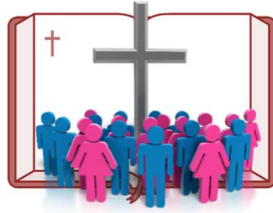


# Being Baptist

*"You have given me the heritage of those who fear Your name."*  
Psalm 61:5



## Lesson 8

### "WHY DON'T Y'ALL BAPTIZE BABIES?" Saved Church Membership

**LESSON AIM:** To explain the biblical view that membership in a New Testament church consists only of persons who have *individually* confessed Jesus Christ as Savior, been scripturally baptized, and expressed a willingness to follow Christ's teachings.

- **WELCOME & PRAYER / LESSON INTRODUCTION / THEME VERSE / LESSON AIM**
- **QUICK REVIEW: LESSONS 1-7**
- **PART 1: THE BAPTIST DOCTRINAL HALLMARKS (Continued)**
  - The Baptist Distinctives
    - B – Biblical Authority & The Lordship of Christ
    - A – Autonomy of the Local Church
    - P – Priesthood of Believers
    - T – Two Ordinances: Baptism & Communion
    - I – Individual Soul Liberty
    - S – Saved Church Membership
    - T – Two Offices: Pastors & Deacons
    - S – Separation of Church & State
- **SIXTH DISTINCTIVE: "S" = SAVED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**
  - Meaning of Saved Church Membership
    - Key Reference: Acts 2:41-47
    - Description: Saved church membership (also called regenerate church membership) means that membership in a N.T. local church consists only of individuals who have openly & consciously confessed Christ as Savior. This act of faith is followed by believer's baptism (by immersion), which is both a symbolic representation of being baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ at salvation as well as the public rite of local church membership.
  - ✓ Two Biblical Meanings of Church
    - ✓ The word "church" (from the Greek term, *ekklesia*) is found more than 100 times in the English Bible. Its literal meaning is "called out ones" or simply, "assembly." Yet, beginning with the first

N.T. mention of *ekklesia* (Matthew 16:18), the Bible imparts a unique use of the word when Jesus spoke of building “*My church* [assembly].” Since then, “church” is used almost exclusively as a reference to a sacred assembly of God’s people. In this regard, “church” has a dual meaning.

1. Universal Body of Christ (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23)
  - ✓ *First, we recognize the mystical, universal church to which all believers belong immediately upon accepting Christ as Savior.*
2. Local Congregation of Believers (Acts 13:1, 16:5, etc.)
  - *The second aspect of “church” is the local church, which receives the priority emphasis in the New Testament (over 90 references).*

➤ Does the New Testament Teach Church “Membership”?

- Three-Fold Progression of Acts 2:41 (“*received*” ... “*baptized*” ... “*added*”)
- N.T. Saints Continued to Be “*Added*” to the Church (Acts 2:47, 5:14, 11:24)
- Every Context of a Local Church in the N.T. Indicates “*Saved Membership*”
- Conclusion: Baptists believe the N.T. is clear that church membership is important & necessary. However, it is only available to (1) individuals who are saved by grace through faith in Christ and (2) have been obedient to the Lord’s command to be baptized.
- Caveat: Church membership will neither save a person nor keep a person saved. Salvation is in Christ alone. However, the Bible does tell us that the local church is God’s agency for reaching the world for Christ, and saved people should be obedient to join a N.T. local congregation of believers.

**QUOTABLE QUOTE:** “The biblical basis for seeing the church as composed exclusively of believers is so strong and obvious that the difficulty is in seeing how this idea was ever obscured... This principle of a regenerated Church membership, more than anything else, marks our [Baptist] distinctiveness in the Christian world today” (John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*, 2005).

➤ Views of Church Membership that Do Not Follow the New Testament Pattern

- Catholicism
- Protestantism
- “Open” Membership-ism

✓ The Importance of Local Church Membership

- *Establishes a person’s commitment to Christ*
- *Places a person under God-ordained spiritual leaders*
- *Establishes accountability for a person’s spiritual life*
- *Provides God’s means for spiritual growth*
- *Provides God’s structure for effective ministry*

● **SUMMATION / PREVIEW OF LESSON 9 / QUESTION & ANSWER TIME / BENEDICTION**