



Church Membership

1. Most religious organizations places church membership as a condition for salvation.
2. The Bible places salvation before church membership.
3. Protestant Evangelicals/Historic Fundamentalists who believe in the Universal, Invisible, Mystical “Body of Christ” Church derogate Believer’s Baptism and Church Membership. They may believe in the importance and primacy of the New Testament church but they do not believe in the exclusivity of the New Testament church.
 - A. Error #1: The Doctrine of Spirit-Baptism into the mystical body of Christ at the point of Salvation.
 - B. Error #2: Believer’s Baptism among other Biblical doctrines are laid aside as “non-essential.”
 - C. Error #3: The church began at Pentecost.
 - D. Error #4: The N.T. church can maintain its autonomy despite a Convention, Assoc. or Fellowship.
 - E. Error #5: Any mode of Baptism, including its administrator, and candidate is inconsequential.
 - F. Error #6: Baptism can save. This is sacramentalism or sacerdotalism. “Baptismal regeneration”
 - G. Error #7: Baptism and church membership is unimportant.
4. The Biblical teachings about church membership:
 - A. Salvation precedes church membership.
 - i. **Acts 2:41** “Then they that gladly received his word (SALVATION) were baptized (BELIEVER’S BAPTISM): and the same day there were added unto them (CHURCH MEMBERSHIP) about three thousand souls.”
 - ii. **Acts 8:12** “But when they believed (SALVATION) Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized (BELIEVER’S BAPTISM), both men and women. (In v.13, the church at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to confirm the news and organize those baptized disciples as a church).
 - iii. **Acts 16:14-15** “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened (SALVATION), that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. (v.15) And when she was baptized (BELIEVER’S BAPTISM), and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us (CHURCH MEMBERSHIP).
 - iv. **Acts 18:8** “And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed (SALVATION), and were baptized (BELIEVER’S BAPTISM).” (Paul organized them into a church, spent 18 months with them, v.11; wrote them two canonical church letters: 1 & 2 Corinthians; written to CHURCH MEMBERS in Corinth).
 - B. Surrender precedes church membership. **2 Cor. 8:5** “And this they did, not as we hoped, **but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.**”
 - i. Salvation helps ensure that the church fellowship is prioritized.
 - ii. Discipleship helps ensure that the church membership is proper.
 - iii. Church discipline ensures that the church membership is pure.
 - C. Steadfast continuance is the mark of church membership. **Acts 2:42** “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Those who did not continue were either never made a part of the church or they were removed from the church assembly (cf. Jn. 6:66; 1 Jn. 2:19).
 - D. Sovereign design is involved in church membership. **Acts 2:47** “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” **1 Cor. 12:18** “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

Conclusion:

Church membership is bound by fellowship, love, confidence, voluntary spirit and obligations to the teachings and commandments of Jesus Christ. **Jn. 15:14** “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”