## The Believer’s Union with Christ

### А. Introduction

In our Christian life, we often encounter personal struggles and failures, that is, we often fail to meet our expectations of what we think a Christian ought to be like. Even though we try to overcome our weaknesses and shortcomings, we frequently make the same mistakes time and time again. Why can we not attain victorious Christian living? Is it possible that something fundamental is missing in our Christian experience? Does the Word of God teach a more effective way of growing in Christ? We believe that it does through the believers’ appropriation of their union with Jesus Christ.

The goal of this chapter is to expound on the biblical teaching of the believer’s union with Christ, which consists of two elements: our position in Christ and Christ’s presence in us. Jesus expressed it concisely in John 14:20: “…you in Me, and I in you.” In this chapter, we will attempt, with God’s help and based on Holy Scripture, to define the concept of the believer’s union with Christ and to describe how to appropriate this truth in our personal Christian experience. We will discover that the study and application of this theme can aid us both in our spiritual lives and in our lives in general.

Very frequently, the Bible, either directly or indirectly, mentions the believer’s union with Christ. Although, as Gaffin writes, “The expression ‘union with Christ’ does not occur in the Bible,” at the same time “it fairly describes the central reality in the salvation revealed there.”[[1]](#footnote-1) We can express the same truth in more biblical terms by saying that we, as believers, are in Christ, and He is in us. The concept “union with Christ” includes not only believers’ position in Him, but also His presence in them. Consequently, it is important to consider both aspects of this union. Nonetheless, since in contemporary Christianity the concept of being “in Christ” is so rarely discussed, we will direct more attention to that aspect in this chapter.

It is interesting to note that in the 2766 verses of Paul’s epistles, we encounter about 150 instances where he alludes to the believer being in Christ, employing such expressions as “in Jesus,” “in the Lord,” “in Christ,” “in Whom,” or “in Him.” This means that in every twenty verses of Paul’s writings, he refers to this special relationship between the believer and the Lord. Besides these phrases, this concept is expressed in other terms as well, and not in Paul’s works alone.

Non-biblical authors also affirm the centrality of union with Christ, not only in Paul’s thought, but in general. Thomas Boston states that union with Christ is the most important, comprehensive and fundamental privilege of believers, and that all other blessings are derived from and based on it.[[2]](#footnote-2) Ferguson feels that the concept of union with Christ “must therefore be the dominant motif in any formulation of the application of redemption and the dominant feature of any ‘order’ of salvation.”[[3]](#footnote-3) C. R. Campbell adds, “Virtually every aspect of the Christian life is informed in some way by the believer’s union with Christ.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

### B. Definition of “Union with Christ”

**1. The Believer “in Christ”**

As mentioned above, the most straightforward expressions of the believer’s position in Christ are the phrases “in Christ,” “in the Lord,” etc.[[5]](#footnote-5) In order to properly define these expressions we must closely examine their usage in the New Testament. First, we note that they are used primarily by two authors: Paul and John. These two writers use these phrases differently. However, these variations of usage, in the final analysis, compliment one another.

**а. John’s Writings**

John employs this phraseology in relation not only to believers and Christ, but also to the Father and the Son. As far as the relationship between Christ and believers, John graphically represents this connection in the parable of the vine and the branches (Jn 15:1-8). Just as branches grow from the vine and the vine supplies life to the branches, believers are in Christ and He is the source of their spiritual life. Therefore, believers are called to “abide in Him” (Jn 15:4; 1 Jn 2:28).

In John’s gospel, a believer’s abiding in Christ is demonstrated by bearing the fruit of that relationship: “He who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit” (Jn 15:5; also see 1 Jn 2:5-6; 1 Jn 3:24). In the book of Revelation, it states that abiding in Christ can also involve enduring suffering for Him (Rev 1:9; 14:23).

For John, union with Christ is often expressed in the idea of “knowing Christ” not in the sense of obtaining mental knowledge of Him, but as personal fellowship with Him in a spiritual union. The following example demonstrates the parallel between abiding in Christ and knowing Him: “The one who says, ‘I have come to *know Him*,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.… The one who says he *abides in Him* ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked” (1 Jn 2:4, 6). We encounter the same idea of experientially “knowing Him” in the writings of Paul (Phil 3:9-10) and Peter (2 Pet 1:3) as well.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Furthermore, in John’s writings we witness a dramatic step. Quoting the words of the Savior, John compares the relationship between the Son and the Father with the relationship between the believer and God: “…that they may all be one; even as You, Father, {are} in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us… I in them and You in Me” (Jn 17:21, 23), and, “I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” (Jn 14:20). This means that John relates abiding in Christ to participation in the very life of the Trinity. We must not conclude, however, that believers become divine or a part of the Trinity in essence, but rather that they may enjoy close fellowship with the Godhead comparable to that which exists between the Father and the Son, yet not at that level.

Finally, John speaks of the believer being not only in the Son, but in the Father as well: “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 Jn 4:15-16).

**b. In Paul’s Writings**

In Paul’s writings, the phrase “in Christ” may acquire various shades of meaning, and sometimes it is difficult to define these nuances. First, by the phrase “in Christ” Paul might simply mean being a Christian. For example, certain passages speak of individuals as Christians, employing the formula “in Christ” (Rom 16:7-8, 10-11, 13; Eph 6:21; Philemon 16).[[7]](#footnote-7) Similarly, this expression can refer simply to Christian faith. For example, in the church at Corinth there were many “tutors in Christ” (1 Cor 4:15), which means that the church received much instruction in Christian faith.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Sometimes this phrase means “for the Lord’s sake.” Wives submit to their husbands, slaves to their masters, and children to their parents “in the Lord,” i.e., for the Lord’s sake (Col 3:18, 20; 4:7; Eph 6:1).[[9]](#footnote-9) At the same time, these instances may possess the nuance of “spiritual power from Christ.” People do these things not only for the Lord, but also by His power.

We must also mention those cases where Paul uses this formula to express gratitude for what Christ has done for us. Three times he repeats the injunction, “Rejoice in the Lord,” that is, for what He has done (Phil 3:1; 4:4, 10). In a similar way, Paul speaks of Jesus as the one in whom we boast (Rom 15:17; 1 Cor 1:31; 15:31; 2 Cor 10:17; Phil 1:26; 3:3).

Paul assigns still other meanings to the phrase “in Christ.” It may indicate that Jesus is the object of our hope (Phil 2:19) or devotion (Eph 1:1), the source of our authority (Philemon 8; 1 Thes 4:1; 5:12; 2 Thes 3:12; Eph 4:17) or confidence (Rom 14:14; Phil 1:14; 2:24; Gal 5:10; 2 Thes 3:4; Eph 6:20), or the verification of some claim (Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 2:17; 12:19).

We are yet to examine Paul’s two most frequent “in Christ” usages, which often overlap with one another: “in Christ” in the sense of “through” or “by means” of Christ, and location in the “sphere” of Christ. Let us highlight several passages that correspond to the sense “by means” of Christ.[[10]](#footnote-10) “In Christ,” i.e., “through Him,” God provides forgiveness of sins and justification (Rom 3:24; Gal 2:17; Eph 4:32).[[11]](#footnote-11) In some instances, it seems that Christ is not so much the means or instrument of God’s actions as much as the agent or doer of the action Himself (see Col 4;17; 1 Cor 7:22).[[12]](#footnote-12)

However, the expression “in Christ” most frequently refers to believers’ location in the “sphere” of Christ or their “positional status” in Him. What exactly is this “sphere” of Christ? A good starting point for our understanding is 1 Corinthians 1:30, which reveals that our position or status in Christ comes from the Father and leads to certain benefits: “By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” In addition, in the “sphere” of Christ are located many, if not all the benefits of salvation.[[13]](#footnote-13)

We hasten to add that, although the formula “in Christ” enjoys a great variety of usage, all these usages have certain affinities with the meaning “sphere” of Christ. On the other hand, none of the other above-mentioned meanings is able to encompass the wide range of usages of this phrase as well as the “sphere” of Christ can. Therefore, we conclude that the idea “sphere” of Christ or “position” in Him was primary in Paul’s mind.

**c. Further Elaboration on the Concept “Sphere of Christ”**

Having examined different instances of Paul’s employment of the expression “in Christ,” we concluded that its basic sense for Paul is location in the “sphere” of Christ or “position” in Him. In this section, we will seek to clarify exactly what Paul meant by this.

