

In Christ

In studying God's Word, we see these terms "in Christ," "in the Lord" and "in Christ Jesus." But look as carefully as you can, you will never find the term "in Jesus" or "in Jesus Christ." Have you ever wondered why? Perhaps not, because it may have seemed trivial or irrelevant. But nothing in God's profound and inerrant Word is trivial or irrelevant, as this little observation may help to illustrate.

Jesus is the earthly name of our Lord. When spoken of as Jesus Christ while He lived, it meant that Jesus was the Christ positionally, and the One who would through His death and resurrection enter His full glory and power functionally. Christ which means the anointed one is the name of the office into which He was fully instituted after His resurrection and His anointing by the Father. This is when He acquired the full manifestation of Christ our Savior, both positionally and functionally. Peter reveals this, but in such subtle terms that, without further evidence, it could be easily missed, when in Acts 2:36 he says, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Notice God made Jesus Lord and Christ. The grammar suggests that He didn't have that status until God made it so. He did this on the cross and at the resurrection. That is why we find Abraham and Lazarus on the paradise side of Sheol in Luke 16. This is the same place where in Luke 23:43 Jesus tells the thief, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." The thief was saved, just as was Abraham, but Jesus had not yet been given the power to raise them to heaven. After His three days and nights in the "belly of the earth" on the good side of shoel where saved souls waited for Him, He was now able to redeem them, and take everyone who was there to heaven, through the power He now had as Christ and Savior.

We should remember that Scripture makes it clear that He deliberately limited His power as God during the time period when He chose to live on earth as man. Philippians 2:5-11 speaks of this great "kenosis."

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was
made in the likeness of men:
and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto
death, even the death of the cross.

Consider this analogy. A person graduates from medical school and thereby achieves the positional title of Doctor. It must be considered positional until he or she takes the exams and becomes licensed to practice medicine. Only then can the title Doctor be considered functional. The doctor can not function as such without this additional credential. Likewise, Jesus could not function as Christ in whom we could reside, or as our Savior, who could open the way to heaven, until He obtained the credentials bestowed by the Father at the resurrection.

Jesus was a man and also the Son of God. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6). The child became the man, Jesus. As the only begotten Son of God, He was no less than equal to the Father in the triune Godhead, but for His earthly mission He shed as noted, most of His Godly powers. Yet, Scripture makes note of His “saving” or bringing eternal life to many even as He walked as man. By being the Christ positionally, He could make that commitment, as it had been made throughout the ages before, through the covering but not the forgiving of sins. That is why we find Abraham waiting in shoel and not already in heaven. In these situations, He gave the promise of salvation through faith as it had been given to the saints of the Old Testament. He became the Christ affectually and the fulfillment of the promises of actual redemption. This was affect after the resurrection, not before.

Thus, as long as Jesus lived on earth no one could be “in Him.” If they could have, they would have had to share the cross and the work of redemption. As God’s only begotten Son, He alone was ordained from the beginning of time to become the Redeemer of all of that portion of mankind who would believe, confess, repent, and through faith, be saved. Jesus became fully functional as the Christ, the Savior, after the resurrection, and

thereafter He was called the Christ Jesus, whenever one's ability to be in Him was expressed. Thus, when in 1Corinthians 1:30 Paul says, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who God is made unto us..." he is saying that now we too can be in Christ or in Christ Jesus.

However, we may yet be confused and ask as to the difference between Jesus Christ and Christ Jesus. To this I suggest that Jesus Christ was the anointed, as it was the custom to anoint or consecrate kings and priests. It was usually an authenticating ritual which set apart certain persons. Jesus was one of these persons. However, as the Messiah, He became The Anointed One, the One and Only Christ Jesus, the One through sins could be forgiven, not just covered.

How wonderful is His Word, for He is the Word, He is our Creator, our Lord, and now through the cross and His shed blood, He is our Christ the Savior who can dwell in us and we in Him.