

Does Abba love you? Brethren, I can't fathom His love. I've lost a son, but I've never had to OFFER my son *and* be the one ending his life, as was the case with Jesus and His Father. Neither have I ever had to turn my back on and walk away from my suffering son when I had the power to

stop the suffering. Be sure we appreciate what Father and Yeshua, Jesus our Christ, have both done. The New Covenant says Jesus “became sin for us” – or the sin offering, for us.

***track 2, cd

Now all of this has everything to do with my topic today. **It's going to be a real Bible study, so I hope you pull out your Bible and follow along with me to read for yourself some very, very exciting verses:**

Over the years we have learned in Scripture how God dwells in us by His spirit, making us His spiritual house, His spiritual temple, His dwelling place. You and I are the temple of the Living God, for the Eternal says He has come to *dwell* in us by His Spirit (1 Cor. 6:16, 19). The Greek word for “temple” -- ‘naos’ -- actually can refer to the Holy of Holies – the most sacred part of the temple. That’s an incredible concept. That holy, holy, holy God would even care to know my name, let alone consider coming to *dwell* inside of someone like me. Or you. God and His holy perfection dwelling in human flesh. Let’s read it. Let it sink in.

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” 17 **But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.**

18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 **Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you,** whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

Spirit is the reality, much more than flesh and physical things. We become one spirit with Christ, in very real terms, just as Adam and Eve became one flesh, we become one spirit with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17; Eph 5:30-32). We may not fully understand this, as we are flesh and spirit is spirit – but it’s a concept to accept and rejoice over. *We become one spirit with our Beloved Master.*

Scripture will go on to explain how this is possible as we proceed in the sermon. In Ephesians 2:22 says we are “a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”.

1 John 2:24, last half of verse, says, “...we know ***He abides in us***, by His Spirit which He has given us.” Can’t get much clearer than that, right? It is BY, and because of having, His Holy Spirit that we can say God is in us, and that we are in God.

John 14:23

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and **We** will come to him and make **Our** home with him”.

So it’s clear, whether we fully understand all of it, that Holy YHWH comes to live in His people.

God has not always lived in mankind, nor does He reside in all humans now. Prior to Passover and applying it to each of our lives, we were distant from God, dead in our sins, with no hope, no future, cut off from God by our sins – according to **Eph 2:1-5; Isaiah 59:2**. Remember even our parents

Adam and Eve had to leave the presence of God when they chose a different Way, and chose to follow a different master. While we were still sinners, God sent His only Son into the world to die for us, to pay our penalty, to be God's Passover Lamb, and reconcile us to Him.

But it did more than that: it transferred us from the power of darkness to the kingdom of King Jesus and the Father.

Colossians 1:13-14

“He (God) has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

The Mystery

We are already citizens of that kingdom and are ambassadors of God's kingdom here on earth (**Phil. 3:20; 2 Cor. 5:20**). This concept is so intense, so profound, that even Jesus Himself and Paul say it is a mystery – Greek *musterion*, meaning *something secret*. Keep that in mind. We are flesh trying to explain spiritual things, but God is revealing some of His secrets to those who have His Spirit (**1 Cor. 2:7-12**), but there will always be some element of mystery to it until we are changed to spirit. Jesus told his disciples in Mark 4:11 “to you has been revealed the mystery of the kingdom of God...” Satan has his own counterfeit mystery – Babylon the Great (**Rev. 17:5-7**), which we have to renounce and come out of (**Rev 18:4**), before we can be part of God's Way and in Christ. So if you feel there are still some loose ends to all of this, by the end of the sermon, understand: it *is* a mystery, that is gradually being revealed to us who have His Spirit (**Dan.12:9-10**).

So when God offered HIS Passover Lamb, Jesus was the real Lamb. Calvary, the stake, Christ on the tree, BEGINS the incredible love story of YHWH for His creation. The Living God, the Creator of all things, opened the way for a relationship with Him – the very meaning of Eternal Life. He didn't do this because of what I am, or who I am, or even because of what I did. He did this because of who HE is, and what He is. God does not want to be distant from His children, but wants to us to know Him, and wants to know us. The peril is to find Him saying He doesn't know us, as I covered last time.

