



The Voice of Truth



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Must One Be a Member of the church of Christ?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

How many churches did Jesus establish? The Bible answers, **ONE!** Jesus used the word church (singular), not churches (plural), when He promised, *I will build my church (Matt 16:18)*. Using the words church and body interchangeably, Paul wrote, *Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23)*. In fact, according to Paul, **the church is the body (Eph. 1:22-23; Cot. 1:18)**. Furthermore, Paul declared, *There is one body (Eph. 4:4)*. It just stands to reason that if the church is the body; and, if there is only one body; then **there is only one church**, which is Christ's.

Must one be a member of the church of Christ if he is saved? The Bible answers, **YES!** All the saved will have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, (Col.

1:14; Heb. 9:22). Paul said the church is that *which he that purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28)*. The church is the body (Eph. 1:22-23). Christ is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). Christ, loved the church, and gave himself for it, (Eph. 5:25). **Acts 2:47 says, And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.** One must be a member of the church of Christ if he is saved I because the church is the saved! Since the establishment of His church in **Acts 2** (the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection), it cannot be shown from the Bible that anyone has been saved outside the Lord's church.

The church of Christ is God's family (Eph. 3:14-15). Paul called the church *the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15)*. In order for one to be saved, he must be a child of God (Rom. 8:14-17). Remember, the saved are God's children, and the church is God's family. Question: Does God have children outside His family (the church)? If one is saved (a

child of God), but not in God's family (the church), then God is the Father of children outside His family. **No one should make such an accusation against God!** But, that is what one is doing if he says people can be saved without being a member of the Lord's church. God has no children outside His family. All of God's children are in His family; therefore, all as God's children are in His church. Since God has no children outside His family, and since the church is His family, only those in the church of Christ will be saved.

The word *church* means *the called out*. One is called out by the gospel of Christ (**2 Thess. 2:14**). One accepts that call and is saved when he believes and obeys that gospel (**2 Thess. 1:6-9; Heb. 5:8-9**). But notice **Colossians 3:15**, *...ye are called in one body*. **Colossians 1:18** shows the body to be the church; therefore, those who are called are called in **one church**. If the church is the *called out*, as *ekklesia* means, then the church is the saved. Those not in the church (the called out) are walking in darkness (lost), (**1 Pet. 2:9**).

No one can be saved unless he is reconciled unto God (**Rom. 5:10; Heb. 2:17**). Sin separates a man from God (**Isa. 59:1-2**). Severed, separated from God, man is hopelessly lost (**Eph. 2:12**). Through the blood of Christ, one may be reconciled (**2 Cor. 5:17-21**), and made nigh unto God (**Eph. 2:13**). (By the way, the blood that reconciles one to God is the blood that purchased the church.) **Ephe- sians 2:16** establishes that those reconciled unto God are reconciled **in one body**. The one body is the one church (**Cot. 1:18**); therefore, those reconciled unto God are reconciled in one church. Those outside the church of Christ have not been reconciled unto God. *

**Truth is truth even if no one believes it.
Error is error if everyone believes it. ***

**Either the Bible will keep you from sin . . .
Or sin will keep you from the Bible. ***

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“... Snatching Them Out Of The Fire”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Fire is mentioned by God well over 400 times in the Bible. For example, God wanted men to use fire to offer sacrifices of bulls, goats, birds, etc. to Him from **Genesis 4** until the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (**Heb. 10:1-22**). Fire was used by God in communication with Moses (**Ex. 3**). A pillar of fire also led the Israelites at night while they journeyed to Sinai and then to Canaan (**Ex. 13:21-22, 40:36-38**).

On other occasions, we do not read about literal fire, but fire is used to illustrate truth. For example, we find God being described as a “*consuming fire*” (**Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:27**). Obviously, “fire” is not the essence of God. Rather, this metaphor is used to describe Jehovah. Also, we know that “*For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases*” (**Prov. 26:20**). In this case the burning of wood in a fire was used as a comparison to the whisperer. The fire never says “*enough*” does it (**Prov. 30:16**)? Jesus also said, “*everyone will be salted with fire*” (**Mk. 9:49**). Many other examples could be given as well in this category.