**1) The Mystical Approach**

In the past, many liberal theologians in their reflections of the phrase “in Christ” interpreted the “sphere” of Christ in mystical terms. Wikenhauser defines mysticism as “that form of spirituality which strives after (or experiences) an immediate contact (or union) of the soul with God.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

Although mysticism, in the positive sense of personal fellowship with God, is a natural and desired result of Christ’s indwelling the believer, the mystical approach in general exaggerates this idea and thereby introduces a serious distortion of God’s truth. In fact, in Paul’s thought personal fellowship with God relates not so much to the idea of the believer being in Christ as to Christ being in the believer.

Many trace the modern study of union with Christ to the work of the German theologian Aldolf Deissmann (1866-1937). Along with others, Deissmann associated the believer’s position in the “sphere” of Christ with a mystical experience with Him in the Spirit. He understood Paul’s thought in the following way.[[15]](#footnote-15) Although Paul acknowledged Jesus Christ as a historical person, he related to Him more as a spiritual entity comparable to the atmosphere in which people live. Life in this “atmosphere” is equated with life “in Christ.” Deissmann writes,

Christ is for Paul not a person of the past, with whom he can only come into contact by meditating on the words that have been handed from him, not a “historical” personage, but a reality and power of the present, an “energy,” whose life-giving powers are daily expressing themselves in him.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Johannes Weiss (1863-1914) held a similar view.[[17]](#footnote-17) Weiss believed that Jesus was liberated from His bodily condition and now exists in a purely spiritual form. He writes of Christ, “The fixed outlines of the personality had been softened and dissolved, and replaced by the idea of a formless, impersonal, all-penetrating being.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Again, Christ is equated with the Spirit: “What is true of Christ is also true of the Spirit and the reverse.” They are “in some way identical.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

In refutation of the mystical approach, we can highlight two main weaknesses. First, one may challenge equating Christ with the Spirit. Paul repeatedly speaks of Jesus Christ as a real historical figure and a divine Person in distinction from the Spirit.[[20]](#footnote-20) Moreover, Wikenhauser explains that in 1 Corinthians 3:17, when it seems that Paul is equating the Spirit with Christ (“The Lord is the Spirit”), in the same verse he distinguishes the two: “The Spirit *of the Lord*.” In addition, 1 Corinthians 15:45 claims that Christ is a “life-giving spirit.” Paul does not mean that He became the Holy Spirit, but that He now dwells in a glorified, spiritual body. When in Scripture the Son is associated with the Spirit, the sense is not to equate them as persons, but to indicate their corporate work in the life of the believer.[[21]](#footnote-21)

In summary, although the Christian experience of “Christ in us” certainly contains a subjective element that we may roughly term “mysticism” (in the sense of personal fellowship with the Lord), this feature in no way exhausts the entire concept of union with Christ and in no way justifies the exaggerated idea that Christ can be equated with the Spirit.

**2) The Historico-Redemptive Approach**

Beside the mystical approach, an alternative view exists called the historico-redemptive approach. According to this theory, our position in Christ possesses a historico-redemptive character, that is, it concerns our real participation in the historico-redemptive events in the earthly career of the Savior, who serves as our representative before the Father.

The key verse in confirmation of this approach is 1 Corinthians 1:30, where we read, “By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” We note that according to this verse, our position in Christ does not consist in some mystical encounter with Him, but that He *became* something for us as our representative, namely, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. So then, due to our position in Christ we are justified, sanctified, and redeemed. Paul echoes this thought in 2 Corinthians 5:21: “He made Him who knew no sin {to be} sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Again we see that “in Him” we are counted righteous because He “was made” something for us – a sacrifice for sin.

In order to unpack the concept of the “sphere” of Christ in line with the historico-redemptive approach, we will employ, with some modifications, the methodology of C. R. Campbell.[[22]](#footnote-22) We will demonstrate that the believer’s position in Christ consists of three elements: (1) the role of Christ as our representative, (2) our participation in the redemptive events of Christ’s life,[[23]](#footnote-23) and (3) our inclusion in the Body of Christ, i.e., the Church. We will attempt a brief resume of these three themes now, and detail them later.

In dealing with Christ’s representative role in redemption, we encounter a prominent biblical theme called “corporate personality,” which we will discuss in detail in the next section. In brief, according to this principle one person can represent an entire group before God with the result that the representative’s actions affect the entire group. In other words, God deals with an entire group as with one entity. In relation to salvation, our “corporate head” is Jesus Christ.

Letham makes an important distinction between the concepts of “representation” and “substitution,” the latter connoting “taking the place of another.” He correctly asserts that Christ’s representation of humanity before God includes an element of substitution as well. This is evident in His taking sinful humanity’s place on the cross. Yet, Christ could be our substitute only in virtue of His being our representative.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Concerning our participation in the redemptive events of Christ’s life, the Bible clearly teaches that God made us participants in four events in the Savior’s earthly career: His death, His resurrection, His exaltation, and His Second Coming. In other words, the believer has died with Christ, been raised with Him, exalted with Him, and will be glorified at His appearance.

The final element of the believer’s position in Christ is participation in His Body, the Church. Being “in Christ” as individuals means being united with other believers, who are also “in Him.” Because of union with Christ, there is an intrinsic unity between all believers in Him.

Finally, C. F. D. Moule makes an important qualification that union with Christ does not mean that the believer is totally identified with Christ – this is not a “union of identity.”[[25]](#footnote-25) Even though we stand in union with Christ, we remain individual persons. The term “corporate personality” simply indicates that Christ is our representative and that we participate in certain events in His history.

**2. Christ in the Believer**

According to Scripture, not only is the believer in Christ, but Christ is in the believer. As mentioned earlier, the apostle John especially emphasizes this aspect of union with Christ. Paul makes mention of it as well, yet not as frequently. Note the following examples:”

- It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Gal 2:20)

- Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27)

- If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness (Rom 8:10)

- …so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (Eph 3:17)

- Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? (2 Cor 13:5)

So then, both John and Paul confirm that union with Christ consists of two elements: we in Christ and Christ in us. Comparing the presence of Christ in the believer with the position of the believer in Christ, C. F. D. Moule makes the following important qualification: “The believer exists completely in Christ while Christ does not exist completely in the believer.”[[26]](#footnote-26) In other words, the entire life of the believer in every respect is located in Christ, yet He does not manifest through any single believer the fullness of His divine glory.

Wiersbe also makes a valuable contribution to our discussion by noting that, although at times we do experience a feeling of closeness to the Lord in our personal fellowship with Him, our union with Christ is not based on feeling, but on fact. We accept the truth of His dwelling in us by faith.[[27]](#footnote-27) Finally, Martin aptly comments that when Christ lives in and through us, “it is not a union that negates the full exercise of all my redeemed humanity.”[[28]](#footnote-28) In other words, we do not become puppets in the hands of God, but real participants in the manifestation of His life through us.

All must agree that Christ Himself does not indwell the believer, but the person of the Holy Spirit.[[29]](#footnote-29) Consequently, in the writings of Paul we see many references to the indwelling Spirit. Smedes affirms that the Spirit so closely identifies Himself with Christ that one may speak of His indwelling as the indwelling of Christ Himself: “He (the Spirit) is the functioning Christ.”[[30]](#footnote-30) At times, the New Testament even speaks of the Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of (Jesus) Christ” (Phil 1:19; Rom 8:9). In Romans 8:9-10, the phrase “Christ in you” is equated with the indwelling of the Spirit.

At the same time, Rightmire stresses that we must not fully identify the Spirit with the Son: “Paul distinguishes between Christ and the Spirit, but views the function of the latter as mediating the former to believers.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

Some commentators go to the extreme of regarding the believer’s position in Christ as simply life “in the Spirit.” Being “in Christ” is simply living in the Spirit’s presence and in fellowship with Him. This resonates with the liberal, “mystic” view discussed previously. However, later in this volume we will demonstrate the biblical teaching of our position in Christ. It consists not in the presence of the Holy Spirit, but in the representative role of the Son and the believer’s participation in the redemptive events of His history. So then, our position in Christ does not derive from our relationship with the Spirit, but vice versa. The work of the Spirit is to actualize in our lives the benefits we enjoy in virtue of our position in Christ.

### C. Elements of the Believer’s Position “in Christ”

**1. Christ Our Representative**

We claim that our position in Christ consists of three elements: (1) the role of Christ as our representative, (2) our participation in the redemptive events of Christ’s life, and (3) our participation in the Body of Christ, i.e., the Church. The first of these elements, Christ as our representative, is based on the biblical concept of “corporate personality.” As we shall see in this section, the conception “corporate personality” was no novelty to God’s people – they experienced it throughout their history.

