

PART 3, Blessings IN HIM, IN GOD (Conclusion)

Light on the Rock

by Philip Shields

Final segment on this huge topic. Hardly a chapter goes by in the Epistles without a mention of being in Christ, in Him, or in God. Why? Because everything to do with our new life, eternal life – is in Him. Here we put it all together, then go on with more about our one-on-One with God, followed by a discussion of Colossians 1-3 and Ephesians 1-2, which have so much to say about being in Christ.

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[TRACK #1]

Greetings again, members of Christ's body. This is Philip Shields with the final installment of the series on the high blessings we have by being "in Him" and "in God". I hope you will study this carefully with me, with your Bible open. Examine each scripture as we go along. Pause the cd, tape or computer. "Being in God" is such a huge topic that I'm just being blown away by its mysteries.

What we have so far is this:

- God wants closeness to humanity. There is no way to become closer than by living with someone. Either you love and respect the people more with whom you lived, or you can hardly wait to separate again. Look at divorce rates. People who vowed they would love til death do us part, are quite willing to part in a short time. There's the old saying, "Fish and visitors stink after 2 days". But stories *also* abound how after living with certain ones, you end up knowing them inside out and respect them more than ever.

So the Almighty started a process where He not only comes to live with us, but *in* us, and we come to live in *Him*. Why? Because – and this is material for another time – because He is preparing a bride for His Son, and that Bride has to be of the same kind of being as God and Jesus are. Otherwise, marrying outside one's kind would be confusion. So we're purchased with the blood of Christ from Satan's kingdom – he's the god of this age – and a process of making us a new creation begins. So God comes to live in us by His Spirit. Many easily accept that God can live in us, but stumble and struggle with the part about flesh and blood mankind living in holy God.

- Our Master Himself confirms this is so in John 17:21 with these words, spoken as a prayer to God the Father: "that they may also be one in us". That sounds future tense there – but we've covered at length how Paul addresses the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1) as holy ones, saints, in God and in Christ, now; not just something in the future. John affirms this in 1 John 4:13 by saying "by this we know we abide in Him, and He in us..." That's all in the present tense.
- We need to understand this, because there's no spiritual life, true life, or eternal life apart from being in Christ and in God. John 1:4 says, "In HIM was Life, and the life was the light of men." Eternal life is in Him and in no other way. In Romans 6:23b, "...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Elohim is the source of life and apart from Him we are nothing. It's more than just claiming to be a Christian. Eternal life starts with knowing God and Jesus Christ (John 17:2-3), dying to the self depicted by a watery grave of immersion baptism. We salvage nothing good from the past life. In our flesh is nothing good, Paul says in Romans 7. We're then resurrected with Christ as they raise us up from baptism. That's all explained in Romans 6. We receive the Holy Spirit by faith upon the laying of hands by a man of God, and

with reception of this “Spirit of Christ” we become His, and He becomes ours. My beloved is mine and I am His, as the Song of Songs says.

- By one spirit we are baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), the body of Christ. He who is joined to Christ *becomes one spirit* with Him (1 Cor. 6:17) in extremely intimate union, as a husband and wife become one in sexual intimacy (Eph 5:30-32). When we are truly in Him, there is an intimacy that is very personal, very private. It’s not something you can get or have by just being part of a group – but it’s something you have because of you have had a one-on-one once or many times with your Maker. I’ll speak some more about that later today.
- *We also become a part of one another* (Rom. 12:4-5) when we are in Him and a part of His body. His body is the church (Col 1:24). The way we therefore treat one another is the way Christ feels we are treating Him – as proven by the Parable of the goats and sheep in Matthew 25, which include Yeshua’s comments of “you’ve done also unto me”. We think we can be rough with one another – and by praising Jesus, He somehow feels loved. How would you feel if I was very sweet and nice to your face, smile at you, speak kindly to you – while kicking your shins hard? You see, Jesus is the head, but we are the body parts. Like He demands from Saul (before he was later called Paul), “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting *Me*?” – as Saul hurt and tortured Christians – who were members of Christ’s body. .