Spiritually, the Bible speaks of a “*lake of fire*” prepared for the eternal punishment of the devil, his angels, and those who die in sin (**Rev. 20:10, 14-15, 21:8; II Thess. 1:6-9; Matt. 25:41-46**). As we see, “fire” is used in many ways throughout Scripture, and deserves a more detailed study than we can offer here at this time. In this article, let us narrow our search and study to the statement about fire made by the Holy Spirit through Jude. The Holy Spirit inspired Jude to write to the Christians and say, “*Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by **snatching them out of the fire**; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh*” (**Jude 21-23**).

Often, when reading and studying this statement in Jude, folks will rightly focus upon the need for pulling folks out of the spiritual “fire” when they are in sin and error. This is necessary to save their souls. Some will note that when someone is in the fire, this is not the time to necessarily be gentle and try to coax one, but grab this person and try our best to get him away from spiritual danger before it gets worse. They risk “hurt feelings” in order to save a soul. This is certainly in line with several Bible examples, including the example of Christ; who on occasion, made folks mad when He preached (**Lk. 6:11, 11:53; Matt. 15:12**; etc.). Let us have the attitude of Paul who

asked, “*Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?*” (**Gal. 4:16**). No, we are not anyone’s enemies. Rather, we are true friends when we act as Christ and the apostles, and tell people the truth — even if it means hurt feelings for the moment. Another example of this can be seen in the book of Acts when folks were “pricked” or cut to the heart when they were convicted of sin (**Acts 2:36**). Some people might have held back and not told the people something that “cut” that deep. Yet, it was necessary if those Jews were to be saved from sin. I remember the apostle Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, where he named a multitude of sins of which the people had been cleansed (**I Cor. 6:9-11**). There is no question that Paul, as well as Apollos (**I Cor. 3:6**), Peter (**I Cor. 1:12**) Timothy (**I Cor. 4:17**), and perhaps others HAD to have spoken out against those sins, and HAD to have made it clear that what those people were doing was wrong so that those who believed could repent of their sins, and be baptized (**Acts 18:8, 11, 18**; etc.). They had to do this in order to save souls (**Acts 20:20, 27**). Might there have been some at Corinth who needed to be coaxed and treated tenderly to get them out of sin? Certainly so. Might there have been some at Corinth who needed to be “*snatched out of the fire*” as Jude described? Absolutely! No doubt, they ran into similar challenges in Thessalonica when preaching there. To some, the apostle Paul said, “*we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children*” (**I Thess. 2:7**). Yet, with others at Thessalonica, he said, “*you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God.*” That was something needed at Thessalonica because when the gospel was preached there, they preached “*in the midst of much conflict*” (**I Thess. 2:2**).

I am saying all of this to challenge us with the following question: Once this person has been “*snatched out of the fire*”, how do we treat him? Do we treat him with love and kindness, or as some “outcast” who is undeserving of concern and forgiveness because, after all, “we KNOW where he has been”? Consider this thought carefully in light of the withdrawn man in **II Corinthians 2**. It is evident the church withdrew from him after being instructed to do so in **I Corinthians 5**. Now, following **I Corinthians 5** is the letter called **II Corinthians** wherein the church is instructed to forgive this man since he has shown his repentance (**2:6-8**). He had obviously been in the “fire”, was “snatched” out of it, and now it was time for the church to recognize his repentance and his being forgiven by God.

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They now needed to forgive him. Would they? Will we forgive the withdrawn who repent?

In addition to the above, what about the "alien sinner" who has never known God, but does now? Perhaps it is that this person was "snatched out of the fire" (**Jude 23**) by a person whose love for their soul outweighed the fear of hurt feelings. How do we treat this forgiven person? Do we set a good example, or do we stand back with a "wait and see" attitude?

Remember, this person has been in the "fire" and has come out! He has been saved from sin, and stands as a newborn babe in Christ (**I Pet. 2:2**) that is in need of instruction, correction, and being pointed in the right direction (**II Tim. 3:16-17**)! Yes, this is what the Bible does, but does not this person also need to be TAUGHT by Christians who care? Absolutely! Such teaching demands patience, love, and concern (**II Tim. 4:2; I Cor. 13**).

