

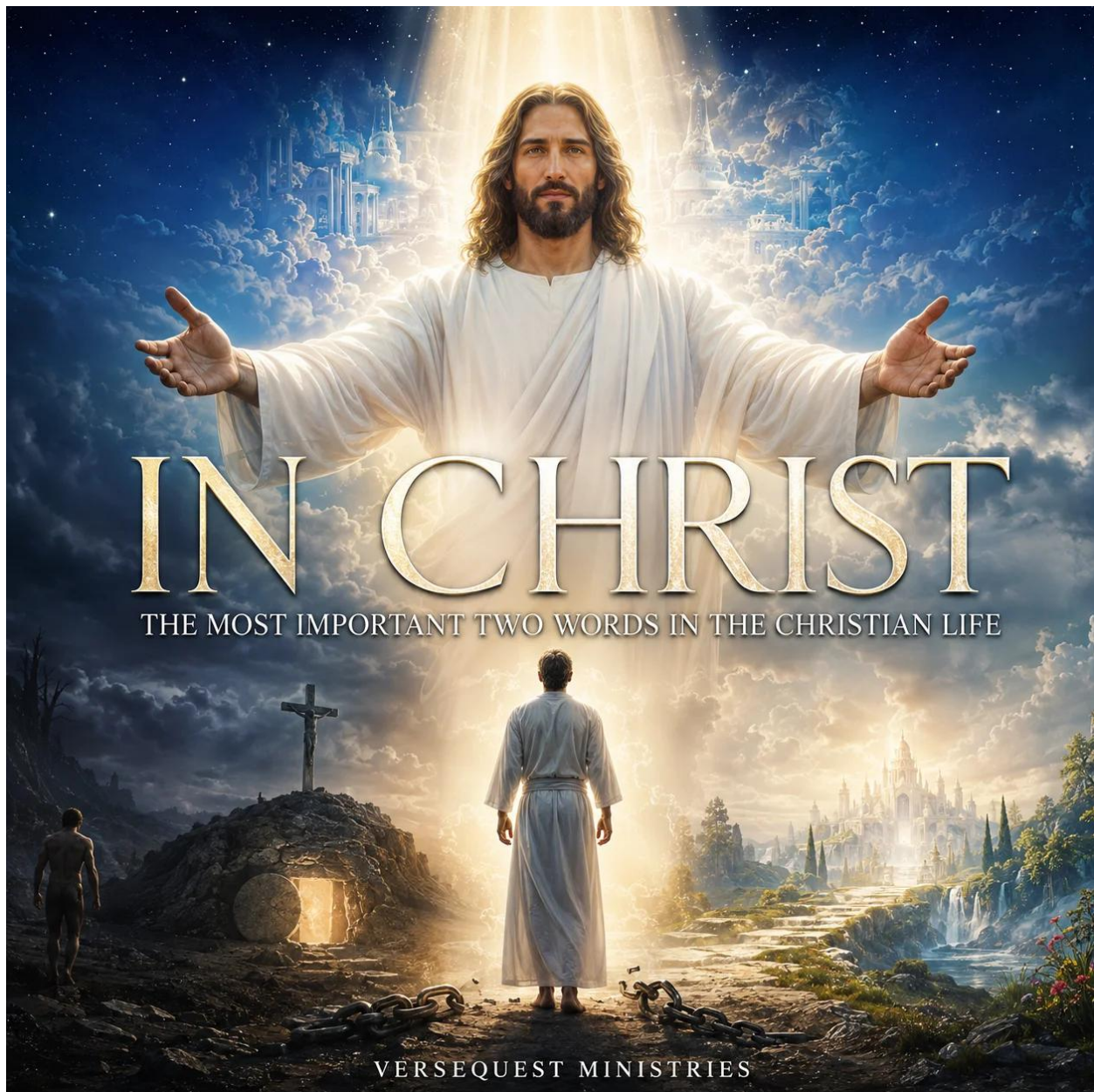
In Christ

The Most Important Two Words in the Christian Life

Series 1-10

By Paul Tackett

VerseQuest Ministries





In Christ

The Most Important Two Words in the Christian Life

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This publication is presented as a Bible-believing doctrinal study. Every reader is encouraged to examine the Scriptures personally and receive the written word of God as the final authority in all matters of faith and doctrine.

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In Christ — The Most Important Two Words in the Christian Life

Series Introduction

Key Passage: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” — Ephesians 1:3

Two of the smallest words in Paul’s epistles contain one of the largest doctrines in the Bible: **in Christ**. Religion has manufactured dictionaries full of impressive language, denominational machinery tall enough to block the sunlight, and enough ceremonial furniture to outfit a dozen temples, while millions of professing Christians remain uncertain about the simple location God gave them at salvation. They know they attend church, believe certain doctrines, avoid certain sins, support certain causes, and carry a Bible with the correct words, but they have never been taught what happened when God placed them in His Son. Consequently, they spend their Christian lives trying to earn a standing already given, preserve a salvation already sealed, manufacture a righteousness already imputed, and climb toward a heavenly position where God says they are already seated. The devil does not need to steal a believer’s salvation to keep him miserable; he only needs to keep him ignorant of where God put it.

Every human being begins life in Adam. First Corinthians 15:22 says, “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” There are the two locations governing the whole human race. Men divide humanity by race, wealth, nationality, politics, education, religion, social position, and outward morality, but God draws the decisive line between Adam and Christ. In Adam, man inherits sin, corruption, condemnation, mortality, and death. In Christ, the believer receives righteousness, justification, acceptance, spiritual life, resurrection, security, and glory. There is no third man for the morally undecided, no neutral bloodline for the religiously respectable, and no waiting room for people who believe they are too good for Adam but not quite ready for Christ. Every natural birth places a person in the first man; only the new birth places him in the second Man. Adam may wear a choir robe, earn a seminary degree, memorize a creed, and speak gently over a communion table, but a dressed corpse remains a corpse.

Salvation is therefore not God helping Adam become a better version of himself. It is not divine assistance added to human potential, religious discipline applied to moral weakness, or a spiritual cosmetic treatment administered by a professional priesthood. The gospel declares that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. When a sinner trusts that finished work, the Holy Ghost performs an operation no human hand can imitate. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). God takes the believing sinner out of his condemned

standing in Adam and places him into the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. He does not join that body as a man joins a lodge, signs a membership card, or shakes a preacher's hand. He is supernaturally incorporated into a living organism whose Head sits at the right hand of God. The Church may add his name to an earthly roll later, but heaven has already placed him into Christ's body.

Once the believer is in Christ, he is identified with everything Christ accomplished through His death, burial, and resurrection. Romans 6 says that believers were baptized into His death, buried with Him, and raised to walk in newness of life. Calvary did more than forgive the sins committed by the old man; it passed God's sentence upon the old man himself. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him" (Romans 6:6). Religion keeps Adam alive, puts him on probation, enrolls him in a recovery program, teaches him table manners, and asks him to imitate Jesus. God nailed him to a cross. The old man was not sent to Sunday school for further improvement; he was judicially executed with Christ. His burial closed the grave upon his former claim, and Christ's resurrection brought forth a new life on the other side of judgment. The Christian is not Adam wearing church clothes. He is a man joined to the risen Christ.

That union establishes the believer beyond eternal condemnation. Romans 8:1 announces, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." No condemnation does not mean fewer charges, a reduced sentence, temporary probation, or judgment delayed until the Christian's next failure. It means the penalty has been exhausted in the Substitute. The law exposed the sin, the conscience testified, Satan accused, and divine justice demanded payment. Christ stood where the guilty sinner should have stood and bore the stroke. He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). The empty tomb is heaven's receipt declaring that Calvary's payment cleared. A saved man may require chastening from his Father, reap consequences from foolish conduct, lose fellowship, damage testimony, and watch his worthless works burn at the judgment seat of Christ. But he will never face condemnation from his Judge because Christ already faced it in his place. God does not collect the same debt twice.

The believer is also "accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6). His acceptance does not rise and fall with the temperature of his emotions or the weekly report of his performance. He may pray warmly on Monday, struggle through Tuesday, become discouraged on Wednesday, recover on Thursday, and feel as spiritual as a fence post by Friday afternoon. None of those changes relocates him outside Christ. God does not accept the Christian because the Christian has finally become impressive. He accepts him because Christ is infinitely pleasing to the Father and the believer has been placed in Him. Religion keeps a

man outside heaven rattling a tin cup of good works, hoping God will notice the noise. Grace opens the door, clothes the beggar, seats him at the Father's table, and tells him the invitation was written in blood.

The garment covering that believer is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Christ received the believer's sin judicially, and the believer receives Christ's righteousness by imputation. God does not release the pardoned sinner from court wearing the same filthy rags with a promise to behave more carefully. He clothes him with a righteousness belonging to His spotless Son. Good works have a vital place in the Christian life as obedience, service, testimony, fruit, and the material examined for reward. But the instant good works are dragged into God's courtroom as grounds for justification, they become an insult to Christ's finished work. The man who adds one religious penny to Calvary is announcing that the blood of God's Son came up short at the cashier.

Inside that righteous standing, God creates something that did not previously exist. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Salvation is not improved self-esteem, positive thinking, suppressed behavior, or successful religious reconditioning. God creates a new inward man. Colossians 2 says He also performs "the circumcision made without hands," putting off "the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." The flesh remains present, corrupt, argumentative, and about as cooperative as a mule standing at the edge of a flooded river. But it no longer defines the believer's identity or possesses the legal authority to determine his destiny. This spiritual operation explains why the Christian can still experience warfare without concluding that God's new creation has failed. The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh because two opposing principles now meet on the battlefield. Before salvation there was no warfare worth mentioning; the old tyrant ran the property. After salvation, God changes the ownership and the shooting starts.

The believer's position reaches even higher. Ephesians 2:6 says God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." His physical feet remain planted in a world crawling with devils, deception, death, disappointment, and spiritual wickedness, yet God considers him joined to the victorious Christ above every principality and power. He possesses access to the Father, spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and the authority to stand in Christ's completed victory. That does not turn him into a miniature god empowered to order heaven around, decree mansions into existence, or treat prayer like a celestial credit card. The believer fights from victory, but the victory belongs to the Head. He approaches boldly, but he approaches a throne. He possesses

riches, but they are greater than the prosperity preacher's showroom because they cannot be taxed, stolen, repossessed, moth-eaten, inflated away, or left behind at the funeral home.

That position is sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption. Ephesians 1:13 says that after believers heard the gospel and trusted Christ, they "were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Ephesians 4:30 states that they are "sealed unto the day of redemption." The seal does not last until the Christian's next weak morning, emotional collapse, foolish decision, or encounter with temptation. It lasts until Christ completes the redemption of the purchased possession. If salvation depended upon how tightly the believer could hold Christ, every Christian would eventually slide through his own trembling fingers. But security depends upon how firmly Christ holds the believer. Satan would have to break the Holy Ghost's seal, reverse regeneration, cancel justification, amputate a member from Christ's body, enter God, remove Christ, and retrieve the life hidden with Him before he could destroy one saved soul. The old serpent could not keep Christ in a guarded tomb; he will not conquer Him at God's right hand.

Eternal security does not mean the Christian's walk is irrelevant. The same epistles promising security command holiness, obedience, service, charity, truthfulness, purity, forgiveness, spiritual warfare, and separation from sin. A believer can grieve the Spirit who sealed him, dishonour the Saviour who purchased him, and waste the earthly life the Father gave him. His wood, hay, and stubble can burn, and he may stand saved yet empty-handed before Christ. Grace protects salvation from human failure; it does not protect carnality from consequences. The secure believer should serve more faithfully, not less, because he belongs entirely to Jesus Christ. He is not obeying to purchase sonship but because the family name is already written upon him. Good works cannot sew him into Christ, but they should reveal that the Holy Ghost has placed him there.

Finally, the life now hidden with Christ will step into visible glory. Colossians 3:4 declares, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The redemption begun inwardly will reach the body. The dead in Christ will rise, the living saints will be changed, corruption will put on incorruption, mortality will put on immortality, and the vile body will be fashioned like Christ's glorious body. The world presently sees frail saints, scarred histories, unfinished growth, temporary graves, and people whose outward appearance seems painfully ordinary. God sees members of Christ's body already destined for glorification. Men see the wrapper; God knows what He sealed inside it. The grave may receive the body temporarily, but it receives property carrying heaven's return label.

This ten-part series will follow the believer's position in Christ from its doctrinal beginning to its glorious conclusion. It will contrast Adam and Christ, explain the Holy Ghost's work of

placing the sinner into Christ's body, trace identification with Christ's death and resurrection, establish freedom from condemnation, reveal acceptance in the Beloved, defend imputed righteousness, examine the new creature and spiritual circumcision, unfold the believer's heavenly position, demonstrate eternal security, and conclude with the redemption of the body and future manifestation in glory. These are not isolated benefits stacked loosely inside a theological cabinet. They are the united consequences of one saving location. The Christian possesses them because God placed him **in Christ**.

Those two words answer the law, silence the accuser, humble the proud, strengthen the weak, correct the careless, comfort the troubled, secure the trembling, and point the dying saint toward resurrection. In Adam, every road leads downward—to sin, corruption, condemnation, death, and judgment. In Christ, every road leads upward—to righteousness, acceptance, life, security, resurrection, and glory. Religion may offer ceremonies, philosophies, experiences, and enough spiritual paperwork to bury a man beneath his own effort. God offers His Son. And when everything earthly has burned away, every denominational label has crumbled, every human boast has been silenced, and every grave has opened, the only location that will matter is the one described by the most important two words in the Christian life: **in Christ**.

1 of 10 – In Christ – Two Men, Two Races, and One Eternal Divide

Key Passage: Romans 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22, 45–49

Introduction

The whole human race is divided between two men. God does not divide mankind according to the little fences men build around themselves. He does not begin with white and black, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, conservative and liberal, Catholic and Protestant, respectable and disreputable. Those divisions may matter to politicians, advertisers, census takers, social climbers, and denominational bean counters, but they do not describe the great spiritual boundary running through humanity. God sees every person as standing either in Adam or in Christ. That is the line. That is the division. That is the doctrine beneath every other doctrine concerning salvation. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Two men stand at the head of two races, two creations, two kingdoms, two destinies, and two eternities. Adam stands at the head of a fallen race governed by sin and marching toward death. Jesus Christ stands at the head of a redeemed race possessing righteousness and moving toward glory. Every man is born into the first race, but nobody is naturally born into the second. The first birth

puts you in Adam; the new birth puts you in Christ. You can polish Adam, educate Adam, baptize Adam, confirm Adam, ordain Adam, perfume Adam, and teach Adam to use religious vocabulary, but when you finish decorating him, he is still a condemned son of a fallen father. Salvation is not God teaching Adam to behave in church. Salvation is God taking a condemned sinner out of Adam and placing him in Christ.

That truth destroys the proudest illusion in religion: the idea that God is weighing one individual against another to determine who deserves eternal life. Men imagine heaven operating like a county fair, with blue ribbons awarded to the cleanest sinner in the livestock barn. One man says, "I have never murdered anyone." Another says, "I pay my bills." Another says, "I was baptized as an infant." Another says, "I joined the church." Another says, "I try to treat everybody right." But Romans 5 does not place Cain against Abel, the drunkard against the deacon, or the criminal against the choir member. It places Adam against Christ. The comparison is not between your record and your neighbor's record; it is between the offence of the first man and the obedience of the second Man. The issue is not whether you have performed better than some sinner you selected because he makes you look respectable. The issue is whether you possess the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Hell will contain many people who were more respectable than some saints in heaven, because respectability is not redemption, decency is not justification, and religion is not regeneration. A man can live seventy years without entering a tavern and still die in Adam. He can memorize a catechism, kiss a bishop's ring, collect Sunday school pins, survive six building programs, and be buried beneath a marble cross while his soul drops into hell. Adam can become religious enough to fool a congregation, but he cannot become righteous enough to satisfy God.

The gospel confronts this condition with something far greater than advice, reform, education, inspiration, or moral improvement. It announces a finished historical work performed by the Lord Jesus Christ and offers a new spiritual position to everyone who believes it. Christ "died for our sins according to the scriptures," "was buried," and "rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). When the sinner receives that gospel by faith, God does not merely erase a few black marks from his record and send him back into Adam with a cleaner page. God justifies him, gives him eternal life, makes him a new creature, and places him in the risen Christ. The believer's assurance therefore rests upon location rather than emotion, position rather than performance, and Christ's finished work rather than Adam's unfinished repair job. Feelings can change before breakfast. Conduct can falter before lunch. Circumstances can turn a shouting Christian into a trembling Christian by supper. But if God has placed that believer in Christ, no difficult Tuesday afternoon can reverse the operation. The Christian is not saved because he is holding Christ with a grip strong enough to impress heaven. He is saved because God

has placed him inside the One whom death could not hold, hell could not conquer, judgment could not condemn, and Satan could not defeat. The most important question in the Christian life is not, “How do I feel today?” It is, “Where has God placed me forever?”

1. One Man Opened the Door, and Death Walked Through It

Romans 5:12 declares, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” Sin did not enter the human world as an innocent weakness, an evolutionary defect, a cultural misunderstanding, or an unfortunate shortage of education. Sin entered through the deliberate disobedience of one man. Adam was not a struggling caveman slowly climbing toward moral awareness. He was created upright, placed in a perfect garden, surrounded by divine provision, united to a wife made especially for him, and given one clear prohibition by the God who had supplied everything else. He did not inherit a sinful nature from his parents because he had no parents. He did not grow up in a broken home because Eden had no broken homes. He was not pressured by an ungodly society because there was no society. He could not blame poverty, trauma, bad schools, defective chromosomes, social inequality, or negative peer influence. Adam sinned in paradise with his eyes open. First Timothy 2:14 says, “Adam was not deceived.” Eve was deceived, but Adam knowingly stepped across the word of God. The first sin did not occur because God’s commandment was unclear. It occurred because man chose the creature over the Creator and his own will over God’s word. Sin entered through a door Adam opened from the inside.

The consequences were immediate and catastrophic. God had warned him, “For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). When Adam ate, spiritual death occurred immediately, physical death began working in his body, and the sentence of death fell upon the race contained within him. The fellowship of Eden was broken. Innocence vanished. Shame appeared. Fear entered. The man who had once walked with God hid among the trees from the God who made the trees. That is sin’s masterpiece: it convinces a man that shrubbery can conceal him from omniscience. Adam covered himself with fig leaves, providing the first recorded example of human religion—man sewing together something temporary to hide what sin had exposed. God called, “Where art thou?” not because God had misplaced Adam, but because Adam had lost his position before God. Every false religion since Eden has operated the same sewing shop. Men stitch together ceremonies, good works, priestly absolutions, water rites, charitable donations, moral promises, and religious affiliations, hoping the fabric will conceal their condition. But fig leaves with theological degrees are still fig leaves. Man-made coverings may impress other fugitives hiding in the woods, but they cannot satisfy the eyes of a holy God.

Adam’s offence also brought death into the world, and death has never missed an appointment. Romans 5:12 continues, “and so death passed upon all men, for that all have

sinned.” Cemeteries are not merely monuments to individual mistakes; they are the visible harvest of Adam’s rebellion. Every funeral procession is another witness that God told the truth in Genesis 2. Men can rename death, soften it, sanitize it, conceal it beneath flowers, and hire a polished speaker to call it a “celebration of life,” but the corpse in the casket remains a theological argument no unbeliever has answered. Hospitals can delay death, doctors can fight death, cosmetics can disguise the approach of death, and undertakers can make death presentable for an afternoon, but nobody in Adam can repeal it. Science can photograph a distant speck, split an atom, replace a joint, and design a machine that talks like a man, but it cannot keep the man who designed it out of the grave. Death is not natural in the sense of belonging to God’s original creation; it is the wages of sin and the reigning power of Adam’s fallen world. Adam opened the door, sin entered the house, and death has been collecting rent from every generation since.

2. Adam’s Bloodline Carries More Than His Name

The doctrine of original sin offends human pride because it tells man that his trouble began before he committed his first conscious transgression. A baby does not enter the world morally neutral, waiting to determine whether Adam or Christ will become his natural head. He enters Adam’s race possessing Adam’s fallen nature and subject to Adam’s sentence. David wrote, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). He was not accusing his mother of immorality; he was confessing the inherited condition of fallen humanity. Job asked, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). Adam could only reproduce after his kind. Genesis 5:3 says that Adam “begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.” Adam had been created in the image of God, but after the fall he produced children bearing the likeness of a fallen father. Seth received more than Adam’s eyes, complexion, and physical features. He received a sinful nature, a mortal body, and membership in a condemned race. Adam did not merely pass down a bad example; he passed down a ruined inheritance.

This is why children do not need to be taught to sin. They require instruction in honesty, obedience, self-control, gratitude, patience, and kindness, but rebellion arrives with the factory equipment. Place two small children in a room with one toy and, before long, you will receive a free demonstration of Romans 5. No professor has to lecture them on covetousness, selfishness, deception, or wrath. The old nature conducts its own seminar. A child learns vocabulary from his parents, mathematics from a teacher, and perhaps a musical instrument from an instructor, but nobody has to explain how to say “mine.” The flesh already knows the chorus. This does not mean every person commits every possible sin or reaches the same depth of outward corruption. Environment, discipline, conscience, civil law, family influence, and the restraining work of God affect outward behavior. Yet a

chained dog remains a dog, and restrained depravity remains depravity. Civilization can place a suit on Adam, hand him a diploma, teach him table manners, and seat him on a church board, but it cannot change his nature. The unregenerate heart may become cultured, polished, patriotic, generous, and religious while remaining “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9).

The proof of Adam’s headship is not limited to the fact that all men eventually imitate him. Romans 5:14 says, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” Adam violated a direct command concerning a forbidden tree. Not everyone after him sinned under the same circumstances, yet death still reigned over them. Death ruled before the law was given at Sinai, proving that the Mosaic law did not create the fundamental problem. The law exposed sin, defined transgression, and made the offence abound, but death had already been working for centuries. Babies died though they had never knowingly violated the command given to Adam. Men died before Moses came down from Sinai with tables of stone. The reign of death testifies that humanity is treated corporately in its natural head. Modern man may object that this is unfair, but he never objects to corporate identity when it benefits him. He gladly inherits property he did not earn, citizenship he did not establish, freedoms he did not purchase, and a family name he did not create. He only discovers his fierce devotion to individualism when the Bible reveals his guilt in Adam. Yet the same principle that condemns him in the first man provides the foundation for his justification in the second Man. If he rejects representation in Adam, he has sawed off the doctrinal branch upon which substitution in Christ rests.

3. The Law Diagnosed the Disease but Could Not Cure the Patient

Romans 5:13 states, “For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” The verse does not say sin was absent before Moses; it says exactly the opposite. Sin was already in the world, and the graves from Adam to Sinai proved it. The entrance of the law did not introduce sin any more than a thermometer introduces fever. The thermometer reveals the temperature; it does not create the infection. The law supplied God’s written standard, identified particular transgressions, and stripped sin of its disguises. Romans 3:20 says, “for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” The law is a mirror, and a mirror can show a man the dirt on his face, but it cannot reach out and wash him. A man would be a fool to smash the mirror because he disliked the reflection, yet that is precisely what sinners do with Scripture. They accuse the Book of being harsh because the Book refuses to flatter them. God’s law is not cruel for exposing the wound. The cruelty belongs to the preacher who pats the infection and tells the dying man that the swelling is part of his spiritual journey.

The law also demolishes the fantasy that Adam's children can work their way into Christ. Galatians 3:21 asks, "for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." But no law could give life to a dead sinner. Rules can regulate behavior, restrain outward evil, and pronounce judgment upon disobedience, but they cannot create a new nature. A speed-limit sign can condemn the driver doing ninety miles per hour, but it cannot reach into the engine and replace it. The commandment is "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12), but the flesh to which it speaks is corrupt. The defect is not in the standard; it is in the sinner. Tell Adam's fallen son not to covet, and the commandment awakens every covetous appetite hiding in the basement. Tell him not to touch, and suddenly touching becomes the chief ambition of his afternoon. The law is light, but light does not improve cockroaches; it makes them run for cover. The commandment reveals what is moving in the darkness, and human nature resents the exposure.

Romans 5:20 says, "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound." God did not give the law so sinless men could earn heaven by keeping it; He gave it so sinful men would understand the exceeding sinfulness of sin and recognize their need for grace. The law closes mouths rather than opens heaven. Romans 3:19 declares that "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." That includes the moral mouth explaining how much better it is than the drunkard, the religious mouth reciting its sacraments, the scholarly mouth correcting the King James Bible, and the proud mouth demanding that God justify Himself before the creature He made. Sinai does not provide Adam with a ladder into Christ. It places him under a floodlight and reads the indictment. The law can track the criminal, identify his fingerprints, display the evidence, and pronounce the sentence, but it cannot become his Saviour. Moses can lead a sinner to the courtroom; only Jesus Christ can lead him out justified.

