

What the Bible Has to Say...About Who Christ Will Add to His Church

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). Christ ought to know who is in His church, since He is the Savior of the body, the church (Col. 1:18-24).

Have you ever wondered how many bodies there are belonging to Christ? The Bible gives the answer in clarion tone: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:4-6). Just as a husband is to have but one wife, a body has only one head. The church of Christ has only one Savior, Who is Jesus Christ. There are just as many churches (bodies) as there are Gods or as there are Lords! There is one God! There is one Lord! Hence, there is one body! If there is one body, and there is, then there is only one church (Eph. 1:22-23).

Have you ever wanted to be a part of the church that you can read about in the pages of your New Testament? You need to know that you cannot “join” the church of the Bible. You ought to know that you cannot be “voted” into the church that Christ built. You need to be aware that you cannot “buy” your entrance into the church of the New Testament. There is only one way that any man has ever been granted admittance into the church of God. Note carefully, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). Did you notice that the Lord is the One Who does the adding to His body, which is His church? If it is the Lord that does the adding, and He does, then only the Lord can do any subtracting—therefore you cannot be “voted out” of the Lord’s church, either!

Would you like to know what the Bible teaches that one **must do** to be added to the church of the Lord? The Word of God teaches God’s plan of salvation thus:

- Hear the Word (Rom. 10:14-17)
- Believe (Faith) (Heb. 11:6; Mark 16:16)
- Repent of sin (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3-5)
- Confess Christ (Rom. 10:9-10; Mat. 10:32)
- Be baptized (Mat. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:1-6)
- Be faithful (Rev. 2:10; Acts 2:42)

There are thousands of man-made religious churches in our nation. Most all of them claim to be the one body of Christ! How can that be? Compare God’s plan of salvation with what they teach. Now, put your ear down here: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). Has the Lord added you to His church?

Jesse Whitlock
Cheyenne, OK

BELVEDERE BEACON

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14)

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Should Everyone Sing?

It is no secret that too many Christians fail or refuse to sing hymns of prayer and praise or Gospel songs of admonition to others; and when one is exhorted to join in the sacrifice of our lips in praise, the answer is: “I can’t sing,” or “My voice will not respond” (even though they can talk a blue streak!), or “I simply am not musically inclined” (though they play records, radio, attend musicals, and even enjoy singing!). It is agreed that we are born with varied degrees of the senses of pitch and rhythm—it is difficult to believe that anyone is born with none. But the question is: Should everybody sing? Is one more obligated to try than another? Can one who is talented do the singing for another who is not as talented? Has God authorized a practice in the kingdom of His Son which cannot be obeyed?

A number of years ago, during a lecture on the music of the church, one from the audience asked to be recognized. We listened as he reasoned: “There is singing and there is making melody in the heart; both are included in the New Testament teaching. One has the talent to sing audibly, while another can only make melody in the heart.” (And he cited a Bible commentary to prove his point.) However, this writer (who was the speaker of the occasion) just had to ascertain if this man thought a dual command, connected by the conjunction “and,” could be performed by two people—one doing one part, another the other part—and please God. The auditor’s answer was affirmative. We remarked that this would not hold true in other cases. For instance, the Lord says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16)—can one believe, the other be baptized, and both be saved? You say this is absurd. Yes, but not any more than saying, “You make melody in the heart and I will sing with the voice, and we will both please God.” It takes both for one to complete his own obligation.

Surely we can know that God does, or does not, authorize us to sing with the voice from the heart. If He doesn’t, then we do not have to utter praise and devotion—we can eliminate singing altogether! If He does (and the Bible is clear on this point), how can we honor God and admonish others without doing our best in song? The moment we admit that God commands us to sing, rather than offer mechanical praise,

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.

Morning Worship 11.00 am.

Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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A DECEIVING TRACT

A while back, I picked up a religious tract in a restaurant. Although the intention of those who published the tract was good and honorable, sadly, the tract is deceitful in that it does not teach the whole truth concerning becoming a Christian and entering the Way – that is, Christ (John 14:6).

