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**Q. Is the Church of Christ the only church recognised by the Lord?
Can one be saved in any denomination?**

A. 1. *The One Church.* It should be abundantly clear to any student of scripture that the Lord has only one church. The testimony of the Lord is emphatic on the point. Matt. 16:18 'Upon this rock I will build my church' (not churches); John 10:16: '... and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.' Jesus prayed, 'That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' (John 17:21). The oneness of the people of God is to be as close as that between the Father and the Son. The Lord further demonstrated (John 15) the same truth by the figure of a vine. Here He represents Himself as the vine, the apostles as the branches, and all Christians as the fruit. All are one, from and in the one vine.

Paul's words are equally emphatic. Eph. 4:4: 'There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.' That the 'one body' is the church is seen from Eph. 1:22-23 and Col. 1:18. Again, Paul shows the same truth under the figure of a temple (1 Cor. 3:16) and a house (1 Tim. 3:15). Again notice, he does not speak of many temples, and many houses, but one temple, and one house.

2. *Denominationalism and the One Church.* Many denominations recognise this truth, but claim that the sects are various parts of the one church. But this is not true. When the Lord used the figure of a vine, with its branches and fruit (John 15); or Paul used the figure of a body and its constituent parts (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-20) or a temple and its building (Eph. 2:20-22), they spoke of individual Christians, and not of sects and parties. Paul clearly shows this in 1 Cor. 12:25. Again, the word 'churches,' is only used in the New Testament of individual congregations within the 'one body' and not of different sects (see Rom. 16:16; Rev. 1:4).

Denominationalism can have no place in the Body of Christ, for it (a) Destroys the union of the 'one body' (1 Cor. 1:10-12; 12:25); (b) Is of human origin, and therefore will be eventually destroyed by the Lord (Matt. 15:13); (c) Dishonours the name of Christ (1 Cor. 1:12-13); (d) Is condemned as a sin (Gal. 5:19-20, see R.V. marg.). Note that 'factions,' and 'parties,' are put on a par with such sins as fornication and idolatry; (e) Carries within itself the seeds of its own decay (Luke 11:17); (f) Is to be rejected by all true Christians, in that they are warned to reject all those that cause division (Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10; 2 John 9-11).

3. *Denominationalism and Salvation.* The above in itself shows that denominationalism and salvation cannot be found together, for sectarianism is a sin which excludes from the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:19-21, R.V.). The same truth can be seen from the opposite aspect, for no-one can be saved outside the Church of Christ. (a) There is no salvation except in Christ (Acts 4:12). To be in Christ, is to be in His Body, the Church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1, 18); (b) to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, we must come into the institution for which He shed His blood (Acts 20:28); (c) to be reconciled to God, we must be in His Church (Eph. 2:16); (d) to be in the family of God, we must be in His Church (Eph. 1:4-5; 1 Tim. 3:15; 'house', 'household', see American Standard R.V.); (e) to be assured of eternity, we must be in His Church, for she is the Bride, and the Lord is the Bridegroom (Eph. 5:25-27); (f) all spiritual blessings are in Christ. The Church is '... the fulness of him that filleth all in all' (Eph. 1:23); (g) the Lord alone adds to His Church (Acts 2:42).

May it be added, lest there be any misunderstanding, that when we use the term, 'the church', or 'the church of Christ' we include all Christians; that is, all those, *but only those*, who have obeyed, and are adhering faithfully to the Lord's word, wherever they are, whether known to us or not.