

Membership and Salvation in the Lord's Church

Introduction

1. **You may have heard it said: "the church does not save." or "one can go to heaven just as well without being a member of the church as he can in the church."**
2. **Truly, it is a popular opinion among most religious bodies that one church is just as good as another.**
 - A. **As a result of that opinion, many deny that church membership is essential to salvation.**
 - 1) **Is that true?**
 - B. **Without a doubt, there has been much confusion that has arisen in the public mind pertaining to salvation and the church due to misconceptions of the church and a misunderstanding of what one must do to be saved.**
3. **The New Testament of our Lord clearly teaches that membership in the body of Christ, which is the church, is absolutely necessary.**

The Universal Church

1. The conditions of membership in the universal body of Christ are outlined by the word of God.

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

- A. **A comprehensive study of the New Testament reveals that the condition for being a member in the Lord's church (His body), is the plan of salvation**
- B. **The church of the living God is made up of those who have been:**
 - 1) **Sanctified**
 - 2) **Redeemed**
 - 3) **Saved**

1 Timothy 3:15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

2. The one church of Christ is also the one body.

Ephesians 2:16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to **the church**, which is **His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

- A. **Individuals that are in this one body are considered by the inspired apostle to be saints, ones sanctified unto God (Eph 1:1).**
- B. **Is everyone that believes in Jesus a saint? Sanctified unto God?**

How Does One Become A Member of the Lord's Church?

1. **It is important that one becomes a member of the Lord's church because we will soon see that this is necessary in order to be saved.**
2. **God has set forth His plan of salvation. One becomes a member of the church of Christ when one obeys the plan.**
 - A. **Hearing** (Romans 10:17)
 - 1) **One must first hear the gospel message proclaimed in order to have faith**
 - B. **Believe** (Hebrews 11:6)
 - 1) **If the words of Hebrews 11:6 mean anything, they surely mean that God does not reward any or all men, whether they seek Him or not.**
 - 2) **One must diligently seek Him, believing not only in God but believe that Christ is His Son**
John 12:44-48
 - C. **Repent** (Luke 13:3)
 - 1) **Jesus was very plain in his teaching - repent or perish!**
 - 2) **When instructions were first given as to what men should do to rid themselves of sin, they came in this form:**

Acts 2:38 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.

D. Confess (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32)

- 1) **Once one has faith in Christ and have turned from their sin, they then must be determined to confess Him as the Son of God – determined to live their life fully and completely dedicated to His service.**

E. Baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21)

- 1) **Peter's instructions to unsaved men seeking the way of salvation at Pentecost included not only repentance but baptism for the remission of sins**

Acts 2:38 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.

3. Simply put, the conditions for membership in the church of Christ (universal) are:

- A. Hearing the word of God in order to have faith, repenting of our sins, confessing our faith in Christ, and being baptized for the remission of sins.**

Church Membership and the Saved

1. **Some may ask “why discuss conditions for salvation when talking about church membership?”**
 - A. **The conditions are the same. The same process that saves one makes him a member of the church which is Christ’s, wears His name, and honors His instructions in all things.**

2. **As we touched on earlier, the church is the body of Christ.**

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things **to the church, which is His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also **Christ is head of the church**; and **He is the Savior of the body**.

Colossians 1:18 And He is the **head of the body, the church**, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Colossians 1:24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, **for the sake of His body, which is the church**,

3. **We are baptized into Christ**

Galatians 3:26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ have put on Christ**.

Romans 6:3-4 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

A. **Thus, we were baptized into His body.**

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

4. The example of Acts 2:

- A. **Peter proclaimed salvation for “whoever calls on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 2:16-21).
- B. **He goes on to explain how one may call on the name of the Lord by having belief in Jesus as the Christ** (Acts 2:22-36).
Romans 10:8-13
- C. **When asked what to do, he told the people to “repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”** (Acts 2:38).
- D. **The record then goes on to say “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them”** (Acts 2:41).

“...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47)

5. Saved and added simultaneously.

- A. **The Bible clearly teaches that whenever one is saved by God at the point of baptism, he is also added to the church, the body of Christ, by the Lord.**
 - 1) **To be (saved), is to be in the (church).**

Conclusion

- 1. How tragic that people do not understand what the church is in New Testament usage.**
 - A. The church that Jesus purchased with His own blood is not a denomination, nor is it a mystical conglomeration composed of all man-made religious bodies.**
 - B. The church of God is the body of Christ, the family or house of God, the kingdom, the people belonging to the Lord.**
 - C. No accountable person in this age is promised salvation outside the church.**
 - D. To be saved one must submit to God by obeying Jesus, the Son of God. To be in Christ is to be in the church over which He is the head.**
- 2. Recognizing that being “in Christ” is equivalent to being baptized into the body of Christ.**
 - A. One can see that if he is not a part of the Lord’s church, he does not participate in God’s spiritual blessings in Christ.**
- 3. The modern concept of being saved without ever being a member of the Lord’s church is foreign to the New Testament!**
- 4. Everyone who is “saved” is “added” to the church by the same one who saves him and that is God!**

