
It is a question that generates strong emotion. It has started arguments and closed minds. Therefore, it could fall into the category of "foolish questions" to avoid because they cause strife (1 Timothy 6:3–4; 2 Timothy 2:23–24).

On the other hand, it is a Bible question. The disciples asked, "Who then can be saved?" (Matthew 19:25). And we are to "be ready always to give an answer" of our hope (1 Peter 3:15). It invites discussion of such essential doctrines as the church, salvation, and heaven. It is appropriate to discuss (Luke 24:32), investigate (Acts 17:11), and evaluate (Isaiah 1:18) matters of the eternal soul. How else can we "prove [test] all things" and hold fast to the good? (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

So let’s take the high road, put our emotions aside, and simply appeal to God’s Word.

Let’s start with some basic truths

- God wants all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). He does not favor any nation, group, gender, or individual. He loves all equally and completely (John 3:16).
- Jesus died for all to be saved (John 3:17; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15).
- Grace is available to all (Titus 2:11).
- Heaven has room for all (Revelation 21:11–27).
- The Lord knows those who are His (2 Timothy 2:19). Therefore, not a single person who should be saved will be lost.
- As Savior, Christ is the one to declare who, when, and where He saves (1 Thessalonians 5:9; Titus 2:11).
- Jesus—not any man or church—will judge on the last day (John 5:22).
- The house of God will be judged, as well as those who do not obey the gospel (1 Peter 4:17–18).
- While we inevitably make judgments (John 7:24), we must not judge unnecessarily, unfairly, or unlovingly (Matthew 7:1).
• The Word is the sole soul guide (Psalm 73:24; Matthew 4:4), our blueprint for church building (Exodus 39:42–43), and the final authority in religion (Proverbs 19:21).
• Scripture is open to all to read, understand, obey, and be saved (John 5:39; Hebrews 5:9). Private opinions did not go into it (2 Peter 1:20–21); private interpretations cannot be taken out. What it says to one, it says to all. It is universal.

How big do we draw the circle?

It is possible to draw the circle too small. We must not shut others out of the kingdom (Matthew 23:13), require more than Jesus required (cf. Matthew 23:4), bind anything the apostles did not (Matthew 16:19; 18:18), or take away others’ Christian liberty (Acts 15:1; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1). In matters of opinion, we must “follow after the things which make for peace” (Romans 14:19).

It is possible to draw the circle too big. Salvation is not universal. Many figure all religions are just taking different roads to the same place, so they put a “coexist” sticker on their bumper and try to avoid all religious discussions. While this appeals to a culture where toleration is a chief virtue, it is a mistake to believe that a civil right to believe anything makes every belief equally true. Jesus taught us to stay “in bounds” (2 John 1:9–11), not to untie what the disciples tied (Matthew 16:19), nor think of men above “what is written” (1 Corinthians 4:6).

As strange as it sounds to pluralistic ears, there are not a thousand ways to heaven, nor even two. Jesus is the exclusive route—the way, the truth, the life (John 14:6). “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Jesus will separate the righteous from the unrighteous, as a shepherd divides sheep from goats (Matthew 25:31–46), using obedience to His words as the standard (Matthew 7:21–27). Not even all who claim allegiance to Him will make it (7:21).

Where does God draw the circle? This is the real question. Whatever His Word says, is right (Psalm 33:4; 2 Timothy 3:16). We want to include every person that God includes and not a single person less, or more. Ultimately, nothing else matters. We could debate it, take a vote, and stand by it until judgment. Would God then use our decision as His standard? No, His immutable counsel will stand though the whole earth set themselves against Him (Psalm 2:1–4; John 3:36; 12:48).

Who does God put in the circle?

The body of Christ will be saved. “Christ is the Saviour of the body” (Ephesians 5:23). This shows not only who the Savior is but also where He saves. God placed all spiritual blessings in one location—“in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). His body contains His blood, which is what saves (Ephesians 1:7).

