

Introduction

- ▶ A few months ago, we partook in an extended series asking, “*What does the Bible teach about...?*”
 - ✖ It was a study of what might be called the “*first principles*”—i.e., “the elementary doctrine of Christ” (Heb. 6:1).
- ▶ Today we’re going to begin a new study, building upon that foundation, but around a *new question*.
 - ✖ In that series, some subject matter was re:, “*How do I become a Christian?*”
 - ✖ In this, notably shorter, series, we’re asking, “**What does it mean to BE a Christian?**”
 - Also, we’re going to switch some things up and *sing a few songs* periodically in the midst of our study.
 - ▶ This will not only “break the mold,” but also allow us to *teach and admonish one another* (cf. Col. 3:16).
- ▶ Children often ask the best questions—some are so *simple*, they end up being the *most difficult* to answer!
 - ✖ Many years ago in Sun. AM elem. class, I was hit with this: “*What does the word ‘Christian’ mean?*”
 - ✖ I confess, I didn’t really know how to go about answering that question.
 - ✖ After we sat in silence for ≈25 mins. (give or take 24¾ mins.), I simply wrote the word in big letters on the board:

CHRISTIAN
 - ✖ As soon as their sponge-heads processed those letters, they had their answer—i.e., **Christ-i-a-n**.
 - They figured out the gist on their own, because they saw “*Christ*” in there.
 - ▶ A “Christian” is one who, at the very least, has some *relation to Christ*;
 - ▶ A “Christian” is one who *follows Christ*;
 - ▶ **A “Christian” is one who—like the word, itself—has Christ in him.**
- ▶ This morning we’re going to look at our first emphasis in this new mini-series: *What does it mean to be a Christian?*
 - ✖ *What does it mean to be an “Illinoisan”?*
 - “a **native** or **inhabitant** of the US state of Illinois” (n); “*relating to* or *characteristic of* the US state of Illinois or its inhabitants” (adj.)¹
 - ▶ NOTE: The word “*Christian*” is **never used as an adj.** in the NT.
 - In other words, “Illinoisan” ref. to those who *dwell in* or “*belong to*” Illinois.
 - ✖ Similarly, our emp. today is that to be a “*Christian*” means **I BELONG TO CHRIST!**

Discussion: I Belong to Christ, Therefore...

I. ...I AM IN CHRIST!

- A. ROM. 3:21-25—“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are *justified* by his grace as a gift, **through the REDEMPTION that is IN CHRIST JESUS**, whom God put forward as a *propitiation by his blood*, to be received by faith...” (23,24).
 - 1. Though we ALL sin and fall short, we can be *justified* through the “**redemption**” that God offers.
 - a) ἀπολύτρωσις—“orig. ‘**buying back**’ a slave or captive, i.e., ‘making free’ *by payment of a ransom*”²

¹ “Illinoisan.” *Apple Dictionary*. Version 2.3.0 (239.1). Apple Inc., 2019. Emp. and ital. added.

² Danker, Frederick W. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd Ed. (BDAG). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. p. 117. Print. Emp. and ital. added.

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- (1) “**release from a captive condition, release, redemption, deliverance**; fig. ext. of the orig. use...”³
 - (2) “**a releasing effected by payment of ransom**”⁴
 - (3) “**redemption, a deliverance, procured by the payment of a ransom**”⁵
 - (4) “*Lutron* is common in the papyri as the **purchase-money** in freeing slaves.”⁶
- b) When a slave’s freedom is procured via payment:
- (1) It can be “**relative**” freedom—i.e., ownership transferred from *current master* to *purchaser*.
 - (a) In these cases, the redeemed **belongs to the one who paid the ransom**.
 - (2) It can be “**absolute**” freedom—i.e., ownership is transferred from *master* to *self*.
 - (a) Even in such cases, the redeemed **still belongs to someone**—even if that someone is *himself*.
- c) Usually in the NT, “what is at issue is the ‘remission of sins’ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; cf. Rom. 8:2)..., linked with righteousness and sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 3:24), always referred to using the compound form [ἀπολύτρωσις]. This term thus becomes almost synonymous with salvation... [and] it is always ‘**the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**’ (Rom. 3:24), whereby **the redeemed belong to God**.”⁷
- (1) 1 COR. 6:19b,20a—“You are not your own, for **you were bought with a price**...”
- B. ROM. 8:1,2—“There is therefore now **no condemnation for those who are IN CHRIST JESUS**. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you **free IN CHRIST JESUS** from the law of sin and death.”
1. Though we all sin, every day, we are able to avoid being subjected to condemnation for that sin—**in Christ!**
 2. This is because Christ paid the ransom for those sins (Matt. 20:28; 26:28; Jn. 1:29; 1 Jn. 2:2).
 3. And all those who are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27)—who obey the gospel of Christ (1 Pet. 1:22)—are washed clean by the blood of Christ (1 Jn. 1:7), and **belong to Him**, and will thus suffer “**no condemnation**” (Rom. 8:1)!
- C. EPH. 1:3ff—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has blessed us IN CHRIST with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places...”
1. Peter once said that God has granted to us “**ALL things that pertain to life and godliness**” (2 Pet. 1:3).
 - a) “All” these “things” that God “has granted to us” are found in one place: **the Scriptures**.
 2. Well, Paul here says that God has offered man “**EVERY spiritual blessing**” that there is to offer.
 - a) And **every single one** of those spiritual blessings is found in one, single place: “**in Christ Jesus**”!
 3. “**IN HIM we have REDEMPTION through his blood**, the forgiveness of our sins...” (7).
 - a) REV. 14:4—“These are they *that follow the Lamb wherever he goes*. **These have been REDEEMED...as firstfruits for God and the Lamb**...”
- D. To be a Christian means that we belong to Christ—that is, we are *in Christ*, because we have been **REDEEMED!**

II. ...I AM CHRIST’S AMBASSADOR!

A. 2 COR. 5:20–6:18

³ Ibid.

