

SEEKERS

Bible Study Course

Lesson Six

THE CHURCH

When a person is baptized for the forgiveness of his sins, he is washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:11). Every sin that a person has ever committed is washed away by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5). He also has become a child of God because of his faith and obedience to the gospel.

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Galatians 3:26,27).

A Christian is a “new creation; old things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Remember, the Christian died to sin (old things have passed away); the sinful man has been put to death and has been born again (John 3: 1-7).

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

The question most frequently asked at the point is “But what happens if I sin now? Must I be baptized again?” The answer is that a person must **repent** of any sin which he commits and **confess it to God** Who is “faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). We do have the important responsibility to make sure that we are trying our best to obey God in all things.

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

In other words, once we come in contact with the blood of Jesus (in baptism), His blood continues to cleanse, as we make every effort to please God - to walk according to His truths in loving obedience.

Another blessing is that at the time of baptism, the Lord adds the saved person to the church (Acts 2:47).

What is the church? It is NOT a man-made organization. The Bible portrays it as the body of Christ. Jesus died to pay the purchase price of this body of redeemed people; He “*purchased it with His own blood*” (Acts 20:28). It is so precious to Him that He nourishes it and cherishes it (Ephesians 5:29).

The book of Ephesians discusses the church and its relationship to Jesus. Paul writes that God “*put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body...*” (Ephesians 1:22,23). He also writes that Jesus is “*the head of the church*” and “*the Saviour of the body*” (Ephesians 5:23). Paul then mentions several other things about Christ and the church.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having any spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25,27).

It is easy to see that Jesus not only loved us enough to die on the cross for our sins; but He also wants us to grow and mature as Christians. It is, likewise, easy to see how many churches there are: there is **one head** and **one body** (church). Paul states that very truth in Ephesians 4:4. “*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.*” This description makes perfect sense; after all, as human beings, each of us has one head and one

body.

Jesus is head over the entire church. In the **New** Testament the word “church” is used in two senses: it is used in the sense of the entire body of believers (as we saw it in the book of Ephesians); and it also refers (most of the time) to a local congregation of God’s people, such as “the church of the Thessalonians” (1 Thessalonians 1:1). All individual congregation of God’s people make up the church as a whole, but each congregation is Christ’s church in one particular geographical area.

How many different kinds of churches are there? The Bible speaks of *only one*. Remember, Ephesians 4:4 says that there is “one body”. In any area today, however, one will find a number of churches - all with difference names. These religious groups did not come from the Bible. Some man (or group of men) started them. The Lord is head over *just one body*. Paul wrote:

“For by one Spirit we were all or Greeks, whether slaves or into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians



baptized into one body- whether Jews free-and have all been made to drink 12:13).

When we were baptized for added us to the church, we and practices that are false. We the Bible, and our goal must be to *same mind and in the same*

the remission of our sins and the Lord probably brought with us many ideas must learn the truths that are taught in “*be perfectly joined together in the judgement*” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

When Christians began to divide themselves into separate groups in Corinth, Paul accused them of being carnal (fleshly) rather than spiritual.

“For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal?” (1 Corinthians 3:4).

Those who are saved by the blood of Christ are all in one body - His body. Unity is what Jesus prayed for (John 17:20,21), and it is what all true believers want. We have not been placed in separate spiritual bodies that hold conflicting views; there is *one* body, one church, Even Jews and Gentiles (who hated one another) are now members of one body. Consider the following text: *“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh - who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands- that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us” (Ephesians 2:11-14).

Now all people everywhere (rich or poor, or white, male or female) can be united in the church (Galatians 3:27,28). Paul goes on to say that the church was a mystery which was hidden in ages past but now is made known to all (Ephesians 3:1-7).

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God” (1 John 3:1).

We have several responsibilities in return.

First of all, having been cleansed of sins, we must do everything we can to keep ourselves pure (1 John 3:3). Second, having been born again, we must grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2). During that process we will learn that the whole body (the church) is

“joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share....” (Ephesians 4:16).

If you have already obeyed the gospel, you are blessed indeed to be part of the church. In the last two lessons, we will discuss worship and the Christian walk.