While we think about this one "snatched out of the fire", have we ever considered the fact that the person who has been pulled from the "fire" is a BURN VICTIM? It's true. Have you ever seen someone who has suffered burns on his body? Have you seen the people whose skin has melted, or has been scarred due to being in excessive heat? Spiritually, if one has been in the "fire" of sin and wickedness, does that person not also have "scars"? Perhaps these scars are not visible (perhaps they are!), but are they not still there? Again, how do we treat this person who has been spiritually "scarred" and has come to Christ, the Great Physician, for healing (**Lk. 5:31**)? If someone assembled with us and suffered physical scarring from burns, would we treat this person as an outcast? Would we ignore him or refuse to shake hands? Would we stand at a distance and perhaps wave? Or, would we show kind-

ness to this one, and offer to be of service?

If we understand this in light of the physical problems some may have, why can we not see this in those with spiritual problems to overcome? Let us remember that after one has been saved from sin (**Mk. 16:16**), he still has problems to overcome! Salvation does not mean an end to all sin, or an immediate end to habits that have been ingrained over a lifetime! This one "snatched out of the fire" now needs to be comforted and shown that there truly is "balm in Gilead" (**Jer. 8:22**) for the sin and scars, thanks to the Lord's sacrifice and the encouragement of fellow Christians!! The spiritual scarring can be helped and healed through Christ and through brothers and sisters who show love for this soul who has come to Christ "poor in spirit", "mourning" over sins, in meekness, and hungering and thirsting for truth and spiritual nourishment. This person has come to God asking for mercy, trying to purify his heart so he can have peace with God and his fellow man. Will we watch and care for him?

Conclusion

Snatching someone out of the fire demands my perseverance and true love for the soul of another. It doesn't end there, though. Just as one's spiritual work and growth does not end, but is just beginning when baptized, so also, my work in encouragement and spiritual help and encouragement does not end when a person is baptized! That same perseverance and love necessary to convert a person is needed when helping this one to stand and be faithful unto death (**Rev. 2:10; I Cor. 15:58**). Don't forget that this spiritual "burn victim" needs our love and patience. No, we do not coddle one in sin, but we do as the father of the prodigal son did (**Lk. 15:20**), and look daily for opportunities to extend the helping hand to these precious SOULS. *Credit: The Old Paths - 10/9/11 ♦*

GOD HAS A RIGHT

Author unknown

- God has a right to a definite part of your time
 - He has the power to take all of it.
- God has a right to a definite part of your money
 - He has the power to take all of it.
- God has a right to be glorified through your tongue
 - He has the power to take all of it.
- God has a right to be honored through your influence
 - He has the power to take all of it.
- God has a right to your life
 - He has the power to take all of it. ♦

TRY THESE EXCUSES

The following list of excuses is presented for your use the next time you miss work and need a good reason. These are some of the excuses that brethren have used thousands of times in the past. Obviously, if the Lord will accept them, they should satisfy your boss:

1. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but some friends came by unexpectedly.
2. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but we went to visit family and didn't make it back in time.
3. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but I was with you in spirit.
4. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but I decided to make my traveling plans during the time I was supposed to be at work and just could not make it.
5. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, but I don't like getting out when it is cold, hot, raining, or snowing.
6. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, I thought I would go work someplace else for a day, you know, just for a change.
7. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, gas prices are just too high to be driving.
8. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, I worked around the house, and I was just too tired to come.
9. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday; I went to Six Flags and a ball game and got home late. I needed to sleep, I was tired.
10. I'm sorry I wasn't at work yesterday, I had to cook dinner.

These excuses won't work with either your boss or with God! ♦

Some go to church just for a walk;
 Some go there to laugh and talk;
 Some go there for observation;
 Some go there for speculation;
 Some go there to sleep and nod;
 We should go there to worship God! ♦

**DON'T THINK YOU CAN
 IGNORE THE LORD IN
 THIS LIFE AND HE WILL
 GIVE YOU A CROWN IN
 THE LIFE TO COME. ♦**

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

How to Contact Us

Telephone: (920)499-5677
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



Our Address

1621 Hillcrest Drive
 Green Bay, WI 54313



Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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