

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “IN CHRIST”?

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This is an expression used almost exclusively by the apostle Paul. Jude used it once and Peter twice. Who Knows? Maybe they heard it from Paul.

[1 Corinthians 15:22](#)

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

[1 Corinthians 15:45](#)

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Jesus Christ was the only human being ever born without the sin of Adam. He was not conceived by the seed of a man. On December 25th we celebrate the conception of Jesus Christ, not His birth. He took upon Himself all the sin of mankind, from Adam to the last human to be born, but He knew no sin Himself. (2 Cor 5:21)

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.

Through the death of Jesus Christ, we are reconciled to God. Through the acknowledgement of our sin and the blood of Christ as the atonement for that sin, we are restored to the likeness of God, the state of sinlessness and spiritual immortality, which Adam forfeited by his disobedience.

There are only two categories of human beings in the world. All human beings, by no choice of their own, are created in the sin nature of Adam. Those who choose to remain in Adam die a permanent death. The Scriptures say, “they perish”. Those who choose to be obedient to God by faith are quickened by the Spirit of God and remain spiritually alive, even though they may fall asleep temporarily in physical death. These are adopted to sonship and will be resurrected to a better life in a place according to their calling and inheritance.

- The first meaning of being “in Christ” is the assurance of no longer being “in Adam”.
- Being “in Christ” is your spiritual state.

Somone who is “in Adam” could know of Jesus Christ, yet still not be “in Christ”. They know about Him, but do not know Him. Consequently, there are those who call themselves Christians that are not saved and are not “in Christ”. I know that because that was me at one time.

The Greek preposition “**en**” here means **being and remaining within** with the idea of **rest and continuance**. (CB Ap 104 viii) This is a spiritual union and fellowship with the Messiah, or Christ.

You may have heard a young person say to another young person, “I’m into you”. This is an expression of affection. All I can think about is you. Are you “into Christ”? How much do you think about Christ?

All humans are created in Adam, but not all human beings choose to be in Christ. The ground of the choice lies in Christ and His merits.

All God’s people, all who are saved, all who are saints, all the seed of the woman, all who are the called, all who are called and chosen, all who are called and chosen and faithful are “in Christ”.

These are “in Christ” no matter their calling, no matter their hope, no matter their inheritance, no matter their realm of age-abiding life.

Whether you are a child of God or an adopted son of God, you are “in Christ”.

But the meanings of “in Christ” might differ with a view to one’s calling and hope. How much “in Christ” are you, or am I?

There are many Scriptures that describe what it means to be “in Christ”. Time does not permit us to cover all of them in this lesson. Let us turn to a few of them to appreciate all that is written in them.

Even before Christ came in the flesh, some were chosen “in Messiah” or “in Christ”:

Of course, we know that before the overthrow of the world, the elect Body of Christ was chosen out “in Christ” for a special then future purpose.

Gen 4:4 And the LORD had respect unto **Abel** and to his offering.

Gen 6:8-9 *But **Noah** found grace in the eyes of the Lord. ⁹ These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.*

Gen 12:1-2 *Now the Lord had said unto **Abram**, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: ² And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

Gen 17:4-5 *As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.⁵ Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be **Abraham**; for a father of many nations have I made thee.*

Gen 17:19 *And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name **Isaac**: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. 21:12 ...for in **Isaac** shall thy seed be called.*

Gen 32:27-28 *And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, **Jacob**. ²⁸ And he said, Thy name shall be called **no more Jacob, but Israel**: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.*

Let us not forget Job, Enoch, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel and all those named and unnamed in Chapter 11 of Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews as having faith. They were justified by their faith. Their sins were covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. They are all “in Christ” by their conduct of faith in God and His plan.

Let us go through some of Paul’s Acts period verses chronologically.

Galatians

[Galatians 2:4](#)

*And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our **liberty** which we have **in Christ** Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:*

[Galatians 2:20](#)

I am crucified with **Christ**: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ** liveth **in** me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
An identification with Christ

[Galatians 3:27](#)

For as many of you as have been baptized into **Christ** have **put on Christ**.

[Galatians 3:28](#)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye **are all one in Christ** Jesus. **A separate identity**

[Galatians 5:6](#)

For **in Jesus Christ** neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; **but faith** which worketh by love.

[Galatians 6:15](#)

For **in Christ** Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, **but a new creature**.

[1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and **the dead in Christ shall rise first**:

[1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)

In every thing **give thanks**: for **this is the will of God in Christ** Jesus concerning you.

[2 Corinthians 1:21](#)

Now he which **stablisheth** us with you **in Christ**, and hath anointed us, **is God**.

It is God Who anoints them and establishes them “in Christ”

[2 Corinthians 5:17](#)

Therefore, if any man be **in Christ**, he is a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (new things come into being)

Their very essence is changed the moment they are “in Christ”.

[1 Corinthians 1:2](#)

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are **sanctified in Christ** Jesus, **called to be saints**, with all that **in** every place call upon the name of Jesus **Christ** our Lord, both their's and our's:

[1 Corinthians 1:30](#)

But of Him (God) are ye **in Christ** Jesus, who of God is made unto us **wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:**

Because of God, we are called to be holy saints “in Christ”. In Christ we have His wisdom, His righteousness, His holiness, and redemption by His shed blood.

