

# Is It Possible To Be Saved And Not Be A Member Of The Church?

## Bible Answers About Salvation

This question deserves careful consideration. In answering this question, by "church" I mean the Lord's church, the church that is identical in name, doctrine, practice and organization with the church that you can read about in the New Testament! I am not referring to religious bodies that have been founded by men, either Catholicism or Protestantism. By the expression "saved" I mean forgiven of past sins, redeemed, and has become a child of God.

Many people think that they can be saved outside the church as well as in it—that they can be Christians outside as well as in the church. They reason that as long as they are good neighbors, good husbands or wives, good parents that all is well. Rather than thinking that something is true one should be concerned with what the Scriptures teach. The Word of God furnishes us with everything that pertains to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

If one can be saved outside the church as well as in it then:

- **One can be saved as a rebel against God!** Jesus is now "...the King of kings, and Lord of lords..." (1 Tim. 6:15). He is now reigning over His kingdom, the church (1 Cor. 15:24-25). All who submit to Him come into His kingdom! (Jno. 3:3-5). When people submit to King Jesus by obeying the gospel they are "translated" from Satan's kingdom to the kingdom of God's dear Son! (Col. 1:13). If one can be saved outside the church, then one can be saved in Satan's kingdom and continue to be a rebel against God.
- **One can be saved without the blood of Christ.** Jesus purchased the church "with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). Christians are redeemed by Jesus' precious blood (1 Peter 1:18-20). Christ gave His life and His blood for the church (Ephesians 5:25). None can be saved without His blood, but none can be saved by His blood without coming into the church, purchased by His blood (Eph. 1:7).
- **It is possible to be saved outside the flock of God!** Paul equates the flock of God with the church in Acts 20:28 when he says, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." If we follow the Good Shepherd (and we must if we hope to be saved), then we will come into His flock, the church (John 10:16).
- **We can be saved outside God's family!** Paul declared that "the house of God is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15). The word "house" used in this way means "family." God's house-His family is the church! If we can be saved outside the church, then we can be saved without being a child in God's family! Only if we are children of God can we be "heirs." (Romans 8:17) If not a child of God then we are not an heir of God. All who are not in "...the

household of God" (Eph. 2:19) are strangers and sojourners and their spiritual father is the devil (John 8:44).

- **We can be saved without being a part of the bride of Christ.** Paul wrote to the saints at Rome that they were "married" to Him who had been raised from the dead, i.e. Jesus Christ (Romans 7:4). Paul ardently desired to present the Corinthian church as a "pure virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2). When writing of the love which a husband should have for his wife, Paul explained, "This mystery is great, but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church" (Ephesians 5:32). To be recipients of Christ's vicarious suffering and death for us, we must be in the church, the bride of Christ! Jesus "loved the church, and gave himself up for it" (Ephesians 5:25).
- **We can be saved outside the body of Christ.** "And He is the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18). Christians "are one body in Christ" (Romans 12:5). Jesus is the Savior of the body "as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). How can one be saved outside of that which Christ saves? There is no promise of salvation outside the body of Christ, the church.

There are no spiritual blessings promised outside the church! Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). How may we be beneficiaries of His precious blood? By being in the church-and being faithful. When we are saved by His blood, the Lord adds us to His church. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). We are reconciled "in one body unto God through the cross" (Ephesians 2:16). Since reconciliation is in the one body, (which is the church, Eph. 1:22, 23), then there is no reconciliation outside that one body.

Since the Lord adds all the saved to the church (Acts 2:47), then the church consists of all the saved! If it is possible to be saved outside the church of the Lord, then it is possible to be saved without being a part of the saved! Yes, one must be a member of the church of the Lord to be saved!

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