TRACK 2 – HOLY VESSELS

- As a part of the body of Christ, and because we are recipients of His Holy Spirit, we become holy earthen vessels of God’s presence. We become “saints” – holy ones – not because we are holy but simply because God’s holy presence is in our body temples. Yahweh, the Eternal One, is who makes anything holy. Last time we even saw how dirt can be holy ground. We are made of the dust of the ground, and with God’s Holy Spirit dwelling in us, even we also become holy ground.
- As a part of the holy body of Christ, no body part can be anything except holy. Can any part of Jesus be unholy? Can Jesus have an unholy foot or finger? I may be the back side, or the arm pit or some other disdained part of the body of Christ, but – and I can say this with full accuracy – by God, even I am holy, if I have God’s Spirit and if therefore I am in the body of Christ. Any sinner called by God, who repents and accepts Jesus and God’s spirit, becomes one of God’s holy ones, a saint, a member with you and me in the body – even if that person is currently in jail or is an outcast. ‘That is why Paul says we must receive, or accept, one another (Romans 15:7; 14:1). The word for accept or receive is literally “take a hold of”, as in “hang on to”, hold, receive, and take in. Instead we see brother fighting brother, going to court against sister, being disfellowshipped from one another’s congregations and so on. God have mercy on us.
- When we have received God’s Spirit – also called the Spirit of Christ (one God, one Spirit) – we are no longer seen by Yahweh as being “in the flesh, but in the Spirit” (Romans 8:9), by being in Christ. I covered that at length. We are fleshly, but not seen as “in the flesh” but now controlled by God’s spirit. In fact, it’s better than that: we are now seen as being in Christ. I need us to really get this.
- We have to remain in him, abide in Him, stay with Him – or if we’re not faithful, we will not be with Him at the end. Master says those who “eat my flesh and drink my blood abides in Me,

and I in him” (John 6:56). Jesus lives because of the Father, and we live because of Jesus. He says so in John 6:57. We have no life in ourselves but have life abundantly in Christ.

- We do not bear fruit apart from the life source of Jesus, the True Vine. John 15:1-8 is very explicit about that. But as we’re rooted in Him and stay attached to the Vine of Christ, He produces His fruit, His mind, His way, his righteousness, his wisdom, His life – in us. Over time, we grow, we change, we become more and more like Him until one day “Christ is formed” in each of us. (Gal. 4:19).
- Jesus clearly taught his disciples – and us – in the first 7-8 verses of John 14, that He was going to the Father, and He would be the way to the Father. **I said earlier we are also in God. How can that be? “No one comes to the Father except by Me.”**- John 14:5. Christ is the door, the way, the only way to salvation. There is no salvation in any other name, being, in no other religion or any other way. This may sound exclusivist. I hope so, because only through Christ can anyone on earth be saved. Period.

So all of this also explained how we can be in holy Father: through Christ. Philippians 3:9 shows us Paul’s thoughts: he wanted to be found in Him, not having his own righteousness which was from the Torah, the law – but the righteousness of God Himself, available through Christ by faith. Read it for yourself. If righteousness good enough for salvation could be attained by our own law keeping, then Christ died in vain, Gal. 2:21 tells us.

So because Jesus is in the father, and we are in Jesus as part of His body, we too are in the Father, through Christ Jesus. It’s something that is true today, right now. Paul explains it clearly in Col 3:3 “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”. This concept puts together all the other sermons I’ve given lately about being crucified with Christ and the ones about the Righteousness of God, vs. our own righteousness.

We can’t work up the righteousness of God. No. In Christ, and in faith, we are given the righteousness of God. It is imputed to us, according to Romans 3, 4, 5 and many scriptures. We believe it, accept it, and God sees Jesus’ life, and not our own.

- We are saved by His grace, but created for good works of God’s way that shows the evidence of our salvation by His grace (Ephesians 2:9-10 – “created in Christ Jesus for good works”). Our new walk is the evidence of God in us. We become transformed by Christ to be in Christ – and God’s law becomes the delight of our hearts. We delight in God’s law and meditate on it day and night (Psalm 1:2) when we have the new heart from God that loves His law. This new heart over time overpowers the old heart, the “old man” nature in us who hates God’s law. Now we see that God’s commandments are evidence of His love, and show us how to love Him and love fellow man. So we see God’s commandments as coming from Him, leading to Him, and they show us the way to love Him and one another. No wonder Master says, “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I kept my Father’s commandments and abide in HIS love.” (John 15:10)
- In Christ, we become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), and He becomes the righteousness of God for us and in us (1 Cor. 1:30-31). 2 Cor. 5:21 says “and we become the righteousness of God in Him.” Hallelujah, brethren! Praise God. It is Jesus’ perfect life that covers me, that presents me spotless and perfect before God the father. There should be, over time, more and more evidence that we are in Him. We are more and more like Him over time.

