

“Will Only Members of the Church of Christ Be Saved?”

(Cont. from pg. 3)

Conclusion

Why be a member of a human denomination? Why not seek, together with those at this place to be members of nothing more and nothing less than the Lord's church? You can do that by obedience to the gospel.

By Kyle Pope



* Some early mss. don't use the word "church" in Acts 2:47. In reflection of this the American Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible omit it. It is subject to debate whether such an omission is warranted by all of the evidence. Even so, the conclusion is the same, God "added to them" those who were being saved. To whom does "them" refer? Clearly, those who had come to Christ (i.e. His church which He promised to build).

Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

Please Visit Our Website - www.olsenpark.com
Articles • Audio Sermons • Outlines • Powerpoint Files

Read More at:
www.olsenpark.com

Faithful Sayings

Olsen Park Church of Christ

4700 Andrews Avenue Amarillo, Texas 79106
(806) 352-2809

Vol. IX, No. 31

August 19, 2007

Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Pat Goguen
Neil Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Fred Perez
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

VISIT US ON THE WEB:
www.olsenpark.com

“Will Only Members of the Church of Christ be Saved?”

The question posed in the title of this article is one that we encounter frequently in our interaction with people in the religious world. Because of this, it is important that we are prepared to be able to answer it properly.

Definition of Terms

To do this, the question itself must first be clarified and its terms defined. Three terms are significant:

“church of Christ”

- The Bible teaches that Jesus, while upon earth declared His intention to build “His church.” In Matthew 16:18a, after Peter con-

fessed that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus told him “**And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church...**” (NKJV). After Jesus ascended back into heaven, those who follow Him in truth are “added” to this church which He built. After scores of people accept the gospel on Pentecost, the Bible says of them - “**...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved**” (Acts 2:47b).^{*} After this, when people who claim to follow Him are divided, the Holy Spirit says such sectarianism is “carnal.” For example, the (Cont. on pg. 2)

“Will Only Members of the Church of Christ Be Saved?”

(Cont. from pg. 1) Corinth began to divide and declare - **“I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ”** (I Corinthians 1:12). To which Paul asks rhetorically, **“Is Christ divided?”** (I Corinthians 1:13a). Later in the same epistle he declares - **“For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?”** (I Corinthians 3:4). This shows us that the church which Christ built was not a division of diverse groups, but one church. It is to this “church of the First-born” that the Hebrew writer says Christians have come. He writes - **“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven...”** (Hebrews 12:22-23a), NKJV.

“Members.” The New Testament frequently uses the term “members” of parts of the physical body. Christ’s church is often figured as the “body” with His followers here on earth as those “members” of that body, Colossians 1:24b establishes this definition, speaking of -

“...His body, which is the church.” Having left sin, Christians used to be **“strangers and foreigners”** but in Christ they become **“members of the household of God.”** (Ephesians 2:19). These members are diverse and very different from one another as members, but they are part of “one body.” Paul declares - **“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ‘so we, being many, are one body in Christ...’** (Romans 12:4, 5a). This is clearly speaking of the various gifts, strengths and talents that individual people have as a part of the church.

“Be Saved.” We have already seen that the church is made up of those “registered in heaven” (Hebrews 12:23). We have also seen that on the day of Pentecost, the Lord added to the church “those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).^{*} Thus, the church by definition is made up of those members of Christ’s body who are saved by His blood and added to Him. So, under these definitions yes, only members of the Lord’s church (i.e. the church of Christ) will be saved because the church is by definition *the saved*.

What This Does *Not* Mean

This is easy enough to understand, but, let’s also clearly define what this does not mean.

This does not mean...

✓ ***Those who are members of some human denomination that calls itself “the church of Christ” or “the church of God.”***

The Bible makes it clear that the Lord knows “those who are His.” Paul declares boldly to Timothy, **“...the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’** (II Timothy 2:19a). It is not a matter of what men may call themselves. Rather, it is about what the Lord established, what the Lord identifies through His word. It is about those whom the Lord recognizes as His. The Bible makes it clear that what the Lord has not established will be uprooted. Jesus told His disciples - **“Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.”** (Matthew 15:13b). It is not enough to wear a certain name, yet follow human traditions and man-made religion. Jesus condemned this

attitude, declaring - **“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”** (Matthew 15:8, 9). Unless our faith and practice is grounded upon the word of God it is futile and useless. Further this does not mean...

✓ ***Simply those who have obeyed the gospel.*** Just as the “church” is, by definition, those who are saved - those who are saved must abide in the word. Jesus said - **“...If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed”** (John 8:31). We may stand against the false doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” yet if we imagine that our responsibility to the Lord ends when we come up out of the waters of baptism, we are espousing the same thing. Those who follow Christ in truth are His. Paul said to the Romans, through the Holy Spirit - **“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”** (Romans 8:9). The “Spirit of Christ” was obedient to the will of the Father. We must do the same.

(Cont. on pg. 4)