

THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

John Edwards

Must one be a member of the church of Christ to be saved? What is the condition of those outside the Lord's body?

1) **THEY ARE WITHOUT CHRIST.** There is no way one can have Christ without the church. As a builder and building (Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9), husband and wife (Rom. 7:1-4; 2 Cor. 11:2), head and body (Eph. 1:21-23; Col. 1:18), foundation and house (1 Cor. 3:11; Heb. 3:6), *“Christ and the church”* go together (Eph. 5:32). One can't be in Christ and not be in the church of Christ, for what puts us in Christ puts us in the church (Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:24). Thus, anything said to be in Christ is not found outside the church. Some things found in Christ include: redemption (Rom. 3:24), sanctification (1 Cor. 1:2), liberty (Gal. 2:4), all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), an inheritance (Eph. 1:11), reconciliation (Eph. 2:13), the hope and promise of eternal life (2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:2), and salvation (2 Tim. 2:10). To be outside the church is to be without Christ!

2) **THEY ARE WITHOUT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.** The blood flows through the body,

and the life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11). If blood supply is cut off to any part of the body, it dies! The same is true of the Lord's body, the church. Ephesians 2:13, 16 connect the blood of Christ and the body of Christ. What puts one into Christ and the body brings him into contact with the blood. Jesus shed His blood in His death (Jn. 19:33-34), and we are *“baptized into his death”* (Rom. 6:3-4). It is in the body that we have the benefits of the blood. There are many things made possible by the blood of Christ: justification (Rom. 5:9), redemption (Eph. 1:7), reconciliation (Eph. 2:13), the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14), peace (Col. 1:20), sanctification (Heb. 13:12), and much more. To be outside the church is to be apart from the blood supply!

We plead with you to gladly receive the word and be baptized, that the Lord may add you to His church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47), where you avail yourself of the blessings in Christ and the benefits of His blood.

IF YOU CLAIM HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

John Edwards

Some today claim to have been baptized with the Holy

Spirit as the apostles of the New Testament. If you claim such:

1) **ARE YOU AN APOSTLE?** Baptism with the Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles. Christ told *“the apostles”* in Luke 24:49 to *“wait for the promise of the Father...For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence”* (Acts 1:2-5). Holy Spirit baptism was received by *“the apostles”* on Pentecost as, *“they were all filled with the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 1:26-2:4). To receive Holy Spirit baptism today, one would have to be an apostle. There are no living apostles on earth today, for no one meets the qualifications (Acts 1:21-22). Have you been with the Lord from the beginning (Jn. 15:26-27)?

2) **ARE YOU ABLE TO SPEAK WITH TONGUES AS THE APOSTLES?** Tongue speaking, the supernatural ability to speak a language one did not know and had not studied, accompanied baptism with the Holy Spirit, for the apostles *“began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”* (Acts 2:4). Are you able to do such?

3) **DO YOU HAVE A COMPLETE AND INFALLIBLE RECOLLECTION OF THE LORD'S WORD?** In the promise of the Holy Spirit to the

apostles, Jesus said, *“he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”* (Jn. 14:26). If you received what the apostles received, then you should have what the apostles had. If not, why not?

Is any willing to give answer to these questions?

WHO’S CAUSING CONFUSION?

John Edwards

As we *“use great plainness of speech”* in presenting *“the unsearchable riches of Christ”* (2 Cor. 3:12; Eph. 3:8), there are those who accuse us of causing confusion.

1) GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF CONFUSION. It is not our intention to add to the confusion that abounds in the religious world. If you think we are causing confusion, please give us a specific example of something we have said that warrants such a charge. Confusion is not the result of God, nor is it of those who

speak the word of God, *“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace...”* (1 Cor. 14:33).

2) WHEN CONFUSION RESULTS. Confusion results when people speak different languages. This is seen early on, in the dividing of nations, as recorded in Genesis 11:1-9. The whole earth was of one language and speech. This common language made the people one. When their language was confounded, confusion was the result. Where confusion persists, division exists, as the people were scattered abroad!

3) A PLEA FOR UNITY. It is our prayer and our plea, as it is the Lord’s, that we all might be one (Jn. 17:20-21). One reason there are so many unbelievers in the world is because of the lack of unity among those who claim to be believers. The only way to end the division is to stop the confusion, and confusion will only cease when we all speak the same thing. Paul wrote, *“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no*

divisions among you...” (1 Cor. 1:10). We will all speak the same language, when we *“speak as the oracles of God”* (1 Pet. 4:11).

4) SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES. Should you ask three different mathematicians the basic question, “What is the sum of one plus one?” and get three different answers, confusion would result, and you would know all three could not be right. Now, when you ask three different preachers the simple question, “What is the action of Bible baptism: sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?”, you might get three different answers. The only way you would know which is right is to search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11). The word of the Lord is right (Ps. 33:4). The one who says what the word says speaks the truth (Jn. 17:17). The one who speaks contrary to the word speaks that which is false, causes confusion, and is responsible for division. This requires us to, *“believe not every spirit, but try the spirits”* (1 Jn. 4:1) and *“prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (1 Th. 5:21).

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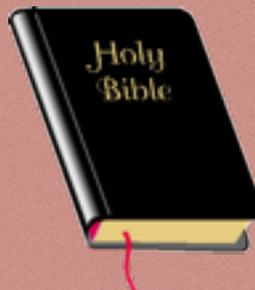
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