4. The Last Adam Entered Where the First Adam Fell

First Corinthians 15:45 says, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Christ is not merely another religious teacher added to the long parade of Adam's descendants. He is the last Adam, the Head of a new creation. His entrance into the world required the virgin birth because a natural father would have connected Him to Adam's fallen line. The Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and "that holy thing" born of her was called "the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). He possessed genuine humanity without inherited sin, true flesh without Adam's corruption, and human blood untainted by the guilt passing through Adam's race. He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Adam began in a garden surrounded by abundance and fell after one temptation. Christ entered a wilderness after forty days of fasting, faced

the devil directly, and answered every temptation with the written word of God. Adam stood amid food and disobeyed; Christ stood amid stones while hungry and obeyed. The first Adam believed the serpent's contradiction. The last Adam answered, "It is written."

The contrast continues through every part of their obedience. Adam grasped at what God had forbidden, but Christ "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). Adam's disobedience brought thorns from the ground; Christ wore those thorns upon His head. Adam hid naked among the trees; Christ was stripped and displayed upon a tree. Adam blamed his bride; Christ gave Himself for His bride. Adam brought sweat into the human experience; Christ's sweat became "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Adam's act opened the grave; Christ entered the grave and broke its authority. The Bible's symmetry is too exact to be accidental and too profound to be the production of religious imagination. The first man turned a garden into a graveyard. The second Man turned a graveyard into the garden of resurrection. Where Adam surrendered dominion to the tempter, Christ spoiled principalities and powers and "made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15).

Romans 5:19 places the two heads in direct opposition: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Notice that salvation rests upon "the obedience of one." The sinner is not justified by combining Christ's obedience with his own improved conduct. Christ does not supply ninety-nine percent while the sinner contributes the final religious penny that keeps heaven solvent. The Lord Jesus obeyed the Father perfectly throughout His earthly life and then became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). At Calvary He bore the sins of the world, satisfied divine justice, fulfilled the demands of the law, and exhausted the penalty against the believer. His resurrection declared that death had no lawful claim upon Him and that the sacrifice had been accepted. Adam's work was disobedience, and Christ's work was obedience. Both are finished. You cannot return to Eden and prevent Adam's offence, and you cannot return to Calvary and improve Christ's sacrifice. The only question is which finished work stands as the basis of your position before God.

5. One Offence Condemned, but One Gift Justified

Romans 5 repeatedly contrasts "the offence" with "the free gift." Verse 15 declares, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift." Salvation is a gift because the sinner possesses nothing with which to purchase it. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Religion hates those two verses because religion depends upon having something

to sell. If salvation is free, the middleman is out of business. If Christ's blood is sufficient, the sacramental cashier can close the window. If the sinner receives eternal life by faith, no ecclesiastical corporation can charge admission, collect installments, or threaten repossession whenever he misses a payment. Religious systems prefer salvation on layaway because a frightened customer is easier to control. God offers justification as a free gift because Christ paid the entire price.

The gift is not merely equal to the ruin; grace exceeds it. Romans 5:16 says, "for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification." Adam's single offence opened a river of sin that has gathered the sewage of every generation, yet the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to cleanse every believer from every offence. The remedy does not barely cover the original wound and leave personal sins unpaid. Christ bore the whole legal burden. Colossians 2:13 says that God has forgiven believers "all trespasses." Romans 5:20 adds, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Grace does not merely keep pace with sin like a tired runner hoping to reach the finish line. It superabounds. Sin may pile its debts to the ceiling, but grace owns the building. This does not make sin harmless; Calvary proves sin is so terrible that nothing less than the blood of God's Son could answer it. Yet Calvary also proves that no quantity of sin can bankrupt divine grace where genuine faith receives the finished payment.

Justification is more than forgiveness. Forgiveness removes the charge, while justification declares the believer righteous before God. Romans 5:18 says, "even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." God does not pretend the sinner never sinned, nor does He quietly lose the evidence. He places the sinner's offences upon Christ and credits Christ's righteousness to the believer. Second Corinthians 5:21 states, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There are the two words again: "in him." The believer is not righteous because Adam finally improved; he is righteous because God placed him in the Righteous One. Heaven is not lowering its standard to accommodate human weakness. God's standard remains the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ, and grace gives the believer that very righteousness. The gospel does not bribe the Judge or manipulate the jury. It presents a Substitute who bore the sentence and a risen Saviour whose righteousness has been legally credited to the sinner's account.

6. The Sinner Changes Heads, Not Merely Habits

Salvation therefore involves a transfer of spiritual position. Colossians 1:13 says that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The word is not reformed, renovated, improved, encouraged, or rehabilitated. It is "translated." God moves the believer from one dominion to another. The sinner does

not climb from Adam into Christ by progressive moral achievement. He is placed in Christ when he believes the gospel. First Corinthians 12:13 declares, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” That operation is not accomplished by water, human hands, denominational authority, or a minister standing beside a baptistery. Water baptism is an important act of obedience and testimony, but no amount of water can remove a man from Adam’s race. If water could accomplish that miracle, every bathtub would be a resurrection chamber and every lifeguard would be an evangelist. The Holy Spirit performs the spiritual baptism that joins the believer to the body of Christ.

This is why the new birth is indispensable. Jesus told Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). Nicodemus was moral, educated, religious, disciplined, respected, and thoroughly familiar with Israel’s Scriptures. If anybody could have polished Adam until he passed inspection, Nicodemus appeared to be the man. Yet Christ did not congratulate him on his religious résumé. He told him that his first birth was insufficient. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). Flesh does not gradually mature into spirit any more than a goat gradually matures into an eagle. Different births produce different natures. A man may reform his habits without receiving a new birth. He may quit drinking, repair his marriage, become dependable, attend church, and clean up his vocabulary, and all of those changes may benefit him and everyone around him. But a cleaner life is not necessarily eternal life. Reformation can comb Adam’s hair and button his collar; regeneration gives life from another Head.

Once placed in Christ, the believer becomes part of a new creation. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” It does not say that he merely adopts a new philosophy, discovers his hidden potential, joins a supportive community, or learns religious coping skills. God creates something new. The believer retains his physical body and must contend with the flesh until redemption is completed, but his identity and standing have changed. He is no longer viewed by God merely as a condemned child of Adam. He is a member of Christ’s body, a possessor of Christ’s life, and an heir of Christ’s future. The world may continue identifying him by his former sins, his failures, his family background, his social position, or the label attached to his past. The devil will gladly dig through yesterday’s garbage and present the contents as current identification. But God does not consult Satan’s filing cabinet. God sees the believer where He placed him—in Christ. The accuser describes what the Christian was in Adam; grace declares what the Christian is in God’s Son.

7. Two Images Will Produce Two Destinies

First Corinthians 15:47–49 brings the doctrine to its final bodily outcome: “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they

also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Adam’s children bear the image of the earthy. Their bodies weaken, age, decay, and return to dust. Even the strongest body contains the seed of its own dissolution. The athlete may outrun his competitors, but he cannot outrun Adam. The billionaire may purchase the best doctors, rarest treatments, and softest hospital bed, but death does not accept bribes. The scholar may explain cellular degeneration in technical language, but knowing the names of the undertakers does not stop the funeral. Adam’s image ends in corruption because Adam’s race is mortal. The grave is the logical destination of the earthy man.

Those in Christ, however, are promised the image of the heavenly. Philippians 3:20–21 says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” The believer’s present body still connects him physically to Adam, which is why it suffers weakness, temptation, sickness, and death. But his spiritual position in Christ guarantees a future transformation. At the Rapture, the dead in Christ will rise and living believers will be changed. First Corinthians 15:53 declares, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” God does not intend to rescue only an invisible portion of the believer and surrender the body forever to the grave. Christ’s redemption will reach the dust. The body sown in weakness will be raised in power. The body bearing Adam’s fading image will be fashioned like Christ’s glorious body. The grave may hold the Christian temporarily, but it holds him with an expired lease.

The eternal divide between the two races will then be openly manifested. Those who remain in Adam will stand before God carrying their own record, their own righteousness, and their own guilt. Revelation 20 describes the dead standing before the great white throne, judged “according to their works.” That judgment is not a second opportunity to enter Christ. It is the final accounting of those who rejected the only righteousness God accepts. Their names are not found in the book of life, and they are cast into the lake of fire. Those in Christ, however, possess eternal life now and will appear with Him in glory. Colossians 3:3–4 says, “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Humanity begins in one race by natural birth, but eternity will not reunite the two lines. Adam’s road terminates in the second death; Christ’s road opens into everlasting glory. The division men dismiss today will be the only division that matters when every earthly label has burned away.

Conclusion

The Bible's message is not that some descendants of Adam are decent enough to deserve heaven while others are wicked enough to deserve hell. Every natural descendant of Adam belongs to the same fallen race, carries the same corrupt nature, stands beneath the same condemnation, and moves toward the same grave. Differences in outward conduct are real and significant, but they do not remove the fundamental condition. One corpse may wear an expensive suit while another lies in rags, but wardrobe does not create life. One sinner may sing hymns while another curses God, but neither voice changes his natural position. One may serve on a church board while another sits behind prison bars, but the church key and the prison key open rooms inside the same condemned world. Romans 3:23 leaves no escape hatch: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." God's standard is not the behavior of the neighbor you selected for comparison. His standard is His own glory, and every child of Adam has come short.

But where the first man failed, the second Man triumphed. Adam disobeyed in a garden; Christ obeyed unto death. Adam brought sin; Christ bore sin. Adam opened the grave; Christ walked out of it. Adam's offence brought condemnation; Christ's righteousness brings justification. Adam's children inherit corruption; those in Christ inherit eternal life. God has not asked the sinner to repair the first man. He commands him to believe upon the second Man. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Salvation is not received by joining a denomination, taking a sacrament, promising improvement, confessing to a priest, following a preacher, or achieving an emotional experience. It is received by trusting the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the full and final payment for sin. Faith does not make Christ's work effective; faith receives the work that Christ already finished. The empty hand does not purchase the gift. It merely stops clutching its own filthy currency and receives what grace provides freely.

So the final question is not whether you admire Christ, quote Christ, paint Christ, wear a cross, defend Christian civilization, or occasionally visit a building bearing His name. The devils recognize Christ's identity and tremble, but recognition is not regeneration. The question is whether you are in Christ. There is no third man waiting in the wings, no third race for the undecided, and no neutral ground between condemnation and justification. You were born in Adam, but you must be born again into Christ. If you remain in Adam, everything belonging to Adam's position remains yours: sin, condemnation, corruption, death, judgment, and the second death. If you are in Christ, everything secured by Christ's finished work belongs to your standing: righteousness, justification, acceptance, life, resurrection, security, and future glory. Religion can decorate Adam's prison cell, but only the gospel opens the door. The eternal divide is already drawn, and every soul stands on one side or the other. When every church roll has crumbled, every title has been forgotten,

every human distinction has vanished, and every grave has opened, only two locations will matter: **in Adam or in Christ.**

2 of 10 – In Christ – The Day the Holy Ghost Put You Inside the Body

Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:12–14; Ephesians 1:12–14; Ephesians 4:4–6

Introduction

The moment a sinner believes the gospel of the grace of God, something happens to him that no human eye can photograph, no church committee can supervise, no priestly hand can perform, and no denominational certificate can adequately describe. The Holy Ghost takes that believing sinner and places him into the spiritual body of the Lord Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 12:13 states the matter without asking permission from the ecclesiastical machinery: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” The verse does not say that some unusually emotional Christians are baptized into the body after reaching a higher spiritual level. It does not say that a preacher baptizes them into it with water. It does not say that membership is granted after six weeks of classes, an interview with the elders, a vote by the congregation, and a photograph for the church directory. It says that one Spirit baptizes all believers into one body. The sinner hears “the word of truth,” believes “the gospel of your salvation,” and is then “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). Heaven acts before religion can find a clipboard. God performs an operation no man can see and places the believer inside a living body whose Head is seated in glory.

That spiritual body is not a building, denomination, corporation, political action committee, social club, lodge, or religious franchise. It is an organism possessing the life of its Head. Colossians 1:18 says that Christ “is the head of the body, the church,” and Ephesians 1:22–23 calls the church “his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Men have spent centuries using the word “church” to describe everything from a cathedral full of statues to a storefront with twelve folding chairs and a coffee machine. They have confused the building with the body, the organization with the organism, the membership roll with the Lamb’s book of life, and denominational recognition with divine incorporation. A man may join a local congregation and never be joined to Christ. He may be baptized in water until the tadpoles recognize him and still remain outside the spiritual body. He may receive a membership card, an offering envelope, a committee assignment, and a parking decal while remaining dead in trespasses and sins. Human beings can place a name on a church roll; only the Holy Ghost can place a soul into Christ.

The distinction matters because the believer's entire standing before God depends upon what the Holy Ghost accomplished when he believed. If salvation were merely a personal decision to imitate Christ, it could be abandoned. If it were merely membership in a religious society, it could be revoked. If it were merely a promise to live better, it could be broken before Tuesday afternoon. But salvation places the believer inside Christ's body, joins him spiritually to the risen Head, seals him unto the day of redemption, and makes him a participant in Christ's life. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:17). The devil would have to rip a member from Christ's own body, break the seal of the Holy Ghost, annul the finished work of Calvary, overturn the Father's purpose, and drag the Head down from the right hand of God before he could finally destroy one saved sinner. Satan is certainly malicious enough to try, but he is not mighty enough to succeed. The security of the Christian does not rest upon the strength of the member; it rests upon the life, authority, and victory of the Head.

1. The Body of Christ Is God's Work, Not Man's Organization

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:12, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." That final expression is remarkable. Paul does not merely say, "so also is the church." He says, "so also is Christ." The Head and the members form one spiritual body under God's operation. This does not make believers divine, turn Christians into little gods, or dissolve their individual identities into some mystical religious soup. It means that Christ identifies His redeemed people so completely with Himself that they are called His body. When Saul persecuted believers, the risen Lord did not ask, "Why persecutest thou them?" He asked, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). Saul's hands were touching saints on earth, but Christ felt the assault in heaven. The members were below, the Head was above, yet the union was so real that an attack upon the members was treated as an attack upon Christ Himself.

This body is not created by organizational agreement. Men can form associations, elect officers, adopt constitutions, purchase property, register legal names, issue credentials, and print impressive letterhead. None of those things creates the body of Christ. At best, they arrange earthly affairs for a local congregation; at worst, they create a religious bureaucracy large enough to hide the gospel beneath its paperwork. A denomination may contain thousands who are members of Christ's body and thousands more who have never been born again. A small independent church may preach the gospel clearly, while another may be as spiritually dead as the denomination it criticizes. The label on the sign does not perform the new birth. The congregation may examine a testimony and receive a person into local fellowship, but it cannot see the heart or manufacture spiritual union. The local

church has real biblical authority and responsibility, but it does not replace the Holy Ghost as the One who forms Christ's spiritual body.

The body is also greater than any one congregation, ministry, fellowship, or movement. Ephesians 4:4 declares, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Men have divided themselves into countless groups, often over serious doctrinal matters and sometimes over matters that would embarrass a reasonably intelligent fence post. One group divides over the colour of the carpet, another over whether the piano should sit three feet farther to the left, and another because two preachers cannot fit their egos beneath the same roof. Yet every genuinely saved person remains a member of the one spiritual body formed by the Holy Ghost. That truth does not command believers to ignore false doctrine, join apostate councils, or pretend that every pulpit is sound. Biblical unity is never purchased by sacrificing biblical truth. It does mean that no sect owns Christ's body, no denomination has copyrighted the new birth, and no preacher possesses a private entrance into the Head. The Holy Ghost did not ask Rome, Canterbury, Nashville, Springfield, or Grand Rapids for permission to build the body of Christ.

2. The Holy Ghost Performs the Invisible Baptism

First Corinthians 12:13 identifies both the One performing the baptism and the body into which the believer is placed: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The baptizer in this operation is the Spirit of God, and the destination is the body of Christ. The verse speaks of "all," not an elite inner circle of unusually excited believers. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, a congregation containing divisions, carnality, lawsuits, moral disorder, abuse of spiritual gifts, and confusion around the Lord's supper. Yet he included them when he said, "we all." If spiritual baptism depended upon reaching a sinless or super-spiritual level, most of Corinth would have remained outside waiting for an application form. Their condition required rebuke, correction, discipline, and growth, but their failures did not prove that the Holy Ghost had neglected to place genuine believers into Christ. Position and condition must be distinguished or the Christian will spend his life confusing God's finished operation with his own unfinished growth.

The timing of this operation is connected with hearing and believing the gospel. Ephesians 1:13 says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." The verse continues, "in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." The Holy Ghost is not awarded after a believer survives a probationary period. He is not a spiritual bonus for those who discover the proper emotional technique. Romans 8:9 declares, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." There are no Christians who belong to Christ while lacking the Spirit of

Christ. A man may be uninstructed, immature, frightened, confused, or poorly taught, but if he is genuinely saved, he possesses the Holy Ghost. Conversely, a man may shout, shake, roll, boast of visions, advertise supernatural encounters, and announce that he has reached an apostolic level unknown to ordinary Christians, yet if he has never trusted the gospel, he has manufactured smoke without fire and noise without life.

The baptism is invisible because it is a spiritual operation. Human eyes see the sinner hear the gospel, perhaps bow his head, confess Christ, or call upon the Lord. God sees the deeper transaction: guilt answered by Christ's blood, righteousness imputed, eternal life imparted, the Spirit received, the believer sealed, and the soul placed into the body of Christ. Colossians 2:12 speaks of being "buried with him in baptism," and then identifies the power behind it as "the operation of God." The crucial salvation operation is not man working for God but God working upon man. Religion reverses the order and spends its time instructing dead sinners to perform enough ceremonies to convince God that they are alive. The gospel announces that Christ has finished the work and that God performs the saving operation upon those who believe. A surgeon does not congratulate the unconscious patient for assisting with the incision, and the Holy Ghost does not share credit with a baptismal tank for placing a sinner into Christ.

3. Water Can Wet the Flesh, but It Cannot Place the Soul in Christ

Water baptism is a biblical ordinance and an important act of obedience, but it must not be confused with the Holy Ghost's baptism into the body of Christ. Water baptism is outward, visible, and administered by a man. Spiritual baptism is inward, invisible, and performed by the Holy Ghost. Water places the body into water; the Holy Ghost places the believer into Christ's body. Water baptism follows faith as a testimony of identification with Christ, but it does not produce regeneration, wash away inward sin, or cause the new birth. First Corinthians 1:17 gives the distinction in language sturdy enough to survive every sacramental fog machine: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." If water baptism were part of the saving gospel, Paul could not separate the two without preaching damnation. Yet he thanked God that he had baptized only a few Corinthians because factions had formed around personalities. No apostle could say, "I thank God I saved none of you," but Paul could thank God he had baptized very few. That should be enough to drain the water out of baptismal regeneration, but religion has been trying to hold its breath under the verse for centuries.

The gospel Paul preached is stated in 1 Corinthians 15:1–4: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. There is no water in that passage except what sacramental imagination drags into it with a bucket. The sinner is saved when he receives Christ's finished work by faith. Romans 3:28 says, "Therefore we

conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” Romans 4:5 says, “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Water baptism is an act performed by the believer and administered through human agency. It has its proper place, but the moment anyone makes it a condition of receiving eternal life, he has placed human activity beside Christ’s blood and called the mixture grace. A ceremony may illustrate salvation; it cannot accomplish what only the Saviour accomplished.

The thief on the cross remains an inconvenient witness against every system that puts water between the sinner and eternal life. He could not come down, join a church, enter a baptistery, attend an instruction class, or prove his sincerity through years of service. He turned to Christ in faith and heard, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Religious salesmen have spent centuries trying to drown that thief because he escaped their system without paying the admission fee. They create exceptions, dispensations within dispensations, and theological trapdoors to prevent his simple faith from exposing their machinery. But the plain truth remains: Christ saved him without water because Christ, not water, is the Saviour. Water baptism should follow salvation as an obedient testimony wherever circumstances permit, but the water does not seal the believer, place him into the body, or keep him saved. Water can wash dirt from the skin, but only the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses sin, and only the Holy Ghost puts the cleansed believer into Christ.

4. Pentecostal Fire Is Not a Religious Thrill Ride

Much confusion comes from failing to distinguish the baptism of the Holy Ghost from the signs, wonders, languages, and transitional events recorded in Acts. John the Baptist said of Christ, “he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). Modern enthusiasts often speak of wanting the Holy Ghost and fire as though John were advertising a louder worship service. The next verse explains the fire: “whose fan is in his hand,” and He “will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:12). The baptism with the Holy Ghost is connected with blessing; the baptism with fire is connected with judgment. Nobody with a grain of Bible sense should be praying for unquenchable fire to fall upon him. But once religious excitement begins dancing, context is usually the first chair knocked over. A preacher shouts, “Send the fire,” the crowd shouts back, and Matthew 3 stands in the corner wondering whether anyone plans to read the next verse.

Acts records a transitional period in which God authenticated the apostles, demonstrated the inclusion of different groups, and moved historically from His dealings with Israel toward the full revelation of the church’s present calling. At Pentecost, Jews from many nations heard the apostles speak in actual languages they understood. Acts 2:8 asks, “And

how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" These were not meaningless syllables repeated until the speaker became dizzy. They were recognizable human languages serving as a divine sign. First Corinthians 14:22 plainly states, "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." Moreover, 1 Corinthians 1:22 says, "For the Jews require a sign." Anyone building Christian assurance upon whether he has reproduced an apostolic sign has traded the finished word of God for a spiritual carnival where volume is mistaken for authority and emotional electricity is marketed as the Holy Ghost.

The command for the present believer is not to seek a second baptism after salvation but to "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Baptism places the believer into the body once; filling concerns the Spirit's control of the believer's daily walk and may need continual renewal as he yields to God. Those doctrines are not interchangeable. Every saved person has been baptized by one Spirit into one body, but not every saved person is walking in the fulness, obedience, and power of the Spirit. The Corinthians had received the Spirit and were members of the body, yet Paul called them "carnal" (1 Corinthians 3:1). Their problem was not the absence of spiritual baptism; it was the presence of fleshly behavior. Modern religion often reverses this, assuring carnal performers that noise proves fulness while telling quiet believers they lack the Spirit because they did not imitate the performance. The Holy Ghost is not recognized by confusion, theatrical collapse, uncontrolled behavior, or religious exhibitionism. He inspired a Book that commands, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

5. One Body Contains Many Members but Only One Head

First Corinthians 12:14 says, "For the body is not one member, but many." Spiritual union does not erase individuality, eliminate different functions, or make every Christian identical. A body requires variety. The eye sees, the ear hears, the hand grasps, the foot walks, and the heart works unseen. Trouble begins when one member despises its appointed function or tries to imitate another member for attention. Paul continues, "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" (1 Corinthians 12:15). A foot does not become useless because it cannot play the piano, and an ear does not become inferior because it cannot carry a suitcase. God does not measure usefulness by public visibility. Some believers preach to hundreds, while others pray where nobody sees them. Some teach, some give, some encourage, some serve, and some quietly hold local churches together while the visible personalities receive the applause. Heaven's accounting department has never been impressed by stage lighting.

The body also forbids one member from declaring another unnecessary. “And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee” (1 Corinthians 12:21). Pride makes visible gifts look down upon hidden service, and envy makes hidden service resent visible gifts. Both attitudes are flesh wearing religious clothing. The preacher who thinks the church exists to exhibit his brilliance has mistaken himself for the Head. The member who refuses to serve because nobody gives him a title has mistaken the body for an awards banquet. Christ distributes functions according to His wisdom, not according to the ambitions of men. Romans 12:4–5 says, “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ.” The body does not need twenty right hands fighting over the microphone. It needs every member faithfully occupying the place appointed by God.

Yet diversity of function never means plurality of heads. Colossians 1:18 says Christ “is the head of the body, the church.” The pastor is not the head. The pope is not the head. The denominational president is not the head. The popular conference speaker with a bestselling book and a fog machine is not the head. Jesus Christ alone occupies that position. A body with two heads is a monstrosity, and a church trying to obey Christ and human tradition as equal authorities becomes spiritually deformed. The Head directs the members through His word, and every leader remains subject to that authority. Paul told the Corinthians to follow him “even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). The limitation is built into the sentence. Follow the servant only as the servant follows the Head. When a preacher contradicts the Book, loyalty to Christ requires rejection of the contradiction. The body belongs to the Head who purchased it with His blood, not to the hired hand who happens to occupy the pulpit.