So it is King Jesus who redeems me, washes me, purifies me in Him, makes me holy in Him, makes me at peace with Him and holy Father. It is my Beloved, whom I've pursued until He caught me and now possesses me, owns me, loves me – it is He who makes me right with God. It is He who has paid my debt, restored my account with God, and it is He who has invited me to sit with Him on His throne beside Holy Father.

The reason we have such a problem with guilt and depression is that we keep looking at our weak flesh that fails all the time, as Paul himself shares with us in Romans 7. He felt wretched when he looked at his flesh, but felt uncondemned and holy when He looked at his life in Christ.

Paul ends Romans 7 talking about how wretched he himself was, but starts Romans 8 by reminding us “therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ...”. Why? Because Jesus was perfect. And my life is now His life, my life is now hidden in Christ in God (Col. 3:2-3).

Are we getting it? If you are feeling guilty and condemned, you are looking at the flesh and not the Spirit – or perhaps you need to repent and get back to being right with God in Christ. If you are worried, you are looking down and not up. If you are discouraged, you are looking at the giants in the land, and not Someone bigger than everything there is: God Almighty!

[TRACK 3] I've covered a couple times some of the list of things we have, now that we are in Christ. A few of these include, plus lots more I've already mentioned:

- In Christ, nothing can happen to me outside of God's knowledge and permission and awareness. What's happening to me is happening to Christ. He is taking it personally and is dealing with it, whether I see how He's dealing with it or not.
- In Christ, I have new life, a new heart, a new attitude, and I am brought near to God Almighty. In Christ I have peace (Rom. 5:1-2).
- In Christ I will now walk with Him, and in Him. This means “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:6). I will be more obedient, I will be growing and producing fruit in season. I abide in Him as I keep His commandments (1 John 3:24). I can't say I'm in Christ and have no resemblance in my life to Christ's life, in other words.
- In Christ we become a part of the Israel of GOD (Gal. 6:16). This is now the Israel God is working with in spiritual matters. He still works with the physical descendants of Israel, and there are prophecies of their future conversion too – but right now, one is a Jew spiritually who is in Christ (Romans 2:28-29).
- We become brothers and sisters together in Him, all one, regardless if we're American, Kenyan, Canadian or Aussie. And we regard one another as such (Gal. 3:28-29). If you have any racism, any tribalism, any prejudices against people from other lands – you'd best get over it, as we have one Father, one Maker of us all, who has no favorites. Yahweh does not favor the white race over others, though it may appear so at times. Elohim is not a respecter of persons.

- In Christ, and by Christ, we can come boldly to the very holy of Holies, to the presence of Father Himself. Abba sees Christ, who covers us, and sees perfection through Christ, even as you and I pray to Him. (Eph. 3:11-12; Heb. 4:16). "...that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily" (Col. 1:27-28).
- I also have covered and feel I should say again, that our hard work now is to abide in Christ, stay close to Him, pray and be meditating in Him constantly. Then He – the Vine – will produce the fruit that will be evidenced in us, who are the branches (John 15:4-8). It is HIS working, His life, His fruit. It is HIS doing – and my submission – that allows that to happen. Or, I can doubt and resist, and try to become more Christ-like by trying harder – and it will be me, and my working, and my failure. I prefer Jesus' life over mine, every time.
- I believe when I am fully surrendered to being in Him, I am tuned in to the greatest Mind in the universe. I am able to do - - if I had faith – able to do even greater things than He did. That's what Jesus Himself said in John 14:12-13. I don't think He was kidding!

John 14:12-14

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; *and greater works than these he will do*, because I go to My Father. 13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

We are the ones limiting God. Don't forget even in Jesus' own home town of Nazareth, he could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief, except that He healed a few people (Mark 6:5-6). Would you and I have been any better? I doubt it.

So, do we want Christ's life – as being what God sees, or our own life? ***
That, in a nutshell, is a small overview of what being in Him is partly about.

[TRACK 4] OUR OWN ONE-ON-ONE WITH HOLY GOD -- PICKING UP where we left off.
Most of the time, to really let the old self die and become "in Him", we have to first have our own dramatic one-on-One with God.

