

The Christian's Position "In Christ"

Lesson # 3 – We Are In Christ – Part II

In lesson #2, we studied certain aspects of our "being in Christ", namely that:

1. We are totally in Christ. Section I of Lesson #2
2. Jesus in His High Priestly Prayer (Jn 17) prayed for us to the Father. Section II. of Lesson #2
3. God had an eternal plan for us being in Christ. Section III. A. of Lesson #2
4. We were in Christ while Christ walked this earth in His living, in His suffering, and in His death. Section III. B. of Lesson #2
5. We were in Christ in His burial, in His resurrection, and in His ascension to be with the Father. Section III. B. 3. of Lesson #2
6. We were in Christ in His heavenly return as an heir of all spiritual blessings. Section III. B. 4. of Lesson #2

In this lesson we will continue with the utter thoroughness of what it means to "be in Christ".

I. We are "In Christ" During Our Lives Now:

Now that we are actually physically born as living beings, created in the womb by God, we who are elect in Christ, chosen by God from eternity past, become the realization of what God had conceived in His mind.

A. We were born in Adam,

Eph 2:1-3 *And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ¹ in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ² Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ³*

1. When we were physically born, we were born "in Adam", although we may also be "elect in Christ". We were born spiritually dead to God. We were dead because of our own nature to trespass and sin against a holy and just God. Nothing in our nature indicated that God had set His love upon us in eternity past and had always considered us to be "in Christ".

Only the God-head knew of our secret position "in Christ". And yet, it was as though it had been fully realized because it was in the Creator's mind. Remember, He's never wrong!

2. In our lives before the regeneration of our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we lived according to the course of this world. We actually were lost to God and lived in rebellion to God, according to the prince of the power of the air (Satan); we lived according to the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience. We were actually in our own mind and nature, lost to God and slaves to Satan, bound up in our own willful depravity as all men are.

3. In our lives before regeneration of our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we lived:

- in the lust of our flesh,
- indulging the desires of the flesh,
- indulging the desires of our fallen minds,
- were by nature children of wrath even as the rest – the wrath is from God.

Even though we were "in Christ" before the foundation of the world in the mind of God, in this life: We were desperately lost and at enmity with God. We were totally ignorant of God who had set His love upon us from eternity past.

The Christian's Position "In Christ"

B. God's Rescue Operation

In our lost and wicked state we needed to be rescued from our own nature and from the wrath of God that must be directed towards us if God be a just and righteous God. He cannot overlook our sin.

Although we (the "elect") were chosen in Him before time began, nevertheless we were still in our fallen state and in need of rescue. The passage from Ephesians above continues with perhaps the 2 most important words to us personally in the whole of Scripture.

Eph 2:3-7 ³Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴**But God,** ⁵being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁶even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁷and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁸so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Some important points to remember about this passage:

1. We were no different in our wickedness than all other lost men. We had no merit.
2. We were saved because God in His great mercy reached out and regenerated our heart.
3. God had a great love for each one of us even when we were dead to Him in our sin.
4. God:
 - i. made us alive **with Christ**.
 - ii. raised us up **with Christ**.
 - iii. seated us **with Christ** in the heavenly places.
 - iv. had placed us "**in Christ**".
 - v. for the purpose of showing the surpassing riches of His grace and kindness toward us "**in Christ**".

C. Our Experience in the New Birth

When we are first born physically, we don't really know much about what happened. We just find ourselves here amongst these strange people. We are not grateful. We don't even know what gratitude is. If we did, we wouldn't know who to be grateful to.

In our new birth, likewise, we are born anew into a new spiritual reality. In the old physical awareness, we do know enough to be grateful for our salvation from sin, but we are babes in this new spiritual non-awareness.

We have to be fed, nurtured, taught, disciplined, and formed into what God wants us to know about Him and what He has done for us. (hence the Church) Remember, God was a stranger and an enemy to us in our old consciousness. We didn't know Him at all. We were dead to Him.

Problem Statement: In many evangelical Churches in the U.S. today, this is where we are left to wail away in ignorance of God's glorious work. We got saved, but no one cares to disciple us. We are left as babes in Christ. Our Churches told us that we needed to "come to Christ", but they failed to tell us about our "**abiding in Christ**".

What Actually Did Happen:

Col 2:9-15 For **in Him** all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰and **in Him** you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; ¹¹and **in Him** you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; ¹²having been **buried with Him in baptism**, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

The Christian's Position "In Christ"

¹³When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

1. We have been **buried with Him** in baptism of regeneration. v. 12a
(Water baptism is an important symbol and a public confession of our new position in Christ.)
2. We have been **raised up from death in Christ.** v. 12b
3. We have **died to our sins and to our old nature in Adam.** v. 13a
4. We were **made spiritually alive in Christ.** v. 13b
5. Our **transgressions have been forgiven in Christ.** v. 13c
6. Our **certificate of sin debt was cancelled in Christ.** v. 14a
7. Our **certificate of sin debt was nailed to the cross of Christ.** v. 14b
8. Christ **disarmed the wicked spiritual authorities with His work on the cross.** v. 15a
9. Christ **made a public display of these wicked spiritual authorities that had enslaved us.** v.15b

II. We Now Have New Life in Christ

Our old life "in Adam" was exchanged for the new life "in Christ". This concept of the exchanged life is a critical element of our understanding of our sanctification unto Christ. We cannot hold onto that old man. He is dead.

