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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 3

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Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18

Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5

Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2

Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22

Organization:

Christ as head – Eph. 5:23

Elders oversee local church –
Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5

Deacons as servants –
Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13

Members compose body –
Col. 1:2

Name (group):

Church of God – Eph. 3:15

Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23

Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16

Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):

Disciples – John 15:8

Saints – Rm. 1:7

Brethren – Lk. 8:21

Children of God – Gal. 4:26

Christian – Acts 11:25-26

Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37

Rule of Faith & Practice:

Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24

Sing – Eph. 5:19

Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17

Teach – Acts 5:42

Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26

Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16

Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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Do you think you are the ONLY ONES GOING to HEAVEN?

Allen Webster

Non-church members ask church members. Muslims ask Christians. Protestants ask Catholics. The church asks the cults. Denominationalists ask it of the church of Christ.

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).

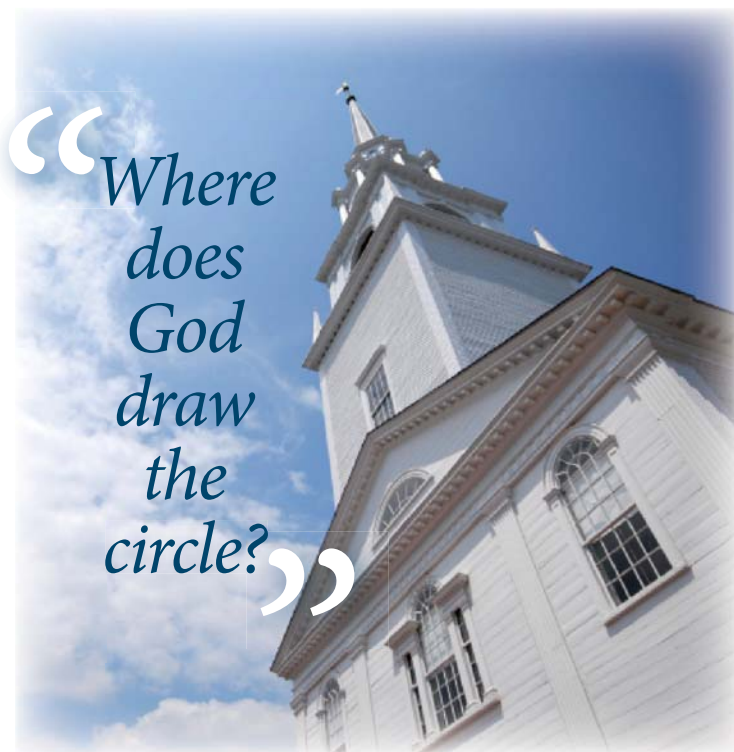
Where does God draw the circle? This is the real question. Whatever His Word says, is right (Psalm 33:4; 2 Timothy 3:16). We want to include every person that God includes and not a single person less, or more. Ultimately, nothing else matters. We could debate it, take a vote, and stand by it until judgment. 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).



The final sentence of Acts 2 records an important truth not to be missed in this discussion: "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Scripture nowhere records that sinners "joined" the church. God added each to it. This may seem insignificant—just a different way of saying the same thing—but it is not. Church membership is not in man's prerogative. Once he obeys the gospel (Acts 2:38, 41), it is out of his hands. Salvation and membership occur as a simultaneous process. One is not first saved and then added; nor added and later saved.

Thus the church is divinely assembled. The assembly pieces God uses are saved people. God puts each person He saves in the same place—the church. He puts no one else into that group. From that perspective, it is impossible for a saved person to be anywhere else. The church is the saved—all the saved, and none but the saved.

One says, "The church cannot save anyone;" or, "I can be a Christian and not be a member of any church." It is true that the church is not the Savior; Christ is. It is equally true that one cannot be saved outside the church. The church is not the Savior; it is the saved.

One cannot follow Christ without obeying Him (Luke 6:46; John 14:15). Since He commands baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), if one follows Him, then he will be baptized (Acts 18:8). At that time the person will be added to the church.

The church of God/of the living God will be saved. Besides "the church," the second most common description given early disciples is the "church of God" (found 11 times, e.g., Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:5, 15). This was not a "name," but a reference to the church's owner. God planned the church (Ephesians 3:8–10); He gave His Son's life to purchase it (John 3:16; Acts 20:28); He provides for it (Ephesians 3:20–21). So it is called the "church of God." (It does not refer to the denomination that wears this name today [which dates back only about 100 years and differs in doctrine from the original church of God].)

The church of the firstborn/of Christ will be saved. Early churches were also called churches of Christ (Romans 16:16;

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 turns a blind eye to its leaders abusing children 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
OBEY like Job
LEAD like Moses
PRAY like Daniel
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

Home PAGE



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.