It's our own personal confrontation of self and God. I define the "one on One" moment, as when you feel and know God is trying to get your attention – and it's very personal. You know He wants you, and wants your full attention now. It's often emotional, because it's like God personally looks at you, taps you on the shoulder – or more – and says, "come follow me -- now." Sometimes God has to tell us to give up our old way several times. We're dull of hearing perhaps, or hard headed. Peter was called to leave his nets and he immediately dropped the nets and followed Jesus (Matthew 4:18-20). That was one moment of one-on-one. Later, in the episode of catching so many fish that the boat almost sank, Peter sees himself and says, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). Then as Jesus was being scourged, another moment – when their eyes locked, right after he had denied Christ 3x (Luke 21:60-61) – and Peter went out and wept bitterly. Then after the crucifixion, he went back to his old job of fishing (John 21:2-5) and Jesus had to tell them again that He had bigger "Fish" to go after. He had to call them back to shore. He tells Peter, at the end of the book – "Follow ME." (John 21:22). After that, another one-on-one – when the King asks Peter, and you and me – "Do you

agape [love] Me?”. You bet that was a one-on-One moment. Read it again in John 21:15-19, where Jesus ends that session with another “Follow ME”.

Until we recognize our one-on-One moments, I personally wonder how many of us really fully surrender, or die to the self. There are many examples of this.

- **Paul** on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-15)
- **Jacob** – paralyzed with fear about the prospect of meeting up with Esau, and then wrestling all night with God (Gen. 32:24-31)
- How about **JOB**, in Job 42 and 44, when God asks him, “Who is this who darkens counsel without knowledge?” Job said he had heard of God, but now that he was face-to-face, he loathed himself and repented (Job 42:1-6).
- It was **Moses** at the burning bush being told to show a little respect and take his sandals off.
- It was also **Zacchaeus** -- when the Anointed One invited Himself over to Zacchaeus’ house (Luke 19:1-10). This one-on-one is rarely a moment of ecstasy as in Zacchaeus’ case, but usually the opposite. It often comes when we’ve struck out spiritually, have hit rock bottom and no where lower to go.
- There’s **David**, when Nathan the prophet points his finger in his face, and says, “You are that man”.
- **Sarah**, being confronted: “Why did you laugh?” And on and on. For some, it’s sudden and unexpected.
- When **Isaiah** had his one-on One, he came unglued (Isaiah 6:1-6). “I’m undone”. When Daniel had his one-on-One, he passed out (Dan. 10:7-10). He was as a dead man.
- When the shepherds in the field had their one-on-one with an Angel of the Lord, they were “greatly afraid” (Luke 2:9).

Have you had your one-on-one with God? Often it’s a life changing event or a severe trial. It could be a looming divorce because of some stupid sin on your part, perhaps; or the death of your child, or being told you have terminal stage 4 cancer. These can all drive us to our knees before our Maker. Sometimes it’s a time of deep realization that Someone bigger than you and me, bigger than life itself – is working with you. Perhaps it’s a moment of quiet inspiration as you stand amazed at a wondrous Grand Canyon, or Victoria Falls. For many it’s when they hold their newborn baby in their arms for the first time. With tears of awe and joy, we meet God. Yes, God, through the new life has put into our shaking hands. Whenever this moment is, you feel you are in the presence of God. The Eternal, though unseen, is letting you know He is there.

I’ve had several one-on-ones. They varied in type. I felt God’s presence when each of our 4 children were born, even the one who died. I felt God speaking to me as an angry but loving Father when I felt His rebuke when I had been so sinful – and then his loving hug and acceptance back into Himself as I repented. Sometimes, I felt that acceptance by God even before I felt it from the corporate organization calling itself the church. (Just as God had accepted repentant Saul/Paul in Acts 9 before Ananias and the brethren were ready to).

God plays no favorites. If he wants to work with you, He will meet you on your road to Emmaus or Damascus. He will wrestle with you, as He did Jacob. He will knock you off your high horse, as He

did Paul. We must be willing to never let go of Him, as Jacob refused to let go, until the Lord blessed him. We must be willing to respond like Saul (Paul) –“Lord, what do you want me to do?” (Acts 9:8)

Have you recognized your moments of one-on-one? Ask for it, be ready for it. Listen to His answers as you pray contemplative, meditative prayers. As you meditate on your back deck or porch as the sun sets. God is there. Be still, be quiet, and listen. The Adversary puts too much noise around us. They're his “Weapons of Mass Distraction”. Turn off the TV and radio. Be still --- and let God speak to you.

