

The Church – No. 2

How People Become Members

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Jesus built His church on the first Pentecost after His resurrection. How did people become members of it? This is an all-important question for those truly interested in being in His church today. If one ignores New Testament teaching on this issue, he may as well ignore it altogether. The only way one can be a member of Jesus' church today is to do what people did in the first century to become members. What does the New Testament say about it?

On Pentecost, the apostles preached a powerful sermon on the Deity of Christ, convincing the Jews they had crucified the Son of God (Acts 2:22-37). When the Jews asked what to do about their terrible mistake (indicating their faith), Peter said, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). Verse 41 tells their response: "They then that received His word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." This historic chapter ends by stating, "And the Lord added to them (to the church, KJV) day by day those that were saved."

Please observe:

1. They were saved **and** added simultaneously, not saved one day, joining a church of their choice several days later (v. 47).
2. They were added **after** they received (obeyed) the Word (v. 41).
3. Since they were added when they were saved (v. 47), and they were not added until after they were baptized (v. 41), **they could not have been saved before they were baptized.**
4. If they were saved before they were baptized (as many erroneously teach), then they were saved before they received remission of sins, because baptism is clearly an act preceding remission or forgiveness of sins (v. 38; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Rom 6:4, etc.).
5. Being saved and being in Jesus' church are the same thing. The church is simply the people who are saved.

Faith, repentance, and baptism for remission of sins is the way to become a member of Jesus' church.

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