

LESSON XVII—SALVATION AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

INTRODUCTION: God does the saving. Salvation is the pardon or forgiveness of God — the “blotting out” of our sins. The Church, then, does not do the saving. The question is, “Can one enjoy the salvation that God has provided without being in the Church of God?”

I. The Essentiality and Importance of the Church Is Seen in Christ’s Own Attitude Toward It:

1. “Purchased with His own precious blood” (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 1:18-19).
2. “Gave himself up for the Church” (Eph. 5:25).
3. Thus Christ evidenced His attitude toward the essentiality of the church by the price He paid for its existence.
4. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

II. One Cannot Be “In Christ” Without Being “In the Church”:

1. Christ is the Head, the Church is His Body, Christians are members (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:21-23; I Cor. 12:27). One cannot be joined to the head without being a member of the body which is the Church.
2. Christ is King, the Church is His Kingdom (I Tim. 6:15; Col. 1:13). One cannot be a subject of the King without being a citizen of His Kingdom.
3. Christ is the Bridegroom, the Church is His Bride (Eph. 5:23-32). The two are one. One cannot be related to Christ, therefore, without being equally related to the Church. A child belongs by the same birth to both the family of his father and mother.
4. To be in Christ is to be in His Body, which is the Church.
 - a. In Christ Jesus, made nigh, by blood (Eph. 2:13).
 - b. In One Body, Reconciled, by Cross (Eph. 2:16).
 - c. To be in Christ, therefore, is to be in His body, and to be in His body is to be in His Church.

III. All Spiritual Blessings Are in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3):

1. The Church is the “Fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:23).

IV. To Be a Member of the Church of Christ Means to Have Your Name Enrolled In Heaven (Heb. 12:22, 23):

1. To not have your name enrolled in Heaven means to be eternally lost at the judgment (Rev. 20:15).

V. The Same Process and Conditions That Save From Sin, Makes One a Christian and Adds One to the Church:

1. Faith, Baptism, Salvation (Mark 16:15, 16).
2. Faith, Baptism, puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:26, 27).
3. Faith, Baptism, adds one to the Church (Acts 2:41). There is therefore no such thing taught as being saved by one process and then joining the church of your choice by another.

Questions For Discussion

1. Who alone saves; does He save out of the Church?
2. How did Christ manifest his attitude toward the Church?
3. What should be the attitude of the saved toward the Church?
4. Show that the same process that makes one a Christian, makes him a member of the Church.
 - a. Discuss this from the relationship of the head and body; King and Kingdom; Bride and Bridegroom.
 - b. How are all made nigh and reconciled in Christ?
5. Where are all spiritual blessings found?
6. Where is the fullness of Christ found?
7. In becoming members of the Church, where is one's name enrolled?
8. Must one's name be enrolled in heaven to be saved?
9. Show that the conditions of salvation, when met adds one to the Church.