

“PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD”

Before his departure from Ephesus, the apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders, “take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). There is only one institution which has been purchased with divine blood – the church of Christ. Jesus has only one body (Eph. 4:4), and God made Jesus “to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body.” (Eph. 1:22-23).

There are many sincere, religious individuals who claim that the particular church (or body) of which one is a member does not matter. Perhaps you have heard or read the statement, “choose the church of your choice.” By implication, this doctrine proclaims that one can be saved in any church (or body) of his choosing. Further, these individuals teach that one does not *have* to be a member of “their church” in order to be saved. If one can be saved *outside* of his particular church, then why choose to be in that body?

Conversely, the Bible teaches that the church one chooses is of great importance. If one wants to be bought by the blood of Christ, he must be in the church which has been purchased by Jesus’ blood. Most all religious people would agree that man cannot be saved apart from the blood of Christ (cf., Rom. 5:9; Rev. 1:5). This being the case, one cannot be saved apart from the church purchased by Jesus’ blood. Only those who are in the church of Christ “are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:19). In order to be redeemed by the blood, one must be in the body of Christ – His kingdom. God “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:13-14). If we are not in the church which belongs to Christ, then we are not “in Christ,” and if we are not “in Christ,” then we are not redeemed, or purchased, by His blood.

In order to be saved (i.e., redeemed by Christ’s blood) one must be in Christ’s church. The Bible teaches that one must believe (John 8:24), repent of past sins (Luke 13:3), make the great confession that Jesus is Christ and Lord (Acts 8:37), and be baptized (immersed) in water in order to have his past sins washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Baptism is the culminating act of obedience which puts one “into Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:3), the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), the body of the saved (Acts 2:47). After an individual is baptized, immersed in water in order to have his sins forgiven (Acts 2:38), one is “in Christ” and “he is a new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17). You can only begin your new life if you choose the church which has been purchased by Jesus’ blood and not the “church of your choice.”

– *Brad Green*