⁴ Thayer, Joseph H. *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009. p. 65. Print. Emp. added.

⁵ Mounce, William D. *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006. p. 1093. Print. Emp. added.

⁶ Robertson, A.T. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol. 4. Nashville: Broadman Press. p. 347. Print. Emp. added; Cites Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 327ff.

⁷ Spicq, Ceslas. *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. Vol. 2. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2012. pp. 428-9. Print. Emp. added.

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1. "...we are **ambassadors for Christ**..." (5:20).
 2. "...as *servants of God we commend ourselves in every way*..." (6:4).
 - a) ἀπολύτρωσις—"orig. 'buying back'
 3. "Do not be unequally yoked with *unbelievers*..., for **we are the temple of the living God**..." (6:14,16).
- B. COL. 4:5—"Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of [your] time."
- C. 1 THESS. 4:11,12—"...aspire to *live quietly*, and to *mind your own affairs*, and to *work with your hands*..., so that you may **walk properly before outsiders**..."
1. All of these passages stress the fact that to be a Christian means to be **an official representative of Christ**.
 - a) That means **our lives ought to reflect the life and teachings of Jesus**—i.e., "*Christ-ian*"!
 - b) Otherwise, I am not going to be a satisfactory ambassador who pleases my Superior!
- D. MATT. 5:16—"In the same way, **let your light shine before others**, so that *they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven*."

III. ...I OWE CHRIST MY LIFE!

- A. 1 COR. 6:19,20—"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN, for you were bought with a price**. So glorify God in your body."
- B. 2 COR. 5:14,15—"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, **that those who live MIGHT no longer LIVE for themselves but FOR HIM** who for their sake died and was raised."
- C. 2 COR. 10:5,6—"We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and **take every thought captive to the OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST**, being *ready to punish every disobedience*, when your obedience is *complete*."
1. When we obey the gospel and accept the redemption that God offers through Jesus's blood, I am signing a contract, entering a covenant, making a vow, to God.
 - a) I am effectively **selling my soul** to God through Christ.
- D. GAL. 2:20—"I have been *crucified* with Christ. *It is no longer I who live, but CHRIST LIVING IN ME*..."
1. Paul means that when he was baptized into Christ:
 - a) It wasn't just his *past sins* that died;
 - b) Nor was it simply his past self that died;
 - c) But when Ananias immersed him into that water, **Paul's past, present, and future self died**.
 2. Recently the kids here have become increasingly aware of the baptistry back here.
 - a) Maybe they've also learned about it in their classes, but in his own little kid-brain way, Roman's combination of what he's learned and what he sees in the dark baptistry hasn't really clicked into a proper understanding of what happens when a person is baptized in the real world.
 - b) For some reason he got it into his 5-year-old mind that if someone is baptized, they vanish, never to be seen again—i.e., when they go down into that water, they don't come back out.
 - (1) The man from Oye's Hardware (when he accidentally fell into the baptistry while working on it);
 - (2) Denise last week;

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3. Well, ironically, fig. speaking, Roman isn't far from the truth—for Paul is saying that when Ananias immersed him in that water, **he never came back up**: Saul of Tarsus vanished, *never to be seen again*.
 - a) The person that did rise from that watery grave was truly “a *new creature*” (2 Cor. 5:17)—*not only in God's eyes, but also in man's eyes* (i.e., *in real life*)!
4. In other words, Paul's life was a sermon unto itself: “*None of Self, and All of [Christ].*”

Conclusion

▶ DO YOU BELONG TO CHRIST?

- ✘ 2 COR. 6:1—“...we appeal to you **not to receive the grace of God in vain.**”
 - There may be many ways a person can “receive the grace of God in vain,” but one way is surely when we try to *have Christ, without letting Christ have us!*
 - ▶ Living for yourself *entirely*;
 - ▶ Giving *some* of yourself to Him (e.g., your Sunday morning/evening, Wed. PM, etc.), but holding onto the rest of yourself; etc.
- ✘ Comment on a YouTube video: “*I am praying that the Holy Spirit will help me or make me to be able to say, 'None of self and all of Thee.'*”
 - Though likely sincere, this person inadvertently admitted that they're **waiting for some outside force** to “spur them on” to submission to Christ.
- ✘ In reality, the only force that can result in your submission to Christ is **your own resolve to do so.**
 - You can say, “None of self, and all of Thee,” right now, by resolving in your heart to finally start letting Jesus have His end of the redemption that He granted you, by no longer living for and unto yourself, but for and unto Him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14,15)!
- ✘ There is no better time to become a Christian—to start belonging to Christ—than right **NOW** (cf. Acts 8:36)!