6. The Life of the Head Flows Through Every Member

Union with Christ means that the believer’s spiritual life is inseparable from the life of the risen Head. Colossians 3:3 says, “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Christianity is not merely belief in historical facts about a religious founder who died long ago. It is possession of the life of a Saviour who died, rose bodily, ascended into heaven, and lives forevermore. Christ said, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19). The believer does not manufacture eternal life through continued religious effort. Eternal life comes from Christ and is secured in Christ. A finger survives only while connected to the living body, but the believer is not loosely attached to Christ by a thread of human determination. He has been joined by the operation of the Holy Ghost. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:17). The union is spiritual, divine, and beyond the reach of earthly powers.

Ephesians 5:30 says, “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” That language is stronger than the cautious vocabulary religious scholarship often prefers. Paul compares the union of Christ and the church to the marriage union and then declares, “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5:32). Christ nourishes and cherishes the church because it is His body. A man does not deliberately starve one hand, abandon one foot, or throw an eye into the street because that member had a bad day. Christ cares for His body with a faithfulness exceeding every natural comparison. He corrects His members, disciplines them, cleanses them through His word, and directs them toward maturity, but He does not amputate them whenever they stumble. Divine chastening proves sonship; it does not cancel it. Hebrews 12:6 says, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” A Father chastens His child because the relationship exists, not because He is deciding whether to establish it.

This union is the foundation of eternal security. Ephesians 4:30 commands, “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” A believer can grieve the Spirit, but the verse does not say he can evict Him. The same Spirit who may be grieved is the Spirit who seals him until a stated day—the day of redemption. Ephesians 1:14 calls the Spirit “the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” An earnest is a pledge guaranteeing completion. God did not make a down payment He intends to forfeit. The believer is a purchased possession, sealed by the Spirit, joined to the body, and connected to the living Head. To lose salvation, he would need to become unpurchased, unsealed, unbaptized, dismembered, unborn, unjustified, and removed from Christ. The New Testament never describes such an operation because God never performs one. Salvation is not a hotel reservation cancelled when the guest fails to arrive on his best behavior. It is a divine incorporation into the risen Christ.

7. Membership in Christ’s Body Demands a Worthy Walk

Positional security does not excuse practical carelessness. The same Paul who taught that believers are baptized into one body also commanded them to glorify God in their bodies. First Corinthians 6:15 asks, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” Paul uses that truth to condemn fornication, not to excuse it. If the Christian belonged only to himself, he might claim authority to use his body as he pleased. But 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 declares, “ye are not your own,” for “ye are bought with a price.” The body of a believer is not private property available for the flesh, the world, and the devil to rent by the hour. It belongs to the Lord who purchased it. Grace does not lower the standard of holiness; it gives holiness a stronger foundation. The Christian refuses sin not because he is trying to earn membership in Christ but because the Holy Ghost has already made him a member.

Union with the body also creates obligations toward other believers. First Corinthians 12:26 says, “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” A healthy hand does not laugh when the foot is crushed. An eye does not celebrate because the ear has lost its hearing. Yet Christians sometimes treat another believer’s fall as entertainment, spreading the details with all the solemnity of a news anchor and all the appetite of a buzzard over highway remains. Biblical discernment requires exposing false doctrine, rebuking sin, and refusing fellowship with apostasy, but fleshly delight in another believer’s ruin is not discernment. It is malice wearing reading glasses. Galatians 6:1 instructs spiritual believers to restore the overtaken brother “in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” The body should not ignore an infected wound, but neither should it cut off the limb merely because surgery attracts a larger audience than healing.

Finally, every member should serve under the direction of the Head. Ephesians 4:15–16 describes believers growing “into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ,” and says the whole body makes “increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Christian growth is not an endless fascination with one’s own feelings. It is increasing conformity to Christ, greater submission to His word, deeper usefulness to His people, and clearer testimony before the world. The Holy Ghost did not place believers into the body so they could occupy a pew like religious furniture. A member disconnected from practical service may still belong to the body, but it is failing to supply what the Head intended. God has not called every Christian to the same office, but He has called every Christian to faithfulness. There are no spare parts in the body of Christ. The member may

3 of 10 – In Christ – Nailed to His Cross, Buried in His Tomb, Raised in His Victory

Key Passage: Romans 6:1–14

Introduction

Calvary is not merely a place where Jesus Christ died for what the sinner had done; it is the place where God passed sentence upon what the sinner was. Most religious preaching never gets beyond the first half of that truth. It tells a man that Christ died for his sins, and thank God He did, but it leaves the old man standing beside the cross with a pardon in his pocket and the same condemned identity governing his life. Paul goes farther. He declares that the believer was joined to Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Romans 6:3 asks, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” The Holy Ghost does not bring the Christian to Calvary as a tourist carrying

a camera. He places him into the crucified and risen Saviour. Christ's history becomes the legal foundation of the believer's history before God. When Christ died, the believer's old man was crucified with Him; when Christ was buried, the believer was buried with Him; when Christ arose, the believer was raised to walk in newness of life. Salvation is not Adam watching Jesus die from a comfortable pew. It is God joining the believing sinner to the death that ended Adam's claim and the resurrection that began an entirely new life.

That truth separates biblical Christianity from the entire religious renovation business. Religion keeps Adam alive, enrolls him in a class, washes his face, changes his clothes, teaches him a vocabulary, hands him a pledge card, and tells him to imitate Jesus. God takes Adam to the execution ground. The religious man wants improvement; God demands death. The counselor wants to manage the old man; God has already condemned him. The moralist wants to place the flesh on probation; God nailed it to a cross nearly two thousand years ago. Romans 6:6 says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." It does not say the old man needs more education, greater confidence, a healthier self-image, or a more inspiring worship atmosphere. It says he is crucified. The cross is not a beauty salon for fallen human nature. It is God's electric chair for Adam's condemned offspring. This does not mean the Christian's flesh has ceased functioning or that temptation has vanished. It means that the old man has lost his lawful position as the believer's ruling identity. Sin remains present, but it no longer possesses the legal throne. The flesh can make noise, but noise is not sovereignty; a dethroned tyrant may still shout from the basement, but he no longer owns the house.

Romans 6 therefore presents one of the most liberating and most neglected truths in the Christian life: the believer must learn to reckon according to what God has already accomplished. He is not commanded to crucify himself repeatedly, bury himself through religious effort, or raise himself through positive thinking. God has already joined him to Christ's finished work. Romans 6:11 says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Reckoning does not create the fact; it counts the fact to be true because God declared it. A bank clerk does not create money by recording a deposit. He recognizes what has already been placed into the account. In the same way, the believer does not become dead to sin by feeling dead, pretending temptation does not exist, or reaching a mystical level where his flesh finally behaves like a choirboy. He reckons himself dead to sin because God placed him into Christ's death. He reckons himself alive to God because God placed him into Christ's resurrection life. Feelings may object, circumstances may argue, the flesh may protest, and the devil may present a folder of old evidence, but none of them can rewrite Romans 6. The Christian life begins to stand upright when faith stops asking Adam how things look and starts asking God what happened at Calvary.

1. Calvary Was an Execution, Not a Religious Exhibition

The cross has become so familiar as a religious symbol that men can wear it around their necks without understanding what happened upon it. It appears on church steeples, grave markers, jewelry, bumper stickers, vestments, and polished denominational logos, but the New Testament presents it as an instrument of shame, judgment, blood, and death. Christ did not go to Calvary to decorate Christianity. He went there to bear sin beneath the wrath of God. Isaiah 53:5 says, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." First Peter 2:24 declares that He "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." The cross was not God demonstrating that suffering is meaningful or that love requires vague sacrifice. It was the sinless Substitute receiving the legal penalty owed by guilty men. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). Every stripe, thorn, nail, wound, and drop of blood testified that sin is not a minor defect to be managed but a capital offence before a holy God.

Yet Christ did more at Calvary than carry a catalogue of separate transgressions. He stood as the representative Man beneath God's judgment upon fallen humanity. Romans 8:3 says that God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." God did not merely condemn murder, theft, adultery, lying, covetousness, pride, blasphemy, and every other rotten fruit hanging from Adam's tree. He struck at the corrupt root from which the fruit grows. Men like to imagine that they are basically good people who occasionally perform bad acts. The Bible says they are sinners who sin because their nature is fallen. A thornbush does not become a thornbush after producing its first thorn; it produces thorns because it is already a thornbush. Likewise, Adam's sons do not become sinners only after accumulating enough violations to qualify. They commit sin because they belong to Adam's condemned stock. At the cross, God dealt with both the fruit and the root, both the sins and the sinner, both the criminal record and the old man who produced it.

This is why sentimental views of Calvary are so shallow. The cross is not merely a picture of Jesus sympathizing with human pain. It is God's verdict against everything Adam became through sin. Galatians 6:14 says, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Calvary divides the believer from the world's system because the world crucified his Saviour and God condemned the world's wisdom, righteousness, religion, and glory at the same place. The philosopher sees foolishness, the moralist sees excess, the religious professional sees a threat to his business, and the saved man sees the end of every boast he inherited from Adam. At the cross, human merit died, religious pride died, the law's accusation was answered, Satan's claim was broken, and the old man received his sentence. Men may

polish the cross until it shines beneath cathedral lights, but heaven remembers it covered in blood. Calvary was not a stage upon which humanity displayed its potential. It was an execution ground where God exposed humanity's ruin and supplied humanity's only Redeemer.

2. Baptized Into His Death by an Operation No Water Can Perform

Romans 6:3 says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" The baptism in that verse places the believer "into Jesus Christ." No preacher can lower a sinner into a tank and deposit him inside the risen Son of God. Water can wet the body, symbolize burial and resurrection, and provide a public testimony of faith, but it cannot join a soul to Christ. First Corinthians 12:13 identifies the divine Operator: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." The Holy Ghost takes the believing sinner and places him into Christ's spiritual body. That invisible baptism identifies him with everything the Head accomplished. The believer is baptized into Christ, into His body, and therefore into His death. A religious ceremony may picture this operation, but the picture must never be confused with the power. A photograph of bread cannot feed a starving man, and a photograph of a baptism cannot regenerate a dead sinner.

This distinction matters because religious systems have spent centuries pouring, sprinkling, immersing, dipping, and arguing over water while ignoring the operation of God. Some sprinkle a baby who cannot believe the gospel and announce that the child has entered the covenant. Some tell adults that faith remains incomplete until a preacher gets them wet. Others turn the baptismal pool into a spiritual tollbooth and insist that nobody reaches salvation until he passes through their water. Yet Paul thanked God that he baptized only a few of the Corinthians and then declared, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 1:17). If water baptism were part of the saving gospel, that statement would make Paul the strangest evangelist in church history. He would be thanking God that he had neglected an essential part of salvation. But Paul knew the difference between the gospel that saves and the ordinance that follows salvation. Christ saves through His death, burial, and resurrection; water baptism testifies that the believer has trusted that finished work.

Colossians 2 joins spiritual baptism to another invisible operation: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." The passage continues, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God" (Colossians 2:11–12). There is the language religion consistently loses beneath its sacramental furniture: "without hands" and "the operation of God." The baptism uniting the believer to Christ's death is not the operation of a priest, pope, pastor, elder, bishop, church board, or denominational headquarters. God performs it. Human hands may

immerse the body in water, but only God can separate the soul from the body of the sins of the flesh and join that soul to Jesus Christ. The sinner is not saved because a preacher said the correct words over the correct amount of water. He is saved because he believed the gospel and God operated. Religion specializes in visible machinery because visible machinery allows men to stand beside it and charge admission. Grace works invisibly, completely, and without consulting the men wearing the costumes.

3. The Old Man Was Not Reformed—He Was Crucified

Romans 6:6 says, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him.” The “old man” is not merely a collection of bad habits acquired through unfortunate experiences. He is the believer’s former identity in Adam, the fallen nature operating through the flesh, the inward source of rebellion against God. Ephesians 4:22 describes “the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” Colossians 3:9 speaks of putting off “the old man with his deeds.” His deeds are corrupt because his nature is corrupt. Men attempt to reverse that order by pruning the deeds while preserving the man. They remove a few visible sins, replace crude habits with respectable ones, and announce that Adam has been rehabilitated. But a cleaner cage does not change the animal inside it. The old man can exchange tavern songs for hymns, profanity for religious clichés, and worldly ambition for denominational ambition while remaining every inch the old man.

God’s answer to the old man is crucifixion. Galatians 2:20 declares, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Paul does not say, “I have improved myself by studying Christ,” or “I am gradually becoming worthy of Christ.” He says, “I am crucified with Christ.” That is judicial identification. When God viewed Christ upon the cross as the believer’s representative and Substitute, He included the believer’s old Adamic identity in the sentence. Christ bore the believer’s sins, but He also became the place where God condemned the believer’s fallen headship. The old man was not crucified alone, because his death could pay for nothing. He was crucified “with Christ.” The value rests entirely in the One to whom the believer has been joined. A condemned criminal dying on his own cross remains condemned; a believer identified with Christ’s cross stands inside the death that satisfied God.

This crucifixion has a purpose: “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:6). “Destroyed” does not mean annihilated in present experience, for the same chapter commands believers not to let sin reign in their mortal bodies. The body of sin has been rendered powerless in its former legal claim and stripped of its right to rule. Before salvation, the sinner may restrain certain actions through discipline, fear, social pressure, or self-interest, but he remains the servant of sin because he remains in Adam. After salvation, sin still appeals to the flesh, but it addresses a man

who has died with Christ and now belongs to another Master. The chains have been broken even when the former prisoner foolishly returns to the old cell. Sin can tempt the Christian, harass the Christian, deceive the Christian, and chastise the Christian through consequences, but it cannot lawfully own the Christian. Calvary did not remove the battlefield; it changed the believer's commander and broke the enemy's title deed.

4. Buried With Him—God Closed the Grave on Adam's Claim

Romans 6:4 states, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." Burial is God's declaration that death has occurred and that the former order has ended. Men do not bury a patient who needs encouragement; they bury a man whose earthly course is finished. When Christ was placed in Joseph's tomb, the world believed it had disposed of Him. The stone was rolled into place, the Roman seal was applied, and guards were posted as though human muscle could prevent the Lord of life from keeping His appointment with Sunday morning. Yet for the believer, Christ's burial carries a deeper personal identification. God counts him as buried with Christ. The old standing in Adam is not placed in a spiritual hospital for observation. It is carried to the tomb. Grace does not leave the old man lingering around the house like an unwanted relative waiting to reclaim the property. God closes the grave upon his legal claim.

Burial also separates the believer from the world that rejected Christ. The world saw Christ disappear into a tomb and continued its business as though it had silenced Him. The priests protected their positions, Pilate guarded his political convenience, the soldiers collected their pay, and Jerusalem prepared to continue its religious machinery. But the believer has been buried with the One that world rejected. His deepest identity no longer belongs to the present evil world. Colossians 2:20 asks, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" The believer still lives physically among men, works, serves, pays bills, raises children, suffers trials, and carries responsibilities, but the world no longer defines his standing. Its approval cannot add to him, and its rejection cannot remove him from Christ. He has attended his own funeral as far as the world's ultimate claim is concerned.

Religion dislikes burial because religion makes its money keeping the old man alive. It sells him rules, rituals, formulas, observances, seasons, garments, candles, beads, pilgrimages, diets, experiences, and endless installments of human merit. If Adam is dead and Christ is sufficient, the religious salesman loses his customer. Colossians 2 warns against commandments such as "Touch not; taste not; handle not," which possess "a shew of wisdom in will worship" but cannot conquer the flesh. The flesh can become proud of what it refuses to touch as easily as it becomes corrupt through what it embraces. A monk may flee society, wear rough clothing, eat plain food, sleep on stone, and become so proud of

his humility that a peacock would blush beside him. Burial ends all confidence in fleshly religion because a buried man cannot improve his record. The Christian's hope is not that Adam will become spiritual after enough ceremonies. His hope is that Adam's claim ended in Christ's tomb and that resurrection life came out without him.

5. Raised With Christ to Walk in Newness of Life

Romans 6:4 does not end at burial: "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Christianity is not a religion of permanent funerals. The cross kills the old claim, the tomb closes upon the old standing, and the resurrection introduces a new life. Christ did not rise merely as the same mortal man returning to ordinary existence. He rose beyond death's dominion, possessing a glorified life that the grave could never touch again. Romans 6:9 says, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." Because the believer is in Christ, he shares the life of the risen Head. This does not mean his present body has already been glorified, but it means eternal life is already his possession and bodily resurrection is guaranteed.

Ephesians 2:5–6 says that God "hath quickened us together with Christ" and "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Those verbs describe the believer's position as a completed divine accomplishment. God sees him joined to the risen and ascended Christ. The Christian may feel weak, discouraged, battered, and painfully aware of his present body, but his spiritual location is not determined by the weather inside his emotions. A storm can hide the stars without moving them. Likewise, a trial can hide the believer's sense of victory without altering his position in the risen Christ. He does not manufacture resurrection life through enthusiasm. He receives it through union with the One who arose. The world can drain his strength, the flesh can cloud his thinking, and circumstances can knock the wind from him, but none of them can drag Christ back into Joseph's tomb.

Newness of life must also appear in the believer's walk. Positional truth is not an excuse for practical corruption; it is the only sound basis for practical holiness. Paul asks, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" and immediately answers, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1–2). He does not threaten to place the believer back in Adam if he stumbles. He appeals to what the believer has become in Christ. Grace does not say, "Sin is harmless, so enjoy it." Grace says, "Sin no longer owns you, so stop obeying a dead master." The Christian does not pursue holiness to earn union with Christ; he pursues holiness because union with Christ has given him a new life. Good works are not the roots of salvation, but they ought to grow as its fruit. A tree

does not produce fruit to become alive; it produces fruit because life is already moving through its branches.

6. Reckon the Record Correct Even When the Flesh Objects

Romans 6:11 contains the practical hinge of the chapter: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” To reckon is to count something true on the basis of God’s record. It is not psychological make-believe, religious self-hypnosis, or a positive confession designed to manipulate reality. The believer does not stand before a mirror chanting, “I am dead to sin,” until temptation becomes embarrassed and leaves the room. He reads God’s declaration, believes God’s accounting, and orders his life accordingly. Faith does not deny the presence of sin; it denies sin’s right to rule. The flesh says, “You have always obeyed me.” God says, “Your old man is crucified.” The devil says, “You belong to your past.” God says, “You are alive unto me through Jesus Christ.” Reckoning chooses God’s Book over the testimony of a liar and the sensations of fallen flesh.

This reckoning must be followed by refusal and yielding. Romans 6:12 commands, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Notice that sin seeks to reign in the “mortal body,” not in the believer’s eternal standing in Christ. The body remains the field upon which the battle is fought. Its appetites, memories, habits, weaknesses, and desires can become instruments of sin. Therefore verse 13 says, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.” The eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, imagination, and physical appetites can be handed back to the former tyrant. A dethroned king cannot govern unless somebody inside the palace opens the gate. Sin’s throne has been legally broken, but the believer can still lend sin his furniture. Every act of surrender gives the old master practical room to operate, though it cannot restore his legal ownership.

The positive command is equally important: “but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” Christianity is not merely a campaign of saying no. The believer must present himself to God for service. An instrument has no independent program; it becomes useful in the hand that controls it. A scalpel can heal in a surgeon’s hand or kill in a murderer’s hand. A tongue can preach truth or spread poison. A mind can meditate upon Scripture or furnish an apartment for lust. Hands can serve the saints or clutch the world. Feet can carry the gospel or walk directly into temptation. The issue is yielding. Victory is not achieved by admiring the instruments, blaming the instruments, or pretending the instruments do not exist. It comes as the believer reckons himself alive to God and places every member at God’s disposal. The old man offered the body to sin; the new man presents it to God.

7. Sin May Bark at the Gate, but It No Longer Owns the House

Romans 6:14 gives the believer a declaration stronger than every sensation of defeat: “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Dominion is the issue. The verse does not promise that sin will never speak, tempt, deceive, wound, or trouble the Christian. It promises that sin does not possess rightful lordship over him. Before salvation, sin reigned unto death. The sinner might prefer respectable sins to scandalous ones, but he still served the same throne. Pride can wear a choir robe as easily as lust can wear a nightclub dress. Covetousness can sit on a church finance committee as easily as it can stand behind a casino table. Sin is adaptable; it changes uniforms without changing commanders. But in Christ, the believer has been removed from sin’s lawful dominion.

Being “under grace” does not provide permission to sin; it provides power and position from which to resist sin. Titus 2:11–12 says that “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” teaches believers that, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,” they should live “soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Grace is not an indulgent grandmother slipping candy to the flesh when the law is not looking. Grace took the old man to the cross, buried his claim, joined the believer to Christ, and now instructs him to live like a man who has changed masters. Legalism demands holiness from a man still relying upon Adam’s strength. Grace supplies a new standing, a new life, a new Head, the indwelling Spirit, and then commands a walk consistent with those realities. The law can order a corpse to stand; grace gives life and then says, “Walk.”

The believer’s failures do not prove that Romans 6 is false; they prove that he must apply Romans 6. A Christian can walk after the flesh, grieve the Holy Spirit, lose fellowship, damage his testimony, injure others, invite the chastening hand of God, and lose rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. Grace does not place padding around sin’s consequences. David was forgiven, but the sword did not depart from his house. The Corinthian believer belonged to Christ’s body, yet his carnality brought severe correction. Eternal security is not divine approval of Christian rebellion. It is the certainty that Christ’s finished work remains stronger than the believer’s unfinished growth. The answer to failure is not to crawl back into Adam and question whether Calvary worked. It is to confess the sin, believe God’s record, stand again upon union with Christ, and refuse to hand the throne back to an enemy whose ownership papers were cancelled in blood.

Conclusion

To be in Christ is to possess a history before God that reaches back to the cross and forward to resurrection glory. Christ’s death answered the believer’s guilt; his identification

with that death ended the old man's legal claim. Christ's burial closed the grave upon Adam's standing; the believer's identification with that burial declares that the old order has ended. Christ's resurrection broke the dominion of death; the believer's identification with that resurrection gives him newness of life now and guarantees a glorified body later. These are not religious metaphors floating harmlessly above daily life. They are divine facts meant to govern the Christian's thinking, conduct, warfare, assurance, and hope. The believer does not approach Calvary as a spectator applauding a heroic sacrifice. God has placed him inside the One who died and rose again.

That is why the flesh must never be allowed to interpret the believer's position. The flesh knows appetite, impulse, memory, fear, pride, lust, weakness, and self-preservation, but it knows nothing about spiritual accounting. It reads only the sensations of the moment. If temptation is strong, the flesh concludes that sin must still be king. If feelings are low, it concludes that resurrection life must have departed. If failure occurs, it insists that the old man has reclaimed ownership. But the word of God says, "our old man is crucified with him." It says, "we are buried with him." It says, "we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." It says, "sin shall not have dominion over you." Faith takes God's side against every competing witness. The Christian does not overcome by pretending the battle is easy. He overcomes by refusing to grant the enemy a throne Christ already destroyed.

So stop carrying Adam's corpse around as though God expects you to rehabilitate it. Stop asking the old man to produce the life that exists only in the risen Christ. Stop mistaking the noise of the flesh for the verdict of heaven. At Calvary, God did not place Adam in a recovery program; He placed him under sentence. In Joseph's tomb, God did not preserve Adam for a future religious experiment; He closed the grave upon his claim. On resurrection morning, Christ did not come forth merely to inspire fallen men to try harder; He came forth as the Head of a new creation. The believer now stands on the other side of judgment, joined to a living Saviour whom death can never touch again. Sin may bark, the flesh may claw, temptation may pound upon the door, and Satan may wave yesterday's photographs through the window, but none of them possesses the deed. The house belongs to Jesus Christ, and the believer living inside it has been **nailed to His cross, buried in His tomb, and raised in His victory.**

4 of 10 – In Christ – No Condemnation: The Court Has Lost Its Case

Key Passage: Romans 8:1–4, 31–39

Introduction

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” is not a sentimental line printed beneath a sunrise on a religious greeting card. It is the final verdict of the highest court in existence. Romans 8:1 does not say there is less condemnation, delayed condemnation, occasional condemnation, or condemnation waiting to be reinstated after the believer’s next failure. It says “no condemnation.” God chose the word, God entered the verdict, and God does not need a committee of nervous theologians to revise His language. The believer once stood in Adam beneath sin’s guilt, the law’s sentence, death’s dominion, and the certainty of judgment. But the moment he believed the gospel, God placed him in Christ Jesus, and everything governing his judicial position changed. The Judge did not overlook the charges, misplace the evidence, lower the standard, or allow the criminal to escape through a legal loophole. He placed the entire penalty upon the Substitute, accepted Christ’s blood as full payment, raised Him from the dead, and justified the believing sinner. The case did not disappear because God stopped caring about righteousness. The case closed because divine righteousness received everything it demanded at Calvary.