What is eternal life? Life everlasting is more than just living forever.

John 17:3 says “And ***this is eternal life, that they may know You***, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

We are to come into such a close relationship of knowing Him that Jesus becomes our Beloved. As **Song of Songs** says, in **2:16a** – “My Beloved is mine, and I am His”. Is that your case?

****track 3, cd.

Now I want to kick this notion up a notch: not only is God in us, but ***have you understood that you also are also in Christ, and in God the Father?*** It's not hard to grasp how God can be in *us*, but how about *us* being in God? How can that be? God is up there, God is spirit, and we are flesh.

Some teach we can't be in Christ and the Father now because we still sin, have evil thoughts and so on, and God will not abide any sin. Others say we can be in God, but not fully, until the resurrection. At least when we say it that way, we're at least saying we can be partly in Him. But when I'm in a

room, I'm either in – or out. There are dozens of scriptures which clearly say we are “in Christ” now. Present tense. I should ask also: if we can't be “in God” because of His holiness and our sinfulness still – then why would God come live in US? Wouldn't the same conditions apply?

1 Corinthians 16:24 “My love be *with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*”

1 Peter 5:14 “Greet one another with a kiss of love. **Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus.** Amen.”

Colossians 1:2 “**To the saints and faithful brethren *in Christ*** who are in Colossae...”

Philippians 1:1 “**To all the saints in Christ** Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (also Phil. 4:21)

John 15:4-8 – as we read this, start noticing some of the benefits of being **IN Christ.**

“Abide *in Me*, [some translations or paraphrases say “remain in me”] and I in you. As the branch cannot *bear fruit* of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides *in Me*, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you *abide in Me*, and My words abide in you, you will *ask what you desire*, and it shall be done for you.”

The notion we can't be in God because we are in the flesh, and God is spirit, is because we don't fully grasp the fact that – hear this carefully – *though we are “fleshly”, after conversion and after receiving the Spirit of God, the Eternal no longer sees His children as still being “in the flesh”.* Let's read it. I'll repeat it.

Romans 8:8-11

“So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. [but many scriptures show WE can please God.] 9 ***But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit***, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 ***And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life*** because of righteousness.”

We are not yet spirit beings, but are “in the Spirit” if God's spirit dwells in us. And we are no longer seen as being “in the flesh” – though we are still fleshly. We're no longer dominated and controlled by the flesh, but by God's Spirit. Therefore the Living God can now come dwell in us, for He sees the Spirit of Christ in us, not our old flesh. This will get clearer and clearer as we go along today.

With God's Spirit in us, Paul can even call the Corinthians who were having quite a few problems – “*saints* in Christ” (2 Cor 1:1). Holy ones. Set apart ones. Hagios in the Greek. We are called saints now – the KJV *incorrectly* in some passages says “called *to be* saints” – and the words “to be” are not in the Greek! The NKJV and ASV correctly have those words italicized to show that (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2).

How flesh and blood mortals can be called holy ones, or saints, is explained in the series I gave on Gal.2:20 being crucified, etc – and the series on God's Righteousness, and the sermon New Creation. Those are essential sermons to have heard to fully appreciate this message today.

After accepting Jesus Christ's blood for us, we were baptized. I was always taught that the baptism pictured my burial and then resurrection to new life. But it's more than that. It certainly pictures I died to the self, but Scripture says I was baptized into Christ's death and resurrected with Him into *His* new life, not our new life. His new life is now the life that I am to be leading. This is key. This is what makes it possible for God to dwell in us and for us to dwell in God. Our lives are hidden now in Christ. It is now HIS life that God sees, and not our own, for we died to the self and now live to Christ.

Romans 6:3-6

"Or do you not know that as many of us as *were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?* 4 Therefore we were *buried with Him* through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection"

There is no new life in Christ unless we give up the old life in sin – and our old life was in Babylon. We cannot be in Babylon and be in God. Remember 1 Cor 6? We cannot be joined to a harlot and think we are one with God. The harlot is the world's Babylon. And too many of us are joined inside of her; too much a part of the world still. That is why I gave a sermon recently on "Come out of Her, My People". We have to die to the self, before we can ever be a resurrected into God's new life, right? It's a total commitment. I'm not sure many of us, including me, really understand the totality of this surrender, the completeness of this death of the self, before we can be in Christ. One minister calls it having to "spend our pride", which I think is profound.

