

Unfamiliar Bible Words: Church

David Halbrook

Are you surprised that I suggest that the word *church* is not a familiar word, since many people see it every day? Many people use, but do not understand, this word. They say “I left my Bible at the church” or in some way call a building “the church.” This is not what Jesus meant when He said “I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18), nor what Paul meant when he referred to “the churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16).

In the Bible, the word *church* means an assembly or gathering. The church is the people God has gathered *in Christ*, having saved them from sin through the blood of Christ (Acts 2:47; Eph. 2:13, 16). No one enters the church through wooden doors but through *the door*, Jesus (Jn. 10:7).

A habit of the church is that they assemble. This is God’s plan (Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:24-25) and also fitting when we understand what *church* means. People who claim to be “in the church” but do not “go to church” (go to the assembly) contradict their claim. Why claim to be a part of the church if you do not do what the church does?

Next week’s article on this subject is available today at our website. Send us your comment or question.

Editor’s Note: This article in *Arkansas Weekly* is not intended to define and clarify every aspect of this subject, but it provides a starting place for other lessons, some of which will be discussed in future articles. Read future articles at our website, or study Lesson 5 of “Common Words, Uncommon Meaning” available on our website under “Free Bible Class Lessons” (or available by request, see David Halbrook).

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Noleka Hopper, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, and new Christians among us.

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*
church of Christ--Quail Valley
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5 Views of Baptism: What View Do You Hold?

Steven J. Wallace

Jesus stated nearly 2000 years ago, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:16). To the simple, unbiased and unprejudiced mind, Jesus’ statement is very clear and easy to understand. It is as easy to understand a doctor’s statement, “He who eats his food and digests it will live; but he who does not eat will die.” All of us would easily understand that unless we eat and digest, we will die! However, for those who have allied themselves with human creeds and have been depraved with worldly wisdom, Jesus’ simple statement becomes confusing and contradicting. Although the Bible ALWAYS places water baptism (in Jesus’ name) before salvation, men have sought ways to undermine His authority and confuse the simplicity of our Lord’s teaching.

ATHEIST’S VIEW For example, the Atheist would say, “He who believes and is baptized will NOT be saved.” He has rejected the existence of God and the authority of the Bible. Unbelievers believe there is no God, yet one would have to be “God” himself to prove such a position. For one to know that there is no God, he would have had to have been everywhere, seen everything at once and know all things! Yet Jesus had him in mind when he said, “...he who believes not shall be condemned,” and again, “...he who does not believe is condemned already” (Jn. 3:18). Truly “the fool has said in his heart ‘There is no God’” Psa.14:1).

UNIVERSALIST’S VIEW The Universalist approaches the scripture with the bias that God is a God of only love and therefore He can never condemn anyone. They say, “He who believes NOT and is NOT baptized shall be saved.” While such a faith accepts the actuality of God, it rejects His word and leaves, nonetheless, a corrupt and misguided picture of Deity. Warning! “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My

words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48).

CATHOLIC’S VIEW The Catholic comes along and teaches, “He who believes NOT and is baptized shall be saved.” I say this as a former Catholic who was sprinkled as a baby. Catholics baptize babies because of the erroneous view of inherited sin (Ezek. 18:20); however, Bible baptism was NEVER administered to babies. Jesus taught that babies are safe (Lk. 18:15-17). Notwithstanding, subjects of Bible baptism must have first believed (see again Mark 16:16), yet faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord (Rom. 10:17). How can a baby believe when they cannot understand the word of the Lord? Can they also confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37)? False doctrine makes us believe unbelievable things!

PROTESTANT’S VIEW Then the Baptist comes and says, “He who believes and is NOT baptized shall be saved.” Yet is this what Jesus said? Is it Deity’s view? No amount of human manipulation will change the eternal truth of Mark 16:16. Beware all of these “NOTS” are formulated by men in the devil’s “tale” to cheat your soul!

JESUS’ VIEW “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:16).

When A Young Person Grows Old (Adapted from Mark K. White)

Unless thwarted by the Lord’s return, or an “untimely” death, all young people will eventually grow old. Regardless of how many creams and rinses are used, the aging process takes its toll on most members of the human family. Aging is an irreversible part of life, for if you live at all, you get older. The curse of our generation is an inordinate preoccupation with youth. No one wants to be old. At least, no one wants to look old. People do not mind feeling old as much as they detest looking old. But while the human family may take such a grim view of aging, the Bible does not so regard the aged. In fact, a special and significant honor is bestowed on the “hoary head” (Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 16:31). God enjoins us to “rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man.” And “a silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness.”

When a young man grows old, there are some definite changes which take place. Solomon gives a detailed description of the aging process in Ecclesiastes 12:1-7. Old age is called the “difficult days” in v. 1. These days of difficulty are brought through

hampering physical maladies which make it hard to really enjoy living. When our hands are racked with arthritis; the legs cease to carry our weight; our teeth are few and brittle; and our eyes grow dim, it is a “difficult” day indeed (v. 3). Even worse, the slightest of noises awakens us and robs our tired bodies of needed rest. Our ability to make melody with a clear, strong voice is gone (v. 4). And we are now frightened easily by heights and are more prone to worry about the dangers in our path. Sexually, we are either powerless or completely devoid of desire. Our physical strength wanes, and even the weight of a “grasshopper” is a burden too heavy (v. 5). In the difficult days of old age, the “silver cord” (nerves/spinal cord) is loosened and the “golden bowl” (brain) is broken, and senility takes hold. The heart and circulatory system is “shattered” and “broken” and death is not far behind (vv. 6-7). A more complete and graphic description of what happens when a young man grows old has never been penned! But Solomon was not writing to an old man about something he was already experiencing in his aging body. There would be little value in telling an old man that his dusty frame was returning to the earth. He would know this without being told, being in the midst of the process himself. Solomon addresses the young who are not yet to this point of life. He said to the young, “Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’.”

Solomon addresses the young man before he wastes the precious time of his youth on frivolity. He is hoping that the young man will listen to wisdom and do something constructive with his days of brightness and strength. Solomon urges that the young “remember” the Creator, but this involves more than a mere mental recall of God. Consider what God did when He remembered Hannah (1 Samuel 1:19). God did something for her. He gave her a son. Likewise, the young are to remember God by serving Him with the strength and vitality of their youth. This will also keep the young man from looking back on his youth with regret, as he remembers how he forgot God and wasted his time with vanities.

To be sure, it does not miraculously become easier to serve God as we get older. In fact, there is no time in life when worldly things automatically lose their appeal. Solomon advises that we get ourselves on target early in life. He labors to get us to see that it is ridiculous to put off commitment to God until later in life. While we may think the young deserve a chance to have their fling with life and settle down to spiritual things later, Solomon teaches just the opposite. In fact, age may work against us in our struggle to shun the world and obey God. And when we look back on a youth misspent — what a sad, empty, futile, haunting gaze it will be.