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PHIL133W

10/1/2021

The "Body" in Pauline Literature

The contents in Apostle Paul's epistles are difficult to comprehend, with most of the people misunderstanding whatever Paul wanted to communicate to his audience. It is vital to note that until today, some clergymen and educationalists have misinterpreted Apostle Paul's literature. One thing that is consistent in most of his letters is that Paul has employed the word "soma" or "body" in trying to ensure that his readers understand his message. Looking at how the Apostle used the term in his writings, he endeavored to ensure that his teachings remained relevant to the lives of his audience. Realistically, every individual understands their body more than anything else. This can explain the reason why the Apostle used the term "body," as he thought that his audience would easily connect his message with the analogy of the body. But to many, his style did not achieve its intended purpose as his message became more complex, needing his readers to dig deep to understand the message. For instance, the reader may wonder whether the human body has anything to do with the good news of salvation. **Therefore, this essays endeavors to lay bare the intricacy and sophistication of Apostle Paul's literature through his use of the term "body."**

As earlier mentioned, the term "soma," which has the same meaning as "body," is one of the consistent terms Apostle Paul uses in his literature. The books of 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Thessalonians, and Colossians contain rigorous employment of this word. To an ordinary individual; who employs western knowledge, the term "body" is delineated as the physical structure of an organism. But as used in the bible, the term body brings out the meaning of an actual self. It is worth mentioning that in Apostle Paul's literature, he employs the word "body" in a binary sense. This means that the Apostle uses the word "body" to mean; 1) The physical body and 2) The Church, which is comprehended as Christ's body. When the Apostle uses "body" to refer to the physical body, he has employed it in a literal way, while when he uses it to refer to the Church, he has employed it metaphorically.

As mentioned earlier, the Apostle uses the term "body" to refer to the physical body. In other words, he uses the term literally to communicate to his audience that they are supposed to take care of their bodies. For instance, in the book of first Corinthians chapter six, verses thirteen to fifteen, the Apostle mentions the importance of maintaining excellent physical wellbeing as God expects it from us. Most people never take this God-given responsibility seriously as they understand that spiritual health is far much superior to physical health. People never prioritize the importance of eating at least thrice a day, consuming a balanced diet that is free from junk food, taking enough water, exercising their bodies, and having enough rest. This passage from Paul reminds people that it is significant for them to maintain their physical wellbeing. It is vital to understand that in maintaining physical wellbeing, Paul also directs that people are supposed to stay away from sexual immoralities. Particularly, in 1 Corinthians chapter six verses thirteen to fifteen, the Apostle speaks about the need to stay away from fornication. Considering that fornication is a sin before the eyes of God and is a major cause of early pregnancy and the increased spread of sexually transmitted infections, the Apostle stresses the importance of keeping the body clean from immorality. Therefore, from the Apostle's literal use of the word "body," his readers will understand that the Apostle was directing them to maintain their bodies as commanded by God and ensure that they do not experience God's wrath during the coming back of Christ. This is evident in the book of 1 Thessalonians 5:23. So how did the Apostle metaphorically use the word body?

The Apostle employed the word "body" to refer to the Church, which is Christ's body. Looking at the way God created our bodies, it is easy to notice that God created everybody part wonderfully and with a purpose. He knew the perfect place for every part. He knew that the neck should hold the head and that the head should have eyes to direct us where we are going, but at the end of the day, all the parts make up the body. Similarly, this is how the Church is built, and it should function; as one body with so many parts; the members. The Apostle notes this in the book of 1 Corinthians 12:13-14. He mentions that despite people coming from different cultural backgrounds, they are supposed to come together as a church to serve one God. 1 Corinthians 12:18 also directs that the Church represents the body of Jesus Christ and that every member of the congregation has been placed by God where they are supposed to serve. God did not place each individual in their respective positions to sit and relax but rather serve others according to the various positions they have been given. They are not supposed to do something different from what God expects from them. This is a reminder that everyone should respect the Church's hierarchy and that to get any promotion, they are supposed to wait for God to elevate them to those positions. In the book of Ephesians chapter one, verses twenty-three, Paul also uses the term "body" when describing the Church. Considering that in Ephesians, Paul speaks more of unity, he wanted his audience to understand that they should establish a unified church just like how the body is structured. Building a unified church is significant in accomplishing the spread of the gospel.

In conclusion, the contents in Apostle Paul's epistles are difficult to comprehend, with most of the people misunderstanding whatever Paul wanted to communicate to his audience. One thing that is consistent in most of his letters is that Paul has employed the word "soma" or "body" in trying to ensure that his readers understand his message. The books of 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Thessalonians, and Colossians contain rigorous employment of this word. In his literature, the Apostle uses the word "body" to mean; 1) The physical body and 2) The Church, which is comprehended as Christ's body. When the Apostle uses "body" to refer to the physical body, he has employed it in a literal way. In contrast, when he uses it to refer to the Church, he has employed it metaphorically. The Apostle employs the word "body" to communicate to his audience how they are supposed to take care of their bodies. This is evident in the book of first Corinthians chapter six, verses thirteen to fifteen. Metaphorically, the Apostle employed the word "body" to refer to the Church, which is Christ's body. This is evident in the book of 1 Corinthians 12:13-14.