*****unleavened bread, Passover (TRACK 4, CD)**

We depict a part of it during these upcoming Days of Unleavened Bread after Passover. I think too many of us have missed what I'm about to say – so I hope you're listening carefully.

Leavened bread pictures our old carnal self. In the same way that we cannot pick out leaven out of a loaf once it is leavened, but must discard it, in the same way *we can't overhaul what was our old self and we can become righteous enough for salvation*. No, our old self is dead. The new self is supposed to be the new life of Christ in us. As Paul says in Gal 2:20 – "I no longer live, Christ lives in me.."

We must throw it *out* as we deleaven for Passover and bring in the entirely new unleavened bread of Jesus Christ. Too many of us think we can make ourselves righteous enough, given enough time, to be saved – but that's like trying to pick the leaven out of leavened bread and hope someday we can say it is good enough to remain in our homes as "unleavened". It won't happen. It's not Biblical. "You are unleavened" (1 Cor 5:7). Christ is the manna from heaven, the bread of God (John 6). We are partakers of *that* One Bread (1 Cor. 10:16-17) if we are in Christ. That is the only way to be unleavened: throw out the old leavening of sinful living and take in Christ. We become what we eat.

When we eat the Passover unleavened bread, we are celebrating the fact that all of us are part of that one body, the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.”

Some of you dwell so much on the physical bread of the days of unleavened Bread and miss the point. As you deleaven, spend more mental time focused on putting out sin and giving up our pride, even more so than just focusing on finding every single crumb in the house. *As you deleaven your house, don't forget to deleaven your heart!* There's leaven in the air, which can leaven a lump of sour dough – so how successful will you be in deleavening anyway? The point of all this was show us to throw out the old self. Then and only then can we have the new life in Christ.

He becomes our Master, supposedly—but I wonder how many of us really understand that. Instead of the world's way of making up goals and hopes and dreams, we do it now God's way of asking our Beloved what He wants for us, and then get in line with His goals. Even our daily and weekly plans should be “if God wills it” (James 4:13-16). Usually we come up with our goals and dreams and ask God to bless that list, and that's backwards.

****We must Be Gifted the Righteousness of God (TRACK 5, CD)

IF we've buried the self with Christ, we have a new life in Christ. But because we are still fleshly, we now have 2 natures. The carnal heart is still in us, which Paul calls “the old man”. It rears its ugly head often and it still hates God and his law. But we now have a 2nd nature – the mind of Christ. The Holy Spirit. These 2 war against each other (Gal. 5:16-18). Which nature wins the war is the nature we feed, listen to, submit to, and choose to obey. If we walk in the spirit, we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. And we can please God and love God with our new nature. This new heart from God does not hate God or His law. David – who had this new heart – said over and over how much he loved God's law. He did not fall into the category of a God-hater that describes people with only the one carnal nature.

What I'm about the cover begins to explain how and why God is able to live in us.

So as a very quick summary, what happens is this: In Romans 7, Paul decries his carnal nature that still seems to win out all too often, and ends the chapter with “Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me...?” He answers, “I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord”. So Christ delivers us, and then he heads straight into Romans 8:1

**** We are no longer condemned***

Romans 8:1:

“Therefore there is now *no condemnation* to those **who are in Christ Jesus**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

Who is no longer condemned? Those who are in Christ. That's what we're talking about. Being “in Christ” and “in God”. It doesn't matter if people still condemn you, and make you pay a heavy price

for sins and stupid mistakes of your past, if you're now "in Christ", you are no longer condemned by God. We should believe this. Too many of us are world class at allowing self-condemnation.

If you really understand it, the righteousness we are to have now is no longer just the righteousness that comes from our own obedience to the law, but a higher righteousness – and this explains how God, and why God, can now live in us and we can live in God: the righteousness we now have is not our own, but the very righteousness of God which He grants to us by faith if we believe. I explain it fully in my Righteousness series.

