

death" (Jn. 8:38; 44f). And, the warning "For which things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" is similarly expressed in Ephesians (Col. 3:6; Eph. 5:5-6).

"Wherein ye once walked, when ye lived in these things" (Col. 3:7). There are those who say that fornication or adultery is an act, not a state: that one does not "live in adultery." Paul disagrees with them. One who has a "live in' partner" is "living in fornication." One who unscripturally divorces his mate and remar-

ries another is "living in adultery." One can only cease to "live in fornication" when he ceases to have a "'live in' mate;" one can only cease to "live in adultery" when he ceases to live with a mate he has no right to have. Being baptized does not change the sin of having a "live in;" nor the sin of "living in adultery."

Because God's wrath comes upon sons of disobedience, we should "put to death our members which are upon the earth". Until we do, we are not seeking the things that are above, not

setting our mind on the things that are above, nor have we died, as Christ demanded that we must. Until we "put to death" our members upon the earth, we cannot be called "children of obedience," but must still be regarded as "sons of disobedience upon whom God's wrath will some day come (1 Pet. 1:14; Col. 3:6). ~

Jim McDonald

NAVARRE MESSENGER

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Is Only ONE CHURCH Right?

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VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

by Sewell Hall

Probably no charge creates more prejudice against a group of people than the charge that they think there is only one church that is right. This fact clearly indicates that most Americans consider all churches right. Is it possible that only one church is right?

At least three other questions must be answered before this

one can be answered intelligently.

1. **Is there such a thing as right and wrong?** Many who complain so bitterly about such a claim do not believe that anything is absolutely right or wrong. If there is no right and wrong, then obviously any claim to be the only right church would be ridiculous. However, if there is a God and if He created us, then He is the standard of right and wrong

(Romans 3:4). His word is truth (John 17:17).

2. **Is there a right and wrong in religion?** Some who accept the concept of right and wrong in the realm of morals exclude it from religion. They seem to think that God is so loving and good that He will accept anything man may do and dedicate to Him. But Jesus warned of false teachers who would come in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). He stated that worship

was made vain by teaching the doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9). Paul informed the Galatians that anyone who preached any other gospel than what he had preached would be accursed (Galatians 1:8), and Peter predicted that there would be false teachers among us (2 Peter 2:1). So religious teachings can be false and religious practice can be wrong. Jesus also said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted" (Matthew 15:13). This is equal to saying that churches not planted by the Lord will be rejected.

3. Has God designated any exclusives in religion? Consider Ephesians 4:4-6. "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." The "one" in these verses obviously means "one and only one."

These verses do not allow for our modern broad-mindedness. Such broad-mindedness, however, is not really new; it existed in the first century among the Ephesians to whom this was

written. Paul became the focus of a riot because he insisted "that there are no gods made with hands" (Acts 19:26). To put it another way, he preached there was "one and only one" God. The Ephesians were tolerant of many gods, but intolerant of anyone who said there was only one. Most of us would agree that there is one and only one God. But the same verses say, "there is one body." What is this one body? The same writer says in Ephesians 1:22-23 that God has given Christ "to be head of all things to the church which is His body." So if there is one body and that body is the church, this is saying there is one church. If one God means only one God, then one body means one body or only one church.

What is the one church? Without doubt, the one body (church) referred to in Ephesians 4:4-6, was the church that Jesus promised to build (Matthew 16:18). It was to be founded on the fact that He was the Christ, the Son of God. That church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when Jesus was first publicly proclaimed to be the Christ, based upon the facts of His resurrection from

the dead. Those who believed asked, "What shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"...Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:37-38, 41, 47).

Please note that all who were saved were added to the church. It includes all who were saved, for the Lord added all who were saved to it. But if it included all who were saved it was not a denomination, for a denomination by definition is only one part of a whole. Neither was it a combination of all denominations, nor even an association of local churches known as "churches of Christ." The one body was made up of individual members, not of local churches. It was the one true church to which all who were saved were added. It was that one body described in Ephesians.

How can this church be identified? Jesus said that the gates of Hades would not prevail against His church (Matt. 16:18). It must be in existence today. If it is, it has Jesus Christ as its only Lord and the gospel as its only faith.

It is entered by the one baptism, it still includes all who are saved, and it is not one of many. It is the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18), Christ's church (Matthew 16:18), the church of God (Galatians 1:13),

the house of God (1 Timothy 3:15). It is the one and only church that is right. ~

“Put to Death, Therefore...”

"...your members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:5). The word "Therefore" tells us the apostle's appeal rests upon the preceding verses: "seek the things which are above," "set your mind on the things that are above," "ye died" (Col. 3:1-3). To do these things we must put to death our members which are upon the earth. We cannot "die" unless we "put to death" fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness. James states the process which culminates in sin: "each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then the lust when it hath conceived beareth sin; and the sin when it is full-grown

bringeth forth death" (James. 1:14f). In Colossians Paul names the sin (fornication) and then tells how it comes about. All the named items (save fornication and uncleanness) are matters of the heart—passion, evil desire and covetousness and while covetousness may be any inordinate desire for possession of things, its appearance in this context with fornication seems to relegate its inordinate desire for possession, to the carnal possession of another's body.

Those whose obsessions for these things and their failure to check such desires and passions in their hearts are styled "sons

of disobedience" (Col. 3:6). This same expression is found in Ephesians 2:2 where Paul explains that Gentiles were dead through their trespasses and sins. They walked according to the course of this world; (walked) according to the prince of the powers of the air (Satan) and (walked according) to the spirit that ... worketh in sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:1f). Just as Jesus charged Jews with being sons of the devil because they followed the path he beckoned them to walk in, so those who give themselves over to fornication and uncleanness are "children of disobedience." They have disobeyed God's instructions to "put these things to