

It is a common thing to hear people say, “I’m saved, but I’m not a member of any church.” Most folks believe being saved has nothing to do with the church—that it’s one thing to be saved, but quite another to be a member of the church.

Does the Bible really make a distinction between being saved and being in the church? Does it really teach that such an option exists? The answer to both questions is, “No.” One can be saved without being in a denomination, but the Scriptures reveal that no one will be saved who isn’t in Christ’s church.

The Bible describes the church in various terms, and all of these terms link salvation to the church of Christ. For instance, the church is described as the “body of Christ” in Ephesians 1:22-23 and in Colossians 1:18,

and Paul says Christians—those who are saved—are members of that body. “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Romans 12:4-5). Thus, we are spiritually connected to Christ, Who is the head of the body and our salvation depends upon our membership in that body. To say one can be saved without being in the body of Christ is like saying an arm can be cut off from the body and still live.

The church is also the kingdom. Jesus used the terms “church” and “kingdom” to refer to the same thing in Matthew 16:18-19 when He said, “Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven...” If one is not in the church, one is not in

the kingdom but Jesus said one must be born again to enter the kingdom (John 3:3-5.) It is impossible to be born again without also being in the church or kingdom.

The Bible also calls the church the “house of God,” in First Timothy 3:15. That means that the church is God’s family. One rules his house by ruling his children, according to First Timothy 3:4. Therefore, the word “house” refers to one’s family. Must one be a child of God in order to be saved? Certainly! But God’s children are only in His family, so if one can be saved and not be in the church then one can be a child of God outside of God’s family.

Think about that! The person who claims salvation outside of God’s family is claiming God has children outside of His fam-

ily! That claim makes God an adulterer and that is blasphemous. God has no children outside of His family. If one is saved, he is in God's family or house, which is the church. One is either in God's family or Satan's family and to be saved is to be translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son, according to Colossians 1:13. The word "church" is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia* which means "the called out." Those who are in the church are those who have been called out of sin. One cannot remain in sin and remain saved. To say one is saved and not in the church is to say one is saved and still in the world of sin. In Acts 2:47 the Bible teaches that one who is saved is added to the church by the Lord. No one is saved who is outside of the church and no one is outside of the church

who is saved. When one believes in Christ, repents of his sin (Luke 13:3), confesses his faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10), and is baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), he is added to that saved body which is the church.

We invite you to learn more about the church of Christ. We will gladly come to your home and study with you about what God would have us do to be saved and go to heaven. Please contact us at the telephone number on the front of this tract.

# The Church And Salvation

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