Let me read it in Philippians 3:6-12, one of my favorite passages. AS we receive this righteousness and this Spirit of God, Christ in us will live as He did before. His mind becomes ours (Phil 2:5), if we let it. He walks in us the way He would have walked on earth—if we submit to Him. He will be obedient in us. But it is Christ's righteousness, not ours. But over time we do become more and more like Christ "Until we grow to the stature of the fullness of Christ" (**Eph 4:13**). Or as Paul put it – "until *Christ* is formed in you" (**Gal. 4:19**). Until Messiah Himself is formed in us.

Philippians 3:6-12, NIV this time

"6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; *concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.* 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to *the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord*, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.* **10 I want to know Christ** and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me"*

Did you get all that? Paul makes it so clear in **Phil 3:9** that he doesn't want his own righteousness from keeping the law, but the righteousness of God Himself, gifted to us (**Rom. 5:17; 4:22-25; 3:21-22; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 11:7**) by faith.

We can have by faith what we could never earn! If we could earn it, it is no longer grace, but wages (**Romans 4:4-5**). If we could attain righteousness good enough for salvation by keeping the law, then Christ died in vain (**Gal. 2:21**). We wouldn't have needed him. But we do need Him – and that is why, in fact, we must be in Him.

Here's the point: God can now dwell in us, and we can dwell in God, because the old self is dead and what Almighty Abba sees is His Son's perfection, not our own failings.

2 Cor 5:20-21

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might **become the righteousness of GOD in Him.**"

So God wants us to be so righteous that He can dwell with us – but the only way is to give us HIS righteousness. *There is no better way to know someone than to live with them*, 24/7 – and that is

what God is doing right now: living IN us and intimately observing and knowing everything about us: everything we think, every place we take Him, every word we make Him hear, everything we see – He sees.

Now wouldn't it make sense that if we are to know GOD intimately, we must also live with HIM and in Him? God makes a way.

Jesus is in the Father. The Father is in Jesus. Jesus says so many times. This is also key to understanding how we come to be in God. Remember that Romans 8:9 says we have the Spirit of Christ and Gal. 2:20 says we live by the life of Christ.

John 14:10-11

“Do you not believe that **I am in the Father, and the Father in Me**? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that **I am in the Father and the Father in Me**, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”

John 17:20-23

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that *they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us*, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 **I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

I hope we're beginning to see how we also will live in God, but not just in the future, but because of being the body of Christ, through Jesus we can say God is in us, and we are in God. Let's keep reading and it will get clearer and clearer. There is no closer relationship – to Almighty Abba – than to grasp you are in Abba, in the Father – as well as in Yeshua, Jesus the Christ.

As we grow, people should be able to see more and more of Christ in each of us, just as Jesus said we could see the Father in Christ.

***in God also TRACK 6, CD.

We're In God the Father also

Some of you will agree we can be “in Christ” – whatever that means – but surely we're not “in God” or in God the Father, some might say. Keep in mind that Jesus is God as well (**John 1:1-3; Titus 2:13**, etc). Thomas, after the resurrection, addressed Jesus as “my Lord and My God” (**John 20:28**). So if we're in Christ, we are automatically “in God” in one sense, if you believe Jesus is God.

1 Thess 1:1 and 2 Thess 1:1 both say the identical thing:

“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians *in God the Father and* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

It doesn't say, “who *will be* in God the Father”. No – it's present tense.

Colossians 3:2-4 (let's read this slowly, as it is so RICH with meaning)

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For *you died*, [remember this key: we died] and your life *is* hidden *with Christ in God*. [It doesn't say “will be”, but “is”] 4 When *Christ who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

You're covered by Jesus' life. The life we are now – is Christ in us. That is the life Father sees. He sees the fact we are not “in the flesh but in the Spirit if we have the Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9). He sees HIS own righteousness covering us, for we asked for it and received it by faith (Rom. 5:7; 4:22-23; Phil 3:8-10).