The law can still identify sin, conscience can still sound an alarm, Satan can still accuse, and men can still drag out a believer’s past whenever their own spiritual cupboard looks bare. None of those voices, however, possesses authority to reverse God’s verdict. Romans 8:33 asks, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” That question is not pretending nobody will attempt to lay a charge. The devil is called “the accuser of our brethren” in Revelation 12:10 because accusing the saints is one of the few full-time jobs he has ever performed with enthusiasm. The world accuses, religious hypocrites accuse, wounded consciences accuse, and sometimes Christians accuse one another with the zeal of amateur prosecutors who misplaced the gospel on the way to court. Paul’s question concerns authority: Who can make a charge stick when God has justified the accused? Satan may arrive with a briefcase full of facts, but facts about the believer’s failures cannot overturn the greater fact of Christ’s finished payment. The accuser can describe the crime; he cannot cancel the blood.

This freedom from condemnation does not turn grace into a padded room where rebellion becomes harmless. The believer remains accountable to his Father, can grieve the Holy Spirit, damage his testimony, reap corruption from the flesh, lose rewards at the judgment seat of Christ, and experience severe chastening. A saved man can make a wreck of his service without making Christ’s cross a failure. But fatherly correction is not judicial condemnation, and confusing those two things has kept multitudes of Christians trembling outside a courtroom God already dismissed. The Judge who justified the believer has become his Father, and a Father corrects a son precisely because the relationship remains intact. Hebrews 12:6 says, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” Chastening proves

sonship; condemnation would deny it. God may take the believer to the woodshed, but He will never take him to the lake of fire. The lightning of divine wrath has already struck the Substitute, and heaven does not collect the same debt twice.

1. The Courtroom Opened in Adam, and Every Mouth Was Stopped

Before Romans 8 announces “no condemnation,” Romans 1–3 establishes universal guilt. God does not begin His presentation by reassuring mankind that everybody is trying his best. He begins by exposing the Gentile world’s idolatry, uncleanness, rebellion, and rejection of revealed truth. Romans 1:18 says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” Creation itself testifies to God’s “eternal power and Godhead,” leaving the heathen “without excuse.” Men knew God but refused to glorify Him as God, “became vain in their imaginations,” and changed divine glory into images resembling corruptible creatures. The descent continued through dishonoured bodies, vile affections, reprobate minds, and a catalogue of wickedness that reads like the evening news after the editor removed the advertisements. Fallen man does not suffer from insufficient light; he suppresses the light he has because darkness offers better hiding places for his idols.

Romans 2 then turns toward the moralist and religious judge who applauded the condemnation of the heathen while keeping his own sins behind the curtains. “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest,” Paul writes, “for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself” (Romans 2:1). The moralist may avoid the scandalous gutter, but pride, hypocrisy, covetousness, self-righteousness, and secret corruption sit comfortably in his parlor. The Jew possessed the law, circumcision, covenants, promises, and religious privilege, yet possessing the law did not equal keeping the law. A man does not become healthy by owning a medical textbook, and he does not become righteous by carrying commandments he has broken. Religious privilege increases accountability when truth is ignored. The fellow sleeping beneath a church steeple without Christ is no safer than the fellow sleeping beneath a tavern sign. A stained-glass window makes an attractive shadow, but it cannot hide a sinner from God.

Romans 3 brings the entire human race before the bench: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Verse 19 explains the purpose of the law: “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” The law does not provide Adam’s children with flattering character references; it shuts their mouths. The educated mouth, the moral mouth, the religious mouth, the philosophical mouth, and the churchgoing mouth all fall silent beneath the standard of God’s holiness. The defendant cannot plead comparison, because God does not grade him against his neighbor. He cannot plead ignorance, because creation and conscience testify against

him. He cannot plead good intentions, because the law judges what he did, not what he meant to place in next year's resolutions. In Adam the verdict is already settled: guilty. Until a man accepts that verdict, he will never understand why "no condemnation" in Christ is such thunderous good news.

2. The Law Could Pronounce the Sentence but Could Not Pay It

God's law is holy, just, and good, but it cannot justify a sinner through his attempts to keep it. Romans 3:20 declares, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." The law can reveal the crookedness, but it cannot straighten the heart. It can expose the disease, but it cannot supply the cure. It can measure the distance between man and God, but it cannot build the bridge. A plumb line tells the carpenter that the wall is leaning; it does not pick up a hammer and rebuild the house. Likewise, the law brings "the knowledge of sin." Every commandment places another witness in the courtroom, and every witness tells the same story: Adam's offspring have violated God's standard in thought, motive, word, and deed.

The problem is not a defect in the law. Romans 7:12 says, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." The problem is "sin that dwelleth in me." Paul describes the hopeless struggle of attempting to produce spiritual righteousness through fleshly strength: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19). The commandment may tell the flesh what is right, but the flesh has no power to perform it. You can command a corpse to run a marathon, correct its posture, and lecture it on the value of exercise, but death remains unimpressed. Adam's fallen nature does not need sterner instructions; it needs a death sentence. The law is excellent at prosecuting the flesh because that is what God designed it to do. It becomes useless only when religious men attempt to turn the prosecuting attorney into the Saviour.

That is why Romans 8:3 says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The law was not weak in its holiness; it was weak as an instrument of salvation because the flesh could not meet its demands. God did not repair the flesh, adjust the law, or negotiate a reduced sentence. He sent His own Son. Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh," possessing real humanity without inherited corruption, and God "condemned sin in the flesh" at Calvary. The condemnation the believer deserved fell upon Christ. The law pronounced the sentence, and the Lamb paid it. Sinai identified the debt; Calvary settled the account. Any preacher who sends a justified believer back to the law to maintain his justification is dragging a paid bill out of heaven's archives and demanding another payment from the debtor.

3. The Substitute Stood Where the Guilty Man Should Have Stood

The heart of the gospel is substitution. Christ did not die merely as a martyr to inspire courage, a victim of political injustice, or an example of love under pressure. He died “for our sins.” Isaiah 53:6 says, “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” First Peter 3:18 declares, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” The words “just for the unjust” establish the legal exchange. The innocent One occupied the condemned man’s place. He bore sins He never committed so that believers could receive righteousness they never produced. Second Corinthians 5:21 states it with divine precision: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Calvary was therefore not an emotional display designed to make mankind feel valuable. It was a judicial transaction satisfying the righteousness of God. Christ was “set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood” so that God might be “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:25–26). God remains just while justifying sinners because He does not ignore their sins. He punishes those sins in their Substitute. Grace is free to the sinner, but it was not cheap to the Saviour. The pardon arrived without a price tag because the price had already been paid in blood. Religion imagines grace as God becoming soft, overlooking the rules, and allowing a few favored criminals through the side door. The Bible presents grace as God maintaining His absolute holiness while providing His own Lamb to meet its demands. God did not bend justice to save us; He satisfied justice and then justified us.

Christ’s resurrection is heaven’s public receipt that the payment was accepted. Romans 4:24–25 says that believers trust in Him “that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” If one charge remained unpaid, if one demand of the law remained unsatisfied, or if one particle of divine wrath still rested upon the Substitute, death would have retained its claim. But on the third day Christ arose. The grave opened, not because death became charitable, but because death had no legal ground upon which to hold the sinless Son after He finished paying for sin. The resurrection is God’s declaration that Calvary worked. The tomb is empty, the Saviour is seated at the right hand of God, and the believer’s justification rests upon a transaction already completed. Satan can argue with the Christian’s feelings, but he has never been able to put Christ back in the grave.

4. “No Condemnation” Means the Verdict Has Already Been Entered

Romans 8:1 begins with “There is therefore now.” “Therefore” reaches backward through the argument Paul has established: guilt in Adam, inability under the law, justification by

faith, identification with Christ's death, and deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord. The verdict does not float alone as a religious slogan. It rests upon the doctrinal foundation laid in the preceding chapters. "Now" means the believer does not have to wait until death, the Rapture, or the judgment seat of Christ to discover whether his justification succeeded. Eternal life is a present possession. John 5:24 says that the believer "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." He has passed. He is not standing halfway across a bridge hoping the final boards remain in place. God has moved him from death unto life.

The verse continues, "to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The controlling location is "in Christ Jesus." Paul is not teaching that believers earn a day without condemnation whenever they manage a perfect walk and fall back beneath wrath whenever they stumble. That interpretation would rebuild the entire prison Romans 3–7 just demolished. Romans 8:9 says to believers, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Their position is no longer in the fleshly sphere of Adam but in the Spirit through union with Christ. The latter clause of Romans 8:1 describes the new spiritual course and identity created by that union, while verse 4 declares God's purpose "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The walk must grow out of the standing; it cannot purchase the standing.

"No condemnation" must be allowed to mean what it says. It means no eternal wrath, no second death, no reopening of the believer's guilt before the great white throne, and no possibility that God will demand from him the penalty Christ already bore. Romans 5:9 says, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." First Thessalonians 5:9 says, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." The believer may feel condemned because he has sinned. He may deserve temporal consequences, correction, embarrassment, loss, or broken fellowship. But his feelings do not possess judicial authority. A condemned feeling cannot cancel a justified standing. Emotions are weather reports, not court records; they tell you what is moving through the atmosphere, not what the Judge wrote in the Book.

5. Every Accuser Arrives Too Late

The law can accuse because the believer has broken its commandments, but Christ fulfilled the law and bore its curse. Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." The law cannot demand a second crucifixion. Its righteous claims have been answered in the Substitute. Romans 7:4 says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." The believer has not become free to call evil good; he has become free from the law as a system of

condemnation. He now belongs to Christ “that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” The law could command fruit but could not give life to the tree. Union with Christ gives life, and the indwelling Spirit produces what engraved stone could never manufacture in fallen flesh.

Conscience can also accuse, and conscience is a valuable witness when instructed by Scripture. It warns of sin, urges confession, and disturbs complacency. But conscience is not infallible. It can be weak, defiled, wounded, misinformed, or seared. A conscience trained by false religion may accuse a man for eating food God permits while remaining silent about pride God condemns. Some consciences are like smoke alarms wired by legalists: they scream over a cup of coffee and sleep through a house full of self-righteousness. First John 3:20 provides the proper order: “For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” The answer to a condemning heart is not to ignore sin but to bring it beneath the word of the God who knows the entire case. Confess what Scripture calls sin, receive cleansing in fellowship, and refuse to let an uninspired feeling revise an inspired verdict.

Satan and men may accuse most viciously of all, but Romans 8 answers them directly: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.” The devil may lay a thing to the charge, but he cannot make the charge stand. Romans 8:34 continues, “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” The defence is not that the believer never failed. The defence is that Christ died, rose again, occupies the position of authority, and intercedes for His own. The accuser enters court carrying evidence from earth and finds the Advocate seated beside the Judge with blood from Calvary on the record. The trial is over before Satan finishes arranging his papers.

6. No Condemnation Is Not No Correction

Grace does not erase the distinction between a faithful Christian and a carnal one. Paul wrote to saved Corinthians as “babes in Christ” and called them “carnal” because envy, strife, division, immorality, lawsuits, disorder, and abuse of spiritual gifts stained their assembly. Their position in Christ was real, but their practice contradicted it. First Corinthians 3:15 warns that a believer’s works may be burned at the judgment seat of Christ: “he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” The man is saved, but his wasted service is not rewarded. Eternal security protects salvation; it does not preserve every crown a careless Christian throws into the furnace. Heaven will contain saved men who arrive with empty hands because they spent their earthly lives building with spiritual straw.

God also chastens His children in the present life. Hebrews 12:7 says, “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.” A father does not correct the neighbor’s children with the same authority he exercises over his own household. Divine chastening proves relationship. First Corinthians 11 describes believers who became weak, sickly, and even died under God’s correction because they treated the Lord’s supper carelessly. Verse 32 explains, “But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” That one verse draws the line in permanent ink. Believers can be judged and chastened now precisely because they will not be condemned with the world. The woodshed and the lake of fire are not two rooms in the same building. One belongs to a Father training sons; the other belongs to a Judge sentencing rebels.

Sin also carries natural and spiritual consequences. Galatians 6:7 warns, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” A Christian can be forgiven and still reap a bitter harvest from foolish planting. Grace may secure his soul without repairing every relationship he shattered, restoring every opportunity he wasted, or erasing every scar his rebellion produced. David received forgiveness after his sin with Bathsheba, but the sword followed his household. Moses remained God’s servant, but one act of disobedience kept him from entering Canaan. No condemnation does not mean no consequences, no discipline, no accountability, and no loss. It means none of those things can become the eternal wrath Christ exhausted at Calvary. Grace is not a pillow for sin; it is the ground upon which a justified man can rise, confess, forsake, and walk with God again.

7. Nothing Can Separate the Believer From the Love of God in Christ

Romans 8 moves from “no condemnation” in verse 1 to “no separation” in verses 35–39. The chapter begins with the believer in Christ and ends with the believer still there. Paul asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” and then names tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword. None of those conditions appears comfortable, and none proves that God has abandoned His own. The prosperity merchant measures divine love by the thickness of a wallet, the comfort of a house, and the absence of trouble. Paul measures it by the cross and discovers that suffering cannot cancel it. A believer can be hungry and loved, persecuted and loved, distressed and loved, dying and loved. Circumstances may strike the body, empty the account, close the door, and bring tears to the eyes, but they cannot reach the believer’s position in Christ.

Paul then declares, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” More than conquerors does not mean Christians avoid the battle; it means the battle cannot alter the outcome secured by Christ. A conqueror defeats an enemy after engaging him. The believer is “more than” a conqueror because Christ has already won the decisive victory and shares it with every member of His body. Death cannot separate him

because Christ conquered death. Life cannot separate him because Christ is his life. Angels, principalities, and powers cannot separate him because Christ is exalted above them. Things present cannot remove him; things to come will not surprise the God who sealed him. Height cannot reach above Christ's throne, and depth cannot fall beneath the reach of Christ's blood.

The passage concludes that no created thing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Again, the security is located "in Christ Jesus." Paul even includes "nor any other creature," which necessarily includes the believer himself, because the believer is a creature. If a saved man could remove himself from Christ, Paul's list would contain a hole large enough to drive Adam's entire religious circus through it. The believer did not place himself in Christ through human strength, and he cannot extract himself through human weakness. God performed the operation, the Holy Ghost sealed the result, and Christ intercedes for the member joined to His body. Eternal security is not confidence in the Christian's grip on God. It is confidence in God's grip on the Christian.

Conclusion

The case against the sinner was real. The evidence was complete, the witnesses agreed, the law was righteous, and the verdict in Adam was guilty. God did not save the believer by pretending otherwise. He saved him by sending His own Son to stand where the guilty man should have stood. Christ bore the sin, curse, shame, wrath, death, and judgment. He cried, "It is finished," not "It is nearly finished if the sinner can complete the paperwork." He entered the grave and arose on the third day, demonstrating that the payment had been accepted and death's claim exhausted. The gospel does not ask a sinner to help Christ finish the cross. It commands him to believe upon the One who finished it.

Once God places a believer in Christ, condemnation has nowhere left to land. The law's sentence struck Christ. Divine wrath struck Christ. Death struck Christ. Every blow fell upon the Substitute, and Christ arose beyond the reach of them all. The Christian may stumble, and when he does, he must confess rather than excuse it. He may require chastening, suffer consequences, lose usefulness, damage fellowship, and forfeit rewards. But none of those things can rebuild the courtroom of eternal condemnation. The Judge has become his Father, the condemned man has become a son, the accuser has lost standing, and the Advocate remains at God's right hand. Calvary did not postpone the believer's sentence; it executed it upon Another.

So when the devil arrives with yesterday's photographs, show him Calvary's receipt. When conscience accuses according to truth, confess the sin and walk again in the light. When conscience accuses contrary to Scripture, correct it with the Book. When religious people

maintain their little filing cabinet of remembered failures, let them keep dusting it until the Rapture. Their cabinet is not the Lamb's book of life, their opinion is not the judgment seat, and their memory is not the blood of Christ. God has spoken: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The court has not merely recessed. The Judge has not postponed the decision. The prosecution has not been granted an appeal. The debt was paid, the Substitute arose, the believer was justified, and **the court has lost its case because Jesus Christ won it forever.**

5 of 10 – In Christ – Accepted in the Beloved When You Cannot Accept Yourself

Key Passage: Ephesians 1:3–7

Introduction

Ephesians 1:6 declares that God "hath made us accepted in the beloved." Those words do not describe a Christian struggling through a probationary period while heaven watches to see whether he can keep his membership. They describe a completed act of God. "Hath made" is not "may someday make," "is considering making," or "will make if the believer keeps his weekly performance above the denominational minimum." God has already made the believer accepted, and He has established that acceptance "in the beloved." The Christian is not received because he finally became impressive enough to catch heaven's attention. He is received because Jesus Christ is eternally pleasing to the Father and the believing sinner has been placed in Him. God does not search the believer for some hidden deposit of merit upon which to build acceptance. He finds the believer inside His beloved Son, clothed in Christ's righteousness, redeemed by Christ's blood, and standing beneath Christ's name. Acceptance is not God lowering His standards until Adam can crawl across them. It is God placing the sinner inside the One who satisfied every standard perfectly.

This truth needs preaching because religion has turned acceptance into a carrot dangling in front of a tired mule. The sinner is told to join, confess, promise, perform, submit, sacrifice, attend, contribute, endure, and perhaps—if he dies with all the paperwork properly stamped—God may finally admit that he tried hard. Some churches have built their entire machinery around keeping people uncertain of God's acceptance. A secure believer is difficult to control, but a frightened customer will keep returning to the religious cashier. So the machinery rattles, the candles burn, the beads click, the baptistery fills, the pledge cards circulate, and the poor soul keeps feeding good works into a vending machine that never drops salvation. He stands outside heaven shaking a tin cup of human merit, hoping God will be impressed by the noise. But grace does not negotiate with the beggar's

collection. Grace opens the door, clothes him in Christ, seats him at the Father's table, and informs him that the invitation was written in blood before he arrived.

The believer often struggles to rest in that truth because he confuses his changeable state with his unchangeable standing. His feelings move like a weather vane in a Florida storm. Prayer may become cold, Bible reading may become distracted, temptation may press harder than usual, and a difficult Tuesday afternoon may leave him feeling about as spiritual as a fence post. If he judges his acceptance by those experiences, he will spend his Christian life moving God in and out of the room according to the temperature of his emotions. But the word of God does not say, "He hath made us accepted whenever we feel victorious." It says, "accepted in the beloved." The believer's fellowship may be interrupted, his joy may diminish, his usefulness may suffer, and his Father may correct him severely, but none of those things relocates him outside Christ. Feelings may report the weather inside the soul; they do not determine the believer's address in heaven.

1. Acceptance Begins With God's Grace, Not Man's Worthiness

Ephesians 1 opens by blessing "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Paul does not begin by congratulating the Ephesians for making themselves acceptable. He begins with what God has done. God blessed, God chose, God predestinated, God adopted, God accepted, God redeemed, God forgave, and God revealed. The first chapter of Ephesians is a cemetery for human boasting because every spiritual blessing originates in God and arrives through Christ. Religion places man at the center and asks what he can perform for God. Grace places Christ at the center and announces what God has already performed through Him. The believer's acceptance does not begin with his decision to become respectable. It begins in the purpose, love, and grace of God.

Verse 4 says that God "hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Notice the location again: "in him." God's election does not provide lost men with an excuse for unbelief or turn them into puppets waiting to discover whether Christ died for them. The gospel is offered freely, and "whosoever will" may take the water of life freely. But every saved man discovers that his security rests in a purpose older than the world and located entirely in Christ. God did not inspect the corridors of future time, discover a few impressive sons of Adam, and choose them because their religious records sparkled more brightly than the rest. He chose believers "in him." Christ is the chosen One, and those who receive Him share the blessings attached to His position. Election is not God finding goodness in Adam; it is God determining that redeemed sinners would possess everything in His Son.

Ephesians 1:5 says this was “according to the good pleasure of his will.” The believer’s acceptance therefore originates in God’s pleasure, not in reluctant divine tolerance. Some Christians imagine God receiving them the way a weary landlord accepts a troublesome tenant because the contract leaves no alternative. They picture the Father glaring at them across heaven while Christ continually persuades Him not to throw them out. But the Father Himself planned redemption, sent the Son, raised Him from the dead, and made believers accepted in Him. John 3:16 begins, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” Calvary did not convince an unwilling Father to become merciful. Calvary revealed the mercy and righteousness already moving within the counsel of God. The Christian is not an unwanted guest sneaking into the banquet behind Jesus Christ. He is there because the Father designed the invitation.

2. Christ Is the Beloved, and the Father’s Pleasure Rests Upon Him

Jesus Christ is called “the beloved” because the Father’s complete pleasure rests upon Him. At Christ’s baptism, a voice from heaven declared, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). On the mount of transfiguration, the Father said again, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5). The Father was not conducting a temporary evaluation. Christ had eternally possessed the Father’s love, and His earthly obedience manifested the perfection of that relationship. He fulfilled every demand of righteousness, obeyed every commandment, resisted every temptation, spoke every word rightly, and completed every work the Father gave Him. Adam fell in a garden containing every provision; Christ obeyed in a wilderness after forty days without food. Israel failed beneath the law; Christ magnified the law and made it honourable. The best of men come short of God’s glory; the Son is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Hebrews 1:3).

The believer’s acceptance rests in that beloved Son. God does not compare the Christian’s performance with Christ and then accept whichever parts resemble Him. He places the Christian in Christ and deals with him according to that union. Colossians 2:10 says, “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” Complete means the believer lacks nothing required for his spiritual standing before God. Religion says he needs Christ plus a ceremony, Christ plus law-keeping, Christ plus sacraments, Christ plus denominational loyalty, Christ plus perseverance as a co-payment on eternal life. Scripture says he is “complete in him.” If something must be added to Christ to make the believer acceptable, then Christ is incomplete. The religious salesman may not intend to insult the Saviour, but every addition to Christ announces that the Son of God arrived from Calvary with insufficient funds.

The Father therefore receives the believer because He receives the Son in whom the believer stands. First Corinthians 1:30 says, “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Christ is not merely the provider of those blessings; He is made those things unto us. The believer’s spiritual inventory is found in a Person. When God seeks the Christian’s righteousness, He finds Christ. When He considers the Christian’s redemption, He finds Christ. When He examines the foundation of the Christian’s sanctification, He finds Christ. The believer does not stand before God displaying his improvement like a schoolboy holding a report card. He stands in the Beloved. The Father would have to become dissatisfied with His own Son before the believer’s position in that Son could become unacceptable.

3. “Hath Made Us Accepted” Is a Completed Divine Act

Ephesians 1:6 does not describe acceptance as a prize waiting at the end of Christian endurance. It says God “hath made us accepted.” The action belongs to God, and the tense points to a completed reality. Just as God justified the believer, reconciled him, redeemed him, and sealed him, God made him accepted. The sinner did not negotiate the arrangement, earn the position, or climb into Christ through religious persistence. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peace with God is not the same as a peaceful feeling. Feelings can churn while the legal peace remains untouched. The war ended because Christ reconciled the believing sinner to God. Romans 5:2 continues, “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” The believer stands in grace; he does not visit it on weekends when his behavior has been unusually tidy.

Acceptance is closely joined to redemption and forgiveness. Ephesians 1:7 says, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” The words “in whom” point again to Christ as the location of every blessing. Redemption has been purchased through His blood. Forgiveness has been supplied according to the riches of divine grace. God does not forgive according to the poverty of human merit, because human merit could not pay for one sinful thought. He forgives according to His riches, and heaven’s treasury has never received an overdraft notice. The blood of Christ does not provide temporary credit while the believer works to pay the remaining balance. It purchased him completely. First Peter 1:18–19 says he was redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

God’s completed act is the only stable foundation for assurance. If acceptance depends upon the believer’s continued performance, he can never know whether he has performed enough. How much prayer makes a man acceptable? How many chapters must he read? How many sins must he avoid? How many souls must he win? How many dollars must he

give? How many years must he endure? Religion keeps the requirements conveniently uncertain because uncertainty keeps the machinery running. But grace does not leave the believer staring at an invisible scoreboard. Christ said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The resurrection declared the payment accepted, the Holy Ghost sealed the believer, and God recorded him as accepted in the Beloved. The Christian’s performance will be examined for fellowship, fruitfulness, chastening, testimony, and reward, but it will never become the price of the acceptance Christ already purchased.

