

STUDY 3 | How God Saved You in Christ

When Jesus came into this world, some two thousand years ago, He came to be the Savior of the world. It was however, the apostle Paul that God set aside to explain this good news of salvation, the gospel. When reading Paul's writings you will find a key phrase that runs through all his epistles. If you were to remove this phrase there would be very little left of Paul's explanation of the gospel. That phrase is "in Christ" or "in Christ Jesus." The truth expressed by this phrase is also expressed by other similar phrases such as "in Him" or "together with Him" or "in the beloved" or "in whom," etc. All these phrases express the same "in Christ" idea or motif (theme).

This truth, stated in the phrase "in Christ," was first introduced by Christ Himself when He told His disciples to "abide in me." These are the undergirding words of the gospel. If we do not understand what the New Testament means by this expression "in Christ," we will never be able to fully understand the good news of the gospel. There is nothing we have as Christians except we have it in Christ. Outside of Him we have nothing but sin, condemnation, and death.

The concept of "in Christ" is however, difficult to understand. Just as "you must be born again" was beyond Nicodemus, one of the top religious leaders of the Jews, the phrase "in Christ" is likewise a difficult idea for us to comprehend. This is especially true of the Western mind. How can I, as an individual, be in someone else? Worse still, how can I, born in the Twentieth Century, be in Christ who lived almost 2,000 years ago? This makes absolutely no sense to our Western way of thinking. Because we cannot fathom this truth, we tend to ignore or skim over it. Yet appreciating the good news of the gospel hinges on our understanding these vital two words, "in Christ."

The "in Christ" concept is based on Biblical solidarity, the idea that all men constitute or share a common life. This is what we touched on in our first lesson, the sin problem. Therefore, if we are to come to grips with this phrase "in Christ," we must first understand what the Bible has to say about solidarity or corporate oneness. In Hebrews 7:7-10, Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek "in Abraham" since he was in the loins of his great grandfather Abraham when he paid tithes to Melchizedek. This is based on Biblical solidarity.

According to Scripture, three fundamental facts are revealed:

God created all men in one man — Adam
Satan ruined all men in one man — Adam
God redeemed all men in one man — Christ

It is this last fact that constitutes the good news of the gospel and gives us everlasting hope. As you study God's Word regarding the "in Christ" motif or idea may your eyes be opened to the matchless charms of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

1. **There are three people involved in this text: "Him" (i.e., God), "you" (i.e., us), and Christ. What has God made Christ to be for us?**

1 Corinthians 1:30 _____

Note: Out of His unconditional love, God united the divine life of His Son to our corporate human life in the womb of Mary. Thus Christ, the God-man, qualified to be our substitute and representative. By His perfect life and sacrificial death He satisfied all the demands of the law on our behalf. In Christ, humanity has a new history which fully qualifies every believer for heaven. This is the incredible good news of the gospel.

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2. In our first study we found that all men were created in one man, Adam, and when he sinned, all sinned in him and, therefore, the death sentence was passed upon all men. In the same way what will happen to all who are in Christ?

1 Corinthians 15:21–22 _____

Note: The man who brought death to humanity is Adam and the man who brought life to humanity is Christ. Today, science is trying to find a solution to the death problem but they cannot because the only solution is Christ.

3. What were the first Adam and the last Adam made to be?

1 Corinthians 15:45

First Adam _____

Last Adam _____

Note: Because the first Adam (mankind) sinned and brought death to all mankind, God sent His Son as the last or second Adam (mankind) to redeem men from that death sentence. Christ is our only hope of eternal life (see 1 John 5:11–12).

4. Through one man's sinful act, what came to all men and with what result?

Romans 5:18 (first part) _____

Note: Because we were in Adam, his one sin made us all sinners (verse 19). While God does not blame us, or hold us responsible or guilty for Adam's sin, nevertheless, because we were in Adam when he sinned, we share his condemnation to death.

