitical priesthood. And they went in to try to offer sacrifices, and to burn the incense, and when they did, they died. You could not go to God in the Old Testament. You could not go to God, In the Old Testament, you had to go through the agency of the official Levitical priesthood. But you can go there today. You can always go to that throne of prayer. You can do it anytime. You can always go to God, which is exactly what you've done by being here tonight. And you do that as your own priest.

Number six: "The prize includes every Christian as an ambassador of Christ to the world to bring about peace with God in a sinner's life. If you people do not give people the Word of God, and if you do not explain the gospel, and use the evangelism brochure, you'll be in trouble at the Judgment Seat of Christ. That is so easy. How much time is it going to take you to carry a few of those along with you, and to hand them out, at the grocery store, and in the shopping that you do, as you go out the checkout counters, and as God lays a person on your heart: "Listen, this envelope contains something very important. I'd like to give it to you. At your leisure, read it. They look at it. It says, "Contents can save your life." Who wouldn't be interested in that?

Number seven: The prize includes a completed canon of Scripture, conveying the full council of God to Christians in the church-age. We have the whole Old Testament, and the whole New Testament. Number eight: Christians are called to a supernatural lifestyle of holiness by the filling of the Holy Spirit: experiential sanctification – to be godly in your experience. The Jew could never do that. He tried, but it has to be God the Holy Spirit in us that enables us to walk a holy life.

Now, there are seven of these (the perfect number). These are seven figures which are used to convey to us what it's like to be a member of the church-age body of Christ – the grace era, in contrast to the Law of the Old Testament. Here are seven relationships (seven comparisons) between the grace of the church, and the Law of Judaism under the Mosaic Law. These would never have been found in the Old Testament. And they, if you have any doubt yet, that the church is not the new Israel replacing Israel, these should pretty well put that doubt out of your mind.

The first one is in John 10:1. We cannot read all of these. This one we will read a little more, but we want to have you to be acquainted with this. This first one, is that Christ is the Shepherd, and we Christians are His sheep. In the Old Testament, God did not looked upon them as the shepherd and the sheep. Beginning at John 10:1 "Jesus said, Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep." So, Jesus Christ is the door into the sheepfold of the family of God – salvation. To Him, the Doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear His voice. And he calls his own sheep by name, and He leads them out. While He puts forth all His own, He goes before them. And the sheep follow Him because they know His voice."

What does the shepherd do when he leads the sheep out of the sheepfold? He leads them to pastures. He leads them to feed for the sustenance of their physical bodies. What does the pastor-teacher do as the shepherd under the Great Shepherd Christ, except to lead people, if he's doing his job, into the richness of the food – the pastures of doctrine, so that they may know how to nurture their spiritual lives, and live successfully in the devil's world.

Verse 5 says, "And a stranger they simply will not follow." When you become well-versed in Scripture, nobody's going to make a fool of you. Somebody will come along (we hear them on television all the time), and most of you people will look at one another and say, "I can't believe that he's getting away with saying that." But the reason is that all the people he's talking to, that are in his denominational association, are dumb sheep. They are uneducated in the mind of God, so they *will* listen to a false shepherd.

Verse 5, again, says, "And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." How odd it is that so many people will flee from an expository church. They come in here with some regularity. They listen. Afterward, I can see in their eyes: the caution; the guardedness; the "I don't know about this explaining the Bible;" and, "I don't know about this putting the monkey on my back, such that I'm responsible for my life before God spiritually. And I don't like this business that I'm going to be accountable in heaven someday." Well, have your kicks now. Have your fun. But I guarantee you that once you're in the sheepfold, you will obey, and you will be rewarded and blessed; or, you will disobey, and not be rewarded. And your life will not be a blessing. You'll be one package of enragement.

Verse 6: "This is a figure of speech which Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, 'I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers. But the sheep did not hear them.''" So, anybody who wants to get into the sheepfold of salvation some other way except through Jesus Christ – all these denominations, and vast groups like the Jewish people, they're never going to make it: "He is the Door."