4. Standing Does Not Rise and Fall With the Believer’s State

The Bible distinguishes between the believer’s standing and his state, though it does not always use those exact theological labels. His standing concerns what God has made him in Christ; his state concerns his present walk, fellowship, growth, and obedience. His standing is perfect because Christ is perfect. His state remains unfinished because he still carries mortal flesh and must grow in grace. Paul wrote to the Corinthians as “them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” (1 Corinthians 1:2), yet within the same epistle he rebuked their carnality, divisions, immorality, lawsuits, disorder, pride, and abuse of spiritual gifts. Their state was disgraceful, but Paul did not say they had ceased to be in Christ. He corrected their behavior by reminding them of their identity: “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Confusing standing and state produces one of two errors. The legalist makes state the foundation of standing and therefore leaves the believer uncertain of salvation whenever he fails. The libertine uses standing as an excuse to neglect state and therefore treats grace like divine permission to wallow in the mud. Scripture rejects both. The believer’s acceptance in Christ is complete, but that acceptance creates a solemn obligation to walk worthy of his calling. Ephesians 4:1 says, “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” It does not say walk worthy so that God will call you. The calling comes first; the worthy walk follows. Christian obedience is not the down payment on acceptance. It is the grateful fruit of acceptance already received.

A believer’s state may change many times in a single day. He can begin the morning in prayer, become irritated before breakfast, recover his composure, speak carelessly at noon, confess it, encourage another believer in the afternoon, and struggle with discouragement by evening. If his position before God followed every turn in his condition, heaven would need a revolving door and the Holy Ghost would spend eternity updating membership records. But God placed him in Christ, not in the emotional weather of his own soul. This does not minimize daily conduct; it gives conduct a stable foundation. A sailor must correct the ship’s course, but he does so by a fixed compass rather than by

asking the waves for directions. The believer corrects his state by returning to the unchanging truth of his standing in Christ.

5. Religion Keeps the Beggar Outside With a Tin Cup

Every works-based religious system teaches the sinner to present something from Adam as the reason God should receive him. One brings baptism, another church membership, another law-keeping, another sacraments, another personal reformation, another mystical experience, and another an impressive pile of charitable deeds. The labels change, but the merchandise comes from the same bankrupt warehouse. Isaiah 64:6 says, “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Notice that the verse does not merely call sins filthy; it calls human righteousnesses filthy. The best Adam produces cannot clothe a sinner for heaven because it carries the stain of Adam’s nature. A man may embroider those rags with denominational thread and spray them with theological perfume, but God still recognizes the fabric.

Religion thrives by placing acceptance permanently out of reach. The Roman system makes grace pass through sacraments managed by its priesthood, leaves souls facing purgatory, and turns certainty into presumption. The cult ties acceptance to submission beneath its organization. The legalist Baptist may preach salvation by grace on Sunday morning and then imply by Sunday night that God has disowned every Christian who does not match his private list of convictions. The charismatic showman measures acceptance through experiences, tongues, manifestations, and emotional temperature. The prosperity merchant treats material success as heaven’s approval rating. Each system installs a different meter, but all of them charge the sinner for what Christ offers freely. Religion is Adam opening a pawnshop across the street from Calvary and trying to sell back the gifts Christ already purchased.

Paul’s answer is relentless: “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Acceptance glorifies grace because grace excludes boasting. If the believer contributed the deciding merit, heaven would contain endless speeches about human achievement. One saint would boast of endurance, another of sacrifice, another of doctrinal intelligence, and another of having found the correct institution. But Revelation 5 does not picture the redeemed praising their own wisdom. They sing to the Lamb, “for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.” Grace leaves every crown at Christ’s feet because grace knows who paid for it. The beggar enters heaven with empty hands but discovers that Christ filled his account.

6. Broken Fellowship Does Not Destroy Family Acceptance

A Christian can lose the enjoyment of fellowship without losing his acceptance in Christ. First John 1:6 warns against claiming fellowship with God while walking in darkness. Sin obstructs communion, steals joy, weakens prayer, dulls appetite for Scripture, and places a cloud over the believer's conscious relationship with his Father. David, after his sin, prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Psalm 51:12). He did not ask God to repurchase salvation, reapply the blood, or recreate eternal life. He asked for restored joy. The salvation belonged to God and remained; David had forfeited its enjoyment through sin. A disobedient child may lose the pleasure of his father's company while remaining the father's child.

First John 1:9 provides the remedy for broken fellowship: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession does not mean informing God of something He failed to notice. It means agreeing with God about the sin, abandoning excuses, and bringing the matter into the light. The verse says God is "faithful and just," because cleansing fellowship rests upon Christ's advocacy and finished propitiation. First John 2:1 says, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." It does not say we need to recover an Advocate. It says "we have" one. Even when addressing the believer's sin, Christ stands before God as his righteous Advocate, and God remains his Father.

The Father may chasten severely when confession is refused. Hebrews 12 teaches that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Chastening is not evidence that acceptance has vanished; it is evidence that the believer belongs to the family. God does not discipline the devil's children as sons. He corrects His own because His purpose is holiness, fruitfulness, and conformity to Christ. The rod may hurt, circumstances may tighten, peace may disappear, and stubborn rebellion may produce consequences lasting a lifetime. Grace does not turn God into an indulgent grandfather who winks at sin from a rocking chair. But the hand applying the rod belongs to the same Father who made the believer accepted in the Beloved. Divine correction does not reopen the courtroom; it restores order in the household.

7. Acceptance Produces Humility, Holiness, Access, and Assurance

Being accepted in Christ destroys pride because the believer cannot claim credit for his position. First Corinthians 4:7 asks, "And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Everything in the Christian's spiritual account arrived through grace. He did not design the gospel, provide the Lamb, shed the blood, rise from the grave, regenerate his own spirit, baptize himself into Christ's body, seal himself with the Holy Ghost, or write his own name in heaven. He received. A man living entirely upon gifts has little room to boast about his wealth. The doctrine of acceptance does not inflate the ego; it punctures it. The believer

stands boldly before God and humbly before men because he knows the difference between confidence in Christ and confidence in flesh.

Acceptance also supplies the proper motive for holiness. A servant obeys to avoid dismissal, but a son obeys because he belongs to the family and bears the family name. Romans 12:1 appeals to believers “by the mercies of God” to present their bodies as living sacrifices. Mercy comes before presentation. Grace comes before service. Acceptance comes before obedience. The Christian does not pursue holiness to persuade God to love him. He pursues holiness because God loved him in Christ and called him to walk accordingly. Titus 2:11–12 says that saving grace teaches believers to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Grace does not merely open heaven; it enters the classroom and teaches the redeemed man how to live while he waits to go there.

Finally, acceptance gives access and assurance. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.” Boldly does not mean arrogantly, carelessly, or presumptuously. It means confidently, because the believer approaches in the name and merit of Jesus Christ. He does not knock on heaven’s door and hope the Father is in a favorable mood. Ephesians 3:12 says, “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” The believer’s prayers may be weak, his words poorly arranged, and his emotions exhausted, but his access rests in Christ. A trembling hand can present a valid passport. The strength of the hand does not determine the authority of the document. Likewise, the believer’s confidence rests not in how firmly he feels accepted but in the Beloved whose name grants him entrance.

Conclusion

God has not made the believer accepted because He discovered something admirable hiding beneath Adam’s corruption. He made him accepted “in the beloved.” That phrase humbles the sinner, exalts the Saviour, magnifies grace, secures assurance, and destroys every religious attempt to charge admission to God’s presence. Christ supplied the righteousness, Christ shed the blood, Christ bore the judgment, Christ rose from the dead, and Christ now appears before God for His own. The believer arrives with no independent merit, but he arrives in the One whose merit is infinite. Heaven does not receive him because his record finally became respectable. Heaven receives him because Christ’s record has been placed to his account.

There will be days when the Christian does not feel accepted. He may see failure in his walk, coldness in prayer, inconsistency in service, weakness beneath temptation, and unfinished growth in every direction. Those discoveries should produce confession, dependence, correction, and renewed obedience, but they should never be allowed to edit

Ephesians 1:6. God knew every weakness before He saved the sinner. Calvary was not negotiated beneath the false assumption that the believer would become flawless by next Tuesday. Christ paid for the entire record, and God placed the redeemed sinner in the Beloved. The believer's state may require daily repair; his standing rests in a Saviour who requires none.

So stop standing outside the Father's house rattling the tin cup of human worthiness. Stop trying to purchase an invitation written in blood and delivered by grace. Stop asking Adam to produce something God will admire. Confess sin when fellowship is broken, submit when the Father chastens, walk worthy of the calling, and serve Christ with every strength He gives—but never confuse those responsibilities with the price of acceptance. That price was paid before you performed a single Christian work. God opened the door, clothed the beggar in Christ, seated him at the table, and called him a son. When your heart condemns, when feelings collapse, when Satan reads yesterday's failures aloud, and when religion demands another payment, answer with the unchanging record of God: **“He hath made us accepted in the beloved.”**

6 of 10 – In Christ – Wearing a Righteousness Hell Cannot Stain

Key Passage: Romans 3:19–28; Romans 4:1–8; 2 Corinthians 5:21

Introduction

A sinner cannot stand before a holy God wearing anything Adam produced. He may polish his conduct, discipline his appetites, join a church, receive a sacrament, memorize a creed, give money to charity, and spend half his life repairing the reputation he damaged during the other half, but none of it produces the righteousness God requires. Romans 3:10 declares, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” God did not add an asterisk beneath the verse exempting educated sinners, religious sinners, patriotic sinners, charitable sinners, or sinners who speak softly and own matching Sunday clothes. “None” is a stubborn Bible word that refuses to make room for human vanity. The best son of Adam comes short because the standard is not his neighbor's behavior, society's approval, or the church's membership requirement. The standard is “the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). A man may climb higher than another worm, but both remain in the dirt.

The gospel does more than pardon the believer and send him out of the courtroom wrapped in the same filthy rags. God credits him with a righteousness belonging to Jesus Christ. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no

sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” There is the gospel’s great exchange: Christ takes the believer’s sin, and the believer receives Christ’s righteousness. The sinless One is treated as the guilty Substitute so the guilty sinner may be treated as righteous in Him. God does not merely declare the believer less wicked than he was. He justifies him upon the ground of a perfect righteousness outside himself. The believer arrives spiritually naked, bankrupt, and condemned; grace clothes him in Christ before presenting him to the Father. Heaven does not admit a sinner because he managed to scrub Adam’s fingerprints from the record. Heaven admits him because God placed the spotless record of Jesus Christ to his account.

That imputed righteousness destroys both despair and boasting. It destroys despair because the believer’s standing does not depend upon producing a righteousness from fallen flesh. It destroys boasting because the righteousness he possesses is received, not achieved. The religious man dislikes both results. He wants enough failure to keep the sinner frightened and enough achievement to keep him proud. Grace leaves no room for either arrangement. The believer has no reason to boast in himself, but he has every reason to glory in Christ. First Corinthians 1:30 says, “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Christ is the believer’s righteousness. Hell would have to stain the spotless Son of God before it could stain the righteousness in which the Christian stands, and the devil has already discovered that his ink will not stick.

1. God’s Righteousness Is the Standard, Not Human Respectability

Righteousness begins with God’s character. Psalm 11:7 says, “For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness.” God does not merely perform righteous acts; He is righteous. His judgments, words, ways, laws, and works agree perfectly with His holy nature.

Deuteronomy 32:4 declares, “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment.” God never bends truth, compromises justice, excuses evil, misreads evidence, or allows personal interest to corrupt His verdict. Human judges can be bribed, deceived, pressured, flattered, threatened, or politically managed. The Judge of all the earth cannot be moved one inch from righteousness. His throne does not sway with public opinion, election cycles, cultural moods, or denominational resolutions.

That presents fallen man with an impossible standard. Men naturally compare themselves with one another because comparison allows them to select a favorable measuring stick. The respectable sinner compares himself with the criminal, the religious sinner with the atheist, the sober sinner with the drunkard, and the charitable sinner with the miser. Second Corinthians 10:12 says that those “measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” A man can always find somebody

whose visible sins make his own appear respectable. The Pharisee in Luke 18 prayed, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are.” He chose publicans and extortioners for comparison because comparing himself with Isaiah’s thrice-holy God would have spoiled the speech.

God’s standard is absolute conformity to His own righteousness. James 2:10 says, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” The verse does not teach that every sin has identical earthly consequences. It teaches that one violation makes a man a lawbreaker. A chain holding a man above a canyon does not need every link broken before he falls. One broken link is enough. Likewise, one sin destroys any claim of perfect personal righteousness. The sinner who plans to enter heaven upon his record must present a record containing no sinful act, word, thought, motive, omission, or inward corruption. After that, he must explain why he inherited death from Adam. The fellow depending upon his own righteousness has selected the only plan of salvation requiring him never to have needed salvation.

2. Adam’s Best Garment Is Still a Filthy Rag

Isaiah 64:6 says, “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” The verse does not say merely that human wickedness is filthy. It says “our righteousnesses” are filthy. Man’s best moral productions are contaminated by the nature producing them. A polluted spring cannot produce pure water simply because the bucket is expensive. The unregenerate man may perform deeds beneficial to society, family, and neighbor, and those deeds may be better than open cruelty. But they cannot establish righteousness before God because they do not arise from a sinless nature, perfect motive, or faith in Christ. A charitable gift given for pride, reputation, guilt relief, self-satisfaction, or religious credit may help the recipient while providing no grounds for the donor’s justification.

Paul supplied a religious résumé impressive enough to make the average church committee reach for a gold plaque. He was “circumcised the eighth day,” of Israel’s stock, of Benjamin’s tribe, “an Hebrew of the Hebrews,” a Pharisee, zealous, and “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Philippians 3:5–6). Outwardly, Paul had collected every badge his religious world considered valuable. Yet after meeting Christ, he counted those gains as loss and “but dung” that he might win Christ. Philippians 3:9 gives the reason: he desired to “be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.” Paul did not add Christ to his religious trophies. He carried the trophies to the rubbish heap because his own righteousness could not survive God’s courtroom.

Romans 10 describes Israel's tragedy: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Self-righteousness is rebellion wearing clean clothes. It appears disciplined, sincere, and religious, but it refuses to submit to God's verdict that Adam has nothing acceptable to offer. Men will crawl on their knees, fast, tithe, confess to a priest, keep ceremonies, endure pain, and travel across continents before they will admit that their finest righteousness belongs in the garbage. Pride would rather climb a thousand stairs carrying a sack of bricks than receive a free gift while kneeling at the cross. Religion is Adam trying to sew designer labels onto the fig leaves.

3. The Righteousness of God Was Manifested Apart From the Law

Romans 3:21 announces the great turn: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." The law reveals righteousness, commands righteousness, and condemns unrighteousness, but it cannot generate righteousness in fallen flesh. Therefore God manifested His righteousness "without the law"—not contrary to the law, but apart from human law-keeping as the means of obtaining it. The law and prophets witnessed to this provision through sacrifices, types, promises, and prophecies pointing toward Christ. The ram caught in Isaac's place, the Passover lamb, the blood upon the mercy seat, the coats God made for Adam and Eve, and Isaiah's suffering Servant all testified that righteousness would come through a Substitute supplied by God.

Romans 3:22 identifies the means and recipients: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." It is available "unto all" because the gospel reaches every sinner without respect of race, rank, education, wealth, nationality, or religious background. It comes "upon all them that believe" because faith receives what grace supplies. The verse does not say the righteousness of God comes upon all who behave, all who join, all who endure, all who are baptized, or all who successfully imitate Jesus. It says "all them that believe." Faith is not a religious work earning the garment. It is the empty hand receiving it. The beggar does not purchase the coat by allowing the king to place it upon his shoulders.

Romans 3:24 says believers are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Freely" closes the cashier's window. Grace cannot be wages, because Romans 4:4 says, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." If salvation is earned, God owes it; if it is grace, man receives what he could never earn. Religious systems attempt to mix the two and produce a spiritual payment plan: Christ covers the initial cost, while the sinner supplies the monthly installments. But Romans 11:6 says, "if by grace, then is it no more of works." Grace and works cannot share

credit for justification any more than light and darkness can rent the same room. The instant human works enter as grounds for acceptance, grace is no longer grace and Calvary becomes a down payment instead of a finished redemption.

4. Abraham and David Testify That Righteousness Is Imputed

Romans 4 calls Abraham as the first great witness. “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.” Abraham possessed works that demonstrated his faith, but those works did not establish his righteousness before God. Verse 3 asks, “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” He believed God’s promise, and God counted righteousness to him. The word “counted” is accounting language. God placed righteousness on Abraham’s side of the ledger, not because Abraham had accumulated moral capital, but because he believed the God who justifies the ungodly. His faith did not become a substitute saviour; it rested upon God’s promise and received God’s provision.

Abraham was counted righteous before circumcision. Romans 4:10 asks whether righteousness was imputed when he was in circumcision or uncircumcision and answers, “Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.” That order knocks the legs from beneath every sacramental system claiming a physical ordinance is necessary for justification. Circumcision was the God-given sign of Abraham’s covenant, yet even that divinely commanded sign did not produce his righteousness. It followed the imputation as “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” If an ordinance given directly by God could not justify Abraham, no priest’s water, church’s ceremony, or denominational membership can justify a sinner now. The sign points to the reality; it does not manufacture it.

David then enters as a second witness, “describing the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.” Romans 4:7–8 quotes him: “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” David lived under the Mosaic law and knew the weight of serious personal failure. Yet he testified to a righteousness imputed without works and a sin no longer placed to the believer’s account. Romans 4 therefore presents three great acts of divine accounting: sin forgiven, sin not imputed, and righteousness imputed. God does not merely erase the negative balance; He credits the positive righteousness of Christ. The believer’s account does not stand at zero like an empty room waiting for Adam to furnish it. God fills it with the riches of His Son.

5. The Great Exchange Took Place at Calvary

Second Corinthians 5:21 is one of the clearest statements of substitution in the Bible: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” Jesus Christ knew no sin by nature, experience, thought, motive, word, or deed. He challenged His enemies, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46). Pilate repeatedly found no fault in Him. Judas confessed that he had betrayed “the innocent blood.” The dying thief declared, “this man hath done nothing amiss.” The centurion said, “Certainly this was a righteous man.” Heaven announced Him as the beloved Son, and hell could find no corruption to claim. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26).

Yet God “made him to be sin for us.” Christ did not become sinful in character or cease to be the spotless Son. He was made sin judicially as the Substitute bearing our guilt. Isaiah 53:5 says, “he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.” First Peter 2:24 says He “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” Every charge belonging to the believer’s record was laid upon Christ. Every sinful thought, secret lust, proud motive, careless word, neglected duty, open transgression, and hidden corruption was placed upon the Lamb. At Calvary the sinless One occupied the guilty man’s legal position and received the stroke of judgment. The darkness covering the land was not theatrical scenery; the Judge of all the earth was dealing with sin in the body of His Son.

The purpose was “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” The exchange moves in both directions. Our sin was placed upon Christ; God’s righteousness is placed upon the believer in Christ. If language means anything, justification is not God pretending the sinner’s personal character has already become perfect. It is God declaring him righteous on the basis of union with the Righteous One. The Christian’s present conduct must grow, his mind must be renewed, his flesh must be denied, and his service will be examined. But his standing is already founded upon Christ’s perfection. The sinner’s guilt went to Christ without making Christ personally sinful, and Christ’s righteousness comes to the believer without pretending the believer has never personally failed. God judged the Substitute as bearing our sin, and God justifies us as possessing His righteousness in Christ.

6. Christ Himself Is the Garment God Accepts

The Bible frequently presents righteousness as clothing. Isaiah 61:10 says, “he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” After Adam and Eve sinned, they attempted to cover themselves with fig leaves. God rejected the human tailoring and made “coats of skins, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). Blood had to be shed, an innocent victim had to die, and God had to provide the covering. From Eden onward, salvation has never been Adam repairing his

wardrobe. It has been God covering the guilty through the death of another. Every self-righteous system is another fig-leaf factory with improved marketing.

Christ is the only garment fit for God's presence. Galatians 3:27 says, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The baptism placing the believer into Christ is the Holy Ghost's spiritual operation, not a priestly rinse cycle. Once in Christ, the believer stands beneath Christ's identity, merit, and righteousness. Colossians 3:3 says, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Hidden with Christ in God is not a precarious position. Satan would have to enter God, remove Christ, and tear the believer out of Him before he could strip away that covering. The devil has influence, accusation, deception, and permitted power, but he does not possess the keys to God's wardrobe.

This righteousness cannot be stained by hell because it does not originate in the believer. If it were personal righteousness produced through Christian discipline, one failure could soil it. If it depended upon emotional consistency, one dark afternoon could weaken it. If it rested upon denominational standing, one church vote could remove it. But Christ is "Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1), and He does not change. The believer may dirty his testimony, interrupt fellowship, require chastening, and lose reward, but he cannot corrupt the righteousness of the One in whom he stands. Mud thrown at the reflection of the sun in a puddle does not stain the sun in heaven. The Christian's earthly walk may require washing, but his righteousness remains seated at God's right hand.

7. Good Works Follow Justification but Never Purchase It

Biblical grace does not oppose good works; it places them in their proper order. Ephesians 2:8–9 says salvation is "not of works," and verse 10 immediately says believers are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Works are excluded as the cause of salvation and required as the fruit of salvation. The sinner does not work his way into Christ; once placed in Christ, he is created for a life of service. Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Then verse 8 urges believers "to maintain good works." The order is so plain that a child can follow it until a theologian arrives with a wheelbarrow full of definitions.

Good works matter for testimony, usefulness, fellowship, growth, the blessing of others, and reward at the judgment seat of Christ. First Corinthians 3 teaches that every believer's work will be tried by fire. Gold, silver, and precious stones will endure; wood, hay, and stubble will burn. Verse 15 says of the believer whose work burns, "he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." The man's righteousness does not burn because Christ is his righteousness. His worthless service burns. The judgment seat does not determine whether Christ's blood was sufficient; it examines what the saved man built

upon the foundation already laid. Salvation and reward occupy different columns in God's accounting.

The believer should therefore labor more faithfully because he is secure in Christ, not less faithfully. Grace removes the fear of condemnation so service can flow from love, gratitude, and reverence. Romans 12:1 beseeches Christians "by the mercies of God" to present their bodies as living sacrifices. Mercy does not follow the sacrifice; the sacrifice follows mercy. The Christian does not obey to sew another patch onto his robe of righteousness. He obeys because Christ has already clothed him, and he does not want to drag that holy name through the world's gutter. Good works cannot make Christ's righteousness brighter, but they can make its testimony visible. A lamp does not create electricity; it reveals that power is present.

Conclusion

Every sinner enters this world clothed in Adam's corruption and carrying a record already marked by sin. Human religion offers a crowded wardrobe of substitutes: morality, ceremony, law, sacrifice, baptism, membership, philanthropy, sincerity, and religious endurance. Some garments appear more respectable than others, but none can survive the fire of God's holiness. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." God does not wash those rags, patch them, bless them, and call them the robe of salvation. He removes every confidence in the flesh and clothes the believing sinner in Jesus Christ. The gospel does not improve Adam's outfit; it gives the believer an entirely new standing.

That standing rests upon divine imputation. Abraham believed God, and righteousness was counted unto him. David described the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works. Paul proclaimed "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." At Calvary, Christ was made sin for us, and in Him believers are made the righteousness of God. The ledger has been settled, the debt has been paid, the negative charge has been removed, and Christ's perfect righteousness has been credited to the believer's account. Hell can produce accusations, but it cannot alter heaven's bookkeeping.

So stop trying to scrub Adam's fingerprints from a record God has already carried to the cross. Stop dragging your good works into the courtroom as though Christ needs character witnesses from the defendant. Serve God, obey His word, deny the flesh, maintain good works, confess sin, seek holiness, and walk worthy of the calling—but keep every one of those duties on the proper side of justification. They are the fruit of salvation, never its price. When Satan points to your failures, do not answer with a list of recent accomplishments. Point to Christ. When conscience asks where your righteousness is, do

not search your emotions, conduct, or religious résumé. Look to the right hand of God. Your righteousness is a living Person, and you stand before the Father **wearing a righteousness hell cannot stain.**

7 of 10 – In Christ – The New Creature and the Surgery No Priest Can Perform

Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:14–21; Colossians 2:10–13

Introduction

Second Corinthians 5:17 does not describe salvation as Adam discovering his better self. It says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” God does not inspire the old creature, polish the old creature, educate the old creature, baptize the old creature, or teach the old creature to speak evangelical language. He creates something new. The sinner was born physically in Adam, spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, joined to a body of corrupt flesh, and headed toward the grave with judgment waiting beyond it. When he believes the gospel, God performs an operation beyond the reach of medicine, psychology, ritual, philosophy, and religion. The Holy Ghost places him in Christ, imparts spiritual life, makes him a member of Christ’s body, and establishes an inward identity that did not exist before the new birth. Salvation is not a repair shop for Adam’s damaged merchandise. It is the creative act of God inside a believing sinner.

Religion has always preferred visible operations because visible operations place human hands near the controls. A priest can sprinkle water, make a sign, cut flesh, administer a wafer, arrange clothing, pronounce words, light candles, apply oil, and record a name in an earthly book. None of those hands can enter the inward man and create spiritual life. Colossians 2:11 says that believers are circumcised “with the circumcision made without hands.” That phrase clears the religious operating room. The priest may keep his knife, the minister may keep his basin, and the institution may keep its certificates; God goes where none of them can reach. He performs a spiritual circumcision “in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” The operation is invisible, instantaneous, and entirely divine. No surgeon can photograph it, no microscope can locate it, and no church committee can reverse it.