Someone might naturally wonder, “Can’t people obtain salvation in some other place too?” Consider a parallel situation. When people needed salvation from the flood (Genesis 6–9), God offered them a free year-long ride in Noah’s boat (1 Peter 3:19–21). All who chose to enter were saved; all who chose to stay out were lost. In the same way, to be saved we must choose to enter into Christ (2 Timothy 2:10).

The church will be saved. The church began on the Jewish Pentecost Day that followed Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2). Three thousand founding members were baptized on its first day (2:41), and thousands more in the weeks, months, and years that followed (cf. Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 9:42; 16:5).
Hebrews 12:23), Christ purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25); it is His bride (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27); He is its head (Colossians 1:18). It belongs to Christ (Matthew 16:18) so it is Christ’s church—the church of Christ.

These phrases—body of Christ, church, church of God, church of Christ—all refer to the same group. This is not attributing salvation to multiple groups; it refers to the same group in multiple ways. Christ established only one church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47). There is “one body” (Ephesians 4:4), and “but one body” (1 Corinthians 12:20). Those in Christ are in His body; those in His body are in the church (Ephesians 1:22–23; 2:16). No one is in the church of God that is not also in the church of Christ.

One may say, “You are talking about the universal church. All denominations compose one universal church.” Let’s consider this. The word church is found 117 times in the New Testament. These references fall into two categories: the universal church and local churches. Not a single verse ever refers to a denomination.

The Lord’s church is not a denomination, nor is it all the denominations combined. A denomination is larger than the local church, but smaller than the universal church. Anytime the church is referred to universally, a singular noun is used (“the church” found 70 times). The plural always refers to local congregations, who were unified—teaching and practicing the same things, unlike denominations (1 Corinthians 1:10; John 17:20–21; Philippians 3:16; Ephesians 4:4–6).

Now to the question, “Do you think that only members of the church of Christ are going to heaven?”

What is meant by the term “church of Christ”? In this discussion, people usually use the same words but mean different things. I do not believe that a denomination called “church of Christ” is any more likely to be saved than any denomination by any other name. It would be arrogant and misguided to think so.

However, if the term “church of Christ” means “Christ’s church”—His one body—then that is a different question. As noted, that group is divinely assembled (Acts 2:47). By very definition, God puts every saved person into the church. From that perspective, it is impossible for a saved person to be anywhere else.

My desire is to stay out of any denomination and belong to Christ’s original church. Does Christ’s church exist—unchanged—on earth today? Yes!

We must not fall into the trap of believing that one church is as good as another. This sounds like a statement a broad-minded person could embrace, but it passes neither the commonsense nor scriptural tests. For instance, do we tell the bank teller to deposit our check into any account because “one is as good as another”? Do we tell the pharmacist, “Give me anything. One drug is as good as another”? This philosophy makes no more sense in the spiritual realm. The church of Satan is surely not good. A church with a charlatan preacher fleecing its members of their retirement funds is not good. A church that denies Christ’s deity is not good. A church that endorses sinful activities is not good. A church that teaches false doctrine is not good.

A person has no authority from God to set up a congregation to do whatever it pleases and call that “the church.” The church must conform to God’s pattern (Revelation 2–3). It must be a “franchise” of the original church. Let me illustrate. If one goes into a McDonald’s in any city, he can order from the same menu. They cook from the same recipes. They answer to the same code of policies. Each is a franchise of Ray Croc’s original organization. One cannot start a restaurant and call it “McDonald’s.” So it is with the church. With the Scriptures as the sole authority for doctrines and practices, a church must “observe all things” that Jesus instructed (Matthew 28:20).

How can we identify Christ’s church today? Compare any church to the Bible. Is it organized as the early church was? Does it use a Bible “name” (description), worship scripturally, accurately teach salvation, and follow the scriptural mission? (Download a more complete checklist at www.housetohouse.com/Downloads/ChurchTest.pdf).

Who is going to heaven? Simply stated, those churches that strictly follow the Bible will make it. We believe that you will find such a church when you visit the church of Christ in your community. Take your Bible. Ask questions. Compare. Investigate. “Come and see” (John 1:39).