“Corporate personality” refers to the phenomenon, often encountered in Scripture, when God deals with an entire group as with one entity. According to this system, the fate of a representative of the group becomes the fate of the entire group. The theologian possibly championing this theory more than any other, H. Wheeler Robinson, defined it thusly: “The whole group, including its past, present, and future members, might function as a single individual through any one of those members conceived as representative of it.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

Even the expression itself, “corporate personality,” hints at its meaning. In the world of business, individual companies can unite to form a corporation, where they combine their assets and liabilities into a single account. Thus, two entities become one. The same occurs in marriage, where two people not only unite their finances, but also adopt a common life.

**а. Corporate Personality in the Old Testament**

The Old Testament abounds with examples of this phenomenon.[[33]](#footnote-33) In Numbers 16:27-33, we learn of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, whose families perished along with them in their rebellion. When Hiel disobediently rebuilt Jericho, it was not he who perished, but his sons (Josh 6:25; 1 Kin 16:34). Moreover, when Achan sinned, his entire family shared in his tragic fate (Josh 7:1-5, 24-26). The Bible records that Canaan incurred a curse because of his father’s inappropriate act (Gen 9:25ff). David’s sin with Bathsheba led to his son’s premature death and other later calamities in his family (2 Sam 12:11-14). Gehazi’s greed led to a similar result (2 Kin 5:27).[[34]](#footnote-34)

On the other hand, according to this principle of solidarity one may not only incur undeserved retribution, but also attain undeserved blessing. For example, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received an inheritance in the promised land thanks to the faithfulness of their ancestors (see Deut 10:15; Isa 41:8). In a similar way, all the descendants of Aaron, both the godly and the ungodly, inherited the priesthood. The high priest served as representative for the entire people of God (Ex 28:11-12). In the same fashion, sons of David ascended the throne thanks to his faithfulness to the Lord. We read in Isaiah 37:35 that God will defend Jerusalem not for the sake of the leaders of that time, but “for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.”

This principle of solidarity stands behind the edict in Ex 20:5-6 (Deut 5:9-10): “…visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.” We may cite many passages in the poetic books indicating curses on the descendants of the ungodly (Ps 20:11; 37:28) and blessing for the descendants of the righteous (Ps 24:12-13; 36:25-26; 68:36-37; 101:29; 111:2-3; Prov 11:21).

The book of Hebrews introduces an interesting example of corporate personality. According to the author of Hebrews, while Levi was still unborn in the “loins” of Abraham, he paid tithes through Abraham to Melchizedek (Heb 7:9-10; see Gen 14). In this manner, the author of Hebrews argues that the priesthood of Melchizedek, who received tithes, is greater than the priesthood of Levi, who paid them.

However, we must qualify that those under corporate punishment could escape it by means of personal devotion to the Lord. This was so in the case of Rahab, who should have perished along with the other inhabitants of Jericho (Josh 2:8-14; 6:22-24).[[35]](#footnote-35) Yet, she was delivered because she feared God. In addition, the Moabites were excluded from the assembly of Israel, yet Ruth was welcomed due to her faithfulness. Furthermore, one of the descendants of the cursed Jeroboam received mercy because “in him something good was found toward the Yahweh God of Israel” (1 Kin 14:13). Finally, some Egyptians, who heeded the warning from God, saved their possessions from the hail (Ex 9:20). Therefore, we cannot claim that corporate punishment is inevitable.

On the other hand, those who are recipients of corporate blessing may still forfeit it through personal disobedience. For example, David’s dynasty ended (in Old Testament times) because it strayed from the God of Israel. In addition, the descendants of Eli were excluded from the priesthood because of their unruly lives. Reuben lost his birthright because “he defiled his father's bed” (1 Chr 5:1). Two sons of Aaron perished because of disrespect for the Lord’s ordinances (Lev 10:1-2). Concerning the spiritual condition of Israel in Ezekiel’s time, God said, “Even {though} these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, by their {own} righteousness they could {only} deliver themselves” (Ezek 14:14).[[36]](#footnote-36) Therefore, it is not impossible to lose a corporate blessing.

Nonetheless, the above-mentioned exceptions do not nullify the principle of solidarity. The original status of blessing the priests, kings, and people in general enjoyed was not due to their merit, but because of the faithfulness of their ancestors. Additionally, even if some descendants lost the corporate blessing, the opportunity to obtain it still remained for future generations.

**b. Corporate Personality in the New Testament**

By far, the most significant example of the principle of corporate personality, which affects us all, is the transmission of sin and its consequences from Adam to all his descendants. Although the rabbis in their time spoke of our union with Adam, the New Testament speaks more directly to this truth. We affirm with Robinson, “The thoroughly Hebraic contrast of Adam and Christ made by the apostle Paul… draws all its cogency from the conception of corporate personality.”[[37]](#footnote-37)

Kaufman agrees that corporate personality “underlies the whole range of relationships, not the least of which is the Pauline teaching on the first and second Adams.”[[38]](#footnote-38) Shedd concurs, “The whole of Paul's anthropology and soteriology is built on the Hebraic conceptions of the solidarity of the race.”[[39]](#footnote-39) Yet, Shedd makes the important point that unlike the more selective Old Testament depictions of solidarity, Paul relates it to the entire human race.[[40]](#footnote-40)

So then, to gain a proper understanding of humanity’s solidarity with Adam and the corresponding idea of union with Christ, we must carefully examine Paul’s teaching in Rom 5:12-19. Paul’s primary claim here is that all of humanity is guilty and stands condemned before God because of Adam’s sin. Nevertheless, all may be counted righteous through Christ:

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous (Rom 5:18-19).

Note that through the transgression of Adam, humanity inherits guilt and condemnation, while through the obedience of Christ we can receive righteousness. Our union with Christ is similar to our union with Adam. That which Adam did affects us all, since we are in union with him. In a similar way, that which Christ did affects us as well, thanks to our union with Him. In the words of Moule, “Paul could think of Christ in the same way as he thought of Adam, as the inclusive personality of the whole race.”[[41]](#footnote-41)

In Romans 5:12-14, Paul defends his position in the following way. Adam’s sin led to his own death. Yet, after Adam, death afflicted his offspring as well who were not guilty of the only offense punishable by death – eating the forbidden fruit. Paul’s conclusion: Adam’s sin has consequences for his descendants as well. Thus, he is humanity’s representative according to the principle of corporate personality.

At the same time, the statement “who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam” implies that people commit personal sin (against conscience, for example – see Rom 2). However, only Adam’s sin in the Garden resulted in the propagation of death in the world.[[42]](#footnote-42) Paul states this directly in verse 15, “By the transgression of the one the many died,” and in verse 17, “By the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one.”

The concluding words of verse 12 draw much exegetical attention: “And so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Many interpreters mistakenly assume that Paul is speaking here of the sins people personally commit, not of humanity’s participation in Adam’s sin. Morris insightfully points out that the use of the Greek aorist tense ἥμαρτον (*hemarton*, i.е., “sinned”) “points to one act, the act of Adam; we would expect the Greek present or imperfect tense if the apostle were thinking of the continuing sins of all people. Paul says that all sinned in Adam, not in imitating him. And it ignores the context with its strong insistence on the sin of one man (not all of us) as the cause of the trouble.”[[43]](#footnote-43)

Morris’ view also finds support in the parallel Paul draws between condemnation in Adam and justification in Christ in this passage. If people are subject to death and condemnation due to personal sin and not the sin of Adam, then we force the conclusion that justification comes not through Christ, but through personal righteousness. This claim, though, directly contradicts the essence of the gospel. In addition, verse 19 makes clear, “As through the *one man's* disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of *the One* the many will be made righteous.” Westberg confirms, “Is righteousness reckoned to us through Christ? So is guilt reckoned to us through Adam.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

Besides Romans 5, the New Testament contains other parallels between Adam and Christ.[[45]](#footnote-45) For example, commentators often note the contrast in Colossians 3 and 4 between the “old man” and the “new man.” The former is the expression of the fallen Adamic nature, while the latter is the new life in Christ. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 5:27 Christ introduces the new creation, which implies a contrast with Adam and the old creation. In Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, he is even more direct – Adam and Christ are contrasted in connection with the future resurrection of the dead: “For since by a man {came} death, by a man also {came} the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Cor 15:21-22).

Next, we claim that the system of corporate personality is “typological” in nature. Fritsch correctly defines a “type” as “an institution, historical event, or person, ordained by God, which effectively prefigures some truth connected with Christianity.”[[46]](#footnote-46) The biblical text itself supports the claim that the relationship of Adam (and, consequently, the entire system of corporate personality) to Christ is typological in nature. In fact, in Romans 5:14 we find one of the rare New Testament usages of the Greek term τύπος (*tupos*), i.е., “type”: “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type (τύπος) of Him who was to come.” Here we see that Adam is a “type” or representation of Christ.