[1 Corinthians 3:1](#)

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto **babes in Christ.**

[1 Corinthians 4:10](#)

We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye **are wise in Christ**; we are weak, but ye **are strong**; ye **are honourable**, but we are despised.

[1 Corinthians 15:31](#)

I protest by your **rejoicing** which I have **in Christ** Jesus our Lord, **I die daily.**

[2 Corinthians 2:14](#)

*Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to **triumph in Christ**, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*

[2 Corinthians 2:17](#)

*For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God **speak we in Christ.***

[2 Corinthians 3:14](#)

*But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which **vail is done away in Christ.***

[2 Corinthians 5:19](#)

*To wit, that God was **in Christ**, **reconciling** the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of **reconciliation.***

[2 Corinthians 11:3](#)

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from **the simplicity** that is **in Christ.***

[2 Corinthians 11:10](#)

*As **the truth** of **Christ** is **in** me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.*

[2 Corinthians 12:19](#)

*Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? **we speak before God in Christ**: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.*

[Romans 3:24](#)

*Being justified freely by his grace through the **redemption** that is **in Christ** Jesus:*

[Romans 8:1](#)

*There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are **in Christ** Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

[Romans 8:2](#)

*For the **law of the Spirit of life in Christ** Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

[Romans 8:9](#)

*But ye are not **in** the flesh, but **in** the Spirit, if so be that the **Spirit of God** dwell **in** you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of **Christ**, he is none of his.*

When we are “in Christ” we have the Spirit of God.

[Romans 8:10](#)

*And if **Christ** be **in** you, the **body is dead** because of sin; but the **Spirit is life** because of (His) righteousness.*

In Adam the body is dead and the spirit is death.

[Romans 8:39](#)

*Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from **the love of God**, which is **in Christ** Jesus our Lord.*

[Romans 9:1](#)

***I say the truth in Christ**, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,*

[Romans 12:5](#)

*So we, being many, are **one body in Christ**, and every one members one of another.*

There is one verse from each Peter, John and Jude.

[1 Peter 3:16](#)

*Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse **your good conversation (behavior) in Christ**.*

[1 John 5:20](#)

*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may **know Him that is true**, and we are **in Him** that is true, even **in His Son Jesus Christ**. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

[Jude 1:1](#)

*Jude, the servant of Jesus **Christ**, and brother of James, to them that are **sanctified** by God the Father, and **preserved in Jesus Christ**, and called:*

The following verses are from Paul's post-Acts epistles,

[Philippians 1:1](#)

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus **Christ**, to **all the saints in Christ Jesus** which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

[Philippians 2:1](#)

If there be therefore any **consolation in Christ**, if any **comfort of love**, if any **fellowship of the Spirit**, if any **bowels and mercies**,

[Philippians 3:9](#)

And be found **in Him**, **not having mine own righteousness**, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

[Philippians 3:14](#)

I press toward the mark for the **prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**.

[Ephesians](#)

^{1:1} Paul, an apostle of Jesus **Christ** by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, **and to the faithful in Christ Jesus**:

^{1:3} Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath **blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ**:

^{1:4} According as he hath **chosen us in Him** before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame before him in love**:

^{1:6} To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath **made us accepted in the Beloved**.

^{1:7} **In whom** we **have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of his grace;

^{1:11} **In whom** also we have **obtained an inheritance**, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

[Colossians](#)

^{1:2} To the saints and **faithful brethren in Christ** which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

^{1:4} Since we heard of your **faith in Christ Jesus**, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

^{1:19} For it pleased the Father that **in Him should all fulness dwell**;

^{1:27} To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**:

^{1:28} Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man **perfect in Christ Jesus**:

^{2:6} As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so **walk ye in Him:** ⁷ **Rooted and built up in Him,** and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

^{2:9} For **in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.** ¹⁰ And ye are complete **in Him,** which is the head of all principality and power: ¹¹ **In Whom** also ye are circumcised with the **circumcision made without hands,** in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

2 Timothy

^{1:1} Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the **promise of life** which is **in Christ Jesus,**

^{1:9} Who hath **saved us, and called us with an holy calling,** not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us **in Christ Jesus** before the world began,

^{1:13} Hold fast the form of **sound words,** which thou hast heard of me, **in faith and love** which is **in Christ Jesus.**

^{2:1} Thou therefore, my son, **be strong in the grace** that is **in Christ Jesus.**

^{2:10} Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the **salvation** which is **in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.**

^{3:12} Yea, and all that will live godly **in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**

^{3:15} And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto **salvation through fath** which is **in Christ Jesus.**

Ephesians

^{1:10} That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might **gather together in one all things in Christ,** both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even **in Him:**

We believe that there at least three families of God. We believe that not one family is superior in any way before God. They will all be gathered together in Christ in the dispensation of the fullness of times. Then Christ and all in Christ will be subject to God, and God will be all in all.

How many of these facets of “in Christ” can you claim for yourself? How much of “in Christ” can you appreciate and be thankful for?

The word “Christian” means pertaining to Christ and His teachings. I would rather choose a different term for the members of the Body of Christ as we are so into Christ that we are Christ-ins. We are members of His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.