Verse 6: "I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy. I came that they might have life, and that they might have it abundantly." That's the promise, folks. It's one of the 7,000 promises in the Bible that are no good for you after you die. Only now I will provide for you abundantly. You can count on me. I will take care of you. You won't starve. You will be provided for. And as your status of life and your age change, I will carry you through. I'm not like the thief who's trying to get something. I'm not like the TV evangelist who wants you to send him the money. I am the Shepherd, and the Shepherd stands, if necessary, with His own life for His sheep, that they might have an abundant life."

Are you having a wonderful life, following the sin nature, and playing in the world system? Don't you ever wake up in the middle of the night and wonder: "What good did I do this day as a child of God, that He should reward me at His judgments? That should be a concern.

Verse 11: "I'm the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them." The religious operator is not going to put himself in hazard for you. All he wants is your money. All he wants is to enrich himself.

Verse 13: "He flees because he is a hireling, and not concerned about the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd. And I know My own, and My own know Me. Even as a father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down My life for the sheep, and I have other sheep which are not of this fold." He's talking to whom? To Jews. They're in the sheepfold of His salvation: "But there are other sheep," Jesus said, "that I must now begin to bring into the sheepfold." Guess who that is? All of us – the gentiles:" I must bring them in also. They shall hear My voice, and they shall become one flock with One Shepherd. And that's what's happened now. We have Jews and gentiles in the body of Christ, the church – one group with one shepherd as the sheep of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 17: "For this reason, the Father loves Me because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ said, "They didn't take My Life, but I let them take it," He also knew the enormous physical suffering.

You just have to stop and think a little bit of what was involved in crucifixion: the brutality; the physical abuse; the mental stress; and, then the agonies of nails driven through your wrists, and through your feet, and being put upright on the cross. And there's just a little place for you to have a support for your feet. And every time you took a breath, you had to push yourself up, because in that position, with your hands over your head, you couldn't breathe. And you had to push up to be able to take air into the lungs as your strength gradually left. Why did He do that? It was because not only was the spiritual death of Christ involved when He bore our sins, but so was His physical death involved, as was demonstrated by the animal sacrifices. He went to that, knowing full well.

That's why He stopped at the Garden of Gethsemane, on the way to where he was going to be taken finally. He said, "Father, this is it. Last Sunday, I came into Jerusalem, and I rode that colt that had never been ridden before, as a final sign that I am Who I say I am, and that you promised to send. And they rejected Me. And now, we move into the final phase of paying as a Lamb of God for the sins of all mankind. Is there any other way to do this? Is there any way I could escape having all the sin of mankind placed upon Me?" This was not only God, but this was a Man Who had never sinned.

Then He said, "But, Father, I'm speaking to You as a human. And I want Your will to be done – not what I want." So, He knew what was ahead. He knew what the price was going to be to be our Shepherd. That kind of a picture is never between God and His people in the Old Testament. Do you see how much greater is your position in the church?

Drop down to verse 26: "Jesus said to the Jews who oppose Him: "You do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My Hand." By the way, what do you think is the word "never" there? It's the same thing we had this morning – the most negative, solid expression in the Greek language "ou me", and that's what you have in the Greek Bible here. When he said "never," this means "absolutely never." Once you're in a family of God, you will never leave it and perish. "Oh me" (no way) – "No one shall snatch him out of My Hand. My father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch him out of the Father's Hand."

**Christ is the Vine, and We are the Branches**

Then, there's a second comparison – the second figure to illustrate what it is to be in the church-age, and that is that Christ is the divine, and Christians are the branches. John 15:1-17: He says, "I am the true vine. My Father is the Vine Dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. You're already clean because of the word which I've spoken to you." You are already saved. Now He says, "Abide in Me." What He's referring to here is: "Stay in fellowship with Me. You're saved. Don't shut off the grace power system by sin that you do not repent. Change your way. Confess." So: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. He who abides in Me, temporal fellowship, and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me, he can do nothing."