Therefore, the fact that Adam, as a corporate head, is a type of Christ as a corporate head, may imply that the Old Testament system of corporate solidarity itself is typological in nature as well. This is why in the Old Testament narrative God did not always punish in this way. God’s goal in corporate punishment was not to establish a new penal system, but to prepare His people conceptually to receive Jesus Christ as their corporate head in relation to salvation. It seems that as soon as God had accomplished His purpose for the system of solidarity, it began to fade out.

**2. Participation in the Redemptive Events of Christ’s Life**

**а. The Concept’s Meaning and Biblical Basis**

In the previous section, we discovered that because of the principle of corporate personality we enjoy a relationship of solidarity with Christ. This means that His representative role has consequences for those who believe in Him, which we will delineate in the next section. In the present section, we will discover that this relationship of solidarity also results in the believer’s real participation in the redemptive events of the Savior’s career: namely, in His death, resurrection, exaltation, and Second Coming. Tannehill expresses it this way, “Christ’s death and resurrection are not merely events which produce benefits for the believer, but also are events in which the believer himself partakes.”[[47]](#footnote-47)

It is also important to emphasize that we participate in events in Christ’s history *in virtue of* *His representative role*. Only because He is our “legal” representative do we have the opportunity to participate in His life.[[48]](#footnote-48) In Scripture, only after one is appointed as a “corporate head” does he begin to exert an influence on those under his headship.

When the Scriptures speak of the forensic aspect of our position with Christ, we usually encounter the phrase “in Christ.” This phrase usually refers to our “legal” position in Christ on the basis of which all the blessings of salvation are provided to us. When we speak of our real participation in the redemptive events of Christ’s life, we generally encounter a related phrase, “with Christ.” For example, Paul writes in Galatians 2:19, “I have been crucified *with* Christ.”

Let us investigate further how Paul uses the construction “with Christ.”[[49]](#footnote-49) Sometimes he uses it in a conventional sense of physically being with someone. For example, after death Paul expects to be “with Christ” (Phil 1:23). The same applies to our gathering to Him at His Second Coming (1 Thes 4:17; 5:10) when He brings “with Him” the departed saints (1 Thes 4:14). More frequently, however, Paul employs the formula “with Christ” in a derived sense to refer to the believer’s participation in certain events in the Savior’s history. First, believers were included in the death of Jesus, that is, they were crucified with Him:

- Rom 6:6-8 – …knowing this, that our old self was crucified with {Him,}… if we have died with Christ

- Col 2:20 – If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world…

- Col 3:3 – For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

- Gal 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

- 2 Cor 5:14 – One died for all, therefore all died.

- 2 Tim 2:11 – It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him

It is vital to note that all of these texts speak of our participation in the death of Christ as a fact accomplished in the past. Dying with Christ is not something that we strive for, but something God has done for us by uniting us with His Son in His death. When Jesus died on Calvary, believers in Him died as well. Nevertheless, George makes the important point that participation in Christ’s death in no way implies that we aid Him in His redemptive work. At the same time, we were real participants in this event.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Along with participation in Christ’s death, the New Testament speaks of our participation in His resurrection as well. God did not leave us in the grave, but raised us together with Christ. Here is the New Testament witness:[[51]](#footnote-51)

- Eph 2:5-6 – even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him.

- Col 2:12-13 – You were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him.

- Col 3:1 – Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above.

- 1 Pet 1:3 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

In the future, we anticipate a participation in Christ’s resurrection in yet another sense – through the resurrection of our physical bodies:

- 1 Cor 15:21-22 – For since by a man {came} death, by a man also {came} the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

- 2 Tim 2:11 – It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him.

- 2 Cor 4:14 – … knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

- Rom 6:8 – Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

Other passages of Scripture reveal that the believer has been exalted with Christ: God “seated us with Him in the heavenly {places} in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6), and, “put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body” (Eph 1:22-23). So then, the present position of believers in Christ is their being seated in heaven with Christ at a place of power and authority.

The final Christ-event in which the believer participates is His revelation in glory at His Second Coming. The Bible teaches that at that time believers will be revealed with Him, i.e., they will be perfected and glorified. We read, “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory” (Col 3:4), and, “We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is” (1 Jn 3:2).

In summary, we affirm that the believer has died with Christ, been raised and exalted with Him, and will be revealed with Him at His Second Coming. The idea of the believer’s real participation in the redemptive events of Christ’s career appears in the writings of several prominent evangelical thinkers. Louis Berkhof, for example, writes, “In an objective sense (the Church) was crucified with Christ, she died with Him, she arose in Him from the dead, and was made to sit with Him in the heavenly places.”[[52]](#footnote-52) B. B. Warfield concurs that believers died with Him on Calvary.[[53]](#footnote-53) Martin expresses this truth especially well:

So it is that His death is reckoned their death, His resurrection their resurrection, and His session at the right hand of the Father their session with Him. Then the Scripture says we shall be glorified together with Him.[[54]](#footnote-54)

In light of the fact that Jesus accomplished everything necessary for our salvation and complete victory, Paul can boldly claim, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, {he is} a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor 5:17), and, “In Him you have been made complete” (Col 2:10). The apostle John writes about the fullness of Christ, “For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace” (Jn 1:16). In light of the riches of our position in Christ, we better appreciate the significance of Paul’s words in Romans 8:32, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

**b. Refutation of False Views**

Unfortunately, every clear biblical teaching becomes clouded by various incorrect views that hinder people from fully appreciating God’s truth. We will examine the more prominent of these views in respect to our participation in Christ’s history.

**1) The Believer’s Participation in Christ’s Entire History**

One errant view on the believer’s participation is the idea that God made us participants not only in certain redemptive events in Jesus life (i.e., death, resurrection, exaltation, and Second Coming), but in all of His history. Some assume that all that Jesus did in the course of His entire earthly life has direct influence on believers today. Correspondingly, our connection to Christ is not by virtue of His appointment as our corporate head, but by His incarnation, i.e., His taking on our humanity. Through the incarnation, it is felt that the believer has an “organic union” with the Lord and, consequently, “access” to His entire earthly history and participation in it.

Some adherents of this theory claim that we are justified before the Father as a result of Jesus’ sinless life, since we were “in Him” and participated in His sinless career. Therefore, our justification comes from our “participation in his human righteousness.”[[55]](#footnote-55) Moreover, since we share in Jesus entire earthly experience, His obedience somehow enables and empowers our obedience as well. Lee describes Torrence’s view: “Our obedience rests upon the victorious obedience of Christ.”[[56]](#footnote-56)

Our response to this theory is as follows. Although this view appears attractive from a logical point of view, it nonetheless lacks Scriptural support. A key verse in its refutation in Romans 5:18: “Through *one act of righteousness* there resulted justification of life to all men.” The King James Version, however, translates this verse in a way that could support the participation-righteousness view: “By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”[[57]](#footnote-57) The Greek phrase in question is διʼ ἑνὸς δικαιώματος (*di’ henos dikaiomatos*). Most translations prefer “through one act of righteousness,” instead of “by the righteousness of one,” yet the point is debated.[[58]](#footnote-58)

An examination of context, though, clearly favors the “one act” position. Concerning Adam’s history, which is paralleled with Christ’s, only one transgression is in view: “the offense of Adam” (v. 14), “the transgression of the one” (v. 15), “one {transgression}” (v. 16), “the transgression of the one” (v. 17), “through one transgression” (v. 18), “through the one man's disobedience” (v. 19). Since the goal of the passage is to compare Adam’s history with Christ’s, it logically follows that justification in Christ comes not from participation in His entire history, but by His one act of obedience at Calvary.

Smedes also comments on this question in our favor: “The parallel between Adam and Christ, then, is focused on the decisive events in which each was the central figure.”[[59]](#footnote-59) Goppelt also agrees, “In each instance the single act of one as a consequence that affects the entire human race.”[[60]](#footnote-60) Additionally, the universal testimony of the New Testament concurs that Jesus redeemed us exclusively by His sacrifice of Calvary. For example, we read in Romans 3:24, “…being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

We find still more support for our view in Romans 5:18. Here, Paul uses a more unusual term for “righteousness,” namely δικαίωμα (*dikaioma*). His usual term is δικαιωσύνη (*dikaiosune*), while δικαίωμα (*dikaioma*) can refer to a “righteous deed.”[[61]](#footnote-61) This usage confirms the conclusion that a single “righteous deed” is in view, i.e., Jesus’ sacrifice on Calvary.

