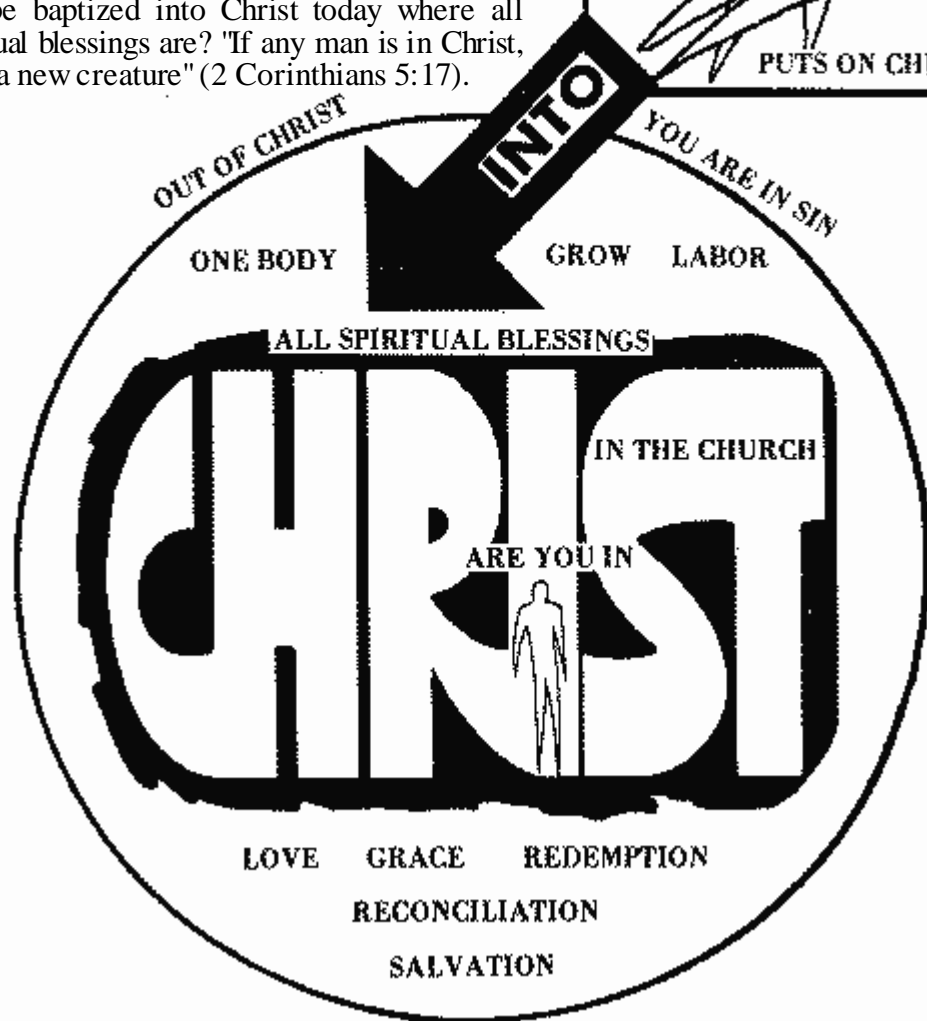


ARE YOU IN CHRIST?

Are you "in" jail? It is either yes or no, because it is a very definite thing to be "in" jail or "out of" jail. Are you "in" sin? This is far worse than physical imprisonment. Have you believed in Christ and been baptized "into" His death so as to "put on Christ"? Either you have or you haven't. It is as definite as being in jail or out of jail. Won't you trust in Jesus and be baptized into Christ today where all spiritual blessings are? "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17).



ARE YOU



"If any man is IN CHRIST, he is a new creature."
2 Cor. 5:17

Christianity is a relationship with God called being "in Christ." Before becoming a Christian a person is "in sin" and "in the world." This word "in" means "within" or "inside of." It expresses a person's relationship or his position in relation to Christ or the world. We cannot understand Christianity unless we understand these relationships.

"IN SIN" BY DISOBEDIENCE

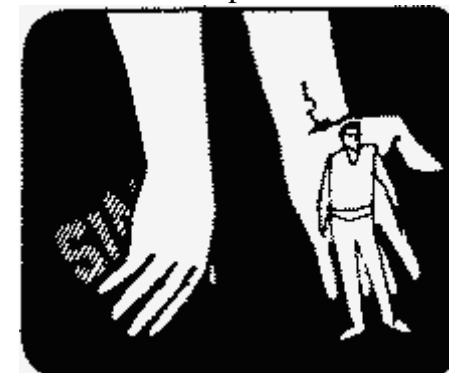
Man is not born in sin. Instead, he enters sin when he is old enough to disobey God. Jesus said that children are pure (Matthew 19:14). Sin is transgression of God's law (I John 3:4), not something passed down from parents.