Some one-on-one moments may not be a pleasant experience at first, because it's about death of the self. How can death be pleasant or easy – and yet, we will come to the point where want to die to the old self and live anew for Christ. It's about coming to the point of being completely broken – and taking your life in its million broken pieces to the Creator of the New Creation. And boy, do we need a new creation at that point. Death of the old self won't come easily. But this is the first real step upon repentance: to really surrender. Without it, we will not experience being In God. Many of us actually come to this “one-on-one” I speak of, sometimes long after baptism, years later, with more maturity and spiritual eyes to really see ourselves as God does.

[TRACK 5] Let's proceed now with a quick study of some verses in Colossians and Ephesians that show even MORE how wonderful it is to be in Christ. Let's start at Col. 1:12.

Colossians 1:12-14

“giving thanks to *the Father who has qualified us* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

Christ is in heaven on the right hand of God. Since we're IN Christ, we're also NOW on the right hand of God, IN Christ, THROUGH Christ if we remain faithful to the end - - though our bodies are still here on earth. If you wish, quickly take a look at Eph 2:6 that says the same thing. We're here, but in spirit, and *through* Jesus, we are also already at the right hand of God with Christ and through Christ.

If we re-read Col 1:12-14, we'll see it's all in the past tense: God has already qualified us. Past tense. How? In Christ, if we abide in Him to the end we're there with Him, on His throne. God **already** sees us as part of His kingdom – past tense again – because again, it is through Christ, in Him. That is why we are already called His children, already called citizens of that kingdom, already ambassadors of that kingdom. You can't be an ambassador of a kingdom or nation you're not already a citizen of! But if you wonder about the verse that says “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom”—no problem. Romans 8:9 – says God does not any longer see us as being “in the flesh but in the Spirit”, NOW, if we are led by God's Spirit! Yes, we are fleshly, but not seen by God as being “IN the flesh”. Brethren, read and re-read Romans 8:7-10 until it just jumps out at you.

Ephesians 2:6 says the same thing:

Ephesians 2:4-7

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Let's read now the end of Colossians 1, starting verse 21.

Colossians 1:21-23

"And **you**, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled *22 in the body of His flesh* through death, *to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight -- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith*, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard..."

That just is mind numbing to me, that God could love me, that God present even me as someone holy, blameless and above reproach in HIS sight. In the end, it doesn't matter what others think of you – just how God sees us, is what matters.

Colossians 1:24-29

"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of *His body, which is the church*, *25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, 26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily."*

Yes, Matthew 5:48 says we are to become perfect. But it won't be in our perfection. No, we are to conform to the image of Christ, and we are presented *perfect in Christ Jesus* (v. 28). *That's the only way you or I will ever be presented perfect or blameless.* I recommend you cross reference in your Bibles, Matthew 5:48 with Col. 1:28.

Colossians 2:6-7, 11-15

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, *7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving."*

(We've already discussed being rooted in Him).

Jumping ahead to verse 11...

11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by **putting off the body of the sins of the flesh**, by the circumcision of Christ, **12 buried with Him in baptism**, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. **13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh**, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, **14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.**

Back to verse 11: The object lesson of circumcision was to demonstrate that we are to reject the flesh with all its passions. In Philippians 3:3, Paul says we Christians are the "circumcision" – we have renounced the flesh and live by the spirit, and worship God in spirit, not just mere rituals. In a sense, we were symbolically also circumcised with Him and put off the flesh's attraction to us, and we have

now had the “circumcision without hands” –i.e., the new heart from God, the soft heart, the new way, not the heart of stone. All – in Christ.

Colossians 3:1-4

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and *your life is hidden with Christ in God*. 4 When *Christ who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

I’ve already commented at length about the fact that Col 3:3 explains how we end up being the Father – and that is through Christ.