Nevertheless, this old man still walks around and terrorizes you because you have made him into a living zombie. Put this man to death! You cannot do that until you accept the new man you are now "in Christ".

Gal 2:17-21 *But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be! ¹⁸For if I rebuild what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor. ¹⁹For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. ²¹I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.*

What does this passage tell us specifically?

1. I have died to the old self who could not live according to the perfect Law of God. v. 19a
2. I now live to God rather than to the Law. I depend on Him for my righteousness of which I have none to offer to God. v. 19b
3. My old self has been put to death with Christ on the cross. v. 20a
4. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. My flesh now lives by faith in the Son of God. v. 20b
5. I have no self-righteousness, but I live by faith through God's mighty and free grace that He poured out on me, a former wretch and an enemy of His. v. 20c

Eph 2:8-10 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. God sovereignly, in accordance with His own will:*

1. Elects us unto salvation in eternity past.
2. Predestines us to salvation in eternity past.
3. Regenerates our heart, killing off the old Adam, and making us a

The Christian's Position "In Christ"

new Creation in Christ.

v. 10a

4. Causes us to repent of our wickedness and gives us faith.
5. Has prepared works for us that we should live to accomplish these work assignments.

v. 10b

III. All of Our Actions are to be Done "in Christ":

Now that we are "in Christ" and have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit and are redeemed from our own sin, and have been rescued from our slavery to sin, we have a great obligation to live a life in union with Christ, acting on His behalf, proclaiming Him in all that we say and that we do. We are now to be slaves to righteousness in our new position "in Christ". An ambassador to the world!

Here is where we stand now:

Eph 4:17-24 *So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. ²⁰But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

1. We who are "in Christ" are never to walk as the lost pagans do. v. 17a
2. They walk in this wickedness because their minds think in futility. v. 17b
3. Their minds are darkened in their understanding. Their sin nature keeps them from seeing the Truth. v. 18a
4. These lost people are excluded from the life of God because of ignorance about the spiritual things of God. Because they are captive to their own sin nature, and because their father is Satan, they are in bondage to the deceiving lies of the world and cannot come to Christ unless God's grace is revealed to them by the power of the Holy Spirit. They need a new heart, not a good argument. v. 18b-19
5. But you did not learn of Christ by human wisdom and logic. God's Holy Spirit enlightened you! v. 20
6. We are to lay aside the old self with its corruption by our own sinful nature and the lies and deception of Satan and his demons. v. 22a
7. The spirit of our mind is to be renewed in the truth that is found in Jesus Christ. God's Holy Spirit testifies with our own spirit as to the truthfulness of the gospel of God. **Rom 8:14-17** v. 23
8. Our "new self", which is in the likeness of God has been created as something entirely new that did not exist before. This new self is righteous and holy regarding the Truth of Christ. v. 24

In Christ, we have exchanged our old life of sin and wickedness for our new life "in Christ". We have been adopted into the family of God. We are now objects of God's love.

1. By God's grace, we exchanged God's wrath for God's love.
2. By God's grace, we exchanged paganism for sainthood.
3. By God's grace, we exchanged our old identify "in Adam" for our new identity "in Christ".
4. By God's grace, we exchanged eternal torment for royal inheritance found in our adoption.
5. By God's grace, we exchanged bondage to sin and death for submission to and the love of Christ.
6. By God's grace, we exchanged depravity for righteousness.

The Christian's Position "In Christ"

7. By God's grace, we exchanged corruption for holiness.

This was a **great exchange**. Sadly, many Christians live lives of defeat and depression, because they have not been taught this concept of "the exchanged life" which is found in the doctrine of Union with Christ and is lived out "in Christ" and in His power!

- Consider this simple website: <http://www.elmco.org/about/statement-of-faith>

IV. Conclusion

The promises of God to His people are real, they are "now". God set His love upon His elect saints in eternity past. In this life He sought us out and redeemed us against our very sinful nature. All that we are now "in Christ" is based on God's love towards His chosen people.

As His children, as His chosen, we dare not be other than grateful. We serve in great gratitude for what the Father decreed, for the work that the Son did on the cross, and for what the Holy Spirit did in seeking us out and regenerating our heart so that we could finally see and know the perfect love of our sovereign God.

Some Important Quotes:

If we ask the reason why those who have indeed accepted the Saviour, and been made partakers of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, thus come short of the full salvation prepared for them, I am sure the answer will in very many cases be, that ignorance is the cause of the unbelief that fails of the inheritance.

If, in our orthodox churches, the abiding in Christ, the living union with Him, the experience of His daily and hourly presence and keeping, were preached with the same distinctness and urgency as His atonement and pardon through His blood, I am confident that many would be found to accept with gladness the invitation to such a life, and that its influence would be manifest in their experience of the purity and the power, the love and the joy, the fruit-bearing, and all the blessedness which the Saviour connected with the abiding in Him. **Andrew Murray** *Abiding in Christ*; p. 28

Over and over we have witnessed the spectacle of people coming forward in a service to recommit their lives. They rededicate, rededicate, and rededicate their lives, and nothing ever changes. In essence, they are coming down to say, "God, I'm really serious this time. This time I'll do it if it kills me!" To them I say, "Don't worry. It will!" I know, because it killed me.

We have simply not come to grips with the fact that it isn't hard to live the Christian life. It's impossible! Only Christ can live it. And that's why our only hope is to learn that Jesus Christ did not come just to get men out of hell and into heaven; He came to get Himself out of heaven and into men! **Bob George**; *Classic Christianity*; p. 52