

Rise Up And Build

"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18

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How Does One Enter Christ?

The question which serves as the title of this article is one that naturally arises in the minds of those who study the New Testament. Especially is this point suggested by such scriptures as Eph. 1:3 wherein we learn that "*all spiritual blessings*" are "*in Christ*," and 2 Tim. 2:10 in which we read of "*the eternal salvation which is *in Christ Jesus*."*

If "*all spiritual blessings*" are "*in Christ*," it necessarily follows that **no** spiritual blessing is found outside Christ. Moreover, if salvation is "*in Christ*," then those outside of Christ are not saved. Thus, it is of paramount importance for every accountable person to be "*in Christ*."

However, one is not "*in Christ*" merely because of some "stroke of good fortune." He is not "*in Christ*" just because his parents were Christians. Nor is he "*in Christ*" simply because it was his privilege to have been born in a so-called "Christian nation." No one is "*in Christ*" unless he has entered Christ. So the importance of the question which heads this article, "**How does one enter Christ**," should be self-evident

The Same Answer for Everyone

When convinced of God's readiness to save Gentiles, the apostle Peter exclaimed: "*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*" (Acts 10:34-35). As another apostle expressed it, "*there is no respect of persons with God*" (Rom. 2:11). This being true, we are forced to conclude that the means of entering Christ is the same for all people everywhere. If it were otherwise, then God would be what the inspired Peter said He is "**not**," namely, a "*respecter of persons*." The idea that "you can believe it your way and I will believe it my way, and we will both go to heaven together" is patently false. Moreover, that statement borders on blasphemy, for it indirectly constitutes a denial of God's very nature!

**The Answer Is Not Found
In subjectivism.**

Unfortunately, multitudes ignore objective Bible truth while depending upon subjective human feelings. Many say, “I **know** I am saved because I **feel** saved.” Others have been observed raising one hand about shoulder high, with the other hand on the physical blood pump, called a “heart,” and then saying, “I wouldn’t trade what I **feel** right here for a stack of Bibles this high!” They claim to have had a religious “experience,” so they refuse to listen to a man who has a Bible **reason**! But that which gives one man a good feeling, or a warm emotional “high,” differs from that which it takes to give another person the same feeling. Again, we affirm “*that God is no respecter of persons*,” a truth that necessarily implies the falsity of the merely subjective approach.

We are not, of course, denying the existence of man’s emotional make-up, nor that the emotions are stirred in the realization of salvation. Quite to the contrary! Upon his obedience to Christ, and his consequent assurance of pardon, the Eunuch “*went on his way rejoicing*” (Acts 8:39). However, the Eunuch “felt good” because he had biblical **assurance** of pardon. He did not claim pardon merely because he felt good! Too many people base their reasons on their **feelings**, instead of their feelings on their **reasons**! There is a difference! They have reversed the divine order.

Pardon Takes Place In The Mind of God.

If the preceding paragraphs are true, then this conclusion is inescapable. However, it should be even more apparent when one considers three very important facts: (1) Man was created in the “*image*” of God, Gen. 1:27. (2) All sin is “*against God*,” Gen. 39:9; Luke 15:18; (3) Sin **separates man from God**, Isa.59:1-2.

Hence, if God is the One offended by sin, then He is the One Who determines the how and the when that pardon takes place. We are fortunate in that God has revealed the terms of pardon in His inspired word, the Bible, so that we, through a study of the scriptures, are also enabled to know by faith when our merciful God grants pardon to ill-deserving sinners. But let us not forget that God “calls the shots,” and that His revealed will is unchanged by the contradictory assertions of emotionally charged sinners who think they are saved simply because they feel good about themselves.

Pardon demands Faith.

“...*he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*” (Heb . 11:6). Not only is faith in God the Father necessary, it is also required that we believe in Jesus Christ, for Jesus said, “*if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*” (John 8:24).

Faith is the result of testimony. “*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17).

However, let us remember that faith alone will **not** save. This statement is not even subject to question by those who know and believe the Bible, for the Scripture says,

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24)! The faith that saves is the *“faith which worketh by love”* (Gal. 5:4). Saving faith is **obeying** faith.

Pardon Demands Repentance.

Inasmuch as man turns from God when he sins, then he must turn from sin in order to return to God. Hence, God *“now commandeth all men everywhere to **repent**”* (Acts 17:30). Repentance includes a change of heart toward sin that results in a change of life or of living. In Matt. 21:29 repentance involved a complete “about face.” Repentance includes the *“fruits meet for repentance”* (cf. Matt. 3:8). He who has not turned from his sinful ways has not repented!

Pardon Includes Confession.

*“Whosoever therefore shall **confess** me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven”* (Matt. 10:32). *“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth **confession** is made unto salvation”* (Rom. 10:10). As did the Eunuch, it behooves the sinner to confess, saying, *“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”* (Acts 8:37).

Pardon Demands Baptism.

Through faith, the **heart** is purified (Acts 15:9), and through repentance the **life** is changed (Matt. 21:29). However, the state or the relationship is not changed until one is scripturally baptized. That this is true is made evident by the fact that Bible baptism is *“for the remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38), and it is the means whereby one **enters** into Jesus Christ. Can anyone deny this statement in view of the fact that the inspired apostle plainly said, *“For as many as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:27)? In fact, the following verse (v. 28) should squelch all controversy on this point because we therein learn that those who were *“**baptized into Christ**”* are identified as being *“**in Christ Jesus.**”* They were *“in Christ”* because they had **entered** Christ, and they entered Christ through baptism. Outside of Christ, there is no salvation, and apart from scriptural baptism there is no *“in Christ”* relationship.

Conclusion

Friend, this article was written and this paper was published with you in mind. God loves you. Christ died for you. If you have not scripturally obeyed the *gospel*, which is *“the power of God unto Salvation,”* Rom. 1:16, it behooves you to become concerned about your own soul! We will be happy to study with you, encourage, and assist you in your obedience to God. Do not delay, for you have no assurance of a tomorrow (James 4:13-14). And “forever” is a long time to suffer the consequences of spiritual neglect!

*** — B. Witherington