1 John 4:13-16

“By *this we know that we abide (KJV: DWELL) in Him*, and He in us, *because He has given us of His Spirit*. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, *and he in God*. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and *he who abides (KJV: dwelleth) in love abides in God*, and God in him.”

Pretty clear, isn't it? All present tense.

The Greek here for “abide” is *meno*, and it means to dwell, abide, endure, tarry, remain in, take up residence in, make it your abode, stay with or to live with someone for a time. We live in God. In Him we live, and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). Look up “abide” in Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words. It makes for a very interesting study in this.

So my whole point up to this section of the sermon has been this: God not only comes to live in US, but Scripture says we live now in GOD as well. How? Through Christ, by being in Him first.

******HOW we come to be in God TRACK 7, CD** **HOW WE COME TO BE IN GOD AND Christ**

Now let's examine closely how we come to be in God the Father as well. The entire process of coming to be “in God” is something God does. You and I cannot put ourselves “in God”. After we learn how this happens, we'll study what being in Christ gives to us even in this life now.

This whole thing of being in Christ and in God is God's doing. 1 Cor 1:26-29 speak of God choosing the base things of the world that no flesh should glory, then this statement in verse 30.

1 Cor. 1:30-31

30 But of Him [God the Father] you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God -- and righteousness and sanctification and redemption -- 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

So being “in God” is God's doing – not something we muster up.

The key: receiving God's Spirit, also called “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9).

1 John 4:13

“By this we know that *we abide in Him*, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.”

A big key now: what happens when you receive God's Spirit? How does that make us “in God”?

How does having the Spirit allow us to be in God?**1 Corinthians 12:12-14**

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one **body**, so also is Christ. 13 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body* -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.”

The church is called the body of Christ (**Col. 1:24**). We become parts of Christ's body by God's Spirit. No part of the body of Christ can be unholy, and all parts are a full part of His body – even the uncomely parts. But each has to be holy or else would Jesus have an unholy part?

But the key is that that Holy Spirit of God makes each of us a body part of Christ – and also a part of one another as well.

Romans 12:4-5

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 *so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*” (*Eph 4:25 also*)

Again, this is key to understanding being “in God”: **1 Cor 12:13**

“13 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body* -- whether Jews or Greeks [or Australians, Americans, Britons, or Kenyans, or Ugandans] whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.”

My fingers on my right hand are a part of my left leg, in the sense that they're both part of my one body. They are both a part of Philip Shields, and therefore a part of each other that way. When I stub my toe, my whole body reacts in pain for the toe and with the toe! When I heard about my brother and sister in Kenya being hurt by the mobs, I wept for them, and prayed for them, as if it were my own son or daughter – and I've never ever met those folks. But God's spirit in them flowed in me, and God in me flowed in them – and I felt pain with them, and prayed fervently for Simon and Anne.

Jesus UNDERSTANDS THIS aspect of us being a part of His Body LITERALLY. When He confronted Saul (later called Paul) on the road to Damascus, He demanded to know why Paul was persecuting Him, Christ (**Acts 9:4**). As Paul imprisoned, hurt, stoned, and attacked the members of Christ's body, Jesus took that personally. He personally felt imprisoned, personally felt stoned or chained or beaten – the same as you would if someone were to be nicey-nice to your face but cut your fingers off, or kick you in the shins. You'd take that personally too. In the same way, Jesus takes it personally when we are kind and accepting of one another, even outcasts of society. “When you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you've done it unto me.” And He takes it personally when we have the means to help our poor brothers and sisters and don't help. If we leave them naked and hungry – He takes that personally too. Read it for yourself in Matthew 25!

Who is the “least brethren” to you? Who would you, or your church, be ashamed of having as a member of your church? I know something about that. *Be careful lest you find yourself being ashamed of and even hurting – Jesus – if you are ashamed of someone HE would consider a part of His body, whether or not you or your pastor would consider that person a part of the body of Christ.*

Remember that our Beloved King Jesus says He is not ashamed to call me or you, or any of us, His brothers and sisters (**Heb. 2:11**). Yes, even me – he's not ashamed of. That just amazes me, because all too often, especially in the past, I've been ashamed of *myself*! But Heb. 2:11 says we are all of one, so He is not ashamed to call us brothers.

