

WHICH CHURCH DID THE SAVED OF THE N.T. JOIN?

Ac.2:36-41,47

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. What church to join is no problem to some:
 - a. It's simply a matter of family tradition.
 - b. It's simply a matter of joining the largest and most influential one in town, especially in smaller cities and small towns.
 - c. It's simply a matter of joining the one that offers the better or the best program of recreation and entertainment for the young people.
 - d. They join the one most convenient to their location.
2. But with some it poses a problem because they do a little independent thinking and ask themselves: Of all the different churches of different faiths and orders of worship and practice which exist, which one is the right one to join?
3. Some try to answer the question by visiting around checking out the various churches to see which one they might like to join. By this means:
 - a. Some eliminate them one by one until they find the one they like or think they would like and join it.
 - b. Others get frustrated and even disgusted and give up entirely and say, What is the use? And end up rejecting altogether what they refer to as "organized religion".
4. All this religious division is confusing to say the least, and at worst it makes infidels out of many and leads souls to a devil's hell.
5. Did the saved of the N.T. times have a problem deciding which church to join? No! We do not read about any such problem in the N.T. Why not?
6. The Bible answer is a simple one! The saved of N.T. times didn't join the church of their choice. In fact, they didn't join any church, period!

II. DISCUSSION

A. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE OPTION OF JOINING A CHURCH OF THEIR CHOICE. WHY NOT?

1. Denominationalism and or churches of your choice did not exist in N.T. times. That came into existence hundreds of years later. The voice of history reveals the following facts about churches established by men offering the church of your choice.

CHURCH

FOUNDER

PLACE

TIME

Roman Catholic A.D.	Boniface III	Rome	606
	(Assumed title of “universal Bishop”)		
Lutheran 1520AD	Martin Luther	Germany	1517-
Church of England AD	Henry VIII	England	1534
(Episcopalian) Presbyterian AD	John Calvin	Switzerland	1536
Congregational AD	Robert Browne	England	1550
Baptist AD	John Smythe	Holland	1607
Methodist 1739 AD	John Wesley		England
Latter Day Saints 1830 AD	Joseph Smith		America
(Mormon) Adventists AD	William Miller	America	1830
Christian Scientist AD	Mary Baker Eddy	America	1866
Jehovah’s Witnesses 1872 AD	Charles T. Russell		America

2. All of these, and others established since these, were established many years too late for the saved of N.T. times to have had a choice in joining any of them!

B. IN THE SECOND PLACE, IN N.T. TIMES THERE WAS ONLY ONE CHURCH OF WHICH ALL THE SAVED WERE MEMBERS, AND THEY DID NOT JOIN IT! HOW DO WE KNOW THIS?

1. Jesus promised to build only one belonging to him to which he gave the apostles the “keys”, or the means of entrance, Mt.16:16-19. (More on the “keys” later)
2. In the N.T. there was only one spiritual body, which is the church that belongs to him, which he purchased with his blood, the one he promised to build and did build, Eph.4:4-6; Col.1:18,24; Ac.20:28; Cf. 1Cor.6:19,20; 1Pet.1:18,19.

3. In the N.T. he is the head and savior of only one church, Eph.5:23-27.
4. In N.T. times the Lord added the saved – all the saved – to the church, the one he promised to build, did build, became the head and savior of, Ac.2:47; Cf. 1Cor.12:13; Rom.6:3-5; Gal.3:26,27.
5. What was true in N.T. times of the saved and being added to the church, is still true today, Mt.28:18-20; Jno.12:48; Heb.5:8,9; 9:26-28; Jno.17:20,21; 1Cor.1:10-13.

C. AS FURTHER PROOF OF OUR ARGUMENT, NOTE CASES OF CONVERSION IN THE N.T. AND THE CHURCH TO WHICH THEY BELONGED, ALL OF WHICH WERE OF THE SAME FAITH AND ORDER.