In addition, nowhere in Scripture do we see the incarnation depicted as the determining factor for the believer’s union with Christ. Paul clearly states the goal of the incarnation in Hebrews chapter 2:

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.… He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb 2:14-17).

The incarnation of the Son of God was necessary so that He could become “a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” So then, the incarnation plays a key role in Christ becoming humanity’s representative. Nonetheless, *only by virtue of Christ’s appointment as our representative and not by the incarnation alone* does the believer qualify as a participant in the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus.

We may also benefit from the research of Seifrid, who observed that the expression “in Jesus” occurs very rarely – Paul prefers the expression “in Christ.” Seifrid feels that this “suggests an emphasis on the exalted status and saving role of the Messiah.”[[62]](#footnote-62) If our union with Christ derived from His incarnation, we would expect to see more references to “in Jesus” than to “in Christ.” Whiting concurs, “The New Testament never speaks of the believer as being ‘in Jesus’ but always refers to him as being ‘in Christ, ‘in the Lord,’ or ‘in the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Our union with Christ is a oneness with Him in His Messianic and Mediatorial office rather than in His manhood or earthly life.”[[63]](#footnote-63)

Therefore, the believer has the privilege to share in the redemptive events of Jesus’ life not due to His taking upon Himself human nature, but by virtue of His role as humanity’s representative. The incarnation was necessary, in its turn, so that Christ could become our true representative. Consequently, the believer is not a participant in all the events of Christ’s history, but only in those where He was appointed our representative as indicated in Scripture, namely in his death, resurrection, exaltation, and Second Coming.

**2) The Teaching of Theosis**

According to some theologians, we are united to Christ to such a degree that we receive divine life from Him and can be deified. This is the doctrine of “theosis.” This theory was discussed and refuted in the previous chapter.

**3. Participation in Christ’s Body, the Church**

Until now, we have focused our attention on the personal benefits that come to those who are in Christ. We must not fail to mention, though, the communal aspect of that union – those who are united to Christ are united to others who are also united to Him, i.e., with the Body of Christ. Campbell well states, “Union with Christ also involves the incorporation of believers into his body, temple, church… belonging to Christ means that we belong to one another.”[[64]](#footnote-64)

Best is correct in his view that one can see in the “the Body of Christ” the concept of corporate personality – if Christ is the Head both of our corporate personality and of the Church, then the phrase “the Body of Christ” is appropriate to express our solidarity both with Him and with one another.[[65]](#footnote-65) Clowney concurs, “Paul’s concept of the body of Christ is drawn from his doctrine of our union with Christ,”[[66]](#footnote-66) as does Campbell, “The nature of the church… is grounded in union with Christ.”[[67]](#footnote-67) Shedd writes similarly, “The doctrine of the Body of Christ is there for an explicit application of the Hebraic conception of corporate personality.”[[68]](#footnote-68)

The interpretation of the “Body of Christ” metaphor has drawn much attention in scholarly circles. It occurs so often in Paul’s writings that it is difficult to call it a mere metaphor. In three passages, in fact, Paul practically equates the Body with the Church: “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph 1:22-23), “He is also head of the body, the church” (Col 1:18), and, “I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church” (Col 1:24). In spite of the difficulty of precisely defining the metaphorical character of this designation, the formula “Body of Christ” brilliantly expresses the very essence of the Church, since the Church consists of born-again people who manifest together the life of Jesus Christ and accomplish together His ministry.

### D. The Benefits of Being in Christ

Having defined our position in Christ as being: (1) beneficiaries of His representation, (2) participants in His redemptive events, and (3) members of His Body, we can now specify the concrete blessings that come to us in virtue of this position.

Although the blessings of God are varied, Taber, along with others, reminds us that they all come to us thanks to our union with Christ: “All the blessings of God are ours by virtue of our union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. God meets every human need through the message of the Cross.”[[69]](#footnote-69)

**1. Benefits Connected with His Representative Role**

Christ’s work as our representative relates our legal position or status before God. As our corporate head, He is able to occupy our place, and we in turn, as far as it is possible for humans, can occupy His. Therefore, there exist two dimensions to His representative work. On the one hand, He can take upon Himself the punishment for our sins, occupying our place of guilt before God, even though He never sinned. On the other hand, He shares with us His righteousness and His sonship. Therefore, Christ’s representative work provides forgiveness of sins, the gift of righteousness, and adoption as God’s children. In subsequent chapters (9 and 10), we will describe in detail the glorious benefits of being forgiven of our sins, justified before God, and adopted into His family.

**2. Benefits Connected with Participation in His Redemptive Events**

Unlike Christ’s role as our representative, our participation in the redemptive events of Christ’s career do not result in a special *position* or status before God, but in a change in our spiritual *condition,* that is, how we live. Thanks to Christ’s representative work, we obtain a special status before God (forgiven, justified, adopted), but because of our participation in His history, we experience life-transformation.

Nonetheless, as we argued earlier, our sharing in His history is possible only because of the “legal” position we occupy in Christ. Thanks to this legal status, the believer may become a partaker in certain events in Christ’s life, namely His death, resurrection, exaltation, and Second Coming in glory.

Jesus not only bore the punishment for our sins in order to liberate us from guilt, but our old (sinful) self died along with Him so that we might experience liberty from sin’s power and live in victory over it. God has, in fact, already accomplished the sanctification of the believer through the death of Christ (Rom 6:6-7). In addition, in Romans 7:1-4 Paul claims that in Christ believers have died to the Law and that this is a necessary step to bear fruit for God. Paul considered the Law not only powerless to justify a person, but also a hindrance to sanctification. One must be delivered from the Law to make progress in spiritual life (see Rom 6:14; 7:1-4; Gal 2:19-20; 5:1-4; 2 Cor 3:6).

Our participation in Christ’s death also results in our being separated from the value systems of this world, as Paul writes, “But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal 6:14). In addition, suffering for Christ is a certain consequence of following the Lord (2 Tim 3:12). We note, especially in John 15:18-20, that our suffering for Jesus is directly related to our union with Him. We suffer because we are in Him and are participants in His life (Rom 8:17).

The idea of “participation” concerns not only our sharing in Christ’s history, but also His sharing in ours, in particular, in relation to healing from sickness and disease. The biblical testimony reads, “He himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases” (Matt 8:17, from Isa 53:4). It is well accepted that Isaiah 53 in its entirety relates to the sufferings of Messiah. Matthew was acquainted with this prophecy and attributed Jesus’ healing ministry to His work on the cross. Therefore, healing is yet another benefit derived from the sufferings of Messiah and therefore comprises one of the elements of our union with Christ.

According to Scripture, we receive regeneration in virtue of Christ’s resurrection from the dead: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet 1:3). Just as the Lord Jesus passed out of death to life, believers in Him pass out of the condition of spiritual death into a new condition – new life in Christ. At the Second Coming of the Lord, our participation in Christ’s resurrection will be completed by the resurrection of our bodies and their transformation into glorified, immortal ones.

The next aspect of our position “in Christ” is being partakers in His ascension and exaltation. After His resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven, where He now resides. When He ascended, He also was exalted and became King of Kings (Phil 2:9). In other words, Jesus was exalted to the place of power and authority. Together with Him, God “seated us with Him in the heavenly {places} in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:6). Now, Jesus invites us to share His power and authority.

Finally, the believer will be revealed with Christ in glory at His Second Coming (Col 3:3-4; 1 Jn 3:2). At the present time, our life is “hidden with Christ.” This means that, although we may enjoy many of the blessings connected with our union with Christ now, the full riches of that position are revealed only when Christ is revealed at His Second Coming. Therefore, Christ is our “hope of glory” (Col 1:27). Together with Peter, we all are partakers “of the glory that is to be revealed” (1 Pet 5:1). Additionally, Peter counsels us, “Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:13). A great inheritance awaits us, since we are co-heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom 8:17).

These benefits afforded us through our participation in Jesus’ death, resurrection, ascension, and Second Coming will be objects of further study in chapters 11-16 in this volume, and in section 1 of volume 5 of this series, entitled “Hope.”

**3. Benefits Connected with Participation in His Body, the Church**

Many practical applications flow from our inclusion in the Church, the Body of Christ. First, since all believers are united in one Body and in one union with the Head, then they must live in unity among themselves. We cannot tolerate discrimination between parties: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28; also see 2 Cor 5:16; Eph 2:13-16).

Second, mutual care and concern should exist among members of the same Body. In a context addressing healthy interrelationships in the Church, Paul writes, “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if {one} member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor 12:26). In his epistle to the Ephesians, he continues the same thought: “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Eph 4:32).

