

Why The Saved Are in the Church

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In this present age the great majority of people believe that salvation from past sins and the promise of eternal life is in no way connected with the church of our Lord. They teach that one may be saved and never be in any church, especially in the church the Lord built. Of course, to these people all churches are permitted by Christ and are all equally acceptable to him. None are important to the remission of sins, according to the thinking of these people. This is either true or it is false. If the scriptures teach that one must be in the church of the Lord to enjoy the blessings of forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life, not one single soul outside of the church can be saved. *All the saved are added to the church at the time they receive remission of sins.*

Obviously, the reason for this doctrine is to try to get someone into heaven who died out of the body of Christ, which is the church (Eph. 1:22, 23). If church membership is totally unrelated to the remission of sins and eternal life, then one who dies belonging to no church has as much hope of eternal life as the best member of the Lord's church. Or membership in one church is as good as membership in any other church. Notice some of the promises made to those who are in the church, and by implication these promises are never promised to those who are not in the church.

1. The *Blood of Christ* saves.

I know of no prominent denomination who contends that one could be saved without the shedding of the blood of Christ. It is true that modernists now preach that the merits of the blood will not accomplish what the scriptures say of it, but for the most part the religionists of the world still believe in the importance of the shedding of Christ's blood.

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). Jesus said: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). "In whom we have remission through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18,19).

All these verses clearly show that redemption is by the blood of Christ, and it is impossible for one to be saved who has not applied the blood of Christ. Now listen: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The blood of Christ is in the church, and to claim to be saved out of the church is to claim to be saved without the blood of Christ. ***Impossible!***

2. Most all religious people admit that *reconciliation in Christ* is absolutely essential to be saved.

To be reconciled simply means to be made friends again; it means to be placed back on acceptable terms with God. This is done by Christ. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18,19). Three things are clearly stated: 1) God is reconciling us unto Himself by Christ; 2) He does not impute the trespasses unto those who are reconciled; 3) This is done by the word of reconciliation. Now, where are those who are reconciled? Are they in the church or out?

"And that he" (Christ) "might reconcile both" (Jew and Gentile) "unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:15). The reconciliation of both the Jews and the Gentiles is accomplished by Christ IN ONE BODY. If we go back to the last two verses of Ephesians one, we read: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22,23).

The church is the body: "that he might reconcile both unto God in one body . . . "; therefore, no man can be reconciled unto God by Christ outside that ONE BODY which is the church.

3. Most all religious people admit that the *New Birth* is absolutely essential to be in the kingdom of God or the family of God.

To Nicodemus Jesus said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). The kingdom and the church are the same (Col. 1:13; Matt. 16:18,19).

The new birth - "born again" - puts one into Christ. It is the "newness of life." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). A birth indicates one is born into a family relationship. That is the very purpose of the use of the term. Now read: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). This passage permits no doubt as to the church and the family of God being the same. And there can be no mistake about the relationship of the "new birth" and the family of God, which is the church.

No man can read these verses and seriously contend that the church of the New Testament does not contain all the saved. Therefore, the church is essential in that all the saved are in it and no saved are out of it.