

"In Christ"

Ephesians one could be subtitled "*in Christ.*" Paul wrote extensively of the blessings which the Ephesians had found in Him. While there are a variety of different expressions which the apostle used, they are all equivalencies of the expression "*in Christ.*" He used the term "*in Christ*" four times; verses 3, 10, 12, 20. He used the term "*in him*" three times; verses 4, 9, 10. He used the expression "*in whom*" three times; verses 7, 11, 13. Once he spoke of "*in the Beloved,*" vs. 7. All together, at least twelve times Paul refers to blessings which are in Christ.

How great are these blessings! We are told that "*all spiritual blessings*" in heavenly places are in Christ (1:3). We are reminded that we are "*chosen in him*" before the world's foundation (1:4). We have been foreordained unto adoption of sons through Jesus Christ (1:5). God's grace has been freely bestowed upon us "*in the Beloved*" (1:6). We have redemption in Christ (1:7). God's good pleasure is purposed "*in him*" (1:10). God has summed up "*all things in Christ*" (1:10). We are made a heritage in Him (1:11). We are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise (1:13).

Truly, great are the works God has wrought for us -- in Christ (1:20). We have our hope in Christ (1:12). It is absolutely essential that to be saved a man must be in Christ for Paul wrote, "*Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory*" (2 Tim. 2:10). The Corinthians were told that "*if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*" (2 Cor. 5:17).

It should be clearly apparent to all that none can be in Christ unless they are in His body. Thus, if all spiritual blessings are in Christ, all spiritual blessings are in His body. Since we are chosen in Christ and have our redemption in Him; then we are chosen in Christ's body and have our redemption there! Since none can be in Christ unless they are in His body, there is another aspect to this: one cannot be in the body of Christ without being in His church, for His church is His body (Eph. 1:22f; Col. 1:18; et al.).

Because Paul wrote so extensively of the blessings in Christ and of the absolute necessity of being in Him, one should not be surprised that he tells men how they might get into Christ. To the Romans he wrote, "*Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life*" (Rom. 6:3f). To the Galatians he said, "*For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as*

were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26f). He told the Ephesians that Christ loved the church "and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word" (Eph. 5:25f).

In light of all these instruction which came from Paul's pen, should any be surprised that Paul's consuming desire was to be in Christ? He told the Philippians, *"I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ ..."* (Phil. 3:8f). NEXT: "Foreordination And Predestination."

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