Third, each member of the Body occupies a certain place in it and is called to perform a certain function for the good of all: “…from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Eph 4:16; also see 1 Pet 4:10).

We will comment in more detail about life in the Body in chapters 16-17 of this volume, as well as in volume 5 of this series.

### E. Other Important Aspects of Union with Christ

**1. Is the Principle of Corporate Personality Unfair?**

At first glance, it seems that the system of “corporate personality” and the corresponding systems of “union with Adam” and “union with Christ” are unjust. Adam’s transgression leads to misery for all his descendants. Christ alone is righteous, but sinners can be justified in Him.

Yet, without the system of corporate personality in place, matters would be much worse. If we began life without the inherited curse from Adam, as the heretic Pelagius taught in the fourth century, we would have no innate tendency to sin. Nonetheless, we would still have free will and the potential to sin. After our first personal sin, we would be under condemnation with no hope of redemption, since without the principle of solidarity we could receive no benefit from Christ. The absence of solidarity would affect both our relationship with Adam and our relationship with Christ. We would inherit neither sin from Adam, nor righteousness from Christ.

However, with the system of corporate personality in place, we begin life in a sinful state, having inherited guilt and depravity from Adam. Yet, by one act of faith, we can be joined to Christ and receive forgiveness and justification thanks to His representative and substitutionary work as our corporate head. Therefore, without solidarity, one transgression leads to damnation without hope of redemption, while with solidarity, one act of faith leads to justification and eternal life. We strongly prefer the second option.

**2. Who Can Benefit from Union with Christ?**

The question arises, “Does union with Christ apply to all people, or just to believers in Jesus?” If Jesus represented *the whole* of humanity before the Father, then why would the benefits of His redemptive work not automatically apply to all? Did Paul not write, “As through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men” (Rom 5:18)? At first glance, it seems that both the sin of Adam and salvation in Christ have universal application.

However, the previous verse explains the matter: “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:17). The word “receive” indicates that one benefits from one’s union with Christ only through putting personal trust in Christ. Whereas the consequences of Adam’s sin automatically transmit to his descendants, the abundance of grace is only for those who receive it.

**3. When Will Our Union with Christ Be Fully Actualized?**

In discussing the topic of union with Christ, it is vitally important to define when one can expect to receive the benefits the Father offers us in His Son. Some aspects of this union are available immediately upon receiving Jesus, others are progressively realized in the Christian life, and still others are experienced only in eternity. In the world of theology, we encounter the phrase “already, but not yet.” This means that certain of the benefits of union with Christ are available now, but others – only in the future.

This approach corresponds to the biblical view of two eras or ages. The first is the present age, which is characterized by sin, death, and the powers of darkness. The coming age is one of perfection in the Kingdom of God. Between them, though, exists an intermediate period, in which the Christian now lives. During this stage, we experience our blessings in Christ only partially. Although believers in Jesus enjoy an abundance of grace now, they still await the consummation of God’s plan and the attainment of perfection at the end of time.

We must attempt to enumerate those benefits of being in Christ that relate to the present and those that are reserved for the future. First, we must hasten to clarify (contrary to Gaffin) that the present and future aspects of union with Christ do not correspond to “internal” (i.e., spiritual) and “external” (i.e., material) blessings – the former available now, and the latter available only in eternity.[[70]](#footnote-70) Many “external” blessings are granted in Christ for believers today, and some “internal” benefits (such as freedom from temptation) await us only in the future.

All evangelical believers accept the biblical witness that in Christ we now have forgiveness of sins, justification before God and access to Him, adoption into His family, inclusion in the Universal Church, the gift of the Holy Spirit, authority over the devil, and participation in the sufferings of Christ. Benefits reserved for the future include physical resurrection, freedom from all temptation and affronts from the devil, and participation in the earthly reign of Messiah Jesus.

Two issues, though, remain hotly debated, namely the questions of complete sanctification in this life and physical healing from all disease. Although a thorough discussion of these topics would require writing separate volumes, we will attempt to give a brief proposal. Strictly from a biblical point of view, one may conclude that these states are theoretically possible, since the Scriptures give us high expectations for victory over sin and sickness. However, experience teaches us that their actual attainment is rarely if ever experienced. Therefore, we recommend that believers rather focus on *progress* and *improvement* in the areas of spiritual and physical health, standing on God’s promises of victory over sin and sickness. Even if their attainment in elusive, one can always rejoice in the final victory over these enemies that awaits us in eternity. In addition, separate chapters are devoted to these issues later in this volume.

### F. How to Appropriate Union with Christ

Having recognized the magnificent blessings available to us in the Lord Jesus, we must next learn how to actualize these blessings in everyday life. Grudem confirms, “We also must be brought into an actual relationship with Christ through which the benefits of salvation can be applied to our lives by the Holy Spirit.”[[71]](#footnote-71)

**1. The Role of the Holy Spirit**

According to the New Testament, the Holy Spirit plays an irreplaceable role in actualizing our union with Jesus Christ. The Spirit’s work is closely linked with that of the Savior in His death, resurrection, and ascension to glory. A key verse in this regard in John 16:14, where Jesus speaks of the Spirit, “He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose {it} to you.”

Concerning the application of Christ’s death to the believer, we read, “If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13). On the one hand, Jesus rendered our sinful nature powerless 2000 years ago through His death on Golgotha. On the other hand, the Spirit now applies this victory over sin to the believer. With the Spirit’s help, the believer can truly gain victory over the sinful nature. Similarly, although God has provided us with new life through the resurrection of Christ, the Spirit now accomplishes this spiritual renewal in us, believers. Paul writes to Titus, “He saved us… by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Tit 3:5). Finally, although power for ministry is available through our identification with Christ in His exaltation, the Holy Spirit manifests this power through us (Acts 1:8).

Martin defends the position that the work of the Spirit is fully determined by the redemptive work of Christ and limited to those parameters. He claims, “There is no activity of the Spirit in the application of redemption apart from union with Christ.”[[72]](#footnote-72) Rightmire agrees, “The Spirit never acts apart from Christ.”[[73]](#footnote-73)

The Scriptures devote much attention to the work of the Spirit in sanctifying the believer. We often encounter in the Bible the combination of “sanctification” and “the Spirit” (e.g. Rom 15:16; 1 Cor 6:11).[[74]](#footnote-74) The Spirit lives within believers, guides them, and produces the fruit of the Spirit in them (Gal 5:22-23). Persons filled with the Spirit lead a godly life (Eph 5:18-21). They experience an internal spiritual renewal (Col 3:10). It is fair to conclude that the Spirit “activates” in the life of the believer the victory over sin that Jesus obtained through His death and the new life He provides through His resurrection.

Concerning sanctification, the role of the individual is often exaggerated. Although, as we will soon demonstrate, the human factor is indeed present and vital, Chase reminds us that the spiritual fruit mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 is not the fruit of human effort, but the fruit of the Spirit, which is borne in the believer’s life “when he is living in vital union with Christ.”[[75]](#footnote-75) Chafer adds, “The very purpose of union with Christ is that the believer may ‘bring forth fruit unto God.’”[[76]](#footnote-76)

**2. The Role of the Believer**

On the one hand, we know that through union with Christ we have received all the benefits connected with salvation and that the Holy Spirit actualizes these blessings in our personal lives. On the other hand, this does not occur against our will, but requires our personal participation in the process.

The human factor in obtaining salvation’s benefits, including sanctification, includes three elements, outlined in Galatians 5:19-25, namely, knowledge, faith and submission[[77]](#footnote-77):

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

The first element includes knowledge of God’s will, so that we can walk in agreement with it. In verses 19-23, Paul list the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. These guidelines help us understand what is pleasing to the Lord and what is not. We gain our understanding of God’s will by studying the Bible.

The second element is faith. In Galatians 5:24, we read that one must rely on Christ’s finished work of salvation, which includes the crucifixion of the old, sinful nature. We can cite other passages of Scripture that emphasize the role faith in realizing union with Christ.

In discussing how union with Christ manifests in his own personal life, Paul writes, “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” (Gal 2:20). He gives similar instruction to the church in Ephesus: “So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through *faith*” (Eph 3:17). In light of our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, the saints in Rome must “*consider* *yourselves* to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:11). Our faith becomes effective “through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake” (Philemon 6). In such an atmosphere of faith and expectation, the Holy Spirt works more freely and fully to apply Christ’s redemptive work to our lives.

