

Eternal Security of The Believer In Christ

Introduction

Perhaps one of the greatest Old Testament illustrations of the believer “in Christ” is found in the Tabernacle. In that ancient structure the linen cloth, which was the internal covering of the boards and furnishings, was called the “Tabernacle” (Ex. 26:1, 6, 7). This linen cloth was a foreshadow of Christ. While there are many truths connected with this observation, our consideration is that the boards were, “in the Tabernacle,” foreshadowing the believer being “in Christ”.

As with every aspect of God’s “so great salvation,” it is permeated with truths beyond our comprehension. The reoccurring clause “In Christ,” which occurs in seventy-seven verses, is one of those truths. Not all these references refer to our standing before God, for context indicates that the expression is used in at least five avenues of truth. These are:

- a) The body of truth (the faith in Christ) which is founded in Christ (Acts 24:24)
- b) The resulting blessings of being “in Christ” (Rom.3:24; Eph. 1:3)
- c) To emphasize the genuineness of a statement (Rom. 9:1)
- d) To emphasize a state of being (Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:17)
- e) The relationship of each believer to all other believers (Rom. 12:5)

There are associated statements with the clause “in Christ,” such as:

- a) “Accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6)
- b) “In the Lord” (Rom. 16:11)
- c) “In Him” (Phil. 3:9)

What Does It Mean To Be “In Christ”?

1) What it does not mean to be “in Christ”?

- a) To be “in Christ” and associated terms does not mean to be in Him physically as a baby in the womb of a mother, or an individual in a building. An individual in a building does not partake of the building, it is a dead structure. While a baby in the womb definitely partakes of the mother by sharing her life, yet the baby does not possess, in the identical degree, all the features and characteristics of the mother.

2) What does not being “in Christ” mean?

- a) To not be “in Christ” means that the individual has never experienced the severing distinction between Christ and the world. As such, their destiny is not with Christ. In other words, that individual is under the condemnation of God awaiting the ultimate judgment and outpouring of the wrath of God in Hell for all eternity.

In Adam	In Christ
Condemnation (Rom. 5:16)	Justification (Rom. 5:18)
Made sinners (Rom. 5:19)	Made righteous (Rom. 5:19)
Bondage (Jn. 8:33-34; Gal. 4:3)	Liberty (Jn. 8:32, 36; Gal. 5:1)
Under Adam as head - all die (Rom. 5:12-14)	Under Christ as Head - all live (Rom. 5:17)
Enemies (Col. 1:21)	Reconciled (Col. 1:21)

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3) What does it mean to be “in Christ”?

- a) It indicates an operation by God whereby the individual is put into a living organic relationship with every other believer of this age (Gal. 3:28), and with the Lord. They are in fellowship with God having been justified and reconciled to God (Rom. 12:5).
- b) It means to be enclosed and a living partaker of the fulness of the love God has for Christ and Christ has for me. To be made the righteousness of Christ, that is, the individual stands in the fulness of all that Christ is morally, the individual has the life characteristics of Christ and God within them, His interests, attitudes, etc.
- c) It means to be within the sphere of all He has secured for us and therefore, all I do is to be a manifestation of Christ. It is not a “dead functional position,” but my life is to be an effective tool for God to use for the blessing of others. All is to be done within the sphere of the character of Christ. Thus, being “in Christ” becomes a dividing wall between what the world is and what I am ideally.
- d) It means to be under the headship of Christ, a new order of manhood. There have been four sorts of manhood:
 - i) Adam was innocent manhood (and yet in a certain way was holy but not essential holiness as the Lord was) before his fall for God is “holy in all His works” (Psa. 145:17)
 - ii) After he sinned all humanity (Christ excepted) are sinful humanity
 - iii) Those who are saved are “redeemed humanity”
 - iv) The Lord was “holy humanity”.
- e) There are at least two prepositions translated “in” used in these clauses, and they carry distinct shades of truth.
 - i) “eis” used in Acts 24:24; Gal. 2:16; 3:17; Col. 2:5, etc. This preposition conveys the thought “because of”; “toward”; “in regard to”; “for the purpose”; all depending on context. Thus, Felix and Drusilla heard Paul speak of the faith “because of Christ”; “regarding Christ”. In Gal. 2:16 Paul wrote: “even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified”.
 - ii) “en” has the basic truth of being at rest or remaining within, and again carries several concepts depending on context. We are, “in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3; 2:6), that is, because of Christ, by Christ. The same “in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6). Paul wrote: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1), that is those who are associated with Him or because of Him.

How Is An Individual Put “In Christ”?