Do you see why Jesus also takes it personally when we won't welcome one another to our fellowship, to our Passover service, or if we don't accept one another? **Romans 12:5** says that though we are many, we are all one body – whose body? The body of Christ – and it goes on to say “and members of one another”. Are we getting it? Jesus welcomed the outcasts of church groups and of society over and over. The true body of Christ still does that. I'll speak more on this soon. I'm going to ask “Who is the Samaritan in your life?”

If you say you know Jesus, but don't want to know all the parts of His body, then I submit that you don't know Jesus! If I say I like you and welcome you to dinner with me – then I have to like and welcome every bit of your body, including your armpits, your shins, your heels and your backside! Are you getting my point? Some of us in the body of Christ have admittedly been the armpit and backside. I've been. But when you invite Christ into your assembly, or into your home, surely you accept and invite all His body parts, do you not? Even his heels and backside and armpits? I say all this with profound respect, to give glory to Christ and acceptance to all his body parts. Later in 1 Cor 12 Paul addresses the same point about some parts are more comely than others, but each one is a full part of the body of Christ if God's Spirit is seen working in that person.

Now watch again what happens in Col 3:2-4. Paul just says over and over that the new life we have is not our own new life, but Christ living in us. Since Christ is in the Father, and we are in Christ, we are also in the Father through Christ.

Colossians 3:2-4 (let's re-read this slowly, as it is so RICH with meaning)

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For *you died*, [remember this key: we died] and your life *is* hidden **with Christ in God**. [It doesn't say “will be”, but “is”] 4 When *Christ who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

****benefits TRACK 8

BENEFITS FROM BEING IN Christ AND IN GOD

Jot these down, because I was overwhelmed by the list of what being in Christ does for me.

No longer under condemnation

Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now **no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

Are we even “in the flesh” now? NO. We are seen as being “in the spirit”, which is also how and why we can be pleasing to God, as we covered earlier (Rom. 8:5,9-10). That in turn, as we read, transfers us into the kingdom of God as citizens of that kingdom now (Col. 1:12-14; Eph 3:20).

We were once distant – but now brought **are brought near to God, once all sin and condemnation have been cleared from us by the blood of Christ, and once we are in Christ.**

Ephesians 2:13

"But *now in Christ* Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ"

We now live in the Spirit, which is brand new for us – and we are a new creation. An overhaul is not brand new. "Brand new" is something that has never been before, but brand new.

2 Cor 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone *is in Christ*, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." *If not in Christ, you are still in your old self.*

In Christ, we have our sins removed and His righteousness becomes ours by faith (Rom 5:17) God offers us a swap: He will be our righteousness, and He will take our wickedness away from us.

2 Cor 5:21 "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become *the righteousness of God in Him.*"

1 Corinthians 1:30-31

"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God -- and righteousness and sanctification and redemption -- 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."

We can have by faith, that which we could never earn.

Philippians 3:8-11

"Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be *found in Him*, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, *but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith*; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

In Christ, we all become Abraham's seed, heirs of all the promises now, regardless of our race or nationality.

Galatians 3:28-29

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; *for you are all one in Christ Jesus*. 29 And **if you are Christ's**, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We don't often act as one. But the time is coming we must. Jesus has sheep "not of this flock" (John 10). Don't think the "body of Christ" is confined to your little – or big -- church group or organization.

This is where the world finally learns who we're heirs of! After clearly explaining in Romans 8:1-9 that we are in Christ, in the Spirit, Paul goes on to explain in Romans 8:12-17 that we are debtors to obey God now, as you would if He truly were your Master. And by God's spirit we are now children – and co-heirs of all things with King Yeshua, the Son of God. Whether you live in a mobile home, a shack, or an apartment, or a mud hut -- if you are in Christ, you an heir of God Himself (Rom.8:17). I know we can't even begin to grasp it.

How near can we get? Conveyed right into His kingdom. Now are we citizens of that kingdom. You can't be a citizen of ANY kingdom unless you're considered already a child in that kingdom.

