

Ecclesiology (Doctrine of the Church)

Thesis: *Christian = member of church*

1 Timothy 3:15

The household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth.

Colossians 1:18

Christ is the head of the body, the church.

1 Corinthians 12:14-15, 27

¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

(1) You cannot separate Christian belief from Christian community

(2) But aren't there people in the church who aren't truly believers?

Matthew 13:24-30

²⁴Jesus put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?'

²⁸He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers: Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" (See also 1 John 2:19)

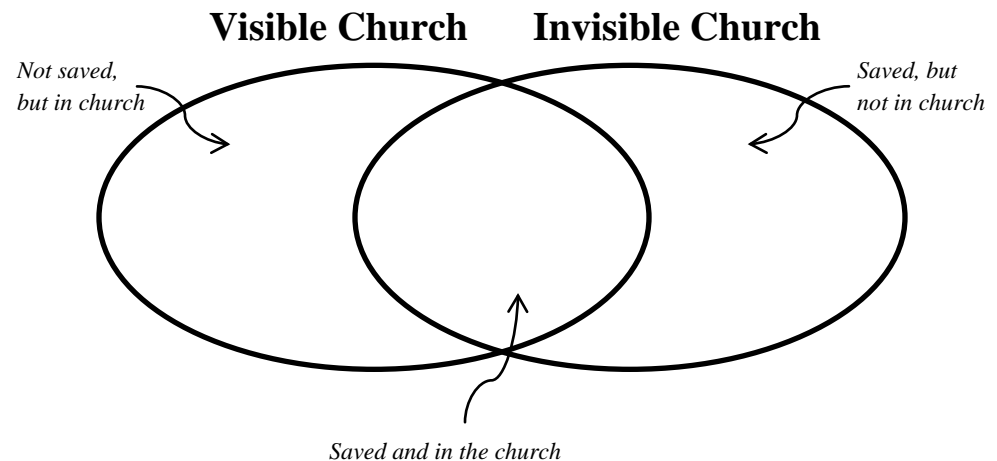
(3) And there are people who are saved who are not in a local church

Luke 23:43

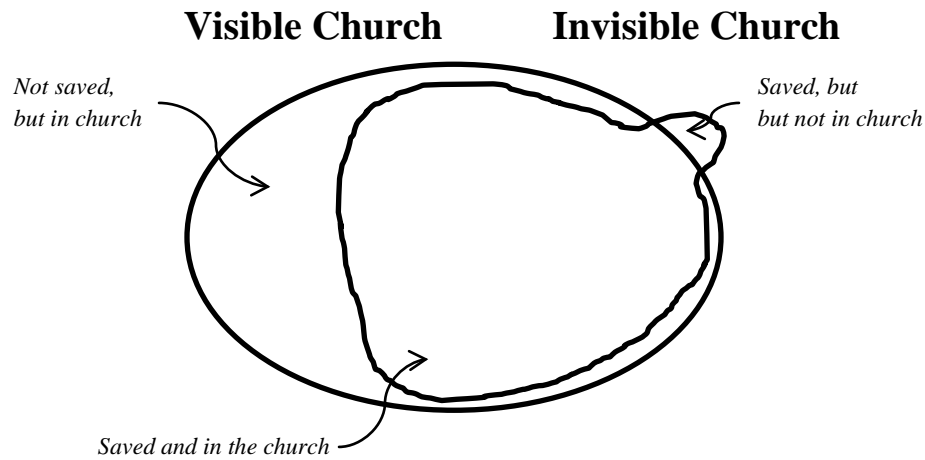
And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

(4) There is a distinction between the Visible and Invisible Church

Visible Church	Invisible Church
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all those who are baptized • the church as we see it • visible, public Christians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all those who are saved • the church as God sees it • the elect of God

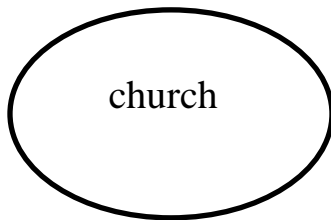


(5) In reality, the situation looks more like this:

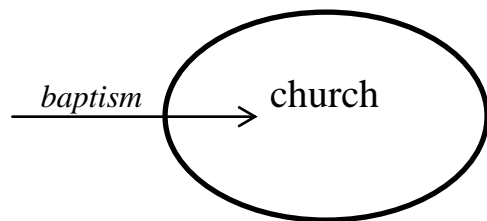


(6) Since the Visible Church is all we can see, we act like this:

Member of visible church = Christian



(7) Baptism is the visible sign of joining the visible church



1 Corinthians 12:13

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

(8) But aren't we baptized into the universal church?

- (a) *the universal church is manifest in local churches; thus each "local church" is, in fact, the visible church.* (Gospel Coalition doctrine statement)
- (b) *you cannot belong to the universal church without belonging to a local church; otherwise, how would you experience real Christian community?*

Hebrews 13:17

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. ² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

(9) Therefore, Communion (Lord's Table) is only for church members

1 Corinthians 11:27

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.

(10) There is no salvation, ordinarily, outside the church

Acts 2:47

And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

(11) Jesus is calling us to plant churches in Great Commission

Matthew 28:19

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.