

What It Means To Be In Christ

Introduction. Throughout time, God has located His blessings. Accordingly, to receive His gracious blessings from His hand, we have to be in that given location (Exodus 20:24). In the case of Noah, God located the blessing in the ark (1 Peter 3:20). In the case of Naaman, God located the blessing in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:10). There were rivers closer in Damascus, but they would not suffice. In the case of the blind man, God located the blessing in the pool of Siloam (John 9:7). There were several pools in Jerusalem, but they would not suffice.

In like manner, God's blessings are still located, and they are "in Christ," as we shall see momentarily. Hence, our present study is captioned, "What it means to be in Christ." We will make five observations in consideration of this vital and eternally significant statement.

I. ***We Are Members Of The Lord's Church***

- A. The church is composed of those "in Christ."
 - 1. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he wrote to those who were "in Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:2).
 - 2. So if it is important to be in Christ (and we will see in a moment that it is), it is important to be in His church.
- B. It is vital to be a member of the church.
 - 1. The church is eternally purposed in its nature (Ephesians 3:10-11).
 - 2. The church is purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25).
 - 3. The church glorifies God in its mission (Ephesians 3:20-21).
 - 4. The church is heaven-bound in its destiny (1 Corinthians 15:23-26).

II. ***We Are Saved From Our Sins***

- A. Salvation is explicitly said to be "in Christ."
 - 1. The word "also" in 2 Timothy 2:10 implies that even Paul had to be "in Christ" to obtain salvation.
 - 2. If this were the case with Paul, then surely, we must too be "in Christ."
- B. Salvation is enjoyed in Christ's church, and to be "in Christ" is to be in His church.
 - 1. The Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47). Therefore, if a person is added to the church, it is because he has been saved. Neither can stand alone.

2. Furthermore, Christ "is the savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). And the body is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24).

III. ***We Are The Recipients Of All Spiritual Blessings***

- A. God's spiritual blessings are locative.
 1. There are several points to consider from Ephesians 1:3:
 - a. God is to be thanked.
 - b. He is to be thanked because of the blessings He has given us.
 - c. The recipients of these blessings are the "us" ones, i.e., "the saints" and "the faithful" (Ephesians 1:1).
 - d. The blessings He has given us are identified as being numerous, spiritual in nature, and inclusive to everyone.
 - e. These blessings are located in "heavenly places."
 - f. These "heavenly places" wherein "all spiritual blessings" are located is "in Christ."
 2. When one thinks about the spiritual blessings we have in Christ, we can see that we are the fortunate recipients of God's amazing grace.
- B. What are some of these spiritual blessings?
 1. Paul lists the following spiritual blessings we have "in Christ:"
 - a. Chosen in Him (Ephesians 1:4).
 - b. Accepted in Him (Ephesians 1:6).
 - c. Redeemed in Him (Ephesians 1:7).
 - d. Forgiven in Him (Ephesians 1:7).
 - e. Climax of the scheme of redemption in Him (Ephesians 1:10).
 - f. Inheritance in Him (Ephesians 1:11).
 - g. Sealed with the Holy Spirit in Him (Ephesians 1:13-14).
 2. Additionally, "in Christ" we are reconciled to God (Ephesians 2:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19), we have salvation (2 Timothy 2:10), and we become new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17).

IV. ***All Things Have Become New To Us***

- A. Old things have passed away.
 1. The Old Testament, with its animal sacrificial system, feast days, and dietary restrictions, were taken out of the way and nailed to the cross (Ephesians 2:13-18; Colossians 2:14-17).
 2. Additionally, old traits of character, old attitudes, old habits, and old, illegitimate ways of life have passed away. This is the result of genuine repentance (Matthew 12:41).
- B. All things have become new.
 1. Having submitted to the new birth (John 3:3-5), a Christian

wears a new name (Isaiah 62:2; Acts 11:26; Revelation 2:17). He walks in newness of life (Romans 6:4), having put on the new man (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). If faithful, he will enter the "new heavens and new earth" (2 Peter 3:13).

2. So, whether he considers the past (John 3:3-5), the present (Romans 6:4), or the future (2 Peter 3:13), life is meaningful as the Christian serves Him "who makes all things new" (Revelation 21:5).

V. ***We Have Hope Indwelling In Our Hearts***

A. Hope is "in Christ."

1. Paul reasoned this fact with the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:19):
 - a. Hope is "in Christ," but if our hope never reaches fruition (which would be the case if Christ were not raised), then "we are of all men most miserable."
 - b. But Christ has been raised, the historical validity of which Paul unquestionably establishes in 1 Corinthians 15:1-12.
2. Accordingly, the hope we have "in Christ" will one day be a reality.

B. This is a study of stark contrast.

1. Describing the condition of the Gentile world before the coming of the Lord in Ephesians 2:12, Paul wrote:
 - a. They were Christless -- "ye were without Christ."
 - b. They were countryless -- "aliens."
 - c. They were friendless -- "strangers."
 - d. They were hopeless -- "having no hope."
 - e. They were godless -- "without God."
2. How bleak, how dark, how foreboding, how disturbing! How tragic it would be to hear the kind-hearted doctor say, "You have no hope." But this fades into utter oblivion compared to having no hope for eternity.

Conclusion. Having established the importance of being "in Christ," the mind will logically and interestingly turn to the question, "How does a person get into Christ?" Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:26-27 provide the answer. The "in Christ" ones are those who have been baptized. When we are baptized, we are saved by grace through the power of Christ's blood.

What does it mean to be "in Christ"? It means everything! It is important in time, and it will ultimately determine the eternal destiny of us all. Let us be grateful that the terms of entrance into Christ are so simple and willingly comply with them.