We're citizens (Philippians 3:20) and ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20) of the Kingdom of God, because we're already a part of it. How? Because we're in Christ. Is Christ already in the kingdom? Yes. Is He already on His throne? Yes.. Is He a part of the Kingdom of God? Yes. Therefore if we are in Him, we are wherever He is.

Colossians 1:12-14

"...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom* we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

Ephesians 1:1-14 is chock full of a list of some of the benefits of abiding in Christ:

Ephesians 1:1-14 (as you read, notice the things being in Christ does for us. Look for "us" and "we" all through here)

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful *in Christ Jesus*: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has *blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*, 4 just as *He chose us in Him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having *predestined us* to adoption as *sons by Jesus Christ to Himself*, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of *His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved [the One He loves. And remember Jesus Himself asks God to love US, in the same way as God loves HIM (John 17:23,26). We do not always do the works of Jesus – but IN Christ, God sees Jesus, not Philip]*

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the *forgiveness* of sins, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having *made known to us the mystery of His will*, according to His good pleasure which He purposed *in Himself*, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might *gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven and which are on earth -- in Him. 11 *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined* according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 *In Him you also trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the *gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed* with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."

So what does Ephesians 1 ADD to our growing list of the benefits we have in Christ:

- we're blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ (v.3)
- we're chosen in Him (v.4)
- we're predestined us to be His children (v.5)
- we've been made acceptable by His grace, in the Beloved (v.6)
- we have redemption in Him, the forgiveness of sins (v7; also Col. 1:13-14)

- In him he's made known the mystery of His will (v.9)
- We'll be among those gathered together in one, in Christ, v.10
- In him we've obtained an inheritance (v.11)- as co-heirs with Christ! (Romans 8)
- We've learned to trust in Him through the gospel of your salvation (v.13)
- In Him we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing our inheritance (v.13-14).

Now add to that list all the other things we've already seen:

- no longer condemned
- have been brought near to God Himself, in Him
- Received and been gifted His righteousness and wisdom by His faith, in Him
- A new creation in Christ, a new man, a new person
- being able to do all things, but only in Christ
- being able to live by HIS power and everything that is Christ's!

So do you want to be IN Christ – or not in Christ? Let's continue!

In Christ, we now have boldness and confidence to come before the very Holy of Holies

Ephesians 3:11-12 (also Hebrews 4:16)

"according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 *in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.*"

Now: when you pray "in Jesus name" – doesn't that mean so much more to you now? You're not just praying by his authority. It's much more than that. You're praying as if you are Jesus Himself because you are in a sense, as part of His Body. He told us to pray in His name now.

Paul tells us we should now live by God's faith, the faith of the son of God in us, not our own puny faith. And as the body of Christ, we should now function and meet every situation the way Jesus would. When Jesus prayed, He prayed with confidence. He thanked God for multiplying the food while there were still 5 loaves and 2 fish.

He thanked God for having heard Him while Lazarus was still dead in the tomb!

In Christ, we have access to God's treasures of true wisdom and knowledge Colossians 2:2-3

In Christ, we experience the meaning behind the circumcision of Christ: "putting off the body of sins of the flesh", buried and raised with and in Him and we now live in Him

Colossians 2:11-15

"In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, **by the circumcision of Christ, 12 **buried with Him in baptism**, in which you also were **raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.** 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has **made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,** 14 **having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us,** which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."**

Our circumcision is not easier in the New Covenant. Though men no longer have to have their foreskins cut off, as the sign they are God's people, today it is far more bloody: we have to give God our very heart. Do we even begin to understand what that is saying? It is a total surrender, and death of the self.

IN Christ, IS OUR LIFE – ETERNAL LIFE

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is *eternal life in Christ* Jesus our Lord”

John 1:4

“*In Him* was *LIFE*, and the life was the light of men.”

We have confidence now when we didn't before. My confidence is not in my own abilities. That is not what I am teaching. Jesus Himself said of himself He could do nothing (**John 5:19**), but everything He did was the Father working in Him. He adds later that neither can we do anything unless we are abiding in Him (**John 15:5**). Paul positively says HE *could* do all things through Christ (**Philippians 4:13**).