Martin makes another important qualification. The nature of faith is such that it is not based on subjective feelings, but on the acceptance of the truth of God’s promises. He comments, “You are not to wait until you feel some kind of celestial flutter in your soul before you believe that you have been raised in Christ. This truth is addressed to faith; faith embraces it.”[[78]](#footnote-78)

Finally, Galatians 5:25 records the final step in the process of applying our union with Christ – submission: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” If we expect power from the Spirit for holy living, then we must allow Him to work in our lives and change us. Paul also stresses this aspect of sanctification in Romans 6, where we read, “Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin {as} instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members {as} instruments of righteousness to God” (Rom 6:13).

Furthermore, in light of the fact that we have died and been raised with Christ, Paul exhorts believers to “lay aside the old self” and “put on the new self” (Eph 4:22-24). It is interesting to note the parallel between this passage and Colossians 3:8-10, where Paul relates that the old man has already been put away in Christ: “You laid aside the old self with its {evil} practices, and have put on the new self” (Col 3:9-10). In one sense, the work of sanctification is already complete in Christ, and in Colossian 3, Paul speaks from that vantage point. On the other hand, the practical working out of that reality is still in process. This is what Paul emphasizes in Ephesians 4.

Therefore, M. Johnson correctly notes that union with Christ is not a call to passivity in relation to holiness: “Believers are commanded in the clearest possible terms to pursue holiness at all times and with all of their persons.”[[79]](#footnote-79) Nonetheless, if believers rely on their own zeal and determination to become holy, failure is sure to ensue. Grudem reasons likewise, “The role that we play in sanctification is both a *passive* one in which we depend on God to sanctify us, and an *active* one in which we strive to obey God and take steps that will increase our sanctification.”[[80]](#footnote-80)

The following illustrations can aid us in understanding the relationship between faith and submission. When wanting to start a car, it would be foolhardy to simply sit in the driver’s seat and expect the car to drive itself. The driver must turn the key and operate the car. Likewise, it profits little to simply expect God’s intervention in our spiritual lives, while we do nothing, adopting a passive attitude toward spiritual growth.

On the other hand, it is equally foolish to stand behind the auto and attempt to push it with the key. The driver must utilize the power of the engine. In a similar way, believers can never make progress in their spiritual life relying on their own strength. One must rely on the finished work of Christ. Faith and submission harmoniously work together and complement each other.

We may suggest another illustration. To light a match, one needs two elements: a matchbox and oxygen in the air. The atmosphere may contain enough oxygen to do the job, but without a person’s participation striking the match, there will be no result. On the other hand, a person can strike the match all day, but if oxygen is somehow lacking, there will also be no result.

In a similar way, God’s power, made accessible through Christ’s redemptive work, is necessary for spiritual progress. A person, though, must apply effort and cooperate with the grace of God in Christ in a way similar to one striking a match. In addition, believers must create in their lives an atmosphere of faith, expecting the power of God to manifest, and strive for holiness within the context of that atmosphere of expectation.

Finally, we must discuss the relation of union with Christ and water baptism. Some key passages of Scripture seem to imply that a person enters into union with Christ at the moment of receiving water baptism and as a direct result of it. The topic of water baptism is covered in chapter 22 of this volume.