This truth explains both the believer’s security and his warfare. The flesh remains alive in his mortal body and continues producing appetite, weakness, temptation, pride, lust, anger, fear, and rebellion. Salvation does not make the flesh holy, and years of Christian service do not persuade it to become house-trained. Yet the flesh no longer defines the

believer's standing or determines his final destiny. God has separated the inward man from the body of the sins of the flesh, joined that inward man to Christ, and hidden his life "with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). The Christian can therefore acknowledge the battle without surrendering his assurance. He is not told to pretend the flesh has disappeared; he is told to stop treating it as his rightful master. A surgeon removes what no longer belongs to the patient; at salvation, God cuts the redeemed identity loose from Adam's condemned claim.

1. A New Creature Is Created, Not Reconditioned

The expression "new creature" carries the force of creation. The God who said, "Let there be light," speaks life into a soul dead in sin. Second Corinthians 4:6 connects the two acts: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." At Genesis 1, darkness did not educate itself into light, chaos did not reorganize itself through positive thinking, and the earth did not attend a seminar on reaching its luminous potential. God spoke. Likewise, a spiritually dead sinner does not regenerate himself through moral effort. Ephesians 2:1 says God "hath quickened" those who were "dead in trespasses and sins." A dead man can receive life only from outside himself, and salvation begins when God does what Adam cannot do.

The new creature is found "in Christ." That location separates biblical regeneration from every program of self-renovation. Men can alter habits, occupations, associations, appearance, vocabulary, and public conduct without becoming new creatures. A drunkard may become sober for practical reasons, a criminal may become law-abiding after fearing prison, and an immoral man may restrain his conduct to preserve his marriage. Those changes can be beneficial, but reformation is not regeneration. A pig can be washed, brushed, perfumed, and fitted with a ribbon, but the first inviting mudhole reveals that the pig's nature never received the memo. Human discipline can place fences around the flesh; only God can impart a new nature.

"Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" does not mean the Christian loses his memory, personality, physical history, or capacity for sin the moment he is saved. Paul would not spend the next chapters commanding Christians to live differently if every trace of the old life had already vanished from experience. The verse describes the new spiritual standing and identity brought forth in Christ. The old relationship to Adam, condemnation, death, and the world has passed away before God. A new relationship to Christ, righteousness, life, and heaven has begun. The believer may require years of growth before his daily conduct displays what God created in an instant, but the delay in development does not cancel the reality of birth. A newborn child may not walk immediately, yet nobody sends him back because his legs require growth.

2. Salvation Is the Operation of God

Colossians 2:12 says believers are risen with Christ “through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Salvation is an operation because God performs precise spiritual work upon the sinner. He does not wave sentiment over Adam’s corruption and call it finished. He convicts, regenerates, justifies, redeems, reconciles, spiritually circumcises, baptizes into Christ’s body, indwells, seals, and sets apart the believer. These works occur together when the sinner trusts the gospel, but Scripture describes them distinctly so the Christian may understand the riches packed into the moment of salvation. A man may remember only kneeling beside a bed, standing in a church aisle, sitting at a kitchen table, or calling upon Christ in the front seat of a car. Heaven records an operation larger than his feelings could measure.

The Operator is God, which means salvation does not depend upon the steadiness of human hands. A minister may preach the gospel, but he cannot regenerate the hearer. A soul winner may explain the Scriptures, answer questions, and point a sinner toward Christ, but he cannot enter the heart with spiritual life in a medicine bag. Paul wrote, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6). Human servants carry the seed; God supplies the life. The preacher who begins acting as though souls belong to him has confused the delivery boy with the Author of the message. No preacher died for the sinner, rose from the grave, or sent the Holy Ghost. The messenger may be useful, but the Operator remains divine.

Because salvation is God’s operation, assurance rests upon His competence rather than ours. Philippians 1:6 says, “he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” The Christian did not begin the work, and he will not complete it through independent strength. God began it and God will perform it. This does not excuse passivity, disobedience, or spiritual laziness; the same Paul commanded believers to work out what God was working within them. But the final security of the operation does not rest upon the patient’s ability to hold the surgeon’s wrist steady. The hands carrying the believer through grace are the same hands that formed the worlds, raised Christ from the dead, and hold the keys of hell and death.

3. Physical Circumcision Could Mark the Flesh but Could Not Change the Heart

Circumcision first appeared as the sign of God’s covenant with Abraham and his physical seed. Genesis 17 required the male child to be circumcised in his flesh as “a token of the covenant.” It was literal, physical, national, and connected to God’s earthly dealings with Abraham’s descendants. Under the law it remained an important sign of Israel’s covenant identity. But the cutting of flesh could never regenerate the inward man. Israel possessed

the outward sign while frequently remaining rebellious in heart. Deuteronomy 10:16 therefore commanded, “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.” The physical mark identified the covenant people outwardly; it did not guarantee inward faith or obedience.

Paul makes the distinction plain in Romans 2:28–29: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh.” He continues, “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit.” Paul was not erasing national Israel or handing Israel’s earthly promises to the Church. He was exposing the uselessness of outward privilege without inward reality. A Jew could bear Abraham’s physical mark while possessing an unbelieving heart. Likewise, a professing Christian can bear water upon his skin, a denomination upon his membership card, and religious words upon his lips while remaining spiritually dead. External signs can testify to truth, but they cannot substitute for it.

The Church is not saved through Israel’s physical circumcision. Galatians 5:6 says, “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” The Judaizers attempted to place Gentile believers beneath a physical requirement belonging to another covenantal arrangement. Paul refused the mixture. The body of Christ contains Jew and Gentile joined by the Spirit, not by a knife applied to Gentile flesh. The moment a man trusts a physical mark as grounds for justification, he leaves the sufficiency of Christ and starts rebuilding confidence in Adam. Religion loves marks in the flesh because the flesh can display them. Grace performs a work so deep that no religious peacock can spread it for applause.

4. The Circumcision of Christ Separates the Inward Man From the Flesh

Colossians 2:11 describes the believer as “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” This is not a poetic synonym for trying harder. God performs a spiritual separation. The believer consists of “spirit and soul and body,” as First Thessalonians 5:23 states. Hebrews 4:12 says the word of God is powerful enough to pierce “even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow.” Men often lump the unseen parts of man together because they cannot examine them, but the Book distinguishes what human instruments cannot reach. At salvation, God deals with the inward man in relation to the corrupt body of flesh.

Before salvation, the sinner’s identity is bound to Adam’s fallen condition. His spirit is dead toward God, his soul stands guilty, and his body serves as the instrument of sin. When God saves him, He quickens his spirit, redeems his soul, and spiritually cuts the inward man

free from the body of the sins of the flesh. The physical body has not yet been glorified, and the flesh has not become righteous. But the sins performed through the mortal body no longer possess the power to redefine the believer's eternal standing in Christ. The body can become an instrument of unrighteousness when yielded to sin, but it cannot drag the regenerated soul back under Adam's condemnation. God has cut the title deed.

This is why spiritual circumcision is central to eternal security. If the believer remained judicially fastened to every movement of the flesh, one sinful act after salvation would return his soul to condemnation. He would be saved and lost with every movement of his thoughts, tongue, temper, and appetites. But God's operation separates his redeemed identity from the flesh's legal claim. Sin can still damage fellowship, testimony, health, family, service, and reward. It can bring divine chastening and bitter consequences. Yet it cannot sew back together what God divided without hands. Satan may be an accuser, deceiver, tempter, and destroyer, but Scripture never lists him as a surgeon capable of reversing the circumcision of Christ.

5. The Warfare Within Does Not Prove the New Creature Is Imaginary

After salvation, the believer discovers two opposing principles at work. Galatians 5:17 says, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." The conflict exists because the Holy Ghost now indwells a man whose mortal flesh remains unredeemed. Before salvation, the flesh could operate without opposition from an indwelling Spirit. After salvation, a new war begins. The presence of battle does not prove salvation failed; it often proves a new combatant has entered the field. A dead man does not struggle against sin. The distress begins when spiritual life recognizes the old tyrant and refuses to salute.

Romans 7 records this struggle with painful honesty. Paul says, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." He carefully identifies the location: "in my flesh." He does not say nothing good dwells anywhere in the saved man, for the Holy Ghost indwelt him and Christ was his life. He says the flesh contains no good thing. When he does what he hates, he distinguishes the inward man from indwelling sin: "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:17). Paul is not evading responsibility. He is identifying the enemy according to the spiritual separation God has made. He delights in God's law "after the inward man," while another law operates in his members.

This distinction saves the believer from two equal errors. One error says the flesh no longer exists and claims sinless perfection, usually just before committing pride, dishonesty, or cruelty while explaining how perfectly sanctified it has become. The other error says the

flesh is the believer's true identity and every failure proves he was never saved. Scripture says neither. The flesh remains corrupt, the inward man delights in God, and the Christian must choose whom he will yield his members to obey. He is responsible for walking after the Spirit, but his failures do not erase the new creature. A soldier may be wounded in battle without becoming a civilian, and he may lose a skirmish without changing armies.

6. The New Man Has a New Nature, Name, and Heavenly Identity

Ephesians 4:24 tells believers to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The new man is not created in partial righteousness, borrowed sincerity, or religious respectability. He is created "after God" in righteousness and true holiness. Colossians 3:10 says believers "have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." The language points back to creation and image. Adam's fallen image governs the natural birth; Christ's image governs the new creation. The believer must now allow his thinking, desires, conduct, relationships, speech, and service to agree increasingly with the inward reality God has created.

The new creature also possesses a heavenly identity hidden from the world's natural sight. Colossians 3:3 says, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The world judges identity by appearance, ancestry, occupation, wealth, mistakes, reputation, politics, and visible achievement. God locates the believer's life with Christ in Himself. The devil may produce records from the believer's past, old companions may remember what he was, and the flesh may try to reenact scenes that should have remained buried. None of them can reach the hidden life. They can attack the testimony displayed on earth, but they cannot penetrate the security established in heaven.

This hidden identity will eventually be revealed. Colossians 3:4 says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Christ is not merely the giver of life; He "is our life." The new creature's final destiny is therefore connected to Christ's appearing. At the Rapture, the mortal body will be changed and the inward reality will receive an outward form suited to glory. Philippians 3:21 says Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." The flesh presently obscures what God has made within, but resurrection will remove the disguise. God does not abandon His new creature inside an old mortal shell forever. The Surgeon who performed the inward operation will complete the case with a glorified body.

7. Spiritual Circumcision Is Security, Not a License for the Flesh

Whenever grace is preached clearly, somebody asks whether it permits Christians to live however they please. Paul heard the same objection and answered, "God forbid." The

believer's separation from the flesh's condemnation does not make bodily conduct unimportant. It makes bodily holiness a reasonable response to divine mercy. Romans 6:12 commands, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." The body is still mortal, still vulnerable, and still capable of being yielded to sin. But sin's presence no longer establishes its right to reign. A deposed king can keep shouting orders, but the citizens are fools if they continue obeying him after a new ruler has taken the throne.

Colossians 3 joins heavenly position to practical mortification: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." The "therefore" reaches backward to the believer's life hidden with Christ. Because he is risen with Christ, he must put earthly corruption to death in practice. Paul names fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying. Grace does not rename those things struggles, personality traits, coping mechanisms, or alternative expressions of authenticity. It calls them sins and commands the believer to put them off. The new creature does not negotiate with the old wardrobe; he takes it to the furnace.

Positive conduct must replace what is removed. Colossians 3 commands believers to put on "bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering," forgiveness, charity, peace, gratitude, and the word of Christ. The Christian life is not merely avoiding visible wickedness while becoming a proud, sour, quarrelsome monument to personal convictions. Holiness includes both putting off the old and putting on the new. The believer does not perform those works to complete God's surgery. He performs them because God's surgery has given him a new identity capable of walking in obedience. Grace does not teach Adam to imitate resurrection; it teaches the risen believer to stop dressing like the corpse.

Conclusion

The new creature is one of salvation's greatest miracles because it occurs entirely beyond the reach of human hands. No priest can create it, no baptistery can produce it, no denomination can issue it, and no surgeon can photograph it. God takes a sinner dead in trespasses and sins, places him in Christ, quickens him, spiritually circumcises him, and brings forth an inward man created in righteousness and true holiness. The Christian may remember the hour he believed without understanding every operation performed at that moment. Heaven understood it. God did more in an instant than religion could accomplish in ten thousand lifetimes.

The flesh remains, and therefore the warfare remains. The Christian must deny it, refuse its demands, mortify its deeds, yield his members to God, renew his mind, and walk in the

Spirit. He may stumble, require confession, endure chastening, suffer consequences, and lose reward through carnality. None of that should be treated lightly. But neither should the flesh be allowed to overturn God's workmanship. The believer's standing is not fastened to the daily behavior of Adam's body. God has cut the inward man loose from the body of the sins of the flesh and hidden his life with Christ in God. The flesh can stain the believer's earthly testimony, but it cannot reach the life hidden beyond its jurisdiction.

Religion can wash the outside, cut the skin, arrange the clothing, teach the ceremony, and print the certificate. That is the limit of human hands. God opens the invisible man, divides what no blade can touch, removes Adam's claim, and joins the soul to Jesus Christ. The operation carries no scar the world can photograph, but it produces a life that eternity will reveal. When Christ appears, the hidden creature will appear with Him in glory, and the mortal body will finally be fashioned like His glorious body. Until then, reckon according to God's operation, refuse the flesh its stolen throne, and walk as the man God created you to be. You are not Adam with religious stitches. You are **a new creature produced by the surgery no priest can perform.**

8 of 10 – In Christ – Seated Above the Battle While Still Walking Through It

Key Passage: Ephesians 1:3, 18–23; Ephesians 2:1–7

Introduction

Ephesians 2:6 says that God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." That statement is so far above ordinary Christian thinking that many believers read it, nod politely, and return immediately to living as though Satan owns the building, the world holds the deed, and their salvation hangs from a frayed string. Yet the verse is not religious exaggeration. God says the believer has been quickened with Christ, raised with Christ, and seated with Christ. His physical body still walks through a fallen world, pays bills, suffers pain, fights temptation, attends funerals, faces disappointment, and occasionally has the sort of week that makes Job's ash heap look like a vacation property. But his spiritual standing is already joined to the risen Christ at God's right hand. His feet remain in the battlefield while his position is established above it.

This heavenly position does not mean the Christian has become a miniature deity authorized to order God around. It does not supply a blank check for mansions, automobiles, private airplanes, designer clothes, or every other toy a prosperity preacher can photograph beside himself. The believer's spiritual authority is found "in Christ Jesus,"

not in his ability to shout louder than the congregation, bully circumstances, or treat prayer like a celestial credit card. God is not a vending machine, faith is not a coin, and prayer is not the button that forces heaven to release whatever the flesh selected. The Christian's authority is real, but it is derived authority beneath the Head. His access is bold, but it is access to a throne where Another sits. His position is exalted, but every inch of that exaltation belongs to him only because he is in Christ.

The riches of that position exceed every material promise sold from a televised platform. Ephesians 1:3 says God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Those blessings cannot be repossessed, depreciated, inflated away, taxed, moth-eaten, stolen, or left behind at a funeral home. The believer may own little on earth while possessing everything necessary in Christ. He may walk through affliction while seated above the authority arranging it. He may be surrounded by spiritual enemies while joined to the Head who spoiled principalities and powers. He does not fight to create Christ's victory; he fights because Christ already won it. The Christian life is warfare conducted beneath a finished banner, not a desperate campaign hoping Calvary eventually holds.

1. God Raised the Believer From a Graveyard, Not a Playground

Ephesians 2 begins by reminding Christians what they were before grace reached them: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." The lost man is not spiritually sick, confused, disadvantaged, wounded, underdeveloped, or waiting for enough encouragement to become divine. He is dead toward God. He may be physically active, intellectually brilliant, morally disciplined, artistically gifted, socially respected, and religiously decorated, but none of those movements constitute spiritual life. A corpse can be dressed in an expensive suit without becoming less dead. Human religion spends enormous effort arranging the clothing while God addresses the condition inside it.

The spiritually dead sinner nevertheless walks "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air." Death toward God does not mean inactivity toward sin. The lost man travels along the world's course under Satan's influence while fulfilling "the desires of the flesh and of the mind." The world may congratulate him for independence, but Scripture reveals a man moving with the current. A dead fish floats downstream without protest; it takes life to swim against it. Fashion changes, philosophies shift, moral standards collapse, and the children of disobedience follow along while congratulating one another for their courage. The world's idea of individuality usually amounts to millions of people wearing the same rebellion in different colors.

Then Ephesians 2:4 interrupts the funeral procession with two of Scripture's greatest words: "But God." Man was dead, disobedient, deceived, fleshly, and "by nature the

children of wrath,” but God was “rich in mercy.” He did not wait for the dead man to improve his pulse. He “hath quickened us together with Christ.” The life imparted to the believer is resurrection life connected to Jesus Christ. Grace did not find him climbing toward heaven and provide the final push. It found him lying in Adam’s graveyard and raised him in union with the Son of God. A religion that tells dead men to climb is not a gospel; it is an exercise program for corpses.

2. Raised Together and Seated in the Victorious Head

God not only quickened the believer but “hath raised us up together.” Christ’s resurrection is therefore more than a historical fact the Christian affirms once a year while standing near a basket of plastic eggs. It is the basis of his present spiritual position and future bodily hope. Romans 6 teaches that believers are united with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. Colossians 3:1 says, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” The believer’s life has been transferred from Adam’s condemned order to Christ’s risen life. He has not yet received his glorified body, but God already counts him joined to the One who has passed beyond death’s dominion.

God then “made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Sitting speaks of a finished work and an established position. Under the old tabernacle system, the priests stood daily ministering because their sacrifices could never finally remove sin. Hebrews 10:12 says of Christ, “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” Christ sat because the sacrifice was finished. The believer sits in Him because his acceptance rests upon that finished work. Religion keeps sinners standing in a checkout line with another payment due; grace seats the believer beside the paid receipt. The Christian’s heavenly position is not an achievement at the end of successful service. It is the starting point from which all acceptable service proceeds.

The believer is seated in Christ because Christ is the Head and the Church is His body. Ephesians 1:22–23 says God “gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body.” A body shares the position of its head. If the Head is above the water, the body cannot be legally treated as drowned. If the Head is seated at God’s right hand, the members joined to Him share that standing. The Christian does not occupy Christ’s throne independently, rival His authority, or become equal with deity. He shares the position of the Head by grace. The little finger does not command the head, but neither can an enemy attack the finger without touching the body to which it belongs.

3. Christ Is Above Every Principality, Power, Might, and Dominion

Ephesians 1:20 says God raised Christ from the dead and “set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” Verse 21 then places Him “far above all principality, and power, and

might, and dominion.” Christ is not slightly above the spiritual hierarchy, negotiating territory with Satan across a conference table. He is “far above” it. Every angelic ruler, satanic principality, demonic power, earthly government, hidden throne, visible authority, and future kingdom stands beneath Him. Satan possesses great power by creaturely standards, but he remains a creature. He cannot step outside God’s boundaries, rewrite prophecy, reverse Calvary, remove Christ from the throne, or cancel the destiny of Christ’s body.

Colossians 2:15 says Christ “spoiled principalities and powers” and “made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” The cross looked like defeat to the natural eye. Christ hung wounded while rulers mocked, soldiers gambled, disciples scattered, and darkness covered the land. Yet beneath that visible humiliation, the Captain of salvation was stripping the spiritual enemy of his claim. Satan’s chief weapon was sin’s condemnation and death’s authority. Christ bore the sin, exhausted the condemnation, entered death’s territory, and came out carrying the keys. Revelation 1:18 records His declaration: “I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” The devil can still rattle chains, but the keys hang from another belt.

Because the believer is in Christ, he stands in the victory of the risen Head. Romans 8:37 says, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” The words “through him” guard the doctrine from human boasting. The Christian is not more than a conqueror through force of personality, emotional excitement, positive confession, superior discipline, or experience in shouting at demons. Victory comes through Christ. A private soldier may stand on conquered ground because his king won the war, but he would be a fool to take credit for the kingdom. Spiritual confidence bows before Christ even while refusing to bow before Satan.

4. All Spiritual Blessings Are Already Banked in Christ

Ephesians 1:3 says God “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” “Hath blessed” describes a present possession, not a promotional offer waiting upon the believer’s next financial seed. “All spiritual blessings” includes election in Christ, adoption, acceptance in the Beloved, redemption through His blood, forgiveness, knowledge of God’s will, an inheritance, sealing by the Holy Spirit, and the promise of final redemption. Paul did not introduce the Ephesian treasury by asking whether they owned beachfront property, rode in a new chariot, or possessed enough Roman currency to make the local merchants admire their faith. Their riches were located in Christ.

Material provision is real, and believers should thank God for food, clothing, shelter, health, work, family, and every earthly mercy. But earthly prosperity is not the measure of spiritual

wealth. Paul sometimes knew abundance and sometimes suffered need. He endured hunger, thirst, nakedness, beatings, prisons, shipwrecks, and poverty while possessing every spiritual blessing in Christ. If material ease proves divine favor, Paul spent much of his ministry backslidden and the Laodiceans were apostles. Yet Christ told Laodicea, “thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” while heaven saw it “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17). A full bank account can belong to an empty soul.

The believer’s heavenly wealth cannot decay because its security rests where Christ sits. First Peter 1:4 describes an inheritance “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.” Earthly riches require insurance, locks, passwords, accountants, repairs, markets, governments, and continual attention. Even after all that protection, rust eats, thieves steal, inflation devours, taxes nibble, and death transfers the leftovers to somebody else. Heavenly riches require no armed guard because Christ Himself is their security. The Christian may leave earth without a dollar in his pocket while arriving in glory as an heir of God. The grave can empty a man’s pockets, but it cannot reach his account in Christ.

5. Seated in Christ Means Open Access to the Father

The believer’s heavenly position grants access to God. Ephesians 2:18 says, “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” The Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ approach through the same Saviour, by the same Spirit, unto the same Father. No earthly priesthood stands between them and God. No saint in heaven must relay the request. No departed mother of Jesus functions as a celestial receptionist screening appointments. First Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” When Scripture says “one,” Rome can assemble ten thousand statues without creating a second.

Ephesians 3:12 says, “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” Boldness does not mean rudeness, presumption, or ordering the Almighty to obey a believer’s schedule. It means the Christian may approach without fear of rejection because his access rests in Christ. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.” It remains a throne, and reverence belongs before it. But it is a throne of grace, and the blood-bought child is invited to come. Prayer is not the beggar attempting to pick the lock on heaven’s back door. It is the son entering through the open door of Christ’s merit.

This access remains open even when the believer feels weak. Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we

ought.” God did not grant access only to Christians who can arrange impressive language. The Holy Ghost helps infirmity, and Christ intercedes at the Father’s right hand. A prayer may arrive from a broken heart in half-formed words, but it travels under Christ’s name. The weakest believer approaching through Christ possesses better access than the most decorated priest approaching through ceremony. Heaven does not measure the eloquence of the knock when the Son has already opened the door.

6. The Battle Is Spiritual, but Authority Is Not Theatrical Boasting

Ephesians 6:12 says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” The Christian’s real enemy is not merely the person standing in front of him. Flesh-and-blood opponents may lie, persecute, tempt, threaten, mock, legislate wickedness, or spread false doctrine, but spiritual powers operate behind the world’s rebellion. Satan blinds minds, plants lies, organizes deception, accuses saints, corrupts doctrine, and appeals to the flesh. The believer who ignores that spiritual dimension brings a pocketknife to an artillery battle.

Yet Paul does not answer spiritual warfare with religious theatrics. He does not command believers to scream at principalities, map territorial spirits, hold conversations with devils, wave imaginary chains, or announce decrees over cities. He says, “Put on the whole armour of God.” The armor consists of truth, righteousness, preparation through the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the word of God, and prayer. Satan is resisted through revealed truth, obedient living, gospel readiness, reliance upon God, assurance in Christ, skill with Scripture, and persistent prayer. The devil is not frightened by Christian volume. He faced the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness and heard three calm words that broke every temptation: “It is written.”

James 4:7 gives the order: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Submission comes before resistance. The Christian who refuses God’s authority while claiming authority over Satan resembles a disobedient private marching into enemy territory with the general’s name pinned upside down. Derived authority works only beneath the One who supplies it. The believer can resist Satan because he belongs to Christ, stands in Christ’s victory, possesses God’s armor, and wields God’s word. Authority is not the right to make God obey us; it is the privilege of obeying God without surrendering to the enemy.