[track 6] NOW LET’S STUDY SOME MORE – IN EPHESIANS 1

EPHESIANS 1:3 “*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*”

God the Father is actually the God of Jesus Christ. I find that very interesting. IN Christ, Father has blessed us with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”. *In Christ, we share in every spiritual blessing. WOW! Verse 3. Believe it, live as if you believe it.*

Eph 1:4- “*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*”

Since we are baptized into Christ’s body, everything that Father has done with and in Christ now pertains to some degree to us also. Jesus was chosen for His role before Adam and Eve even sinned. In that sense at least, and maybe much, much more than it initially seems, we too were chosen from before the foundation, at least “in Him” and as a part of Him. King David says in Psalm 139 that God knew him from before his birth, as he was being formed. He even says God knew the days of his life before he was born. (Psalm 139:13-18). Paul says in Gal. 1:15-16 that even HE was called out even from the time he was in his mother’s womb.

Ephesians 1:5-6 “*having predestined us to adoption 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 [how? Read on...] in the Beloved.*”

v. 6 - Accepted in the Beloved, accepted in Christ.

This is huge. You and I cannot be righteous enough for salvation – even after repentance -- on our own merits or efforts. It is by and in Christ that we are accepted! We can’t overhaul the fleshly nature we have. It has to be dumped and we have to accept a new nature, which is In Christ, and makes us acceptable. There’s no other way.

When God's spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ, we become accepted by God, in Christ – no matter how acceptable, good or bad we were. Jesus Himself made a point to accept people who were the “untouchables” of his day: the Samaritans, the tax collectors, the formerly demon possessed people, even women generally, who were 2nd class citizens back then.

Who are the untouchables in your life? In your heart, who do you look down on – in or out of your fellowship? With whom have you refused to fellowship the past few years? Be careful, as you may be

refusing fellowship with Jesus and God Himself, through this person who has been “accepted in the Beloved”. Let’s continue now in verse 7.

Ephesians 1:7-12

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth -- in Him. [as part of the Bride, we will be co-heirs of all this with Him] 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

Ephesians 1:13-14

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee [the down payment] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

[TRACK 7] Let’s move to Ephesians 2 – and continue to see that everything comes from being “in HIM”.

Ephesians 2:4-10

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, ***made us alive together with Christ*** (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and *made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [we understand God’s kindness as we see all He has done for us through and because of Christ] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

Brethren, that’s all I’m going to cover for now. Let me sum up:

I think the key now is to be sure you have repented, have been baptized, and have accepted the King as your Savior and Redeemer. Don’t put it off. If you have had hands laid on you for the holy spirit, believe it and believe God. It takes time before a seed produces fruit. Be sure you are attached to the Vine. Be sure you are working hard to be close to God – and then let HIM produce His works in you.

As we surrender to God, which will be a future topic, doing so does not limit us – it expands what the Almighty wants to do in us, for us, and through us. Paul has this interesting passage in 2 Cor. 1:18-20 where he says all things are “yes” in Him, and not “no”. God is positive. God wants the best for us. God wants to do His good pleasure in us. WE are the ones limiting Him by not believing, by not accepting His invitation to FULLY work in us.

Let me end by saying in Christ we know what the end will be - -if we remain faithful to Him.

God guarantees us the victory over sin, over the world, over the flesh – if we remain faithful to Him.

Father also tells us that when Christ returns, those who will be with him are the elect holy ones. In Revelation, those who are with the returning King are “the called, chosen and *faithful*” (Rev. 17:14).

Notice it says those who are “the faithful” are also the ones who will be with him. This is not something for the short haul – but is for the long run.

In the end, God’s victory over the adversary and all adversaries – is total, is complete. And we will have the victory, because of our King.

“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ” – 1 Cor. 15:57.

We overcome Satan, our accuser, “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony”... Rev. 12:11

The more we study what happens when we are in Christ, and living in Him and accepting Him, the more the view just gets more and more spectacular. Praise be to Yahweh who has given us all things in Him. It’s like looking up at a night sky – and then looking at it through a powerful telescope. More and more details of God’s power and God’s sovereignty and God’s grace become visible -- all because of our Beloved King and husband, and because of the love of Abba, our dear holy Father, God in the Highest, the Supreme Being over all.

This topic is so vast, so powerful that I only apologize to you and to God, for I know I have not done it justice. But I hope you will study it afresh now and start to praise God for being “in Him”.

Until next time, this is your brother Philip, in Christ, with you. Praise God for all His wonders as He offers us His mysteries, His kingdom, His universe, His way, His righteousness, His love, His life, His Way, His will and His power – His everything—as we come to be, in Him. Praise Him, praise Him.

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