

# In Christ

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One of the most under appreciated themes of the New Testament is that we have been united with Christ. May the Spirit give us revelation that will make this reality come alive within us.

## The OT backdrop

In terms of God's plan for humanity, the OT is basically a narrative of failure. Adam and Eve failed to fulfill their mandate to produce a race of people who would image God on the earth and extend His rule over all creation. The rest of the book is God's maneuvering to achieve the original desired outcome. Here's the basic plot:

1. Adam and Eve turned the coregency of the cosmos over to God's archenemy (Gen 3)
2. Most of the human race becomes a hybrid race when some of God's spiritual sons copulate with women and the earth becomes so polluted God needs to cleanse it with a universal flood (Gen 6:1-5).
3. A united humanity again chooses to reject God by building a ziggurat to connect with the heavenly realm in rebellion against God. God divides the peoples, fractures language, and turns the nations over to those whom they have sought, other elohim. (Gen 11:1-9)
4. God unilaterally chooses Abraham to establish a people for Himself who will be a light to the nations and the vehicle through whom the nations will be blessed and ultimately brought back into the fold (Gen 12).
5. Israel as a nation and people fail miserably at their assignment
6. The book of Malachi, the last book of the OT, is basically a declaration of that failure. "'A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts.'" (Mal 1:6, NKJV)

## What will God do?

Will He abandon His project based on past failures? His answer is an emphatic NO! God Himself will do what man has failed to do. How will He do it? By becoming a man.

## Behold Jesus!

Where Adam and Israel failed, Jesus was faithful. "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, **Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him.**" (Heb. 3:1-2a)

## Adam and Jesus compared

Adam is the father of the human race, which is grown having physical sons and daughters. The new creation race is grown by sons and daughters of Adam becoming one with Jesus. **By becoming one with Jesus, everything that He did becomes ours.** That is the basic message of Paul in the NT. Where all those who pertain to the race of Adam have failed to faithfully image God to the rest of the race, those who pertain to the race of Jesus have been given all they need to fulfill that calling and faithfully image Jesus to them. "Christ" in you will succeed where "Adam" in you has failed.

## Introduction to "In Christ"

One of the lenses used to view the separation between God and humanity is the phrase "union and communion." Humanity lost their union and communion with God through Adam's

treason. This phrase is particularly used by H. Clay Trumbull in his book The Blood Covenant, (Impact Books, 1975). He says in the introduction, "...the universally dominating primitive convictions: that the blood is the life; that the heart, as the blood fountain, is the very soul of every personality; that blood-transfer is soul-transfer; that blood-sharing, human, or **divine-human, secures an inter-union of natures**; and that a union of the human nature with the divine is the highest ultimate attainment reached out after by the most primitive, as well as by the most enlightened, mind of humanity." (Preface, p. V). Blood covenant makes one of two. Paul's teaching aligns precisely with this thinking and will be the basis of my teaching today.

The key to this understanding is to view Jesus as having become one with all of humanity thru the last supper covenant meal (Luke 22:14-20). With this understanding, Jesus did not just die on our behalf, but we were in fact with Him on the cross, in the grave, in His resurrection, ascension, and enthronement at the Father's right hand. But it is efficacious only for those who place their faith in Him. Paul explicitly says all this in his letters. We will look at what he says.

First, a little bit on grammar. To describe this reality, Paul constructed new verbs which did not exist in Greek. (Sidebar: Human language generally falls short to adequately describe spiritual realities.) He took the prefix "sun" (together with) and added it to a variety of verbs to communicate what Jesus did together with us. For example, "**buried with** Him in baptism, in which you also were **raised with** Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." (Col 2:12, NKJV)

G4916 - Word Study

συνθάπτω

suntháptō; fut. sunthápsō, from sún (G4862), together with, and tháptō (G2290), to bury. To bury with someone. Burial with Christ refers to participating in His death by virtue of union with Him, with the dat. and pass. (Rom 6:4; Col 2:12).

Ant.: sunegeirō (G4891), to raise together

### **Together with**

To state the obvious: together with means, drum roll please, together with! Paul declares unequivocally that what Jesus went through, we went through with him. Let's look at some verses from Paul.

Rom 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Rom 6:4 Therefore we were **buried with** Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Rom 6:5 For if we have been **united together** in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

Rom 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was **crucified with** Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Rom 6:7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Rom 6:8 Now if we **died with** Christ, we believe that we shall also **live with** Him,

Paul says that the act of baptism unites us together into one with Christ. Through baptism, which is the official act of "enlistment," we become one with Christ. Everything that Jesus did, we did with Him. Everything He is, we are.

**"I (Jesus) in them (the disciples, and by extension, you and me), and You (the Father) in Me (Jesus);** that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (Joh 17:23, NKJV)

Col 2:12 **buried with Him in baptism**, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has **made alive together with Him**, having forgiven you all trespasses

"I have been **crucified with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20, NKJV)

A great summary for this section is: "For as **in Adam** all die, even so **in Christ** all shall be made alive." (1Co 15:22, NKJV)

Therefore Paul could say things like:

"that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He **might gather together in one** all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him." (Eph 1:10, NKJV)

G346 (Word Study)

ἀνακεφαλαίω

anakephalaiōō; contracted anakephalaiō, fut. anakephaleōsō, from aná (G303), an emphatic meaning again, and kephalaiōō (G2775), to sum up, recapitulate. To sum up, gather together in one. **In the mid. voice, to gather together again in one, to reunite under one head** (Eph 1:10, "to bring all things into one in Christ" [a.t.]

"I have been **crucified with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20, NKJV)

"I have been crucified with Christ..." This is in the perfect past tense, which means there was a completed action in the past, but the effects of that action are ongoing.

"Christ lives in me..." is in the present, which means ongoing action every day.

Your death was enacted 2000 years ago. Your commitment of faith in Christ activated it. But His presence gives you life every moment of every day!

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2Co 5:17, NKJV)