7. Heavenly Position Must Produce an Earthly Walk

Ephesians divides naturally between the believer’s position and his practice. Chapters 1–3 explain the wealth, calling, union, access, mystery, and heavenly standing found in Christ.

Chapter 4 begins, “I therefore...beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” Standing comes before walking. God does not command the sinner to walk his way into heavenly places. He places the believer there in Christ and then commands a walk worthy of that position. The order matters. Legalism makes the walk purchase the standing; grace makes the standing empower the walk. A man does not behave like a son to earn birth into the family. He should behave like a son because he already bears his father’s name.

The heavenly Christian must therefore live faithfully in earthly responsibilities. Ephesians applies doctrine to truthfulness, anger, honest labor, speech, forgiveness, marriage, family, work, ministry, unity, purity, and spiritual warfare. Paul does not allow heavenly position to become mystical fog floating above unpaid debts, neglected children, lazy service, bitter relationships, filthy entertainment, and an uncontrolled tongue. A man claiming to be seated in heavenly places while living like the devil beneath the kitchen table has misunderstood either the position or the devil. The proof of spiritual understanding is not how high a man claims to sit, but how faithfully he walks where God placed his feet.

Philippians 3:20 says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” The believer’s citizenship, expectation, and final bodily transformation are heavenly. He lives below as a representative of the country above. That does not make him useless on earth; it gives his earthly life proper direction. He serves without worshipping success, suffers without surrendering hope, owns possessions without allowing them to own him, and fights without imagining the outcome depends upon his strength. He walks through the battle with his eyes upon the throne because his true address is already connected to the King seated there.

Conclusion

The Christian occupies two realms at once. His mortal body walks through a world groaning beneath sin, death, corruption, deception, and spiritual warfare. He experiences fatigue, temptation, grief, disappointment, persecution, loss, and the ordinary pressures of life in a fallen creation. Scripture never tells him to deny those realities or pretend every battlefield is a flower garden. But his spiritual position is already joined to Christ above every principality and power. He fights below while seated above, suffers in time while possessing eternal life, and walks through enemy territory while belonging to a kingdom the enemy cannot overthrow.

That position produces confidence without arrogance. The believer has access to the Father, but he approaches through Christ. He possesses authority, but it operates beneath Christ’s Headship. He holds spiritual blessings, but they are gifts of grace rather than

trophies of achievement. He is more than a conqueror, but only “through him that loved us.” Every true spiritual privilege bends the knee before the Lord Jesus Christ. The man who uses heavenly position to glorify himself has dragged the doctrine back down into Adam’s basement. Christ did not seat believers with Himself so they could start autographing the throne.

So do not measure your wealth by what can be taxed, stolen, repossessed, buried, or left in a lawyer’s office after your funeral. Do not measure your victory by the absence of battle or your authority by the loudness of your declarations. Put on the whole armour of God, stand upon the written word, pray through the access Christ supplied, submit yourself to God, resist the devil, and walk worthy of your calling. Your feet may be dusty from the battlefield, your body may carry wounds, and your eyes may grow tired from watching the darkness spread, but your position has never moved. You are walking through the war while God has already made you **sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**.

9 of 10 – In Christ – Sealed Inside the One Satan Could Not Defeat

Key Passage: Ephesians 1:13–14; Ephesians 4:30; Romans 8:28–39

Introduction

Eternal security does not mean Christians never stumble, never backslide, never grieve the Holy Spirit, never damage their testimony, or never require the correcting hand of God. It means God finishes the saving work He begins. Philippians 1:6 says, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” God began the work, God performs the work, and God has already named the day toward which He is carrying it. Salvation is not a joint construction project in which Christ lays the foundation and then leaves trembling Adam to keep the roof from collapsing. The same grace that finds the sinner, justifies him, regenerates him, places him in Christ, and seals him with the Holy Spirit also preserves him until final redemption. If salvation depended upon the Christian’s unbroken grip, every believer would eventually slip through his own fingers. Security rests in God’s grip, Christ’s finished work, and the Spirit’s unbroken seal.

The believer’s security is inseparable from his position “in Christ.” He has not merely received assistance from Christ while remaining spiritually independent of Him. He has been baptized by one Spirit into Christ’s body, made a member of His flesh and bones, accepted in the Beloved, seated in heavenly places, and hidden with Christ in God. Satan

would have to reverse regeneration, break the Holy Ghost's seal, amputate a member from Christ's body, overturn God's justification, defeat Christ's intercession, and drag the risen Head back beneath death before he could remove one truly saved believer. The old serpent could not keep Christ in the grave when every sin of the world had been laid upon Him. He will not conquer Him now that He sits glorified at the right hand of God. Eternal security is not confidence in a strong sheep; it is confidence in an undefeated Shepherd.

This doctrine does not create a license for sin. A Christian can lose joy, peace, fellowship, testimony, usefulness, health, opportunities, rewards, and even physical life through rebellion. Paul never treated carnality as harmless simply because salvation is secure. He rebuked it, exposed it, commanded churches to judge it, and warned that every believer's work will be tried at the judgment seat of Christ. But consequences are not condemnation, chastening is not damnation, and the loss of reward is not the loss of eternal life. Grace does not remove accountability; it places accountability inside an unchangeable family relationship. A father corrects his son because the boy remains his son. God may burn the Christian's wood, hay, and stubble, but First Corinthians 3:15 still says, "he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

1. The God Who Began Salvation Will Complete It

Philippians 1:6 places confidence in the One who began the work. The believer did not conceive salvation's plan, provide its sacrifice, write its gospel, raise its Saviour, or regenerate his own dead spirit. God moved first. Ephesians 2:4–5 says, "But God, who is rich in mercy," quickened those who were dead in sins. A corpse contributes nothing to its resurrection except the condition requiring it. The sinner hears the gospel, believes upon Jesus Christ, and receives salvation, but even then the saving power belongs entirely to God. Faith is the hand receiving the gift, not the factory manufacturing it. The believer cannot boast that he kept himself alive any more than Lazarus could boast that he had organized his own exit from the tomb.

The One who began the work "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." God does not begin eternal salvation and abandon it halfway through time because the believer proves weaker than expected. Nothing about the Christian's future conduct surprises omniscience. God knew every weakness, temptation, failure, foolish decision, cold prayer, wasted opportunity, and season of discouragement before He saved him. Calvary was not planned beneath the mistaken assumption that every convert would behave like the Apostle Paul before breakfast the following morning. Romans 5:10 reasons, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." If Christ's death reconciled enemies, His risen life is more than sufficient to preserve sons.

Romans 8:29–30 lays out an unbroken chain: “whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate,” “whom he did predestinate, them he also called,” “whom he called, them he also justified,” and “whom he justified, them he also glorified.” No link says God justified some and later misplaced half of them. Glorification is stated with such certainty that Paul speaks of it as accomplished, though the believer’s body still awaits its transformation. God sees the finished work from beginning to end. The Christian sees a road full of bends, fog, potholes, and enemy fire; God sees every justified believer standing conformed to Christ’s image. Eternal security is God’s conclusion read backward into the believer’s present struggle.

2. Sealed With the Holy Spirit Until the Day of Redemption

Ephesians 1:13 explains what occurs when the sinner believes: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.” Hearing comes first, then trusting, and then the divine seal: “in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” The Holy Ghost does not seal a man after years of successful Christian performance. He seals him after he believes the gospel. The seal is not a charismatic thrill, an emotional surge, or a second experience reserved for the spiritually elite. Every saved person receives the Spirit. Romans 8:9 says, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” No Spirit means no salvation; possessing the Spirit marks the believer as Christ’s own.

A seal signifies ownership, identification, security, and the authority of the one applying it. God’s seal does not advertise the believer’s strength. It announces God’s claim. Second Timothy 2:19 says, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.” Religious men may lose track of names, churches may mishandle records, Christians may doubt one another, and a discouraged believer may struggle with assurance, but “the Lord knoweth them that are his.” Salvation does not depend upon God remembering to check a denominational membership roll. He placed His own Spirit within the believer as the living mark of divine possession. Satan can counterfeit religious excitement, but he cannot forge God’s ownership.

Ephesians 4:30 identifies the duration of the seal: “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Notice that a believer can grieve the Spirit, yet the verse does not say grieving removes the Spirit’s seal. It says the Spirit by whom he is sealed is the very Spirit he grieves. That should produce sorrow, reverence, confession, and changed conduct, not a doctrine of repeated spiritual evaporation. The seal lasts “unto the day of redemption,” when Christ changes the believer’s vile body and completes the redemption of the purchased possession. The flesh can grieve the

Occupant, but it cannot evict Him. God did not seal the believer until his next bad day; He sealed him until the day Christ finishes the entire transaction.

3. The Earnest Guarantees That God Will Claim His Purchased Possession

Ephesians 1:14 calls the Holy Spirit “the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” An earnest is a pledge guaranteeing the completion of a transaction. God has placed His Spirit within the believer as heaven’s down payment upon the inheritance to come. This does not suggest God needs time to gather the remaining price. Christ already paid it in full. The earnest assures the believer that the One who purchased him will return to claim everything the blood bought, including the mortal body presently awaiting redemption. God does not make down payments on property He intends to abandon.

Second Corinthians 1:21–22 says God “hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” Second Corinthians 5:5 repeats that God “also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” Paul returns to the term because the Spirit’s indwelling is not a passing religious sensation. It is God’s guarantee of future completion. The Christian may feel weak, but the earnest remains. He may pass through grief, persecution, illness, failure, or the cold silence of a difficult season, but the Spirit does not become less divine when the believer becomes less emotional. The security of a legal guarantee does not depend upon whether the purchaser feels cheerful while reading it.

The “purchased possession” also reminds the Christian that he belongs to Another. First Corinthians 6:19–20 says, “ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price.” Eternal security is not God granting Adam permanent independence with a ticket to heaven. Christ purchased the believer’s body, soul, future, service, and allegiance with His blood. The doctrine that secures salvation also destroys the excuse for careless living. Since the believer belongs to Christ, he should glorify God in his body and spirit. Grace secures the property, and ownership establishes responsibility. A Christian who uses eternal security to justify sin is bragging that the blood-bought house has permission to become a garbage dump because the deed cannot be cancelled.

4. Joined to a Body That Cannot Be Dismembered

First Corinthians 12:13 declares, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” The Holy Ghost does not merely place the believer near Christ, under Christ’s influence, or on Christ’s mailing list. He places him into Christ’s body. Verse 27 tells the Corinthians, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” Those Corinthians were hardly model Christians. They were divided, carnal, boastful, disorderly, and tolerant of serious sin. Yet Paul corrected their conduct by reminding them of their membership rather than

threatening that every failure had already amputated them. Their carnality contradicted their position; it did not dissolve it.

Ephesians 5:30 deepens the union: “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” This is not the loose association of a club member who can resign, tear up a card, and walk across the street to join another organization. The Church is a living spiritual organism joined to the risen Head. Christ nourishes and cherishes it because no man ever hated his own flesh. If a believer could lose salvation, Christ’s body could gain and lose members continually according to the fluctuations of human performance. The Holy Ghost would baptize a man into the body on Monday, remove him on Tuesday, restore him on Wednesday, and amputate him again before the weekend. That is not salvation; that is ecclesiastical surgery performed with a revolving door.

Christ’s body will be presented complete. Ephesians 5:27 says He will present it “to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” The Church’s final perfection rests upon Christ’s sanctifying work, not the present flawlessness of its members. Every believer is being shaped toward the day when the body stands complete with its Head. Satan may attack individual members, spread false doctrine, corrupt local assemblies, discourage saints, and destroy earthly testimony, but he cannot dismantle the organism created by the Holy Ghost. To remove one true member, he would have to tear Christ’s own body and prove the Head incapable of preserving what belongs to Him.

5. Hidden With Christ in God and Kept by a Living Intercessor

Colossians 3:3 says, “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” That is one of the strongest descriptions of the believer’s security in Scripture. His life is not hidden merely behind Christ, beneath an angel, inside a church, or under the protection of his own determination. It is hidden “with Christ in God.” Satan would have to penetrate God Himself, remove the risen Christ, locate the believer’s life, and carry it away while omnipotence watched helplessly. The devil has never completed the first step. He could not conquer Christ when the Lord entered his territory bearing the world’s sin, and he certainly cannot overthrow Him now that Christ sits glorified at the Father’s right hand.

Romans 8:34 adds Christ’s continuing ministry: “It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” The believer’s security does not rest only upon a past death but also upon a present living Intercessor. Christ died to pay the debt, rose to demonstrate the payment accepted, ascended to the Father, and now represents His own at God’s right hand. Hebrews 7:25 says He “ever liveth to make intercession for them.” The Christian’s enemies do not merely

face his imperfect prayers; they face Christ's perfect intercession. Satan may accuse a believer at midnight and discover that the Advocate never sleeps.

Second Timothy 2:13 says, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." The verse does not praise unbelief or teach that apostasy is harmless. It establishes that Christ's faithfulness is not undone by human instability. Because believers are members of His body, Christ cannot deny Himself. Peter's courage failed beside a fire, but Christ's faithfulness did not fail Peter. The Lord had already said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Peter denied Christ, wept bitterly, and required restoration, but he did not cease to belong to the Shepherd. The sheep wandered; the Shepherd's ownership remained.

6. No Creature Can Separate the Believer From God's Love in Christ

Romans 8:31–39 forms a fortress around the justified believer. Paul asks, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Many can oppose the Christian, but none can successfully reverse God's purpose. Verse 32 reasons from the greater gift to every lesser need: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" God has already given the most costly gift in heaven. He will not abandon the believer before completing the salvation His Son purchased. A builder who paid for the entire house does not quit because one hinge needs adjustment.

Paul then asks, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." The answer is not that nobody attempts to accuse. Satan accuses, conscience accuses, the law identifies sin, and religious people occasionally maintain filing cabinets of old failures as though heaven appointed them assistant prosecutors. But no accusation can overturn God's justification. "Who is he that condemneth?" Christ died, rose, sits at God's right hand, and intercedes. The entire case rests upon Christ. To condemn the believer eternally, an accuser would have to prove Christ's death insufficient, His resurrection invalid, His position unauthorized, and His intercession ineffective.

Paul concludes that neither death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, "nor any other creature" can separate believers "from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The believer himself is a creature, so he cannot be smuggled into the passage as the one exception capable of separating himself. Present failure cannot do it. Future trouble cannot do it. Death cannot do it. Spiritual powers cannot do it. The security is located "in Christ Jesus," and nothing created can tear open that location. Paul did not forget to include the one danger that could undo the entire chapter; he deliberately closed every exit.

7. Security Does Not Protect Carnality From Consequences

The secure believer remains accountable for his walk. Galatians 6:7 says, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Eternal security does not allow a Christian to plant corruption and harvest roses. Sin damages fellowship, dulls spiritual appetite, weakens prayer, injures others, destroys credibility, hardens the conscience, and invites God’s chastening. Grace prevents eternal condemnation; it does not repeal moral cause and effect. A saved man can ruin his marriage, waste his health, scatter his family, disgrace his testimony, and spend years reaping a crop he planted during fifteen minutes of rebellion.

First Corinthians 5 provides a severe example. A professing believer was living in such immorality that Paul commanded the church “to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.” Yet the verse continues, “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” God was willing to permit the destruction of the man’s flesh rather than allow his rebellion to continue unchecked, but his salvation remained distinguished from his bodily judgment. First Corinthians 11 likewise records weak, sickly, and dead believers chastened for abusing the Lord’s supper. Verse 32 explains, “when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

The judgment seat of Christ will expose every Christian work. First Corinthians 3:13 says, “the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” Wood, hay, and stubble will burn; gold, silver, and precious stones will endure. A careless believer “shall suffer loss,” but Paul immediately adds, “he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” Eternal security preserves the man, not every accomplishment bearing his name. Some believers will enter glory with reward; others will stand amid smoking ruins, saved by Christ but stripped of everything they built for themselves. Grace gets the Christian to heaven; faithfulness determines whether he arrives carrying crowns or smelling like a burned hayloft.

Conclusion

The believer is secure because every Person of the Godhead is involved in his salvation. The Father purposed, called, justified, adopted, and promised glorification. The Son died, rose again, purchased the believer, joined him to His body, and now intercedes at God’s right hand. The Holy Spirit regenerated, baptized, indwelt, sealed, and became the earnest of the inheritance. To lose salvation, the entire saving work of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost would have to collapse. Eternal life would have to become temporary, the sealed possession would have to be abandoned, the member would have to be torn from Christ’s body, and the justified sinner would have to become condemned after the Judge closed the case.

None of this excuses sin. The secure Christian possesses more reason for holiness, not less. He was bought with blood, indwelt by the Spirit, joined to Christ, and appointed to appear before the judgment seat. He can grieve the Spirit who sealed him, dishonour the Saviour who purchased him, and waste the life the Father gave him. He can lose fellowship, joy, usefulness, health, opportunities, rewards, and perhaps physical life. But he cannot turn the eternal life of Jesus Christ into a temporary loan. God's chastening hand may fall heavily upon a rebellious son, yet the hand striking the rod is still attached to the Father who refuses to abandon him.

So stop measuring eternal security by the strength of the sheep's grip. Sheep are weak, wandering, easily frightened, and famous for getting themselves tangled in places where no sensible animal would go. The glory belongs to the Shepherd. Christ found the sheep, purchased it with His blood, placed it upon His shoulders, gave it eternal life, and sealed it inside His own body. The grave could not hold Him, hell could not conquer Him, death could not keep Him, and Satan could not defeat Him. The weakest believer rests in an undefeated Saviour, and that is stronger than the strongest believer resting in himself. The sheep may tremble, but the Shepherd does not; the sheep may stumble, but the seal remains; the sheep may lose its footing, but it has been **sealed inside the One Satan could not defeat**.

10 of 10 – In Christ – When the Hidden Life Steps Out in Glory

Key Passage: Colossians 3:1–4; Romans 8:18–30; Philippians 3:20–21

Introduction

The Christian presently possesses a life the world cannot see, measure, explain, purchase, imitate, or destroy. Colossians 3:3 says, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The outward man remains visible: a mortal body carrying scars, weaknesses, unfinished growth, painful memories, and the daily evidence that Adam's flesh has not volunteered for sainthood. The world sees the Christian become tired, discouraged, sick, tempted, persecuted, and eventually laid in a grave. It concludes that he is merely another dying man using religion as a crutch while waiting for the undertaker. But the world is judging a sealed envelope without reading its contents. The believer's real life is hidden with Christ in God, and the grave can touch only the mortal wrapping. The life inside belongs to the risen Christ, and death has already spent its ammunition upon Him without leaving a mark.

That hidden life will not remain hidden forever. Colossians 3:4 declares, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Christ is not merely the giver of life, the helper of life, the example for life, or the religious addition to an otherwise independent existence. He “is our life.” The believer’s past was judged in Christ’s death, his present is secured in Christ’s risen life, and his future will be revealed in Christ’s glory. What God began through calling, justification, regeneration, spiritual union, and sealing will reach its appointed destination in glorification. Not one member of Christ’s body will be misplaced between grace and glory. The same God who placed the believer in Christ will display him with Christ when the hidden reality steps into view.

The world presently sees saints who look far less glorious than their position sounds. Some live in frail bodies, some carry deep wounds, some struggle through poverty, some endure persecution, and some fight battles nobody around them understands. Even the strongest Christian remains unfinished in practice. His testimony may shine one day and sputter the next; his spirit may be willing while his flesh continues behaving like a stubborn mule dragging a piano uphill. Yet God is not finished displaying what He placed inside His Son. At Christ’s appearing, mortality will surrender to immortality, corruption will put on incorruption, weakness will be raised in power, and the body now humbling the saint will be fashioned like Christ’s glorious body. Salvation will finally become visible from head to foot.

1. The Believer’s Real Life Is Presently Hidden With Christ

Colossians 3 begins, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.” The believer’s hidden life rests upon his union with Christ’s resurrection. God does not command him to seek things above in order to become risen; He commands him to seek them because he has been risen with Christ. Position precedes practice. The Christian’s body still walks through this earth, but his spiritual identity has already crossed the grave in the risen Saviour. Ephesians 2:6 says God “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” The believer’s earthly circumstances may appear low, but his heavenly standing could not be higher because it is located in the Son at God’s right hand.

To be “hid with Christ in God” means the believer’s life lies beyond the reach of every enemy seeking its destruction. Satan can attack his mind, tempt his flesh, accuse his conscience, hinder his service, damage his reputation, and perhaps destroy his mortal body when God permits. But Satan cannot enter God, overthrow Christ, and remove the believer’s eternal life from its hiding place. The old serpent could not keep Jesus Christ in a sealed tomb guarded by Roman soldiers. He will not succeed in tearing a member from Christ’s glorified body. The Christian’s life is not hidden because God has forgotten where He placed it; it is hidden because no enemy can reach it before the appointed unveiling.

This hiddenness also explains why the world misunderstands the saints. First John 3:1 says, “therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” The world did not recognize the Lord of glory when He walked among men. It saw a carpenter, a Galilean, a religious troublemaker, and finally a condemned criminal. If it failed to recognize the sinless Head, it will not properly evaluate the imperfect members of His body. The Christian should not expect the age that crowned Caesar and crucified Christ to understand spiritual value. The world can price a mansion, auction a painting, rank an athlete, and count a billionaire’s fortune, but it cannot appraise one blood-bought soul hidden with Christ in God.

2. The Whole Creation Is Waiting for the Sons of God to Be Revealed

Romans 8:19 says, “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” Creation knows something is unfinished. The ground bears thorns, animals suffer, bodies weaken, storms destroy, disease spreads, and death consumes every generation. Romans 8:22 says, “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” The groaning creation is not progressing toward human perfection through evolution, government, education, technology, environmental religion, or international committees. It is laboring beneath the curse and waiting for the rightful King and the manifestation of His redeemed sons.

Believers groan as well. Romans 8:23 says that those possessing “the firstfruits of the Spirit” groan within themselves, “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” The Christian has already received the Spirit of adoption and cries, “Abba, Father,” but one aspect of adoption awaits public completion: bodily redemption. His soul is saved, his spirit has been quickened, and his life is hidden in Christ, but his body remains mortal. It aches, ages, tires, suffers, and carries the law of sin in its members. Salvation has reached the inward man, but the purchased possession has not yet been fully renovated on the outside. The Holy Ghost within is the earnest that God will finish what He started.

This groaning is not unbelieving despair. Romans 8:24 says, “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope.” Biblical hope is confident expectation grounded in God’s promise, not a nervous religious guess. The Christian does not look at his weakening body and hope God might remember him if the heavenly schedule remains convenient. He knows the redemption of the body is coming because Christ’s resurrection established the pattern and the Holy Spirit’s seal guarantees the result. Every ache reminds him that Adam’s body is temporary; every groan announces that resurrection is approaching. The hospital does not disprove redemption. It provides another waiting room for it.

3. The Rapture Will Complete the Redemption of the Body

First Thessalonians 4:16 declares, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” Christ does not send an angel to collect His Church while He remains occupied elsewhere. “The Lord himself” descends. The same Jesus who died, arose, and ascended will return for the body joined to Him by the Holy Ghost. The Rapture is not an escape plan invented by frightened Christians who dislike difficult headlines. It is the appointed completion of Christ’s relationship to His body and bride. A Head seated in heaven will not leave His body scattered permanently among graves.

“The dead in Christ shall rise first.” Those three words—“in Christ”—identify the dead whose resurrection occurs at the Rapture. Their bodies may have returned to dust, disappeared beneath oceans, burned in fires, been buried on forgotten battlefields, or rested beneath markers no living relative remembers. God has not misplaced one particle necessary for resurrection. The One who formed Adam from the dust requires no assistance from an undertaker’s records. Cemeteries appear full to men because men see only the ground; heaven sees every saint marked “in Christ.” When the trumpet sounds, the graves will discover they were warehouses, not permanent residences.

First Thessalonians 4:17 continues, “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.” The living saints will not precede the dead or receive a superior place; both groups will be gathered together “to meet the Lord in the air.” This is Christ’s coming for His Church before the Tribulation, distinct from His later visible return to earth with His saints in judgment and glory. At the Rapture the Church rises to meet Him in the air; at the Second Advent the armies of heaven descend behind Him. Right division keeps the Bride from being confused with Israel, the catching away from the Day of the Lord’s wrath, and the blessed hope from the terror falling upon an unbelieving world.

4. Corruption Will Put On Incorruption and Mortality Will Put On Immortality

First Corinthians 15:51 announces a mystery: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” Not every member of Christ’s body will experience physical death, but every member must experience transformation. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God in its present corruptible condition. The Christian’s mortal body is suited to earthly life beneath Adam’s curse, not heavenly life in Christ’s glory. God will not carry the believer into eternity with disease, degeneration, weakness, sinful appetite, and death still operating in his members. Grace has no unfinished rooms in the final house.