However, there are some people who think they're a branch, but they're really unbelievers: "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is an unbeliever." There's no way he'll be in fellowship with the Father: " He is thrown away, as a branch dries up: they gather them; cast them into the fire; and, they are burned." At the end of a fake branch, there's the lake of fire: "But if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you." That's it. All you have to know is basic doctrine. Then you will know how to pray. Then you'll be led to the Holy Spirit to ask whatever you wish, because you'll be asking for that in the name of Christ, which will be in the will of God. And then God says, "I'll do it." Now, that's great. Can you imagine a Jew in the Old Testament ever enjoying that kind of privilege?

**Asking Amiss in Prayer**

"I can ask anything of God, if I stay in fellowship with Him. I will not be asking amiss. James says, "You do not have your prayers answered because you're asking a miss." You're asking for things you should not be asking for. What you're asking is not the leading of the Holy Spirit.

So, verse 8: "By this is My Father glorified: that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." Our Heavenly Father sitting in heaven, tapping His foot, waiting for you to come to follow Him, so that He may produce great divine good works through you: fruit. So, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, you may be rich – not just a little bit. He said, "I want to produce much divine good works. I want many times for you to exercise your spiritual gifts – whatever they are, and thus, to prepare for Me to shower you with blessings beyond your fondest dreams, that will last for all eternity with you.

Verse 9: "Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you, and I abide in My love. If (that's a first-class condition if – if, and it is true) – If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love." That's it. You stay in obedience to Me; in obedience to the Word of God; in obedience to the moral code of God; in obedience to the mission that I've laid upon your heart; and, in obedience to faithfulness to use your spiritual gifts that I've made clear to you, then you will be at the center of My love of blessing. Just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and I abide in His love. I'm in the place of fellowship. These things I've spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

Do you want to be happy in life? Then do your mission. Do you want to be happy in your life? Then keep the commandments of the Word of God. Some people say, "Well, I go to church and I never talk about the commandments. They never explain Scriptures. They never explain verses. I don't think I know what God thinks." That's right. That's the way it is. And most of us who are in an expository ministry like we have here, you don't really begin to appreciate it – not that you don't mean to. But you're not out there with the blindness, and the dullness, and the darkness is in religious life, such that you cannot appreciate the enormous opportunity, and the contrast that you have.

Jesus said, "I've spoken to you these things so that I may be happy in you, and that your joy may be full."

Verse 12 says, "This is My commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you." There's another expression of the supernatural life to which we are called – to love one another with that same mental attitude love (this is "agape" love – free of mental-attitude bitterness and resentment. When was the last time you made some snide remark about some Christian that you were fed up with? That's mental-attitude hatred. When was the last time you said an ugly thing about me? I'm a prince, who everyone cannot help but like. That is mental-attitude hatred, because something was said that disturbed the way you want it to be, instead of the way, you find from Scripture, that it ought to be.

**I Put Myself out for You**

"My commandment to you (and I mean it is a commandment – it's not an invitation) is that you have no mental-attitude bitterness toward other believers, as I do not toward you." And that "agape" love has what characteristic at the heart of it? "*I put myself out for you.* Sacrifice. I sacrifice myself in your behalf."

Some Christians are very great at that: "If you need help, let me know. I'm there. I can do something for you. Don't hesitate. I'll do what I can.

Verse 13 says, "Greater love has no one than this: that one laid down his life for his friends." "I will wear myself out in God's service to you, and you'll get the best – not the leftover of my capacities. It will be for His glory."

Then Jesus said a very precious thing. This was never said to Jews: "You are my friends if you do what I command you." That means you'll be in fellowship if you obey the Word of God.

Then He says, "No longer do I call you 'slave,' for the slave does not know what his master is doing. But I've called you 'friends,' for all things that I've heard from My Father, I made known to you. Those who are not in the family of God are the enemies of Christ. And Christians who are not in fellowship are the enemies of Christ.

I'm horrified sometimes at the way I hear some Christians talk, and how they speak out against other biblical Christians: "because they know not whereof they speak." And what they're saying is that they resent the friendship that God extends toward those who obey Him, and to those who take instruction. That's the problem. So many Christians can't be told anything. They can't be admonished, and take the time to think it over. They know and they blow you off.

Verse 16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain." This is what you were elected to do. Once you accepted Christ as Savior, God elected you to bear fruit, and to bear it abundantly, and have a harvest of good works that just overflows. What's going to happen up there? The harvest will be there for your reward. Now, either you believe that, or you don't. And because you're your own priest. Now, you can blow it off, and you'll be indifferent toward it; or, you can say, "Yes, that's what I'm going to do: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain," in treasures in Heaven, and whatever you ask the Father in My Name, He may give it to you. This I command you – that you love one another."

Ultimately, this kind of love is the love that the Holy Spirit gives you. It's part of the fruit of the Spirit. It's that "agape" love – mental-attitude goodwill, and self-sacrificial service.

It is humbling to me to read this verse. All over this congregation, over a half-century, I've seen Christian after Christian after Christian, who has exemplified this verse – to love one another, and then demonstrate it by putting themselves out in God's service: to being on hand when we need them; to being on an even when they didn't feel too good to be here; to put themselves out; and, to use their time where we needed their gifts and their presence: "This, I command you: to love one another."

**Christ is the Cornerstone – We are the Building**

Then the third comparison (the third figure), again unknown in the Old Testament: Christ the Messiah Savior is a chief cornerstone. And on Him, we Christians are a building that is being erected. In Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul says, "So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets – Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God the Spirit." Christians are put together as a temple of God. Yes, God still has His temple, but it's not like some religious groups think – still a building of material things. That temple is your body. And that body is a temple when it's alive.

**The Cornerstone**

So, right now. Christ lives in you. The Holy Spirit lives in you. We Christians are of the household of God, and the foundation is the apostle and the prophets of the New Testament, and their doctrinal principles, which they revealed to us relative to the church. And Christ is the cornerstone. And everything is being built upon it. The cornerstone is the critical thing. It's the foundation. Everything else is going to be on that.

After waiting many years, the academy building, which was once just a wooden-sided building (which it still is, under the brick), came to the point where we had the money to put the brick on it. And we had all the academy kids out there, and the Mason said, "Now we are going to lay the corner brick (like the cornerstone). And that was our meeting place of Berean Church. And so Berean Church will never be without funds, we are going to put a silver dollar under this brick. And he did. He put the mortar on, and put the brick over it. And I will not tell you which corner of the building that historic pure silver is under. It's not a not a sandwich dollar, but a real silver dollar. It's out there folks, under one of those corner bricks. But if you chip those bricks out, the whole building will come down. It is all built upon the cornerstone.

Well, that's the picture. This is your life, and you are built upon this tremendous structure.

This is further mentioned to us in 1 Peter 2:5: "You also (as Christians) – living stones are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." We, as the body of Christ are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We individually are the temple of the Holy Spirit. And together, we're brick-upon-brick, having been put together as a magnificent temple structure. And we're part of it. And we're gathered together now tonight as that body of Christ.

For what reason? All week long we will be united as a congregation in order to exercise our priesthood – and, to exercise the offering of spiritual sacrifices. You may wonder, "What on earth am I going to do with my time tomorrow?" Well, whatever else you're going to do, you better execute your priesthood. That would be the wise thing. Keep your eyes and ears open: "Father, what can I do for you?"

