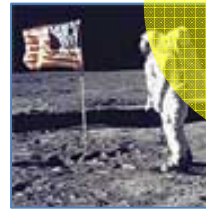


## Questions for Study Two

1. Can a person be saved without hearing Biblical teaching?  
YES / NO
2. Can a person be saved without being a member of the Church?  
YES / NO
3. How many books are there in the New Testament?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Paul feel so unworthy?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. In what city were the disciples first called Christians?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What does it mean to abide or remain in Jesus' word?
  - a. Listen
  - b. Read
  - b. c. Obey
  - d. Understand
7. Place the following events in order of time by assigning numbers with number one being the first event.
  - \_\_\_ Paul was saved
  - \_\_\_ Paul persecuted the Church
  - \_\_\_ Paul wrote to Timothy
  - \_\_\_ Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus
  - \_\_\_ Ananias told Paul to get baptized
8. Who is the worst of sinners?
  - a. Me
  - b. Paul
  - c. Everyone
  - d. No one
9. Who baptized Paul?
  - a. Jesus
  - b. Peter
  - c. Ananias
  - d. Agrippa
10. At the end of his letter to the Romans Paul sent greetings from
  - a. The Catholic Church
  - b. The Protestant Churches
  - c. Churches of Christ
  - d. Church of your choice
11. \_\_\_\_\_ comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.
12. Jesus and His apostles required baptism for salvation. YES / NO
13. Do you understand how baptism saves us? YES / NO

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# LIFE-SEARCH



*But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Deuteronomy 4:29

A LOOK INTO THE HEART OF GOD THROUGH THE STUDY OF HIS WORD

Part Two

## *The Body of Christ* *The Church*

In part one of this series we took a look at how Jesus is the fulfillment of all that is written in the Bible. That might cause some people to think that we don't need the Bible anymore but the fact is that Jesus demonstrated His need for scripture and He also called His followers to stay close to the written word as we shall see. The question we are looking into in this discussion is:

**Can a person be saved without hearing Biblical teaching?** That in turn leads to another question: **Can a person be saved without being a Church member?**

Several of the 27 Books of the New Testament were written by Paul who was an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can actually find quite a bit of detail about this man's story in the book of Acts and it is a story filled with adventure and tragedy and overwhelming hope. Many of us tend to think we are too bad for God to be able to forgive us but if you know anything about Paul then you know that is not how God looks at it. In fact we all have to compete with Paul for the position of "worst of sinners" for that is how he described himself in 1 Timothy 1:15

Why did Paul think of himself as the worst of sinners? A couple of sentences earlier he tells us that...*"though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief"* 1 Timothy 1:13

Paul makes the same point in 1 Corinthians 15:9 where he says, *For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

We can read about these events in Paul's life in Acts 9 where we are told that Saul (his Hebrew name) was *"breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord"* (Acts 9:1)

Let's ask some more questions now:

#### **What are Disciples of the Lord?**

- a. Followers of Jesus and His teachings. Jesus urged His disciples to remain in His Word (John 8:31)
- b. They are also known as "Christians" (Acts 11:26)
- c. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:9 they are the "church of God".

#### **Why Did Paul persecute them?**

- a. He later explains to King Agrippa (Acts 26:1-23) that he was brought up as a member of the sect called Pharisees (Acts 21:5). He genuinely believed that his way of life was the ideal way and that the teachings of Jesus would destroy that way, so he was determined to destroy the way of Jesus. Paul sometimes referred to the church as the "Way" (Acts 22:4)
- b. Jesus referred to Himself as "The way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). However, many of us still fight to have our own way.

#### **What happened to change Paul?**

- a. Paul loved to tell this story as we have already seen from Acts 22 and Acts 26. The actual account is found in Acts 9:1-19.
- b. While Paul was on a mission to destroy the church in Damascus he had a visit from the Lord. When Paul asked who it was he was told, *"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."* (Acts 9:4,5) So, there is no distinction between Jesus and the Church.
- c. Jesus told Paul that he was to be His minister to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15) but first he must go into Damascus and have an encounter with one of Jesus' disciples name Ananias. (Acts 9:6-19)
- d. As we look closely at this encounter we see the continuity between what Jesus taught about salvation, what the apostle Peter was preaching about salvation in Jerusalem and what those disciples who were on the run were teaching about salvation. This is very important so let's review it.

**Jesus:** *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned*

Mark 16:16

**Peter** *And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 2:38

**Ananias**



*"Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized;*

Acts 9:17,18

**Also from Paul's account in Acts 22:16**

*"And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name."*

Many years later, we find Paul declaring how, though he once persecuted the Lord, he now calls on His name ( 1 Timothy 1:13-17). Paul knows the danger of following man's traditions so he makes sure we hear words like *"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ"* (Romans 10:17). As he ends that letter to the Romans he will say, *"All the churches of Christ greet you"* (Romans 16:16). In his lifetime Paul lived to see the Church planted all over the world and countless souls baptized into Christ. As you and I hear Paul's words today we can know that Jesus sent Paul to teach as He also sent Peter and James and others. We have those teachings written down and preserved in the Bible. We can hold to the words of Jesus today and thus be true disciples - members of the Church. To Paul, that was no small thing. Listen as he describes God's mind for the church to the Ephesians. *His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.*, Ephesians 3:10,11

Paul would never forget his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. That is where he began to learn the connection between Christ and His followers. It is not hard to see why he was so comfortable using the term "Body of Christ" for the Church.

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*

1 Corinthians 12:27