

Christians—The Saved- Are In the Church

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The church of the first century had no proper name. The term “the church of Christ” is a possessive term indicating ownership. When one speaks of “The farm of John Brown,” he isn’t naming the farm, but indicating who owns it. The same is true of the term “the church of Christ.” It is Christ’s church and its numerous local bodies were known as “CHURCHES OF CHRIST” in the New Testament (**Romans 16:16**). As Christ and the Father are one, it was also termed “THE CHURCH OF GOD” (**1 Corinthians 1:1-2** cf., **John 17:10, 20-21**).

Neither do members of the church of Christ denominate themselves into parties by their names. There were no hyphenated Christians in the first century, such as Baptist-Christians,” “Methodist-Christians,” “Presbyterian-Christians,” or “Anglican-Christians.” The saved are simply Christians and wear this God given name without hyphenating it. The name “Christian” is worn by individual, not the church. This was the new name of which Isaiah prophesied, and was given in precise fulfillment of his prophecy. “FOR ZION’S SAKE WILL I NOT HOLD MY PEACE, AND FOR JERUSALEM’S SAKE I WILL NOT REST UNTIL THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THEREOF GO FORTH AS BRIGHTNESS, AND THE SALVATION THEREOF AS A LAMP THAT BURNETH. AND THE GENTILES THAN SEE THY RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL KINGS THY GLORY: AND THOU SHALT BE CALLED BY A NEW NAME, WHICH THE MOUTH OF THE LORD SHALL NAME” (**Isaiah 62:1-2**).

The fulfillment of this prophecy is found in **Acts 10** and **11** in the New Testament. The “RIGHTEOUSNESS” of Jerusalem and that which the Gentiles would see was the gospel which would be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (**Luke 24:45-41**) and which would save Jew and Gentle alike (**Romans 1:16-17**). The apostle Peter was called to preach to the house of Cornelius a Gentle who was a Roman soldier (**Acts 9-10**). It was at the house of Cornelius that the Gentiles first heard and obeyed the gospel, and in the exact order of Isaiah’s prophecy the disciples of Christ were given a new name — “CHRISTIAN” — in **Acts 11:26**. That’s the first of three times the word is used in the New Testament. The others are in **Acts 26:28** when Agrippa said, “ALMOST THOU PERSUADED ME TO BE A CHRISTIAN,” and in **1 Peter 4:16** where Peter wrote, “YET IF ANY MAN SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN, LET HIM NOT BE ASHAMED.” There isn’t a single denominational name that is found in the New Testament which is divinely applied to the disciples of Jesus Christ.

The blessings of salvation are found only in the church of Christ. Paul said “ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS” are in Christ (**Ephesians 1:3**) and then enumerated those blessings. Those in Christ are the “CHOSEN” of God (**Ephesians 1:4**), God’s adopted children (**Ephesians 1:5**) and heirs of heaven (**Ephesians 1:11**). To be in Christ is to be in His body, the church (**Ephesians 1:22-23**). One cannot be in Christ without being in His church, for the church is His fullness (**Ephesians 1:23**) and no one is in Christ who has not repented and been baptized into Him (**Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27**).

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When the gospel was first preached on Pentecost (**Acts 2**), 3,000 souls obeyed the gospel by repenting and being baptized and the Scripture says they were added to the church (**Acts 2:41, 47**). Now, this question arises “To which denomination were they added?” The answer? None! Were the apostles and others members of a denomination? Absolutely not! No such thing as a denomination among the professing Christians then existed. Those 3,000 souls were added to the church of which you should be a member – the church which Christ, its Founder, will save (**Ephesians 5:23**). Not a single one of them was added to any denomination. The church is the saved body of Christ and rejects denominationalism.

God Has Only One Family

Paul told Timothy “THESE THINGS WRITE I UNTO THEE, HOPING TO COME UNTO THEE SHORTLY: BUT IF I TARRY LONG, THAT THOU MAYEST KNOW HOW THOU OUGHTEST TO BEHAVE THYSELF IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD” (I Timothy 3:14-15). This passage identifies God’s “HOUSE” as the church. As used in this context, the word “HOUSE” means “FAMILY”. The church is God’s family and that is its designation in **Ephesians 3:15**. God has only one family and to insist that God has children in all denominations is to accuse God of being an adulterer. There are no children of God outside of his family. Denominations do not comprise the family of God and are no part of it. The church of which you should be a member – the one you read about in the New Testament – rejects denominationalism because it blasphemes the name of God in its insistence that there are children of God in all denominational “families”.