"It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

MATTHEW 18:14

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).

"Therefore I will give thanks unto thee."

2 SAMUEL 22:50



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to 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?"

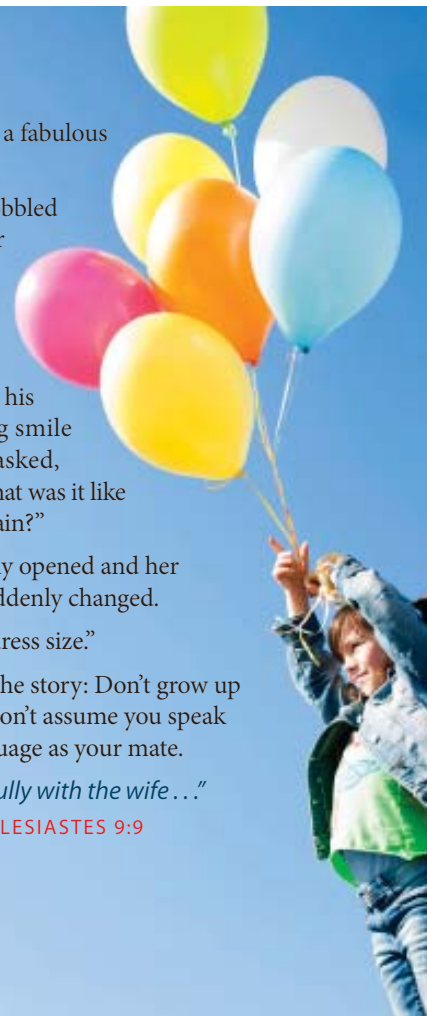
Her eyes slowly opened and her expression suddenly changed.

"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.

"Live joyfully with the wife . . ."

ECCLESIASTES 9:9





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.

Picture #1: The unquestioning obedience of Abraham (Genesis 22:9–12, 16–18; James 1:22, 2:14–16, 21–24).

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.

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Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the Church History Timeline bookmark as a way of saying "thanks" for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
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Questions Taken from the King James Version

Answers to Last Issue: The Seven Churches of Asia
 1. Ephesus (Revelation 2:1, 4); 2. Nicolaitans (2:6, 15); 3. Crown of life (2:10); 4. Smyrna (2:8–9); 5. Pergamos (2:12–13); 6. Antipas (2:13); 7. Balac (2:14); 8. Thyatira (2:18, 20); 9. Love, rebuke, repent (3:19); 10. Fornication, idols (2:20); 11. Laodiceans (3:14–15); 12. Thyatira (2:18–29); 13. Sardis (3:1); 14. Sardis (3:4); 15. Philadelphia (3:7–8); 16. Crown (3:11); 17. Laodiceans (3:14, 17); 18. Spirit, churches (2:7, 11, 17; 3:6, 13, 22).

The Inauguration of the New Testament Church

Directions: Find the answers below in Acts 2.

- The church began on the day of _____ (2:1).
- The coming of the Spirit’s arrival had both audible and visual confirmation. What were these? _____ (2:2–3).
- The apostles received the ability to speak with other _____, and every man heard them speak in his own _____ (2:4, 6).
- T/F There were both Jews and Gentiles present on this occasion (2:5).
- Those who mocked said that the apostles were full of _____ (2:13).
- What prophet foretold of these events (coming of Spirit)? _____ (2:16).
- Joel prophesied that “whosoever shall _____ on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (2:21) and Peter preached that those desiring salvation should “repent and be _____” (2:38), showing that calling on the Lord means more than simply praying.
- Jesus was shown to have God’s approval by “_____ and wonders and _____” (2:22).
- T/F Jesus’ death caught God by surprise (2:23).
- T/F Jesus’ body “saw corruption” (decomposed) while in the grave (2:27).
- It was prophesied that Jesus would sit on David’s _____ (2:29–30).
- “Know assuredly, that _____ hath made that same _____, whom ye have crucified, both _____ and Christ” (2:36).
- T/F Those who heard Peter’s sermon were angered by it (2:37).
- When asked, “What shall we do?”, Peter said, “_____”, and be _____ one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the _____ of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (2:38).
- T/F About a 1000 people were baptized this day (2:41).
- T/F Those who believed had all things common (shared what they had) (2:44).
- Circle one: Those who were saved (a) the Lord added to the church; (b) joined the church; (c) were voted in by the apostles and members (2:47).
- T/F These had a choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion (2:38, 41).
- And they continued _____ in the apostles’ doctrine (2:42).

TRUST

in the Lord

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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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



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| <input type="checkbox"/> Why Caleb Lived on a Mountain | <input type="checkbox"/> Back issues of <i>House to House/Heart to Heart</i> |

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*



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this copy to your family or friends.