Let’s all go to heaven together!

Good Advice

WALK like Enoch
WORSHIP like Abel
WORK like Nehemiah
WEEP like Jeremiah
OBEE like Job
LEAD like Daniel
PRAY like Paul
WIN like Paul
LIVE like Christ

—Robert A. Glass, Roanoke, Virginia

“Follow me.”
LUKE 9:23

God’s Plan for Saving Man

God’s Grace Ephesians 2:8
Christ’s Blood Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit’s Gospel Romans 1:16
Sinner’s Faith Acts 16:31
Sinner’s Repentance Luke 13:3
Sinner’s Confession Romans 10:10
Sinner’s Baptism 1 Peter 3:21
Christian’s Work James 2:24
Christian’s Hope Romans 8:24
Christian’s Endurance Revelation 2:10

www.housetohouse.com
Best Citizens

President Teddy Roosevelt once noted, “When all is said, it is the mother only who is a better citizen than the soldier who fights for his country. The successful mother, the mother who does her part in rearing and training aright the boys and girls, who are to be the men and women of the next generation, is of greater use to the community, and occupies, if she only would realize it, a more honorable, as well as more important, position than any man in it. The mother is the one supreme asset of national life. She is more important, by far, than the successful statesman, or businessman, or artist, or scientist.”

Roosevelt’s statement reminded me of the old adage, “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” We need to continue to emphasize to our mothers how important their role is in our world (Proverbs 14:1).

Often the problems of our society are blamed on the absence of fathers. While this has clearly played a part in our nation’s demise, we cannot overlook what the absence of mothers has done. Mothers, thank you for the sacrifices you make for children. You are vital!

—Wade Webster, Southaven, Mississippi

Oh to Be “8” Again!

A man was sitting on the edge of the bed, watching his wife, who was looking at herself in the mirror. Since her birthday was not far off, he asked what she’d like to have for her birthday. “I’d like to be eight again,” she replied, still looking in the mirror.

On the morning of her birthday, he arose early, made her a nice big bowl of Cocoa Pops, and then took her to Adventure World theme park. What a day! He put her on every ride in the park: the Death Slide, the Wall of Fear, the Screaming Roller Coaster—everything there was.

Five hours later they staggered out of the theme park. Her head was reeling and her stomach felt upside down. He then took her to a McDonald’s where he ordered her a Happy Meal with extra fries and a chocolate shake.

Then it was off to a movie, popcorn, a slushy, and her favorite candy, M&Ms. What a fabulous adventure!

Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed exhausted. He leaned over to his wife with a big smile and lovingly asked, “Well dear, what was it like being eight again?”

Her eyes slowly opened and her expression suddenly changed. “I meant my dress size.”

The moral of the story: Don’t grow up too fast, and don’t assume you speak the same language as your mate.

—Wade Webster, Southaven, Mississippi

Fingerprints on the Wall

Dorothy Evslin observed, “It will be gone before you know it. The fingerprints on the wall appear higher and higher. Then suddenly they disappear.” How sad, but how true! We must redeem the time that we have with our children (Ephesians 5:16). We must waste no time in training them in the way that they should go (Proverbs 22:6).

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

“Fingerprints on the Wall”

“Therefore I will give thanks unto thee.”

2 SAMUEL 22:50

Going Up

A little boy got on the elevator in the Empire State Building in New York City. He and his daddy started to the top. The boy watched the signs flashing as they went by the floors: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70. They kept going, and he got nervous. He took his daddy’s hand and said, “Daddy, does God know we’re coming?” —Leighton Ford, “Hope for a Great Forever,” Preaching Today, Tape No. 96.

“For the Lord is good, His tender mercies are great; His compassions and faithfulness endure long.”

MATTHEW 18:14

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2 SAMUEL 22:50
Pictures of Faith

Faith is such a wonderful quality that it is impossible to define it adequately with words. That may be why the Bible is not only a collection of doctrines and treatises, but also of stories of people and their responses to God. Four of those well-known stories offer us insights into the real meaning of the faith God is looking for in our lives.


