

# Can a Person be Saved Outside the Lord's Church?

1 Corinthians 12:12-14

Introduction: Have you ever tried to teach someone the necessity of baptism to no avail? There are a lot of people who have been made to believe that baptism is not necessary for salvation. I'm talking about teaching people who know enough of their denomination's doctrine that they have an excuse lined up when you show them the many verses that tie baptism to salvation (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21; etc.).

Might I suggest that you first answer this question with them? Can a person be saved outside the Lord's Church?

I. Regardless of their answer, turn with them to Eph. 5:23.

A. Point out that Christ is the Savior of the body.

B. Make sure they understand the body is the Church (Eph. 1:22-23). In fact, you might need to explain the Lord's Church.

II. Read Eph. 5:25 next.

A. Christ loved the Church by dying for her.

B. Ask again, "Can a person be saved outside the Lord's church?"

C. By now the person should have the correct answer which is "no."

III. Then ask this question, "How do you get into the Lord's Church?"

A. There is no telling what you will hear next but odds are you won't hear anything about baptism. They will likely be confused as they have never considered such a question.

B. Turn with them to 1 Cor. 12:12-13. Emphasize that we have already established the fact that the body is the Church and this passage says we are baptized into the church (the body)! You might read 1 Cor. 12:14, 18, 20, and 27 for emphasis.

C. This is where the excuses begin.

1. If they say they were baptized, point out that by their own earlier admission their baptism wasn't for salvation. Therefore, they are yet to be saved since they also admitted one cannot be saved outside the Lord's church. In other words, they are not part of the Lord's Church since baptism is required to enter it.

2. Salvation is in the Church. If baptism is not for salvation then we are not saved and not in the Church. Can't have it both ways.

3. If they say this is a baptism of the Holy Spirit and not a water baptism, go back to Eph. 5:26. Point out that the Lord sanctifies His Church through water. Salvation is by water baptism per the Holy Spirit's instruction.

4. If they ask, “What about the thief on the cross?” Disarm this concern by telling them the thief lived under the Old Law and had no requirement for baptism under it (Col. 2:14).

IV. In any case, follow up by turning to John 3:3-5.

A. Another synonym for the church or body is the kingdom (John 18:36; Matt. 16:18).

B. Jesus says here that unless you are born again (baptized) you cannot enter His church (kingdom of God)! One’s spirit is born again through water baptism.

C. Hence when the 3000 were baptized in Acts 2:38-41; the act of baptism was what the Lord used to determine admission into His Church (Acts 2:47).

D. One must be in the Church to be saved! All spiritual blessings are in the Church (Col. 1:17-19).

Conclusion: If you haven’t been baptized then you are not saved for two reasons:

1. Baptism is necessary for the removal of sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

2. Baptism is necessary for admission into the Lord’s Church (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13).