



Joining a Church by [John T Polk II](#)

*All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.*

Denominational evangelists commonly tell those who respond to their preaching to "pray the sinner's prayer" and then "join the church of your choice." According to such preachers, one is saved by faith alone. He must ask Jesus to come into his heart and forgive him of his sins (the so-called "sinner's prayer"). The one who does this is saved.

The church has nothing to do with it. Whether or not such a one is baptized has nothing to do with his salvation. One should be baptized and become a member of a church, but he is saved before and without either, according to these preachers.

The Bible Has a Different Plan

The Bible is God's Word. In it, He has told us what we must do to be saved. What then does the Bible teach about salvation? Must one be baptized? Is it necessary in order to be saved? What about joining a church? Does it have anything to do with our salvation?

The **second** chapter of the book of **Acts** tells of the first preaching of the gospel (Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection on the third Day) (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**).

The apostles had waited in Jerusalem as the Lord had said (**Acts 1:4-8**). They were baptized in the Holy Spirit as evidenced by their speaking in languages they had never learned. When the multitude heard them speaking, they were amazed and asked what it meant. Peter addressed them and pointed out that this baptism of the Spirit had been prophesied by Joel.

He then preached that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ. God confirmed this by the miracles Jesus worked. The Jews had crucified and slain Jesus, but God had raised Him from the dead the third day. The apostles were witnesses.

When the multitude heard Peter, the Bible says "they were cut to the heart." Obviously, they believed the gospel they had just heard. They were deeply convicted of their sins, particularly of crucifying the Son of God.

The Bible Has a Different Answer

They cried out to the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They wanted to know what to do to be saved. Peter did not have them pray "the sinner's prayer." No record of such a prayer is found anywhere in the Bible! It is purely a "doctrine and commandment of men."

They had heard and believed the gospel so Peter told them simply:

Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38**).

Neither did Peter tell sinners to "Join the church of your choice." But the Bible does say,

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them (**Acts 2:41**).

The chapter goes on to speak of the continued preaching of the gospel and ends with the statement,

And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (**Acts 2:47**).

The Bible Way

When sinners hear the gospel and believe it, are convicted of their sins and repent of them, and are then baptized for the remission of their sins, they are added by the Lord to the church. No joining is necessary. The Lord does the adding. He adds them to His church, not a denomination founded by men.

-- John T Polk II

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