

Understanding The Position Of The Christian 'In Christ'

Explore Your Faith Teaching Series - Explo-17 ©

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OUTLINE

Introduction

This study examines what it really means to be 'IN CHRIST'.

The strength of our Christian walk is dependent upon our assurance of who we are because of the new birth.

The understanding we have of our new status is vitally linked to the 'hope' we entertain, and the authority we exercise in this life as covenanted people.

This study critically examines key paragraphs and words for a clear understanding.

It is an essential teaching because our eternal security hinges on it.

Key passage for study: Ephesians, chapters 1-3.

The Christian has not only been rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of God's Son; he also lives in Christ Himself.

He lives in Christ *because that is where God has placed him*: "it is because of him (God) that you are in Christ Jesus" (1Cor.1: 30).

Paul uses the phrase "in Christ Jesus" countless times to refer to the *position of the believer*. For the Christian is not only *crucified with Christ*, he is *raised to new life with him*. (*This is what water baptism signifies; see Rom.6: 3-4*).

The terms "in Adam" and "in Christ"; "first Adam" and "last Adam"

In some mystical sense, the Christian is living 'in Christ Jesus'. It is important to understand this

The proof of Christ living in us: "We know that we live in him and he in us because he has given us his spirit" (1 John 4:13).

Understanding "Position in Christ"

The term "position" must be understood in the context of the concept of the kingdom.

"Kingdom" involves a *king and subjects*. It also involves *jurisdiction*. It is something that is intangible but is real.

We live in the period called "the already, but not yet". *This is the understanding of the kingdom as it relates to us in this present age. The Kingdom is amongst us but not yet here in its fullness.*

We are living in the tension between the finished work of Christ and what is yet to come. We are still living in "this present evil age". Therefore, we can continue to expect the ramifications of the 'fall' in our personal daily lives and even in the catastrophes we see in nature. *It is important to understand this, otherwise we are led into "triumphalism" (e.g., we have total healing now, etc., and if we don't receive it there is something wrong with us). 'Triumphalism' is just as much error as is 'Unbelief'; they are simply at different extremes of the scale.*

We already *are* in the kingdom. Our *position* in Christ does not fluctuate once we have been born again. Our *status* is Kingdom status. We *already* have every spiritual blessing "in Christ". We *are already* seated with him in heavenly places, *positionally*. This is a statement of fact. It is something that we have already received; something that has already been accomplished positionally. However, because we still live in 'this present evil age', we haven't *fully received it*. *To understand this better, it might be easy to think of the concept of "position" in terms of an 'heir apparent' (e.g. a prince or princess).*

The kingdom will come in its fullness ONLY WHEN JESUS RETURNS. (New heaven /new earth/former things pass away/all thing new etc).

Ramifications of our position in Christ

We are 'dead' *in Christ*, not in ourselves. We are 'alive' *in Christ*, not in ourselves. This is fundamental to our understanding of the 'born again' (new creation) experience.

Therefore: (a) we reckon ourselves dead to sin (Rom. 6:11)

(b). we know we are in the light (Eph. 5:8)

(c). our life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3)

(d). because of the preceding statements, we are “ new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). First death, then life. We *have* died; we *are* alive.

The essence of all scriptural teaching is **not** to point the Christian more and more deeply into himself (as many modern techniques of ministry do), **but to teach him to see himself dead to sin and raised to new life with a new nature in Christ.**

If we look within ourselves, we shall see weaknesses, failures, and sin. God has accomplished his work in Jesus, not in us. We *appropriate* all that work when we accept Jesus. *In Him*, we are dead, made righteous, holy, and acceptable to God, despite all that we do in ourselves. We must learn the futility of trusting in ourselves.

As we look to Jesus and what God has made us because we are *in Him*, we are able to trust him more fully. The more we are built up in our revelation of who we are *in Christ*, the more we shall find ourselves able to please God and resist the pull of sin in our lives. ***This*** is what it means to realize your **position in Christ!**

Note: *this does not mean that there is no need for self-examination and confession of our sins to God!*

Our position in Christ designates that we SIT with him. When we understand our position in Christ, we can then know:

1. *How to WALK* (Eph. Chapters 4-6:26)-6:26 gives us the imperatives) and

2. *How to STAND* (Eph. 6:27 to end). We cannot enter into spiritual warfare in this ‘evil age’ until we know our *position* in Christ. We can only stand firm in the victory that Christ has won for us when we know our position in Christ.

Can you now see the significance of using the phrase “in the name of Jesus”? Can you see that our effectiveness does not come from the power of the phrase but from the assurance within us of our *position* in Christ? That it comes from faith in *who we are* in Christ?

Think about this:

- How do you see yourself? Who are you?
- Are you striving to please God? Trying to do it all yourself?
- Can you see that knowing who you are in Christ is the secret to your Christian walk and effectiveness?
- How will you live now that you have been exposed to these truths?

As you move on from here into greater things for God be encouraged by this:

You no longer need to feel ‘defeated’. You have victory over temptation, weakness, futility, and spiritual inadequacy. This is a process; it is not instant!

You have all this and more because of whom you are **in Christ Jesus.**

Take hold of the power of these truths and be set free by them. Know Christ’s power to live victoriously!