

THE CHURCH IS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

(Acts 2:47)

1) Where does God save?

- a) There is no doubt that our Lord saves us (Matthew 1:21).
 - i) Other passages teach this as well.
 - ii) John 12:47; Titus 3:6, and a host of other passages.
- b) The question, then, is not, Does the Lord save, but, where does the Lord save?
- c) God has always placed certain restrictions on salvation, or required certain things of man in order for man to be saved.
 - i) During the patriarchal age, man had to offer the proper sacrifices.
 - ii) During the Mosaic age, man had to be obedient to the Mosaic Law.
 - iii) During the Christian age, man must be obedient to Christ.
- d) For example, during the days of Noah, God required man to be in the ark to be saved.
 - i) God offered salvation to all those that heard the preaching of Noah.
 - ii) Salvation was available to all who would enter the ark.
 - iii) 1 Peter 3:20.
- e) God placed salvation from the flood in the ark during Noah's time, but where does He place it today?
- f) The answer to that is in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10).
 - i) Acts 4:12.
 - ii) John 14:6.
- g) God saves exclusively in Christ is what these verses teach.
- h) All spiritual blessings are found in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
 - i) Redemption (Romans 3:24).
 - ii) Forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7).
- i) These verses teach that forgiveness of sins is in Christ, so salvation, which is the forgiveness of sins, must be in Christ.
- j) One is a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:7).
- k) One obtains spiritual life in Christ (1 John 5:11-12).
 - i) You can't have spiritual life and be outside of where it is found.
 - ii) It is only found in Christ.
- l) When man's sin is forgiven man, he is reconciled, or reunited, with God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).
- m) So, what all these passages teach us is that God saves those who are in Christ.

2) What does it mean to be in Christ?

- a) We just noticed that to be reconnected, reunited, or reconciled to God means your sins are forgiven and forgiveness is in Christ.
- b) Notice where Paul, by inspiration, tells us that man is reconciled to God by Jesus (Ephesians 2:16).

- i) To be reconciled to God, which indicates forgiveness of and redemption from sin, is in Christ.
 - ii) To be in Christ, according to Ephesians 2:16, places us in the body.
- c) What is this body, which is where we are placed when we are in Christ?
- d) Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18 – both of these passages teach us that the body is the church belonging to Christ.
- e) Ephesians 4:4 tells us that there is only one body.
- f) Notice the progression of thought:
 - i) Man is reconciled in one body (Ephesians 2:16).
 - ii) The body is the church (Colossians 1:18).
 - iii) There is only one body, or church (Ephesians 4:4).
 - iv) Therefore, man is reconciled only in the church, which is the one body.
- g) Jesus is the Savior of the church (Ephesians 5:23).
 - i) One must be a member of the church of which Christ is the Savior in order to be saved.
 - ii) Since the church is the body of Christ, and Jesus is the savior of the body then one cannot be saved and not be a member of the body or church.
- h) The church is that group of people who are saved, or, they are the ones who make up the church.
- i) Acts 2:47 – the Lord saved those people and added them to the church all in the same process.
 - i) They were not first saved and then added to the church.
 - ii) They were not added to the church and then later saved.
 - iii) They were saved when they were added and added when they were saved.
- j) Again, notice the progression of thought:
 - i) To be saved is to be in Christ;
 - ii) To be saved equals to being in the church because the Lord adds the saved to the church when they are saved;
 - iii) Therefore, to be in Christ is to be in His church.
- k) You can't be in Christ but out of the church.
- l) There are no saved people outside the church of the New Testament or the church that belongs to Christ, or the church of Christ, which are all three the same thing.
- m) If one can be saved outside of the church, he can be saved outside of Christ.
 - i) If he can be saved outside of Christ, there must be another way than Jesus.
 - ii) If such is the case, Jesus is a liar and not worth following.
- n) When we can see the biblical definition of the church, then man will see the need to be in the church because it is only the church that is saved.
 - i) It is not a building.
 - ii) It is not someplace we go.
 - iii) It is the body of the saved, made up of people who were placed there by the Lord at the exact same time they were saved from their sins.

- o)** There is only one church because there is only one body as we have noticed and that body is not a denomination as we discussed last Sunday.

3) How does man get there?

- a)** This is the simplest question to answer of them all.
- b)** Salvation is in Christ.
- c)** Christ places one in His church at the point of salvation.
- d)** How does one get into Christ since that is where salvation is?
 - i)** Galatians 3:26-27.
 - ii)** Baptism, immersion in water, is the only process by which one is placed into Christ.
- e)** A person is either in Christ or not in Christ.
- f)** The person who hasn't been baptized is not in Christ.
- g)** If one is not in Christ, he or she is not in possession of any spiritual blessing because they are all found in Christ as we noticed; one of which is the forgiveness of sins.
- h)** If one is baptized, He is in Christ, and Christ has saved him and placed him in His church.

From an article by Perry Cotham