Because the world is full of sin, the Bible says that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). Non-Christians are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). Man must not continue "in sin" (Romans 6:1). He must change his relationship to sin.

Sin keeps one from fellowship with God. Since God cannot stand sin, He cannot have fellowship with anyone "in sin" (Isaiah 59:2). His perfect holiness cannot have companionship with sin, because sin is "ungodliness," that which is un-God-like, contrary to God's very nature (Romans 1:18). Sin breaks fellowship with God.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN "IN CHRIST"

Because God loved man, He provided for man's sins to be forgiven so that fellowship could be restored. God gave His Son to be a sin-offering, enabling God to punish Jesus for man's sins, so that man need not receive sin's punishment. But to have forgiveness of sins, man must be "in Christ" where God's forgiveness is found. Only in the death of Jesus can man's sins be forgiven (Ephesians 1:7).



ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ARE "IN CHRIST"

Ephesians 1:3 says that all spiritual blessings are "in Christ." Because God cannot fellowship anyone outside of forgiveness provided "in Christ," all of His spiritual benefits for man are "in Christ." God's love is "in Christ" (Romans 8:39, I Timothy 1:14). His grace or undeserved favor are "in Christ" (I Corinthians 1:4, 2 Timothy 2:1). Reconciliation with God is "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19, Ephesians 2:16). Redemption from sin is "in Christ" (2 Timothy 2:10, Romans 3:24). Man has no spiritual blessings outside of Christ.



FAITH AND TRUST "IN CHRIST"

Because the death of Jesus paid the penalty for man's sins, man must trust in Jesus' death as the basis of forgiveness before God. Faith "in" Christ Jesus was the message that the apostles preached (Acts 24:24, Galatians 2:20). Men believed that Jesus had died for sinners and trusted this atoning blood as God's only means of their forgiveness. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

BAPTIZED "INTO" CHRIST

Galatians 3:26, 27 says: "For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Notice that faith in Christ makes one a child of God when he is baptized "into" Christ. The word "into" means "from without to within." A believer's faith brings him "into" Christ when he is baptized to enter Christ or "put on Christ." Baptism is the point at which a believer enters into Christ where forgiveness is (Romans 6:3-5). If one has not been buried with Christ, he has not "put on Christ." Man can have no fellowship with God until he is baptized into Christ's death where God's forgiveness is found.

IN CHRIST AND IN THE CHURCH

A Christian's relationship with God by being forgiven in Christ puts him into the church. 3,000 Christians were added "to the church" by the Lord the first time people were saved in Christ's death (Acts 2:47). In the Bible the church was simply people in

Christ Jesus. Paul wrote to Christians sanctified "in Christ" at Corinth and called them "the church of God" (I Corinthians 1:2). When anyone today is baptized into Christ, he is at the same moment in the church, since the church is nothing but saved people called out of sin into Christ. Thus the church is purchased with Christ's blood, because Christians are bought with Christ's blood. Jesus gave Himself for the church because He gave Himself for Christians, and Christians are the church (Acts 20:28, Eph. 5:25).



ONE IN CHRIST

The church is often called Christ's "body" (Ephesians 1:22, 23, Colossians 1:18, 24). By being baptized into Christ, Christians are at the same time "baptized into one body" (I Corinthians 12:13). Christians are called the many members (parts) of Christ's one spiritual body, the church (Romans 12:5). Jesus prayed that all believers be one in God and Christ (John 17:21). Paul said that all are "one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). Christians must be "of the same mind in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2). Everyone in fellowship with God in Christ must be one with everyone else in fellowship with God in Christ. There is "one body" (church), just as there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4, 5). Division into different churches is sinful.



GROWTH AND LABOR IN CHRIST

The relationship "in Christ" includes work, growth, and fruit-bearing in the Lord. Labor is not in vain "in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58). In Christ Jesus only a faith which works in love avails anything (Galatians 5:6). Paul's converts to Christ were called his "work in the Lord" (I Corinthians 9:1). Babies "in Christ" must grow together in Christ by being fitly-framed as parts of the building of Christ, the church (I Corinthians 3:1, Ephesians 2:21). The Christian's relationship "in Christ" is a continual growth process by which he relates himself to other parts of Christ's body, the church.

DYING IN THE LORD

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" (Revelation 14:13). The lifelong relationship "in Christ" results in dying "in the Lord." Only by living, growing, and laboring in the Lord can Christians die in the Lord. I Thessalonians 4:16 describes the "dead in Christ." These are those who were baptized into Christ, who lived in Christ, and who finally died in Christ. Their wonderful relationship with God had grown closer through the years until it brought them fully into the presence of God.