I like it the way our friend Jack Smith in Kentucky says. He wakes up every morning, and looks up to the Lord, and He says, "Father, I am your servant. What are your orders for this day for me?" And he gets the orders. Why? Because he's available. All of us will get the orders. The problem is, you'll not be shoved. The Holy Spirit never shoves anybody. He makes that gentle appeal, and on the basis of the admonition of Scripture, and of the preaching ministry, you must decide to respond or not.

"You, as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, for a holy priesthood, to offer of spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Then there is the 1 Corinthians 13:9: "For if the ministry of condemnation was glorious, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds in glory." The Ministry of Condemnation was the Old Testament. It was a glorious document. Paul says, "The Mosaic Code was good, and perfect, and holy, and it was right, and nobody could keep it, especially its moral small part. The ministry of condemnation – all the Mosaic Law did, was condemn. It shows how much sinners we were: "How much more did the ministry of righteousness abound in glory? How much more that you should be built upon Christ, the Cornerstone, as part of His building – brick in that building? How much more glorious is *that* temple than the one in which Moses and the Levitical priesthood functioned?

**Priests**

Next, for Christ is the high. Priests and Christians are a kingdom of priests. 1 Peter 2:5-9: "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house for holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, for this is contained in Scripture." Then he quotes an Old Testament passage: "Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious cornerstone, Jesus Christ. He who believes in Him shall not be disappointed. This precious value, then, is for you who believe, but for those who disbelieve, who will not accept Christ the Savior, the stone which the builders rejected (the leaders of Israel rejected), this became the very cornerstone, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of defense." The cornerstone of Christ the Messiah should have been what the Jewish leaders, the rabbis, built upon, but they didn't. They stumble across that stone to this day: "For they stumble because they are disobedient to the Word. And to this doom they were appointed. But you (you Christians) are a chosen race, a royal priesthood."

Jesus Christ is our high priest, and every one of us, are our own priests before God. Therefore, you will be held accountable on how you went to God daily, and dealt with him. The priests deal with God in spiritual service every day.

In Revelation 1:6, John says, "He has made us (Christians) to be a kingdom – priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Going to the other end of the book of Revelation, in Revelation 20:6, John says, "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection. Over these, the second death has no power. And they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for 1,000 years." We Christians will be priests of God, and we will reign with him as the royal priesthood of God for 1,000 years in the millennium.

**Christ is the Head of the Body**

The next figure is that Christ is the head of the church, which is His Body. Such a relationship with God was unknown and never anticipated in the Old Testament. Why would anybody want to go back, and give up this kind of relationship to God? We are part of the church, which is the body of Christ, so that what we are doing as individual believers has almighty God thinking for us and guiding us, if we are receptive to that.

Ephesians 4:11-16: "And He (the Lord Jesus Christ) gave some as apostles." These are communicators of the mind of God – communicators of doctrine. We do not have apostles anymore: "And some as prophets." We do not have prophets anymore: "But some were evangelists." We do have evangelists: "And some as pastor-teacher teachers." And we do have pastor teachers. And why is that? You are acquainted with this verse? We have it: "For the equipping of the saints." And that word "for" is a foundation: "The equipping of the saint" means that we are taught the Word of God. They're trained. For what? "For the work of service." But that second one depends upon the people having been taught the Word of God – expository teaching.

Then the next purpose of the pastor-teacher is: "The building up of the body of Christ." Individual Christians are being brought to maturity, and the whole body of Christ going on to maturity. For what reason? "Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." As a result: We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine; by the trickery of men; or, by the craftiness in deceitful scheming." You talk about the TV evangelists – there you have them: "The craftiness of men, the deceitful scheming." The look for ways to get money out of people. And what do the poor people of God do? They're thrown about by every wind of doctrine. And if you ever watch those programs, it is unbelievable. You who know the Word of God, and how it works, will shake your head, and say, "How does that guy get away from it?" Millions of dollars are being poured into his coffers for him personally, to be dispensing and dealing with. And the individual Christians who sit in those emotionally oriented meetings every wind of false doctrine that comes along, they're carried away.

