

What Does It Mean to be "IN CHRIST"?

1. Mankind can be divided into two groups: 1) those outside of Christ (Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12); 2) those who are "IN CHRIST" (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:1).
2. In connection with man's first birth he is "IN ADAM" (1 Cor. 15:22) and he is part of the old creation that was spoiled by the fall. In connection with man's second birth (John 3) he is "IN CHRIST" (1 Cor. 15:22) and part of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
3. Key passages: 1) 2 Corinthians 5:17 (*my new position*); 2) Ephesians 1:3 (*my spiritual blessings*); 3) 1 Corinthians 1:5 (*my abundant wealth*).
4. How did I get to be "IN CHRIST"? How did this happen to me? How did this come about?

MAN'S PART = **FAITH** (GALATIANS 3:26)
GOD'S PART = **BAPTISM** (GALATIANS 3:27).
WHEN I WAS SAVED GOD BAPTIZED ME (IMMERSED ME)
INTO JESUS CHRIST.

This baptism is not water baptism. It is a real baptism (Spirit Baptism) that happened the moment I was saved as God immersed me or placed me into His Son, thus IDENTIFYING me with Christ. This is my POSITION, and my STANDING.

5. **WHO AM I? WHAT AM I?**

IN CHRIST...

I am a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17; cf. Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 2:10).
I am a saint (1 Cor. 1:2).
I am a part of His Church (Eph. 2:21-22).
I am a temple for God's Spirit (Eph. 2:22).
I am in the eternal plan of God (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9).
I am complete and filled full with the fullness of Christ (Col. 2:9; and compare Col. 1:19).
I am enriched (1 Cor. 1:5).
I am accepted because God's favor has been poured out upon me (Eph. 1:6).
I am light (Eph. 5:8).
I am secure in the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).
I am established, rooted and built up (2 Cor. 1:21; Col. 2:7).
I am circumcised inwardly (Col. 2:11).
I am near to the heart of God (Eph. 2:13).

MY RESPONSIBILITY IN LIGHT OF THESE FACTS:

BY FAITH I MUST RECKON THAT IT IS SO! I MUST SEE MYSELF AS GOD SEES ME!

6. WHAT DO I HAVE? WHAT DO I POSSESS?

IN CHRIST...

- I have every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3).
- I have eternal life, an eternal relationship with God (1 John 5:11; 1 Cor. 15:22 and Romans 6:23 where "through" could be translated "in").
- I have a glorious salvation (2 Tim. 2:10).
- I have a rich inheritance (Eph. 1:4; cf. 1 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:17).
- I have a glorious future (Eph. 1:4-5).
- I have a heavenly position—seated with Him! (Eph. 2:6).
- I have a high calling (Phil. 3:14).
- I have the hope of eternal glory (1 Pet. 5:10 where "by" = "in").
- I have God's perfect righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11).
- I have sanctification or holiness (1 Cor. 1:2; 1:30; 6:11).
- I have God's wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30; cf. Col. 2:3 and 1 Cor. 2:16).
- I have redemption or freedom from bondage (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30).
- I have security (Rom. 8:1).
- I have complete forgiveness (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Cor. 6:11--"washed").

MY RESPONSIBILITY IN LIGHT OF THESE FACTS:

BY FAITH I MUST POSSESS MY POSSESSIONS AND ENJOY (CLAIM) MY RICHES!

7. PRACTICAL MATTERS

IN CHRIST...

- I walk and live (Col. 2:6).
- I stand fast and firm (Phil. 4:1).
- I have constant victory (2 Cor. 2:14).
- I am fruitful (1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 2:10).
- I can do all things (Phil. 4:13).
- I can draw near to God (Eph. 2:13,18).
- I have all that I need; every need is supplied (Phil. 4:19 "by"="in").
- I can rejoice always (Phil. 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:8).
- I have a purifying hope (1 John 3:3).
- I am strong (2 Tim. 2:1; Eph. 6:10).
- I am faithful (Eph. 1:1).
- I have faith and love (1 Tim. 1:13).
- I can be mature (Col. 1:28).