***the evidence Track 9

THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE IN HIM

Frankly in Christ we should have His humility as well, if we're letting Him live in us.

In Christ, we should have peace in a storm, for that is what Christ had in a storm. He is Lord over the storms of life – asleep in the stern of the boat during the storm. Even after disasters in our life, we should in Christ – after normal grieving – be able to say “It is well with my soul” (written by Horatio Spafford, after losing his 4 daughters in a shipwreck around 1871).

“When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.”

In Christ, we should have PEACE.

John 14:27-28

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

LOVING GOD AND LOVING PEOPLE

1 John 4:13-16 (especially verse 16, end)

“**By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us**, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. 15 **Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.** 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and **he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**”

In fact, in 1 John 3:14, we are warned that if we don't love our brother, we abide in death – and we're certainly not abiding in God. If you get sucked into the mood and spirit of Satan, and hate those of other races, of other tribes or of other cultures – we are proving we are not in God. We can't be! For our God died for all peoples, all races, all cultures, all tribes and groups.

IF we abide in God, WE will now LIVE HOLY and obedient LIVES – as Christ would, if we let Him lead our lives.

1 John 2:5-6

“But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. **By this we know that we ARE in Him [not “will be” in Him]** 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” (See also 1 Peter 1:14-16 – be holy in all your conduct, for HE is holy)

Titus 2:11-14 says we should live soberly, righteously and godly

1 John 3:24

“Now he who **keeps His commandments** abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”

THE RESULT OF BEING IN GOD:

Confidence in the outcome. Victory in Christ.

1 John 2:28 “And now, little children, **abide in Him**, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”

Why? Because Jesus has already won. **1 Cor 15:57** says God gives us the victory through Jesus Christ. We are more than conquerors through Him (**Rom 8:37**), not just by our own efforts. In fact, we overcome – according to **Rev. 12:11**, by the blood of the Lamb and by our testimony.

2 Corinthians 2:14

“Now thanks be to **God who always leads us in triumph in Christ**....

In the end we win – because He has already won. And we are in Him.

1 John 5:20 "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; **and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.**"

I think this is a wonderful, joyful mystery that God is letting His people see and it is just so wonderful. What it portends is huge.

We are the body of Christ. Only one body. He, not any human leader, is the head of that body. Shortly we'll all be brought together as living stones to form the perfect holy temple of God.

1 Thess 4:16-17

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the *dead in Christ will rise first*. And those of us who remain - - who are alive in “Christ”, will be changed.”

We will stand perfected before God at that point. How? By our own merits? Oh no. Remember the flesh is dead, and at baptism we were resurrected with Christ and became a part of HIS perfect body – without spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such thing.

Being in Christ means we are being transformed to think like Him, be like Him, be One in Him. Phil 2:5 – we are to let His mind be in us, which was in Christ Jesus, and it will become ours.

And we are part of His very body- Holy One - – awaiting the resurrection when our lowly bodies will finally be transformed into a likeness of His glorious body. At that time, literally and truly and perfectly without spot or wrinkle, without blemish, without stain, without guilt, without anything that can be said against you or me. Nothing bad, and everything good, and holy, and right and perfect. At that moment we will stand before our God as one without blame, without fault.

All because of being in Christ now, and in God now – and all that it portends. Perfect in Christ. Not in our own merit or our own righteousness. Let’s read it. (Greek: perfect = mature, complete, lacking nothing).

Colossians 1:27-29

“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: **which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory. 28 **Him we preach**, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that ***we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus***. 29 To this end ***I also labor***, *striving according to His working* which works in me mightily.”

Jude 24-25

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.”

And then what? We become fully one with Christ in the marriage supper. Jesus said all that was the Father’s was now his, and Rom 8 says Jesus is heir of all things, and we are co-heirs with HIM! Of all things – because we are in Him.

All of this – made possible by God sending His Son to live a perfect life, die for us, and then bring us into HIS body, so we can be in Christ and In God – now, in this life. What a glorious gift this is from God our father.

Have a wondrous Passover – and rejoice in the victory we have in the Lamb of God. Until next time, your servant Philip Shields.....