In this picture, we see a man whom God commanded to do something he detested to do—offer the body of his only son as a burnt offering. Of course, before he could complete this horrible assignment, God sent an angel to stop him, and to announce, “Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” James presents this picture as a true picture of faith, for in it we see one who not only hears or believes God’s Word, he does it no matter what, without question or hesitation.

Picture #2: The unwavering confidence of David (1 Samuel 17:4–7, 10, 33–37)

Picture this shepherd boy, inexperienced in battle, walking briskly onto the battlefield to face the fearsome Philistine champion, Goliath, in combat! David did not think it so strange. He only thought it strange that there were not others as confident as he in God’s power to deliver the faithful.

Picture #3: The unseeing certainty of Abraham (Hebrews 11:1, 6, 8–10)

Faith is certainty of that which we do not see. Such faith is not an option if one wants to please God. Abraham packed up his goods and gathered his household and left on a journey, never to return. He did not know where he was going. But he followed God’s instructions because he had confidence in what God had said, and he was certain that God would lead him.

Picture #4: The unyielding hope of Job (Job 2:9–10, 13:15, 19:9–25)

Although we know that Satan caused all of Job’s misery, Job and his friends believed that God had afflicted Job with all his losses. Even though Job felt that God was not treating him fairly and not responding to his prayers, he refused to give up hope in God. “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15).

May our faith grow to unquestioning obedience, unwavering confidence, unseeing certainty, and unyielding hope.

To ask a Bible question or view previously answered questions, go to www.HouseToHouse.com.
Trust in yourself, and you are doomed to disappointment. Trust in your friends, and they may leave you. Trust in your money, and it may be taken from you. Trust in reputation, and some slanderous tongue may blast it. Trust in God, and you will never be confounded.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”
PROVERBS 3:5

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- The Beauty of Non-denominational Christianity — Aubrey Johnson
- What to Do When You FIRST Think There May Be a Problem in Your Marriage — Sam Jones
- Saved or Lost? — James Watkins
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- Overcoming Pornography Addiction — Jerry Martin
- And the Books Were Opened — Allen Webster

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Free Marriage Enrichment
Each year the churches of Christ host the Great Smoky Mountain Marriage Retreat in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. This year’s instructors were Sam Jones of Henderson, Tennessee, and Michael Shepherd of Pensacola, Florida. Their seven sessions provide laughter, insights, and motivation for building the marriage God wants you to have. Listen at www.housetohouse.com/hth/Audio/marriage.htm

Resources
www.hthbible.com
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- I would like a daily Bible reading schedule.

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- NEW! Steps to Heaven: Hear
- NEW! Steps to Heaven: Believe
- NEW! Noah by the Numbers
- Advice to the Grieving
- Biography: Saul of Tarsus
- When Jesus Arrived Late
- Who is at the Controls?
- God’s Olympics
- In Pursuit of Godliness
- Don’t Fall
- Saving the Church
- Kingdom of Christ
- Are Kingdom and Church the Same?
- Worship Fads or Timeless Truth?
- I Want to Look upon His Face
- The Discipline of Children
- History’s Most Famous Anonymous Wedding
- Jesus Made a Blood Donation
- Why Caleb Lived on a Mountain
- Sermons of a Drunk Preacher
- Love Thy Neighbor
- Heaven Is Four Steps Away #4
- The Way He Should Go (parents)
- Curiosity May Have Killed the Cat
- Old Age: Taking Care or . . . ?
- Wicked Imaginations
- Wait till the Honeymoon?
- A Man with a “Wait” Problem
- Does Heaven Have a Smoking Section?
- Be Swift to Hear
- Sweat the Small Stuff
- Under a Bushel of Bushels
- Pornography’s Pain
- The Scourging of Jesus
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- God’s Hospital
- God’s View of Abortion
- Grandparenting
- Back issues of House to House/Heart to Heart

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All materials/services are absolutely FREE of charge. We even pay postage (in the U.S.A.)!
Best News I’ve Heard All Week

Robert De Vincenzo, the great Argentine golfer, once won a tournament and, after receiving the check and smiling for the cameras, went to the clubhouse and prepared to leave.