5. Through one Man's righteous act what came to all men and with what result?

Romans 5:18 (last part) _____

Note: Just as all die because all have sinned in Adam, so also, all have obeyed in Christ and stand justified to life in Him. Please notice that what God has brought to the whole human race by Christ's obedience is a "free gift" and like any other gift, we cannot enjoy it until we receive it (verse 17). What is ours in Adam is ours by inheritance; what is ours in Christ is a gift from God, for "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life."

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6. When did God plan our redemption in Christ?

Ephesians 1:4 _____

Note: Before we were even created in Adam, God, who knew beforehand that Adam would sin, had already planned our salvation in Christ. According to verse 5, God predestined our adoption to be His sons and daughters by uniting us to Christ. He did this, not because we were good or deserved it, but because of His unconditional love for us. The moment you accept Christ as your Savior, God looks at you as if you are His son or daughter, “accepted in the Beloved” (Christ, verse 6).

7. What three things has God done for us in Christ, while we were still sinners?

Ephesians 2:5–6

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Note: These three facts are what God has accomplished in Christ for all men and women. Together, they constitute the good news of the gospel: salvation full and complete for sinful humankind. However, for these facts to become ours individually, there must be a human response.

8. How do we experience this salvation obtained for all people in Christ?

Ephesians 2:8–9 _____

Note: Salvation comes as a result of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and is made effective through faith; this grace is the supreme gift of God to mankind. The fruit of receiving this grace is good works (see verse 10).

9. What is the wages of sin?

Romans 6:23 (first part) _____

Note: By nature, as well as by performance, we are sinners and deserve death since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

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10. What is the gift of God in Christ?

Romans 6:23 (last part) _____

Note: Please note that while death is wages we earn, eternal life is entirely a free gift that comes through the holy history of Christ and which we have not earned or deserved. That's why the Bible tells us that we are saved by grace alone.

11. What has God given us in His Son?

1 John 5:11 _____

Note: The whole world is trying to escape from the "grim reaper." No one wants to die, but there is only one Source of the life that never ends — Jesus Christ.

12. What are the two options we have regarding this gift of life from God?

1 John 5:12

1. _____

2. _____

Note: Please do not refuse this incredible gift. If you refuse it you will not have this eternal life, no matter how many good works you have performed. If you accept Jesus as your only source of salvation and life, the eternal life God offers you in Christ is guaranteed.

13. What assurance does John give to those who believe in the Son of God?

1 John 5:13 _____

14. If we believe in Jesus, what do we become?

John 1:11–13 _____

Note: God looks at every one who believes in Jesus Christ as His child. If you believe in His name you have already received life, even though you may not feel it or think you deserve it.

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15. If we hear and believe God's Word, what will be the result?

John 5:24 _____

Note: We pass from death to life by accepting the gift of God, Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law. However, to those who are justified by faith in Christ, the law becomes the standard of Christian living (see Galatians 5:13–14).

16. What is Christ to those who believe?

Romans 10:4 _____

Note: The word "end" means something completed or terminated. Paul tells us in this verse that, by faith, Christ's perfect obedience to the law becomes ours. In His earthly mission, Christ met both the positive demands of the law as well as its justice. Thus, He terminated legalism (salvation by our own attempts to keep the law).

17. What happens when you accept the gift of Christ's righteousness?

2 Corinthians 5:17 _____

Note: Read also verses 18–21. On the cross, God heaped all the sins of the world on His Son Jesus Christ. Thus, by His death humanity has been redeemed from sin. Then, in exchange, God gave humanity the life of His Son in the resurrection. When you accept Jesus by faith as your personal Savior, you pass from death to life.

18. What two things did Christ accomplish by His death and resurrection?

2 Timothy 1:8–10

1. _____

2. _____

19. What two things must we do for the good news of salvation in Christ to become ours?

Mark 16:15–16

1. _____

2. _____

Do you believe that Christ has redeemed you? If yes, check here: