

**BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES**

# What Does It Mean to Be In Christ?

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Romans 8:1-17

**1 Most people in the world believe that salvation is achieved by keeping a certain standard of righteousness. The Jews believed that standard was the Law of Moses. Today, the standard seems to be “Don’t hurt other people and don’t be a crook”.**

**At least the Law of Moses was absolute. Today’s standard is pretty much what you feel comfortable with. The law could show you what God’s will for your life is but did not provide forgiveness when you goofed.**

**But, there’s good news! When Jesus went to the cross, the Law was made obsolete as far as establishing a relationship with God was concerned. You can now choose a relationship with God through His grace and be “in Christ”. The old way of obedience to a set of rules or to today's worldly standards doesn't help! You're still "in sin".**

**So, what does it mean to be “in Christ”?**

# I. Those in Christ are Set Free from the Law

– v2-8 2

First, those in Christ are set free from the Law. Romans, Chapter 8, verses 1 through 8, help us understand this. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. <sup>1</sup> <sup>4</sup>

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of

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<sup>1</sup> v1-4.

**sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.** <sup>2</sup>

**<sup>5</sup> The Law of Moses was powerless to make people sinless because the flesh, the sin-oriented life, was too weak. <sup>3</sup> <sup>6</sup> When you are not in Christ, you let sin control your life instead of God's Spirit. <sup>4</sup> You live a sin-oriented life.**

**<sup>7</sup> The result of this sin-oriented life is death for several reasons. <sup>8</sup> It is hostile to God <sup>5</sup>, <sup>9</sup> it is not submissive to God's law, His intended way for you to live <sup>6</sup>, <sup>10</sup> it is**

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<sup>2</sup> v5-8.

<sup>3</sup> v3 - For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature . . .

<sup>4</sup> v5 - Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires . . .

<sup>5</sup> v7 - . . . the sinful mind is hostile to God.

<sup>6</sup> v7 - It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

not able to obey the law because it is too weak <sup>7</sup> and <sup>11</sup> it really doesn't please God <sup>8</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> So, God did something about it! <sup>13</sup> In John, Chapter 3, verse 17, the Lord said, **For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.** The Law condemned, the Son saves!

<sup>14</sup> Lord Jesus was sent as a man, even with human weaknesses! <sup>9</sup> <sup>15</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Matthew <sup>10</sup> Jesus is tempted by the devil.

The Lord had physical needs. He fasted for 40 days and became very hungry. The devil tempted Him to miraculously make a loaf of bread out of a limestone rock. Jesus didn't yield; but He could have.

Lord Jesus had psychological needs. Satan tempted Him to test the Father's plan to protect Him from

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<sup>7</sup> v3 - For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature . . .

<sup>8</sup> v8 - Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> v3 - For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature . . .

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 4:1-11.

**danger and to trade in His spiritual mission for secular power and position. Jesus didn't yield; but He could have.**

**Since the Law of Moses was given by God, it had to be fulfilled! <sup>16</sup> So the Lord fulfilled the legal demands of the Law in you <sup>11</sup>. How? <sup>17</sup> The Lord fulfilled the Law by obeying it perfectly as a man! Hebrews, Chapter 4, verse 15, **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.** <sup>18</sup> Then the Law was nailed to the cross! Colossians, Chapter 2, verses 13 and 14, **When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.****

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<sup>11</sup> v3-4 - And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us . . .

**19** Now, when you identify with the Lord Jesus, His victory over the Law's requirements becomes your victory! <sup>12</sup> **20** You are made righteous <sup>13</sup>, **21** justified by His blood <sup>14</sup>, **22** free from sin's dominion <sup>15</sup>, **23** no longer under condemnation <sup>16</sup> and **24** you become the people of God! <sup>17</sup>

## **II. Those in Christ Will Know They Are in Christ – v9-13 <sup>25</sup>**

**26** The 9<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup> verses continue, **You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not**

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<sup>12</sup> The first way of identifying with the Lord and His gospel message is to be baptized.

<sup>13</sup> Romans 3:21-22 - But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

<sup>14</sup> Romans 5:9 - Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

<sup>15</sup> Romans 6:22 - But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> Romans 8:1 - Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

<sup>17</sup> I Peter 2:10 - Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.

belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. <sup>18</sup> <sub>27</sub>

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live . . . <sup>19</sup>

The second thing this passage tells us about being in Christ is that those in Christ will know they are in Christ. <sub>28</sub>

If God’s Spirit is dwelling in you, then you are “in the Spirit”. <sup>20</sup> <sub>29</sub> You can’t be “in the Spirit” and “in the

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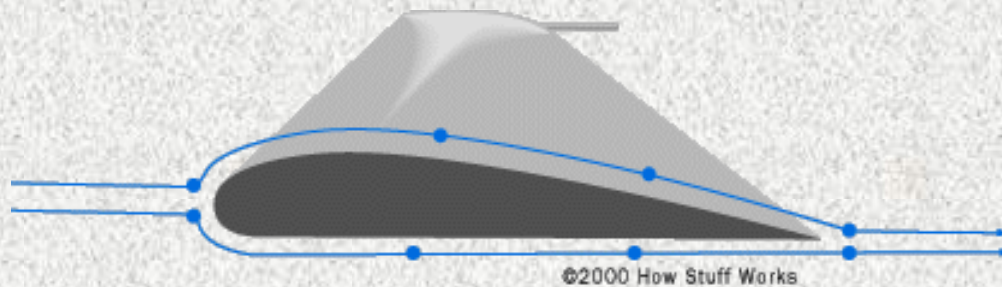
<sup>18</sup> v9-11.

<sup>19</sup> v12-13.

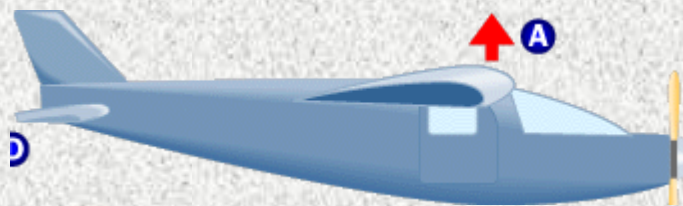
<sup>20</sup> v9 - You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.



flesh” <sup>21</sup> at the same time. The Law of Aerodynamics, for instance, supersedes the Law of Gravity in an airplane with properly shaped wings.



This is because the air takes longer to flow over the top of the wing than under it. <sup>30</sup> This causes lift, so the airplane flies.



The faster the air flows above and below the wing, the greater the lift on the airplane. <sup>31</sup> When you become “in Christ”, the Spirit supersedes the flesh. <sup>32</sup> But if the Spirit of God is not in you, you are not a Christian, even though you think you are. <sup>33</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The sin-oriented life.

So, the question becomes, how do you know if you have God's Spirit? <sup>34</sup> You know when you are obeying God's word. <sup>35</sup> Acts, Chapter 2, verses 38 and 39 say, **Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.** <sup>36</sup>

You know when you surrender your life to the Lord. <sup>37</sup> This surrender is illustrated in your baptism. <sup>38</sup> Your body will be dead because of sin. <sup>39</sup> Your spirit is alive because of the Lord's righteousness. <sup>22</sup> <sup>40</sup> Romans, Chapter 5, verse 18 explains, **Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.** <sup>41</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> v10.

The indwelling Holy Spirit will raise you up and give you life; abundant and eternal life! <sup>23</sup> <sup>42</sup> This Spirit will help you kill the practices of your sin-oriented life. <sup>24</sup>

### III. Those in Christ are Adopted Children -

#### Not Slaves of Law – v14-17 <sup>43</sup>

Let's continue with verses 14 through 17. <sup>44</sup> . . . because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*,<sup>Father</sup>.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

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<sup>23</sup> v11 - And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

<sup>24</sup> v12-13 - Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation —but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

The third thing this scripture tells us about being in Christ is that those in Christ are adopted children, not slaves of law. Let me explain what this is saying.

**45** It's possible for you to have a personal relationship with the Creator of the universe, Almighty God! Let's look at verse 15 again, **For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."**

**46** The word "Abba" is a transliteration (the actual word) from Aramaic <sup>25</sup> roughly equivalent to our English word "daddy". It is the most intimate word a child could use to address his father. **47**

From Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words we read, "In the Gamara (a Rabbinical commentary on the Mishna, the traditional teaching of the Jews) it is stated that slaves were forbidden to address the head of the family by this title. **48** It approximates to a personal name, in contrast to "Father," with which it is

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<sup>25</sup> אבא

always joined in the New Testament. Abba is the word framed by the lips of infants & betokens unreasoning trust; “father” expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship. The two together express the love & intelligent confidence of a child.”

<sup>49</sup> This word was used by the Lord when He asked in the Garden of Gethsemane that the cup of suffering be taken from Him. <sup>26</sup> <sup>50</sup> Its used again in Galatians, Chapter 4, verse 6, **Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”** When you have the Spirit of Christ in you, you are authorized this special relationship! <sup>51</sup>

You can become an adopted child of God! <sup>27</sup>  
Remember when Ben Hur was adopted by Arius. You can have that same relationship with God. <sup>52</sup> Nelson’s

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<sup>26</sup> Mark 14:36 - “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

<sup>27</sup> v14 - . . . because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. and v23 - Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

**Illustrated Bible Dictionary explains this intimate relationship. “Roman law required that the adopter be a male and childless; the one to be adopted had to be an independent adult, able to agree to be adopted. In the eyes of the law, the adopted one became a new creature, he was regarded as being born again into the new family.”** <sup>53</sup>

**Just like Ben Hur, as an adopted child, you become an heir. You receive all the inheritance God has for you!** <sup>28</sup> <sup>54</sup> **You receive abundant life here in this earthly life. That’s a victorious life even though the world may be caving in all around you.** <sup>55</sup> **You receive complete forgiveness from your sins. God treats all your rebellion against His standards as though they never happened.** <sup>56</sup> **Then, you receive eternal life in heaven in the presence of God.**

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<sup>28</sup> v17 - Now if we are children, then we are heirs —heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

**57 Surrender your life to the Lord right now! He paid the price on the cross so you could do that! You could be “in Christ” instead of “in the flesh”!**

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