Later, he was approached by a young woman as he walked to his car. She congratulated him on his victory and told him that her child was seriously ill. She cried as she explained that she could not pay the doctor and hospital expenses.

De Vincenzo, touched by her story, took out a pen and endorsed his winning check. “Make some good days for the baby,” he said as he pressed the check into her hand.

The next week a Professional Golf Association official came to his table at a country club. “Some of the boys in the parking lot last week told me you met a young woman there after you won that tournament.” De Vincenzo nodded.

“Well,” he said, “I have news for you. She’s a phony. She has no sick baby. She’s not even married. She fleeced you, my friend.”

“You mean there is no baby who is dying?” said De Vincenzo.

“That’s right,” said the official.

“That’s the best news I’ve heard all week,” De Vincenzo said. De Vincenzo’s attitude is reminiscent of the attitude that God has shown us. Despite man taking God’s goodness for granted, despite our repeated failures, God was willing to give not just a token, but the ultimate sacrifice of His Son. He did so, not reluctantly or with resentment, but willingly and gladly, knowing that while most would only show disdain for His gift, some would respond in obedience motivated by faith and love.

Paul wrote, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-8). —adapted from Alan Smith, Thought for the Day

Think on good things.
PHILIPPIANS 4:8

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JESUS BY THE NUMBERS

1
Way to the Father
(through Jesus)
John 14:6

2
Crucified between two thieves

3
Days in the Tomb

6
Trials before His crucifixion (3 religious and 3 secular)

7
Sayings on the cross

10
Jesus healed ten lepers, and only one thanked Him (Luke 17:11–19)

12
Apostles during His ministry

35
Recorded miracles (source: Halley’s Bible Handbook)

40
Ascended 40 days after the resurrection

52
Parables (source: Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia)

456
Messianic prophecy passages identified in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in Jesus

500
People who saw Him after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:5–8)

4000
Fed with seven loaves and a few fish

5000
Fed with five loaves and two fish

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Names and Titles for Jesus

There are over 200 names and titles given in the Bible for Jesus which show aspects of His character and role in our lives.

MAN
CHRIST
JESUS
SON OF GOD
SON OF MAN
KING
LORD
MAN OF SIN
HEIRESS OF THE PROMISE
TRUTH
WORD
SALVATION
MAN OF MOURNERS
INHERITOR OF THE MIGHTY
MYSTIC OFFERING
GENESIS OF THE CONSECRATION
KEEPER OF THE SEALS
HEIR OF ALL EXCELLENT GIFTS
ALPHA & OMEGA
HEAD OF THE APOSTLES
HEAD OF THE CHURCH
PRINCE OF PEACE
LAMB OF GOD
ANGER OF MAN
LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH
LAMB OF JERUSALEM
GENTLE SHEPHERD
LAMB OF GOD WITH US
RABBI
ADVOCATE
PRECIOUS CORNER STONE
SAVIOR

— Compiled by Gary N. Underwood

(Source: Eisenbeis, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah)
There’s a Great Day Coming

Excuses that won’t work at the Judgment:

**Lord, I didn’t know enough.** “Thy word is a . . . light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

**Lord, I didn’t know which church to join.** “And I say . . . I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). “Search, and look” (John 7:52).

**Lord, I didn’t believe I could hold out.**
“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

**Lord, I thought sincerity was all I needed.**
“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter . . . but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

**Lord, I thought my preacher was right.**
“They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

**Lord, I didn’t think I was good enough.**
“Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

**Lord, I was afraid to offend my family.** “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37).

**Lord, the church was not popular.** “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth . . . but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:5–8).

**Lord, there were too many hypocrites in the church.** “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

**Lord, I thought there was plenty of time.**
“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee . . .” (Luke 12:20). — Author Unknown