(As we do this, remember the apostles of Christ having been given the “keys” to the kingdom, Mt.16:19 (18:18); Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:15,16; Lk.24:47; Jno.20:19-23; Ac.2:21-41,47; Rom.1:16,17; 1Cor.1:21; 15:1,2. These cases of conversion reveal how the apostles used the “keys” to the kingdom)

1. The case of the Pentecostians.
 - a. Their conversion, Ac.2:1-41.
 - b. The church of which they were members and how they became members, Ac.2:47.
2. The case of the Corinthians.
 - a. Their conversion, Ac.18:8-11.
 - b. The church of which they were members, 1Cor.1:1,2; 2Cor.1:1,2 (Ac.20:28).
 - c. How become members? Saved. Lord added, Ac.2:47; 1Cor.12:13.
3. The case of the Galatians.
 - a. Their conversion or salvation, Gal.1:6; 3:1,2,13; 3:26-29; 4:6; 5:1-4.
 - b. The church of which they were members, Gal.1:1; Cf. 1:21,22.
 - c. How become members? Saved. Lord added, Ac.2:47.
4. The case of the Ephesians.
 - a. Their conversion, Ac.19:1-7; Eph.1:13; 5:25-27; 2:5,8.
 - b. The church of which they were members, Eph.1:1-3; 2:11-16; 4:4; 1:22,23; 5:23-27; Col.1:18,24.
 - c. How become members? Saved. Lord added, Ac.2:47.
5. The case of the Philippians.

- a. Their conversion, Ac.16:11-15,25-34.
 - b. The church of which they were members, Phil.1:1,2.
 - c. How become members? Saved. Lord added, Ac.2:47.
6. The case of the Thessalonians.
- a. Their conversion, Ac.17:1-4; 1Th.1:2-10.
 - b. The church of which they were members, 1Th.1:1; 2Th.1:1-4; Cf. 1Th.2:9-14.
 - c. How become members? Saved. Lord added, Ac.2:47.
7. These churches were all of the same faith and order as such passages as 1Cor.16:1; Gal.1:6-12; Jno.17:20,21; 1Cor.1:10-13 prove!

III. CONCLUSION

1. Since there is only one gospel of Christ, which is God's power to save, Gal.1:6-9; Rom.1:16,17;
2. And since the apostles were commissioned to preach this gospel of Christ and it alone, Mk.16:15,16;
3. And since they were faithful to their charge, all preaching the same thing, which they preached in every church, 1Cor.4:17;
4. And since they said men were saved by this one gospel they preached, and could not be saved by any other, 1Cor.15:1,2; 1Cor.1:21; Gal.1:6-9;
5. And since the Lord has only one church belonging to him (Mt.16:18), and adds all the saved to that church (Ac.2:47),
6. And since you don't read about different churches of different faiths and orders until after N.T. times, you know the saved of N.T. times were not saved and then joined the church of their choice.
7. Furthermore, the N.T. does not say "the Denominations salute you". Nor "the churches of your choice salute you". But it does say, "The churches of Christ salute you," Rom.16:16.
8. What about today and joining a church? You solve the problem of what church you are to be a member by learning of Christ and his church, then by obeying the gospel of Christ in order to be saved, and letting the Lord add you to his church!

WHICH CHURCH SHOULD I JOIN?

All up and down this troubled land confusion reigns today;
 As honest folk on every hand, in doubt are heard to say,
 "I cannot tell which church to join, there are so very many;"
 To which we offer this advice – you never should join any.

You cannot join the church of Christ; no man can vote you in;
 The Lord, Himself, will add you, when He saves you from your sin.

Then take no chances, neighbor, this race but once you'll run;
A church you'd join will be of man, and not the proper one.

Beware a church you cannot find, within the sacred pages;
Be safe, dear sinner, rest your soul upon the Rock of Ages.
Be added to His blood-bought church, and drink salvation's cup;
For every plant God planted not, it shall be rooted up.

No mourner's bench on Pentecost, the inspired Peter fitted;
But said, repent and be baptized, that your sins may be remitted.
The Lord, who saved and added those, who did, that day, His will;
Will do the same for you, dear friend, for He is adding still.

Let not false teachers led you wrong, nor close your eyes in slumber;
When Jesus said He'd build His church, 'twas not in plural number.
No choice of churches, neighbor mine, is found beneath the sun;
Though men may have ten thousand, our Savior has but one.

--- Author

Unknown