

“This Is My Body”

As Jesus ate the Last Supper with His apostles, He took some of the bread and broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body” (Matt. 26:26). The New Testament is full of references to the body of Christ; however, students of the Bible will be careful to notice that there are four different uses of the phrase “body of Christ” in the New Testament.

The body of His incarnation – John writes that, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14a). Jesus had a real human body during His earthly sojourn so that He might, “taste death for everyone” (Heb. 2:9). Hebrews 10:10 teaches that Christians are, “Sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” After Jesus had died on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea, “Went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus” (Luke 23:52). How grateful we should be for the fact that Jesus took on human form and offered His body as a sacrifice for us (cf. Phil. 2:6-9).

The body of His resurrection – After He was laid in the tomb, God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day (Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4). When He arose, the Scriptures indicate that His body was a glorious resurrection body. Paul wrote that Christians eagerly await the Resurrection Day when the Lord, “Will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body” (Phil. 3:21). The difference between these two types of bodies is described in 1 Corinthians 15:35-50. The Bible promises that when He is revealed at His second coming, we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2).

The bread of the Lord’s Supper – Jesus was speaking about bread when He said, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19). Symbolically, the unleavened bread that Christians eat during the Lord’s Supper represents the body of Christ Himself (1 Cor. 11:23-24). Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that although we are many, “We are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread” (1 Cor. 10:17). The bread of the Lord’s Supper is connected to the body of Jesus and to the unity that Christians share as members of His spiritual body, the church.

The spiritual body of Christ, the church – Colossians 1:18 declares that Christ, “Is the head of the body, the church.” Similarly, Ephesians 1:22-23 explicitly teaches that the church is the body of Christ. Early Christians were taught, “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (1 Cor. 12:27). When the Gospel is taught, the effect is the, “Edifying of the body of Christ,” of which, “Christ is the Savior” (Eph. 4:12; 5:23). These passages and more are clear: when an individual is saved, he is added by God to the spiritual body of Christ, the church (cf. Acts 2:40-47). Consider carefully that there is only **one** body (Eph. 4:4), and **one** bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23ff). This truth ought to prompt serious-minded students of Scripture to examine themselves to see whether they are really in the spiritual body of Christ (2 Cor. 13:5).

How thankful we should be for what the Bible teaches about the body of Christ! **--JB**