Being “placed in Christ” is not something an individual can do for themselves, nor can it be done by someone else. No amount of devotion, will, or religious ritual can change ones spiritual birth family. I was born into the “Jennings” family, not the “Brown’s” nor “Smith’s, and no matter how much I might desire to be in the Brown family, it does not change my parentage. I am still a “Jennings!” The changing of ones spiritual “birth family” is a work of God by which:

- a) The individual is taken from under Adam’s headship with all it’s ramifications of condemnation etc., and put under Christ’s headship with all it’s blessings of no condemnation (Rom. 5:12-21).
- b) I am transferred from being spiritually related to Satan (Jn. 8:44), to being spiritually related to God (1 Jn. 5:1).
- c) From being under the “power of darkness” to being in the “kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. 1:13).

This then begs the question: “How does this come about?”

The first observation is that no one is by natural birth brought into the family of God and placed in Christ. If my parentage is Irish then I will be Irish. If my parentage is Jewish then I will be Jewish, but if my parents are Christians it does not automatically make me a Christian! An individual “becomes” a Christian by faith in Christ. King Agrippa, who was a pagan, said to Paul: “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28). Focusing on the two men, Paul and King Agrippa, it is seen that humanity is divided into two groups:

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- a) Those who are not Christians, not “in Christ” and under condemnation (Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12), and those “in Christ” who are justified by God (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:1).
- b) To understand how an individual is put “in Christ”, there are two responsibilities which come into play.
 - i) **On my side.** I must transfer my faith from my works, etc., for salvation is a work of faith (Eph. 2:8-10; Gal. 3:26). Salvation is a conscious action of our own volition, not by personal merit, but through faith Christ dwells in our hearts (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Col. 2:12).
 - ii) **On God’s side.** At the moment of salvation I was “baptized” (Gal. 3:27), that is, God puts the individual into Christ. This has nothing to do with being baptized by water as a baby or by immersion. It is God placing the individual into a relationship with Himself through identification with Christ.

What Are The Results of Being “In Christ”?

There are two avenues of truth in this understanding, those which have the text explicitly saying “in Christ”, and those which have the truth of being in Him without the actual wording. The following are a few of such encouragements:

- a) Explicit statements stating what happens when the individual is put “in Christ” because:
 - i) We are justified by faith in Christ (Gal. 2:16) for by the grace, mercy, and love of God Christ has “purged our sins” (Heb. 1:3); there is given “remission of sins” (Acts 10:43); “forgiven . . . all trespasses” (Col. 2:13); and willingness to “forgive us our sins” (1 Jn. 1:9).
 - ii) The individual:
 - 1. Is preserved “in Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:1), and God pledges: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).
 - 2. Is made “accepted in the beloved” (Eph. 1:6), so that: “As he is, so are we in this world (1 Jn. 4:17).
 - 3. Can never be separated from the love God has for them (Rom. 8:38-39).
 - 4. Is seated in the Heavens (Eph. 2:6).
 - 5. Can expect persecution (2 Tim. 3:12).
 - iii) Has been:
 - 1. “Made nigh” (Eph. 2:13-14), and have the enablement for victorious Christian living (2 Cor. 2:14).
 - 2. Made a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17), and becomes a “child of God” (Gal. 3:26).
 - 3. Made to sit in the heavens (Eph. 2:6), having been sanctified (1 Cor. 1:2).
 - 4. Given grace before the foundation of the world (2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Cor. 1:4).
 - 5. Made alive unto God (Rom. 6:11).
 - 6. Have the power of victory (2 Cor. 2:14).
 - 7. Called to His eternal glory (1 Pet. 5:10; Col. 3:3-4).
- b) Those which have the truth of being in Him without the actual wording.

We:

 - i) Are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6)
 - ii) Were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4)
 - iii) Are assured of the fulfillment of all of God’s promises (2 Cor. 1:20)
 - iv) Have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7)

Thank God our place before Him is unchangeable, for nothing we can do ever takes God by surprise, and no sin committed catches Him unawares. Knowing all there is to know about us, He knew all our sins due to ignorance, willingly committed or hastened after. Yet, knowing all this He loved us to the extent of giving His beloved Son to be the sacrifice for our sins. By His infinite grace He has placed us under the headship of Christ, that place of no condemnation and having the perfection of Christ perpetually and eternally reckoned to us. We are made the “righteousness of God” without the law (Rom. 3:21); by “faith of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 3:22); and “in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21); and that can never change.

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If only we as the saints of God could see the glory of the dignity we have in being in Christ, the enormity of the responsibility placed upon us, I have no doubt our effectiveness in this world would be much different and the joy we would have in the Lord would know no bounds. May the Holy Spirit of God give us a desire to know this blessedness and encourage us to have such a desire.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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