People who are not following doctrine, keep coming to you, and saying, "Hey, this preacher said, "So-and-so. So, what difference does it make?" You know what's true? Why are you sitting around, giving second thought to what's some dumdum has told you? But if you are not versed in doctrine, and you do not understand that you are part of the church, the body of Christ, and how it functions, then you'll be blown away.

Verse 15 says, "Speaking the truth in love." That's always important. You don't want to be ugly to people when you give them the truth. You give it straight, but you do it kindly. We are to grow up in all aspects into Him Who is the Head, even Christ. We're to become Christlike. He's the head. We're His body. And the way the head thinks, that's super. The head is perfect. The head is good health. The head is prosperity. The head is purpose in life. The head is mission – possible, and executed. And we grow up to maturity, so what Christ thinks, we think. And what He desires, we desire.

Verse 15: "For Whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body, for the building up of itself in love." We have nobody in this congregation who is not important to us in terms of your gifts, and certainly in terms of your presence.

Anybody who is not here tonight, who could have been here, but chose to do something else, has made us the poorer for it. He is focused upon himself, and he has not been concerned with building us up, as your presence does: "From Whom the whole body, being fitted and held together."

Yes, we're going to be running ads every Thursday. The one we ran last week is on the table. Take a look at it. We're going to change it a little bit this week. What are we praying for? What are we spending the money for that you will provide for us to be able to do this? What we're asking for is people who are ready to fit into the Berean Ministries' vision of a servant's heart, and of a mind that is filled with the mind of God, and who is receptive to being taught Scripture. We don't want just anybody. We want a certain group. And we're trying to deal with a thing I hear so often. People come, and they find something significant here at Berean, and they say, "Well, I didn't even know you existed." They say that with the Academy: "I didn't even know you existed here."

So, we're trying to put something out there that God the Holy Spirit will use. But what we're asking them to do is find people who can be fitted into this particular local body, so that it's part of every joint that supplies a proper working, so that this body of Christ can grow in mutual Christian love.

Also, Christ is the head of the church, which is his body.

**Christ is our Cornerstone**

There are two more very important aspects (figures) which are use of the church: the comparison of our relationship to one another, and to God. And they are two of the most precious and most significant. But here you've had tonight, things that no Jew could ever hear this sort of thing as applying to him. Christ is our Shepherd, and we are the sheep of His flock. He's going to take care of you. He's going to direct you. Christ is the vine, and Christians are the branches. He is our life. Christ is our life. Our physical life flows from the fact that Christ is providing that life, as the vine provides life to its branches. That's where it all comes from. Christ is the Chief Cornerstone, and Christians are the building erected on it. We are a magnificent temple of God.

You may see some pile of stone on the corner that's impressive, but it's shallow and hollow without God in it. Here we are. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Cornerstone, and we are built as part of that temple. Christ is the High Priest, and church-age believers are a kingdom of trees. Every one of us can walk into the throne room of heaven. We are directly into the inner sanctuary – the Holy of Holies. Christ is the veil that was torn away. His body was the veil that shielded that. Scripture tells us that when He died, our access to the very presence of God was ensured.

The high priest is leading us, and we are priests, with the power to do what? Priests have a lot of power. We not only give spiritual sacrifices, but we can open the door to eternal life. That was what they looked to the priests to do: make those sacrifices, to open the door to eternal life symbolically. That's why those brochures are the key. Don't leave without them. Never leave home without them.

**Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His Body**

Next, Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. So, we are one with the Lord Jesus Christ, as a human body. And what the head thinks, the body receives the results. And because Christ is the head, everything that He thinks is super. Therefore, everything that happens to us is super, even if it doesn't seem so from our human point. It is all in His hand and guidance. It is all in the plan.

So, never forget who you are. You are not just a poor Jew under the Old Testament Mosaic Law.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

[**Back to the Colossians index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/colossians.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)