The change will occur “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” The transformation will not require centuries of spiritual evolution, rehabilitation, or sacramental preparation. The same divine power that raised Christ will act upon His body

in an instant. The dead will be raised incorruptible, and the living will be changed. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” The words “must put on” carry divine necessity. Christ purchased the body, the Spirit sealed it, prophecy promised its redemption, and resurrection power will finish the operation. The Christian’s weakness is temporary because God has already scheduled its eviction.

Then “Death is swallowed up in victory.” Death presently swallows bodies, families, ambitions, strength, beauty, and entire civilizations. It sits at the end of Adam’s road like a monster feeding upon every traveler. But resurrection reverses the meal. Death itself will be swallowed by Christ’s victory. Paul mocks the defeated enemy: “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” He does not whisper condolences to death or negotiate visitation rights with the grave. He stands on Christ’s resurrection and taunts them both. The grave may bite the believer once, but resurrection will pull its teeth and leave it chewing dust.

5. The Vile Body Will Be Fashioned Like Christ’s Glorious Body

Philippians 3:20 says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” The believer’s citizenship, expectation, and destiny are heavenly. He is not waiting for humanity to repair Adam’s world through politics, education, technology, social engineering, or another international peace conference chaired by men who cannot maintain peace inside their own homes. He is looking for the Saviour. The Christian may serve responsibly on earth, love his family, labor honestly, defend truth, and occupy until Christ comes, but his final hope does not rise from a ballot box or laboratory. It descends from heaven.

Christ “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” “Vile” does not mean the body has no value; Christ purchased it and God calls it the temple of the Holy Ghost. It means the body remains in a condition of humiliation, corruption, weakness, and mortality. It can become sick through something too small to see, weakened by a few sleepless nights, injured in a moment, and reduced to dust after death. Men spend fortunes preserving its appearance, only to discover that age does not accept bribes. Cosmetic science can stretch the tent fabric, but it cannot cancel the eviction notice.

The glorified body will be fashioned according to Christ’s resurrection body. First John 3:2 says, “we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” The believer will not become deity, share Christ’s eternal Godhead, or cease being a redeemed creature. He will become like Christ in glorified humanity—incorruptible, immortal, free from sin, beyond disease, and permanently suited to God’s presence. The

body that once fought fatigue will possess power; the mind once clouded by flesh will know without sin's distortion; the eyes once dimmed by tears will behold the Lord. Adam's likeness will surrender to the image of the heavenly Man.

6. Every Believer Will Be Presented, Examined, and Rewarded

The Rapture does not eliminate Christian accountability. After gathering His Church, Christ will examine the believer's service at His judgment seat. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." The question there is not whether the believer belongs in heaven. That matter was settled by Christ's blood and the believer's position in Him. The judgment concerns "the things done in his body," whether good or bad. Salvation is by grace through faith; reward is connected to faithfulness, motive, labor, obedience, endurance, and the quality of what was built upon Christ's foundation.

First Corinthians 3 describes the searching fire. Gold, silver, and precious stones endure; wood, hay, and stubble burn. A ministry may appear enormous on earth and arrive in heaven as a smoking pile of denominational lumber. Another service may look small to men yet survive as precious metal because it was performed faithfully for Christ. God will not be impressed by attendance charts, social status, religious applause, bestselling slogans, or the ability to produce smoke machines in a sanctuary. The fire will reveal "of what sort" the work is. Heaven measures quality where earth counts quantity.

Some believers will receive reward, while others "shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." The doctrine preserves grace without making service meaningless. The believer cannot lose eternal life, but he can waste the earthly opportunity to lay treasure at Christ's feet. Crowns will be awarded for faithful service, disciplined living, loving His appearing, enduring temptation, shepherding properly, and winning souls. Those crowns will not inflate human pride; Revelation shows the redeemed casting crowns before the throne. The highest reward of Christian labor is possessing something worthy to place at the feet of the One who gave everything.

7. The Saints Will Appear With Christ in Glory

Colossians 3:4 reaches beyond the hidden life and declares, "then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The Church caught up to Christ will not remain concealed forever. After the judgment seat and the heavenly events preceding His return, Christ will descend openly as King of kings and Lord of lords. Revelation 19 pictures the armies in heaven following Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. The world that mocked Christ, rejected His word, persecuted His saints, and constructed its kingdom

without Him will see the One it refused. The carpenter returns as the King, the Lamb returns as the Lion, and the cross gives way to the crown.

The saints will appear “with him,” but Christ remains the center of the manifestation. Christian glorification does not turn heaven into a parade of redeemed egos. Every saint’s glory reflects the grace of the Head. Second Thessalonians 1:10 says Christ will come “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.” The world will see what God’s grace accomplished in sinners once condemned in Adam. Every redeemed life will become an exhibit of Christ’s mercy, power, righteousness, patience, and faithfulness. Heaven’s trophies will not advertise the quality of the material God found; they will display the skill of the Craftsman who transformed it.

The glorified saints will also share Christ’s reign. Second Timothy 2:12 says, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” Revelation 20 speaks of those who live and reign with Christ. The future kingdom belongs to Jesus Christ by right, covenant, conquest, and divine appointment, yet He graciously allows redeemed servants to participate in His administration. Positions of service and reward will differ, but every member of Christ’s body will remain secure in His life. The Church will no longer fight the flesh, endure the world, or resist spiritual wickedness. The battle will have given way to manifestation, the hidden life to visible glory, and faith to sight.

Conclusion

The doctrine of being in Christ begins with the sinner’s removal from Adam and ends with the saint’s appearance in glory. In Christ, the believer is placed into a new race and a new body. In Christ, he is identified with the Saviour’s death, burial, and resurrection. In Christ, he stands beyond condemnation, accepted in the Beloved, and clothed in imputed righteousness. In Christ, he becomes a new creature through an operation made without hands. In Christ, he is seated in heavenly places, sealed until the day of redemption, and preserved inside the One Satan could not defeat. Glorification is not an unrelated reward attached to the end of salvation. It is the inevitable unveiling of everything God established when He placed the sinner in His Son.

Until that unveiling, the Christian walks by faith. The world sees mortality; faith sees the coming immortal body. The world sees a grave; faith sees a temporary warehouse waiting for a trumpet. The world sees weakness; faith sees resurrection power. The world sees scarred histories and unfinished saints; God sees men and women already foreknown, called, justified, and destined to be conformed to Christ’s image. Romans 8:30 does not leave the justified man stranded beside the road. “Whom he justified, them he also

glorified.” Grace owns the entire journey, and grace has never lost a passenger between Calvary and glory.

So lift your eyes above the failing body, the noisy world, the raging devil, and the temporary battlefield. Mortality is not your final condition, corruption is not your inheritance, and the grave is not your home. Christ is your life. When He descends, the dead in Christ will rise, the living saints will be changed, and every member of His body will meet the Head in the air. After the hidden work has been examined and the appointed hour arrives, the saints will appear with Him in glory. Then every doctrine in this series will become visible, every promise will stand clothed in immortality, and every redeemed sinner will understand that the two words securing the whole journey were the same two words written over its beginning, middle, and end: **in Christ**.

In Christ — The Most Important Two Words in the Christian Life

Series Conclusion

After ten essays, we arrive at the end of this series without reaching the end of what God has placed inside those two words: **in Christ**. Eternity itself will be required to unfold the riches now hidden in that position. Paul calls them “the unsearchable riches of Christ” in Ephesians 3:8, not because God has concealed the truth from believers, but because no creature can reach the bottom of it. Search as far as Scripture carries you, and another chamber of grace opens. Follow redemption from the sinner’s guilt to Christ’s cross, from Christ’s cross to His grave, from His grave to resurrection, from resurrection to heavenly places, and from heavenly places to future glory, and every road passes through the same location. The Christian life is not built around what Adam promises to become if properly encouraged. It is built around what God has already made the believer in His Son.

The first great truth established throughout this series is that every human being stands in one of two men. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). Humanity may divide itself into nations, races, political parties, economic classes, educational ranks, religious affiliations, and enough social categories to keep a government office buried in paperwork until the judgment. God draws one line. On one side stands Adam with sin, condemnation, corruption, death, and judgment. On the other stands Christ with righteousness, justification, resurrection, eternal life, and glory. There is no third head, no neutral family, and no religious balcony from which a respectable sinner can watch the two races without belonging to either. Every man is born in Adam.

Every saved man has been placed in Christ. That is the divide death will uncover when every lesser distinction has returned to dust.

Religion does not solve Adam's problem because religion is one of Adam's favorite hiding places. After sin entered Eden, Adam covered himself with fig leaves and hid among the trees. He established the basic pattern of man-made religion before the first church building, altar boy, prayer bead, confirmation class, or denominational headquarters appeared. Man sins, recognizes his nakedness, manufactures a covering, and hopes God will accept the tailoring. Since then, the materials have become more expensive and the language more sophisticated, but the design has never changed. Some cover Adam with water, some with sacraments, some with law-keeping, some with morality, some with mystical experiences, and some with respectable evangelical activity. God does not renovate Adam's wardrobe. He takes the sinner out of Adam and places him into Christ.

That transfer occurs when the sinner believes the gospel of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The Holy Ghost performs what no priest, preacher, sacrament, institution, ordinance, or religious committee can accomplish. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). The sinner does not join Christ's body as he joins an association. God incorporates him into a living spiritual organism whose Head sits above every principality and power. Human hands can lower a body into water, write a name on a church roll, distribute religious elements, and pronounce impressive words beneath stained glass. They cannot place one soul inside Jesus Christ. Salvation requires an operation performed from heaven, and heaven has never licensed the operation to a man wearing a collar.

Once placed in Christ, the believer is identified with the Saviour's death, burial, and resurrection. Romans 6 does not leave him standing at the foot of Calvary as a tourist examining somebody else's crucifixion. It says he was baptized into Christ's death, buried with Him, and raised to walk in newness of life. The old man was crucified with Christ. God did not schedule Adam for another counseling appointment, enroll him in religious rehabilitation, or place him beneath a stricter set of rules. He passed sentence upon him. Calvary is not a fitness center for fallen flesh; it is God's execution ground for the old man. The flesh remains present and troublesome, but its legal throne has been overturned. It may bark at the gate, claw at the door, and throw yesterday's garbage through the window, but it no longer owns the house.

Because Christ bore the condemnation, none remains for the believer. Romans 8:1 declares, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." God did not misplace the evidence, overlook the crime, lower His standard, or allow the guilty sinner to slip through a theological loophole. Every charge was placed upon Christ, every

righteous demand was answered, and every stroke of judgment fell upon the Substitute. Christ arose because the payment was accepted. The empty tomb is heaven's receipt, and the devil has been trying to dispute the charge ever since. Satan may accuse, conscience may ache, men may remember, and the law may expose, but no accuser can reopen a case God closed with blood.

No condemnation does not mean no correction. That distinction must remain sharp enough to shave the whiskers off a legalist and pierce the hide of a libertine. A saved man can grieve the Holy Spirit, break fellowship, destroy usefulness, injure his family, ruin his testimony, reap corruption, lose rewards, and invite severe chastening. First Corinthians 3:15 says he may suffer loss while "he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Grace does not convert sin into a harmless hobby. It distinguishes the Father's woodshed from the Judge's lake of fire. The same Book that teaches eternal security commands holiness because the Christian was purchased for God's service, not rescued so he could carry Adam's garbage into every room of the Father's house.

In Christ, the believer is also "accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6). His acceptance is not adjusted every evening according to the day's spiritual batting average. His state changes, his feelings rise and collapse, his fellowship may warm or cool, and some mornings his devotional life can feel as lively as a brick in a rain barrel. But his standing rests in Christ. God does not accept him because he has finally become impressive enough to brighten heaven. He accepts him because the beloved Son is infinitely pleasing to the Father and the believer has been placed inside Him. Religion keeps the beggar outside shaking a tin cup of good works. Grace opens the door, clothes him with Christ, seats him at the table, and tells him the bill was settled before he arrived.

That clothing is the righteousness of God imputed through faith. Second Corinthians 5:21 says Christ was made sin for us "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The great exchange at Calvary destroys every human boast. Our sin was charged to Christ, and His righteousness was placed to the believer's account. God does not merely forgive the sinner and release him spiritually naked with instructions to sew a robe before sunset. He clothes him in the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ. Good works must follow salvation as fruit, obedience, testimony, and service, but they cannot enter the courtroom as the grounds of justification. The best work Adam produces still carries Adam's fingerprints. The only righteousness heaven accepts belongs to Christ, and grace places it upon every sinner who believes.

God then creates a new creature and performs a circumcision made without hands. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Salvation is not improved self-esteem, religious behavior management, or an inspirational renovation of Adam's

personality. Something new comes into existence. Colossians 2 declares that God puts off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. The believer's inward identity is separated from the condemned flesh that once defined his standing. The flesh remains active until the body is redeemed, which explains the warfare without overturning the security. The Christian is responsible for yielding his members to God, mortifying the deeds of the body, and walking in the Spirit, but every failure of the flesh does not reverse God's spiritual surgery. No priest performed the operation, and no devil can sew it back together.

The believer's position reaches all the way into heavenly places. Ephesians 2:6 says God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The Christian's feet remain in a world crawling with devils, death, corruption, disappointment, and spiritual wickedness, but his standing is joined to the victorious Head above them. This does not authorize the flesh to order God around, decree material luxuries, or treat prayer like a celestial credit card with no spending limit. True authority bows beneath the Head before it stands against the enemy. The believer fights from Christ's victory, approaches the Father through Christ's merit, and possesses spiritual riches that no recession, thief, grave, government, or prosperity preacher can touch.

The Holy Ghost seals that position "unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). Eternal security is not confidence in the sheep's ability to maintain an impressive grip upon the Shepherd. Sheep wander, stumble, panic, and occasionally become tangled in objects that a sensible animal would have avoided. Security rests in the Shepherd. The believer is sealed by the Spirit, joined to Christ's body, hidden with Christ in God, represented by a living Intercessor, and preserved for bodily redemption. To lose one truly saved soul, Satan would have to overturn justification, reverse regeneration, break the Spirit's seal, amputate Christ's body, enter God, remove the risen Head, and retrieve the life hidden there. He could not keep Jesus Christ behind one stone guarded by Roman soldiers. He will not remove Him from the right hand of God.

What is now hidden will finally be revealed. Colossians 3:4 says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." At the Rapture, the dead in Christ will rise and the living saints will be changed. Corruption will put on incorruption, mortality will put on immortality, and the vile body will be fashioned like Christ's glorious body. The same body that aged, weakened, suffered, fought temptation, and carried Adam's humiliation will be transformed by the power of the risen Christ. The undertaker may close the casket, but he cannot close the prophecy. The grave may receive the body, but it receives property bearing heaven's seal and awaiting a trumpet.

That future glory should govern present conduct. Colossians 3 does not say that because the believer's life is hidden with Christ, he may live like a sewer rat until the Rapture. It says,

“Set your affection on things above,” and then commands him to mortify fornication, uncleanness, evil desire, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying. It tells him to put on mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forgiveness, charity, peace, gratitude, and the word of Christ. Position is the foundation of practice. The Christian does not pursue holiness to become accepted; he pursues holiness because God made him accepted. He does not serve to become a son; he serves because the Father’s name is upon him. He does not resist sin to prevent Christ from abandoning him; he resists because Christ purchased every member of his body with blood.

The believer should therefore stop allowing feelings to act as unauthorized interpreters of his salvation. Feelings are real, but they are terrible theologians. They can be influenced by fatigue, pain, fear, disappointment, hormones, weather, criticism, memory, and whatever disaster arrived in the morning’s inbox. Scripture does not say the Christian is justified when he feels clean, accepted when he feels spiritual, secure when he feels strong, or seated in heavenly places when the day proceeds according to plan. It says he is justified, accepted, sealed, seated, and complete in Christ. Faith does not pretend emotions do not exist. It refuses to grant them editorial authority over the King James Bible.

Nor should the believer permit religious men to sell him blessings already deposited in Christ. Ephesians 1:3 says God “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” The preacher who promises access to God through a sacrament is selling a key after Christ opened the door. The teacher who promises the Holy Ghost as a second-class upgrade is selling an Occupant already present. The showman promising victory through a donation is selling a battle Christ already won. The legalist offering acceptance through performance is billing the believer for a garment Christ already supplied. Religious merchandising survives by keeping Christians ignorant of their inventory. A man who does not know what he owns will purchase the same item every Sunday.

Yet the greatest danger is not merely that saved people misunderstand their riches. It is that lost people borrow the language of being in Christ without ever believing the gospel. Church attendance is not union with Christ. Water baptism is not the Holy Ghost’s baptism into Christ’s body. Admiring Jesus is not receiving Him. Defending Christian values is not regeneration. Being raised in a Christian home, voting for Christian causes, listening to Christian music, quoting Christian slogans, and wearing a cross can all occur while a man remains in Adam. The devils believe there is one God and tremble. Religious familiarity may make a sinner harder to awaken because he mistakes the furniture of Christianity for life in Christ.

The gospel remains clear. “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). Salvation is received by trusting that finished work. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). The sinner must stop presenting Adam’s religion as payment, stop arguing with God’s verdict, and receive the righteousness offered freely in Christ. God is not asking him to help finish Calvary. Christ cried, “It is finished.” The question is whether the sinner will believe the One who finished it or arrive at judgment carrying a sack of religious rags he insisted were valuable.

For the saved, these ten essays should leave more than information. They should leave assurance rooted in Scripture, humility beneath grace, hatred for the flesh, gratitude for the blood, confidence in prayer, boldness in warfare, seriousness about service, and expectation of glory. A man who understands his position in Christ should not become careless; he should become unshakable. He knows where he stands when circumstances move, where he is accepted when feelings accuse, where his righteousness rests when the flesh fails, where his life is hidden when death approaches, and where his body is going when the grave receives it. Truth makes him steady because his anchor is not fastened to himself.

The entire Christian life can therefore be read through these two words. When guilt speaks, answer **in Christ**. When the law condemns, answer **in Christ**. When Satan accuses, answer **in Christ**. When religion demands another payment, answer **in Christ**. When the flesh parades yesterday’s failures, answer **in Christ**. When death stands beside the bed, answer **in Christ**. When the grave closes above the body, heaven still answers **in Christ**. And when the trumpet sounds, the dead will rise under the same name: “the dead in Christ.”

That is the conclusion of the matter. In Adam, man inherits a grave he cannot avoid and a judgment he cannot survive. In Christ, the believer possesses a life death cannot touch, a righteousness hell cannot stain, an acceptance religion cannot improve, a seal Satan cannot break, and a glory the grave cannot prevent. The world may see an ordinary saint walking through an ordinary day in a weakening body. God sees a member of Christ’s body, seated in heavenly places, hidden with His Son, and scheduled to appear with Him in glory. Everything Adam ruined, Christ answered. Everything the law demanded, Christ supplied. Everything death threatened, Christ conquered. And everything God began in grace, He will finish in glory—all because the believer is eternally, completely, and unchangeably **in Christ**.

IN CHRIST

THE MOST IMPORTANT TWO WORDS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

KEY PASSAGES: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:22 • 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 • EPHESIANS 1:3 • COLOSSIANS 3:3-4

CENTRAL TRUTH

Every natural man in Adam; every saved man has been placed in Christ by the Holy Spirit. In Christ the believer possesses righteousness, acceptance, life, security, and future glory.

“FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE.”

— 1 CORINTHIANS 15:22

IN ADAM ROM. 5:12	HEAR THE GOSPEL 1 COR. 15:3-4	BELIEVE ON CHRIST EPH. 1:13	SEALED BY THE SPIRIT 1 COR. 12:13	IN CHRIST 2 COR. 5:17	GLORY COL. 3:4
1 TWO MEN — TWO RACES - In Adam: sin entered and death reigned. - First man: earthly; last Adam: a quickening spirit. - Natural birth places man in Adam. - New birth places the believer in Christ. - There is no third spiritual standing. KEY SCRIPTURES: ROM. 5:12-19 • 1 COR. 15:22, 45-49 • JOHN 1:6-7	2 BY ONE SPIRIT INTO ONE BODY - Hear the word of truth—the gospel. - Believe on Christ and receive the Spirit. - By one Spirit baptized into one body. - Every believer is a member in particular. - No priest, water, or denomination performs this operation. KEY SCRIPTURES: EPH. 1:13 • 1 COR. 12:13, 27	3 DIED, BURIED, AND RISEN WITH CHRIST - Hear the word of truth. - Baptized into His death. - Buried with Him. - The old man crucified with Him. - Raised to walk in newness of life. - Reckon dead to sin and alive unto God. KEY SCRIPTURES: ROM. 6:3-6, 11 • GAL. 2:20	4 NO CONDEMNATION - The law exposes sin but cannot justify. - God condemned sin in Christ's flesh. - Christ died, rose, and intercedes. - God justifies—no accusation can stand. - Chastening is not eternal condemnation. KEY SCRIPTURES: ROM. 3:20 • ROM. 8:1, 3, 33-34 • 1 COR. 11:32	5 ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED - God hath made the believer accepted. - Standing is fixed in Christ. - State affects fellowship, fruit, and service. - Through Christ we stand in grace. - Confession restores fellowship. KEY SCRIPTURES: EPH. 1:6 • ROM. 5:2 • 1 JOHN 1:9	
6 THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IMPUTED - God's righteousness is upon all them that believe. - Abraham believed God; righteousness was counted. - Righteousness is imputed without works. - Made the righteousness of God in Him. - Good works are fruit—not the price. KEY SCRIPTURES: ROM. 3:22 • ROM. 4:3-6 • 2 COR. 5:21 • EPH. 2:8-10	7 A NEW CREATURE — AN OPERATION WITHOUT HANDS - In Christ: a new creature. - Spiritual circumcision made without hands. - Buried and risen through the operation of God. - The flesh remains the battlefield. - The new man is created in true holiness. KEY SCRIPTURES: 2 COR. 5:17 • COL. 2:11-12 • GAL. 5:17 • EPH. 4:24	8 SEATED ABOVE THE BATTLE - Blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. - Raised and seated in heavenly places. - Christ is far above every principality and power. - Through Him we have access unto the Father. - Stand wearing the whole armour of God. KEY SCRIPTURES: EPH. 1:3, 20-21 • EPH. 2:6, 18 • EPH. 6:10-18	9 SEALED AND ETERNALLY SECURE - Sealed with the Holy Spirit unto redemption. - The Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance. - Members of Christ's body, flesh, and bones. - The believer's life is hid with Christ in God. - No creature can separate him from God's love. KEY SCRIPTURES: EPH. 1:13-14 • EPH. 4:30 • EPH. 5:30 • COL. 3:3 • ROM. 8:38-39	10 THE HIDDEN LIFE REVEALED IN GLORY - The dead in Christ rise first. - Living saints are caught up together. - All believers are changed in a moment. - The vile body is fashioned like His glorious body. - Saints shall appear with Christ in glory. KEY SCRIPTURES: 1 THESS. 4:16-17 • 1 COR. 15:51-53 • PHIL. 3:20-21 • COL. 3:4	

IN ADAM VS. IN CHRIST

IN ADAM Sin Condemnation Corruption Death Judgment ROM. 5:12 • 1 COR. 15:22	➔	IN CHRIST Righteousness Acceptance New Life Security Glory ROM. 8:1 • EPH. 1:6 • COL. 3:4
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STANDING VS. STATE

STANDING — UNCHANGEABLE In Christ Justified Accepted Sealed Heavenly	➔	STATE — CHANGEABLE Daily walk Fellowship Fruit Chastening Reward
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OUR WALK MUST AGREE WITH THE POSITION GRACE HAS GIVEN.

EPH. 4:1 • COL. 3:1-4

WHAT CAN BE LOST — WHAT CANNOT

CAN BE LOST Joy Fellowship Testimony Usefulness Reward Ps. 51:12 • 1 JOHN 1:6 • 1 COR. 5:15	➔	CANNOT BE LOST Eternal Life Justification Spirit's Seal Body Membership Life in Christ ROM. 8:30 • EPH. 4:30 • COL. 3:3
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LIVE LIKE A MAN WHOSE ADDRESS IS IN CHRIST

 BELIEVE THE GOSPEL 1 COR. 15:3-4	 RECKON YOUR POSITION ROM. 6:11	 WALK IN THE SPIRIT GAL. 5:16	 REJECT SELF-RIGHTOUSNESS PHIL. 3:9	 COME BOLDLY TO THE THRONE HEB. 4:16	 SERVE FOR ETERNAL REWARD 1 COR. 3:13-15	 LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR PHIL. 3:20
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IN ADAM, EVERYTHING ENDS IN DEATH. IN CHRIST, EVERYTHING GOD BEGAN IN GRACE ENDS IN GLORY.

VERSEQUEST MINISTRIES