Four things were stated in the tract that one should do: First, realize that God loves you! John 3:16 is quoted: *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* Second, realize that everyone is a sinner! Two Scripture passages are quoted: *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one”* (Romans 3:10); *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). Third, realize that sin has a price that must be paid! Romans 6:23 is quoted: *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). Fourth, realize that Christ died to pay your price! Two Scriptures are again quoted: *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8); *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”* (Colossians 1:14). The tract then states, Finally, pray. Ask Jesus Christ to be your Savior, and claim His promise of eternal life! Romans 10:13 is then quoted: *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Romans 10:13).

Is that how people became Christians in the first century? Is that what the apostles told those people to do? Note that none of the Scriptures quoted in the tract is from the book of Acts. Acts is the book where we read of people becoming Christians. The Scriptures quoted, except John 3:16, come from the epistles, letters written to Christians. As regarding calling on the name of the Lord, we read in Acts that Saul of Tarsus (Paul the apostle) was told: *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). Baptism is **nowhere** mentioned in the tract – yet **every** case of conversion to Christ recorded in Acts shows those converted were baptized. Why does the tract not mention this vital part of becoming a Christian?

Let us never be deceived into accepting another gospel which, in reality, is not another gospel. Let us never cease to preach, and teach people how to become Christians in the same way as the early Christians did—as recorded in the book of Acts; and let us reject these four steps to becoming a Christian that teach another way of salvation as opposed to that taught by the Christians of the first century.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

This bulletin was prepared early as Ken Chumbley is in England. He is scheduled to return on Tuesday October 16, 2007. Please keep his labors for the Lord there in your prayers. News and Notes will resume next week.

Should Everyone Sing? Continued from page 1

we are faced with a searching question: Can we go to heaven while disobeying a command? There is no alternative — to do or not to do, to the best of our ability, is the real concern. One endowed with greater potentiality in song has no stricter duty, no greater reward; neither is one of lesser talent relieved of duty nor denied blessings and rights of participation. As men judge, one can teach better, lead a better prayer, or give more, but this cannot excuse others from their obligation in these realms. If God says sing--and He does – we must do our best.

Paul said to speak (and this is oral expression) psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, “singing and making melody in your heart” (Eph. 5:19); to teach and admonish (and this is with the voice) in the same fashion (Col. 3:16); with him, it was personal, “I will sing” (1 Cor. 14:15), and he practiced it (Acts 16:25). The Hebrews writer said it must be “in the midst of the church” (Heb. 2:12), and that “By him [Christ] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name” (Heb. 13:15). These, and related Scriptures, assure that God wants each and all to sing.

Grant that someone has waited too long to do well at singing, he could still try; and, anyway, this should not check our teaching that God expects His children to sing! If this had been emphasized fifty years ago, more--if not all--Christians would be joining in the exercise today. For the sake of the present and coming generations, we must urge *God's* pleasure with respect to music in the worship. It is a fact that we must be taught to do what God requires—Jesus taught His disciples to pray, and by what manner: He actually went through the manner of observing and serving the Lord's supper; we are taught to teach, but must be taught before we can do so. Hence, to sing, we should be taught to sing.

One of the errors of teachers of singing schools in the past is that they piled up a stack of theory and often made the undertaking appear difficult, while under-emphasizing the joy of singing, the art of it, and promotion of spirit and understanding in the practice. May the Lord bless every one who strives to improve our singing, but may we prove, with Solomon, that “man should rejoice in his own works” (Ecc. 3:22). The old saying is that “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”—may we also insist that the means and reward in singing is the doing of it! The least a Christian could do to effect improvement is to be on hand and try in every singing effort. The elders, who must of necessity be concerned with the teaching of and by the flock, should certainly encourage one of the most powerful means of teaching and admonishing. If all members of the church should attend worship and Bible study, let us put forth every effort to gain 100 per cent attendance; but if we fail, let us not give up. If all are to sing, let us put forth a special effort to attain full participation; but failure with some must not deter our efforts toward better singing.

L. O. Sanderson

Prolific songwriter of the Lord's church, Deceased