1. Gaffin R. B., Jr. Union with Christ: Some Biblical and theological reflections // McGowan A. T. B. Always reforming: explorations in systematic theology. – Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. – P. 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Boston T. The complete works of Thomas Boston. – V. 1. – P. 549. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ferguson S. B. Ordo Salutis // Ferguson S. B., Wright D. F. New dictionary of theology. – Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988. – P. 480-481. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Campbell C. R. Paul and union with Christ. – Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012. – P. 375. Kaufman concurs (Kaufman P. The one and the many: corporate personality // Worship 42. 1968. P. 554), as well as the following: Harris M. J. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: a commentary on the Greek text // The new international Greek Testament commentary. – Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005. – P. 431; Longenecker R. N. Paul: Apostle of liberty. – New York: Harper & Row, 1964. – P. 169; Fung R. Y. K. Justification by faith in 1 & 2 Corinthians // Evangelical Review of Theology. 5. 1981. P. 184; Mawhinney A. Baptism, servanthood, and sonship // Westminster Theological Journal. 49(1). 1987. P. 46; Walvoord J. F. Identification with Christ // Elwell W. A. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. – 2nd ed. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001. – P. 588; Wilbourne R. Union with Christ. – East Sussex: David Cook, 2016. – P. 184; Johnson M. P. One with Christ: An Evangelical theology of salvation. – Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013, Kindle Ed. – P. 20; Letham R. Union with Christ: in Scripture, history, and theology. – Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011. – P. 1; Austin-Sparks T. Union with Christ. – London: Witness and Testimony Publishers. – P. 6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Campbell (Campbell C. R., p. 67) and others concur. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Macaskill sees indications of union with Christ in Peter’s epistles as well: 1 Pet 2:24; 4:1, 13 (Macaskill G. Union with Christ in the New Testament. – Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. – P. 276-279). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Sometimes churches or brethren in general are “in Christ,” that is, “Christian” (1 Thes 2:14; Gal 1:22; Eph 1:1; Phil 1:1, 14; Col 1:2). Believers greet one another “in Christ,” i.e., as fellow Christians (Phil 4:21; 1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:12), and receive one another as such (Rom 16:2). Believers die “in the Lord,” that is as Christians (1 Cor 15:18; 1 Thes 4:16). Finally, widows must marry only “in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39), i.e., other Christians. In addition, 1 Corinthians 16:24, “My love be with you all in Christ Jesus,” may mean “with all you Christians.” In 2 Corinthians 12:2, “a man in Christ” means “a Christian.” In 1 Corinthians 9:2, “You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord,” may mean “you as Christians.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Moreover, in Colossians 2:7, Paul calls believers to be “firmly rooted” and “built up in Him,” that is, in Christian faith. Furthermore, Paul speaks of his “ways” in Christian faith (1 Cor 4:17). “Babes in Christ” (1 Cor 3:1) are those yet undeveloped in Christian faith, while the “mature in Christ” (Col 1:28) are spiritually mature believers. In addition, a person can be “wise” in Christian faith (1 Cor 4:10). Also see Ephesians 4:21: “truth is in Christian faith,” Philippians 4:1: “Stand firm in Christian faith,” (similar in 1 Thes 3:8), and Colossians 2:6: “walk in Christian faith.” Additionally, Timothy is Paul’s “beloved and faithful child in Christian faith” (1 Cor 4:17). Similarly, Paul is a “father in Christian faith” for those he led to Christ (1 Cor 4:15). Also note: “Live in harmony in Christian faith” (Phil 4:2) and, “Live godly in Christian faith” (2 Tim 3:12). Finally, according to Christian faith, God’s will is for us to be thankful (1 Thes 5:18). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Believers jailed “in Christ” suffer for His sake (Eph 4:1; Phil 1:13; Philemon 23). Christian ministers serve “in Christ,” that is for His sake (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 1 Cor 9:1-2; 15:58; Rom 16:3, 9, 12). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This usage of ἐν Χριστῶ (*en Hristy*), i.e., “in Christ,” functionally overlaps with the phrase διὰ Χριστοῦ (*dia Hristy*), i.е., “through Christ.” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Through Christ, God also supplies: victory (Col 2:15; 4:17), spiritual circumcision (Col 2:11), blessing (Eph 1:3; Gal 3:14), sanctification (1 Cor 1:2), grace (1 Cor 1:4-5: 2 Tim 1:9; Eph 1:6), ministry (1 Cor 1:5), power (Phil 4:13), glorification (2 Thes 1:12), and eternal life (Rom 6:23). Through Christ Jesus, God created all things (Col 1:16), upholds all things (Col 1:17), accomplishes His purpose (Eph 1:9, 20; 3:11), and receives glory (Eph 3:21). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Campbell C. R., p. 73ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In particular: no condemnation (Rom 8:1), the law of the Spirit of life (Rom 8:2), love, grace and faith (1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 1:13; 2:1; Rom 8:39), salvation (Phil 3:9; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 1:7, 13; Col 1:14; 2 Tim 2:10), the high calling of God (Phil 3:14), a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), comfort (Phil 2:1), provision (Phil 4:19), fullness (Col 2:10), access to God (Eph 2:13; 3:12), light (Eph 5:8), resurrection (1 Cor 15:22), inheritance (Eph 1:10-11; 2:7), and many others. In this “sphere,” all of God’s promises are “Yes,” to which we say “Amen” (2 Cor 1:20). God accomplishes His election in Christ (Eph 1:4, 9). In Christ, we are seated in heavenly places (Eph 2:6) and are re-created in Him (Eph 2:10). Finally, in Christ, the Church is unified (1 Cor 11:11; Gal 3:28; 5:6; Rom 12:5; Eph 2:15; 3:6; Phil 4:2). Other possible references to the “sphere” of Christ include: Rom 6:11, 23; 8:39; 1 Cor 15:18, 22; 16:19; 2 Cor 1:21; 2:14; Gal. 2:4; 5:6; Eph 2:20; 3:21; 5:8; Phil 4:7; 2 Tim 1:1, 9, 13; 2:1, 10; 3:15; Philemon 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Wikenhauser A. Pauline mysticism / Trans. J. Cunnigham. – Friebrug: Herder, 1960. – P. 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See Deissmann A. Paul; a study in social and religious history / Trans. W. E. Wilson. – Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1972. – P. 136-157. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid., p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Weiss J. Earliest Christianity; a history of the period A.D. 30-150 / Trans. and ed. F. C. Grant. – New York: Harper & Row, 1937. – V. 2. – P. 463-471. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid., p. 465. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ibid., p. 464. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. For example, see Matt 28:19; Jn 15:26; 1 Cor 12:3; 6:11; 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Pet 1:2 and many others. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Wikenhauser, p. 84-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Campbell C. R., p. 413. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. We will employ the expression “redemptive events” to indicate Christ’s death, resurrection, exaltation and Second Coming. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Letham, p. 62-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Moule C. F. D. The phenomena of the New Testament // Moule C. F. D., Ackroyd P., Filson F. V., WrightG. E. Studies in Biblical theology, 2nd series. – Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1967. – P. 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Moule C. F. D., p. 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Wiersbe W. W. Prayer: Basic training. – Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988. – P. 128-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Martin A. N., p. 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The following support this view: J. Calvin, L. Smedes, M. Erickson, R. Gaffin, E. Clowney and many others (See Smedes L. B. Union with Christ. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983. – P. 127-129; Erickson M. Christian theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985. – P. 952-953; Gaffin, Union with Christ, p. 274; Clowney, E. P. The Biblical theology of the Church // Carson D. A. The Church in the Bible and the world: an international study. – World Evangelical Fellowship, 1987. – P. 55). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Smedes, р. 135. А. Wikenhauser claims that in us “Christ works thru the Holy Spirit” (Wikenhauser, p. 58). Also see Moule C. D. F., p. 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Rightmire R. D. Union with Christ // Elwell W. Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996. – P. 792. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Robinson H. W. Corporate personality in ancient Israel. – Rev. ed. – Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1980. – P. 25. We must qualify, though, that the concept of corporate personality presented in this chapter differs somewhat from Robinson’s understanding. Robinson focused more on solidarity as a feature of Hebrew culture. He wrote, “The group possesses a consciousness which is distributed among its individual members and does not exist simply as a figure of speech or as an ideal” (Robinson, Corporate personality, p. 30). We will demonstrate, though, that this principle has its roots not in Hebrew thought or culture, but in God’s dealings with His people. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Several examples were taken from Robinson, Corporate personality; Shedd R. P. Man in community: A study of St. Paul’s application of Old Testament and early Jewish conceptions of human solidarity. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964; and Kaminsky J. S. Corporate responsibility in the Hebrew Bible // Clines D., Davies P. R., eds Supplemental Series of the Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, no. 196. – Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Many other examples exist, both in regard to Israel (2 Sam 21; 24:15-17; 1 Kin 11:12-13; 14:10-12; 2 Kin 21:1-18) and to the Gentiles (Deut 23:3-6; 1 Sam 15:2-3; Gen 20:7, 18; 27:37 with Mal 1:3-4; Est 9:6-10). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Also of note is that by her faith, Rahab secured not only her own safety, but also safety for her family (Josh 2:12-13). However, in this case the family still needed to fulfill a condition – stay in the house during the battle (Josh 2:18-19). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Noted in Shedd, Man in community, p. 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Robinson, Corporate personality, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Kaufman, p. 546. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Shedd, Man in сommunity, p. 103. Similarly, Bruce writes, “Paul was thoroughly conversant with the Hebrew concept of corporate personality, and his thought could readily oscillate on the one hand between the first man Adam and sinful mankind, and on the other hand between Christ, ‘the second man’, and the community of the redeemed” (Bruce F. F. Epistle of Paul to the Romans. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963. – P. 126). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Shedd, Man in сommunity, p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Moule C. F. D., p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Morris L. The Epistle to the Romans. – Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W. B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988. – P. 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Morris, Romans, p. 231-232. Similarly, see Westberg G. C. The two Adams // Bibliotheca Sacra. 94. 1937. P. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Westberg, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See Shedd, Man in community, p. 150-159; Motyer S. Man, old and new. // Elwell W. A. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. – 2nd ed. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001. – P. 728; Ridderbos H. Paul: an outline of his theology / Trans. J. R. De Witt. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975. – P. 64; Best E. One Body in Christ. – London: SPCK, 1955. – P. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Fritsch C. T. Principles of biblical typology // Bibliotheca Sacra 104 (1947). P. 214; cited in LaRondelle H. K. The Israel of God in prophecy: principles of prophetic interpretation. – Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983. – P. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Tannehill R. C. Dying and rising in Christ: A study in Pauline theology. – Berlin: Verlag Alfred Topelmann, 1966. – P. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See Campbell C. R., p. 351. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. See discussion in Campbell C. R., p. 220-236; Hansen G. W. The Letter to the Philippians. – Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: Eerdmans, 2009. – P. 88-89; O’Brien P. T. The Epistle to the Philippians: a commentary on the Greek text. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991. – P. 132-134; O’Brien P. T. Colossians, Philemon // Hubbard D. Word Biblical commentary. – Dallas, TX: Word, Incorporated, 1982. – P. 170-171; Best, p. 60-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. George T. Galatians // New American commentary. – Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994. – P. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Although Romans 6:4 lacks the phrase “raised with Christ,” the sense is clearly implied: “As Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” Gaffin comments here, “The believer’s continuing walk in newness of life is based upon resurrection with Christ” (Gaffin R. B. The centrality of the resurrection. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978. – P. 47). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Berkhof L. Systematic theology. – 4th ed. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941. – P. 448. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Warfield B. B. Faith and life; 'conferences' in the Oratory of Princeton seminary. – New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1916. – P. 436. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Martin A. N. Union with Christ // Lecture series at Toronto Baptist Seminary, February 15-17, 1978. – P.29. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid., p. 214. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ibid., p. 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Dunn also prefers this translation, although he favors the “one act” view of Romans 5 in any case (Dunn J. D. G. Romans 1–8 // Hubbard D. Word Biblical commentary. – Dallas, TX: Word, Incorporated, 1988. – P. 283). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. See the discussion in Dunn, Romans 1–8, p. 283 and Morris, Romans, p. 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Smedes, p. 83-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Goppelt L. Typos: The typological interpretation of the Old Testament in the New. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982. – P. 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Arndt W., Danker F. W., Bauer W., Gingrich F. W. A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature. – 3rd ed. – Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000. – P. 249. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Seifrid M. A. In Christ. // DeRuiter K. Dictionary of Paul and his letters. No city: InterVarsity Press, 1983. – P. 433. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Whiting A. B. The rapture of the Church // Bibliotheca Sacra. 102. 1945. P. 363. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Campbell C. R., p. 409. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Best, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Clowney, The Biblical theology of the Church, p. 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Campbell C. R., p. 383. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Shedd, Man in community, p. 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Taber M. Christ – the message and the messenger // Grace Journal. 2(2). 1961. P. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Gaffin, The centrality of the resurrection, p. 59-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Grudem W. Systematic Theology. – Leicester, England: Intervarsity; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994. – P. 842. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Martin A. N., p. 11. Also see Shedd: “This resurrection life is made effective through the working of the Holy Spirit who represents Christ on earth” (Shedd, Man in сommunity, p. 154). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Rightmire, p. 792. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. White R. E. O. Sanctification // Elwell W. A. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. – 2nd ed. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001. – P. 1053. The phrase “sanctifying work of the Spirit” in 1 Peter 1:2 refers to the work of the Spirit in drawing the unbeliever to Jesus (likewise in 2 Thes 2:13). [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Chase E. L. Reflections of an industrial chaplain // Bibliotheca Sacra. 107. 1950. P. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Chafer L. S. Systematic theology – Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993. – V. 4. – P. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. It is interesting to note the same order in chapter 6 of Paul’s instruction to the Romans. Victory over sin results from the same three factors: (1) knowledge, in this case that we have died with Christ (Rom 6:6), (2) faith to consider ourselves dead to sin (Rom 6:11), and active submission to the Holy Spirit (Rom 6:13). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Martin A. N., p. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Johnson M. P., p. 136-137. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Grudem, Systematic theology, p. 754 [↑](#footnote-ref-80)