MY RESPONSIBILITY IN LIGHT OF THESE THINGS:

BY FAITH MAY I SO WALK AND LIVE (COLOSSIANS 2:6)!

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IN CHRIST

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, (4) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, (5) having predestined us to [positioning] as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, (6) to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

~Ephesians 1:3-6 NKJV/Adapt

We find that wonderful expression “in Christ” here in Ephesians 1:3, which is characteristic of this book. That little big word “in” is found over ninety times in this short Ephesian letter, and the words “in Christ,” in some form or other, are found about twenty-five times. That word “in” has been called the biggest word in our Bible. Its import is truly wonderful. Those words “in Christ Jesus” are among the most important ever written. With their equivalents, they are found some 130 times in the New Testament.

We have life in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ is to the believer the sphere of this new life, not merely a circle which surrounds only on one plane, but a sphere which encompasses the believer in every direction. A sphere surrounds and protects all that is within, while it excludes and separates from all that is without. Thus our being in Christ means that the Lord Jesus surrounds and embraces the believer in His own life, and separates him at the same time from all outside and hostile influences. He protects the believer from all perils and foes, and supplies him with all that is necessary. In Ephesians the meaning of this being “in Christ” reaches its highest thought. The peculiar truth in Ephesians is the heavenly nature and divine fullness of this sphere of our new life.

Our life is a heavenly life. That in itself is an amazing truth, for heaven is not man's abode normally. Psalm 115:16 assures us that the earth had been given to the children of men, but because of sin man lost his right to live on earth. This is proven very simply by the fact that man dies, and is thus taken off the earth. But divine grace comes in and brings the wonderful news that though man has lost his right to live on earth, yet God has devised a way by which man may live in heaven—the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, which God used in matchless grace to open the way into a heavenly paradise. Man who had lost the right to live on earth, by divine grace is taken into heaven itself.

Where can one find this story told out in sweeter strains than on the very cross of Christ itself? For there, next to the Lord Jesus, hung a thief who was dying for his sin; he was unfit to live on earth. But in infinite grace our Lord could and did say to him: “Ver-

ily, verily, I say unto thee. Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Here in Ephesians the Spirit of God places the believer right now, by faith, in those heavenly regions. There he may look around and enjoy those riches which are his already because of what Christ has done for him. We are blessed “with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.”

What lovely thoughts are evoked by that simple word “in.” One can let his imagination run riot, and yet never exhaust the vast wonders suggested by that little phrase, “in Christ.”

To be in something, first of all, leaves out any reference to the person that is inside. Thus to be “in Christ” means that I myself am not being considered. It is not who I am, or what I am, or what I have done, but where I am that is important in this being in Christ. Therefore it is not because I am worthy or unworthy, but because of who Christ is and what He has done that I am the recipient of all these heavenly blessings. Thus, my being in Christ does away with any thought of self. It all depends on who He is, and not on who I am. I only need to come to Him as a poor sinner and trust Him as my Saviour, and immediately God sees me in Christ, accepted in the Beloved. In verse three, my blessings are said to be in Christ, while in verse six, I myself am in Christ.

To be in Christ also means that I am eternally safe, for nothing can come at me when He surrounds me on every side. It also means comfort and joy, for when one is in a secure place in times of stress and storm, peace and comfort are assured. There is hardly any limit to the many thoughts and shades of meaning contained in that lovely expression “in Christ.” Not only does it mean where I am (the position in which divine grace puts me), but in Christ means that whatever blessing the believer has is his already because of who the Lord is and what He has done. Our calling thus is from heaven to heaven, and on the way there, so to speak, our path by faith should lie through heaven. We should already enjoy in a large measure our heavenly blessings in Christ.

~Adapted from: **Ephesians: The Glories of His Grace**, 1946, by August Van Ryn (1890-1982)