

AM I IN CHRIST OR JUST RELIGIOUS?

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30-31 • TV070A

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1 Corinthians 1:30-31

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

I’m asking you to turn in your Bible today to the book of **1 Corinthians chapter 1:30**.

Now here’s the subject: **“AM I IN CHRIST OR AM I JUST RELIGIOUS?”**

Now man is a religious creature. He’s not only a social creature, he’s not only a physical creature, but he’s a religious creature. And we see this by all the religious shrines, churches, religious pictures, all of the statues, and cults, and denominations, and philosophies that we have about us today. Man is a religious creature.

When our Lord came to this earth He came to a religious world. Did you know that? When Christ came it was a very religious world. He was surrounded by temples, tabernacles, synagogues and places of worship. They were everywhere.

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And He was surrounded by ceremonies and sacrifices and all kinds of religious rituals, Holy Days, and Feast Days. This was a religious world to which our Lord came and He was surrounded by teachers, theologians, religious leaders, and men who fasted and prayed and taught the Scriptures and stood on the street corner and prayed.

He was surrounded by these things, the men who claimed to know God, though Christ Himself said, *“You do not know me nor my Father.”* But these men were religious. They were very religious.

It’s a religious world. And our Lord came to a religious world and man today is a religious creature. And when our Lord sent His disciples out to preach He sent them out to preach to a religious world. And if you’ll turn to **Acts the 17th chapter, verse 22**, you will hear Paul saying that in **Acts 17:22**; listen to Him; *“Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and he said: ye men of Athens; I perceive, (I understand) that in all things you are too superstitious (more religious than most).”* We are talking about Athens, not Jerusalem, not Bethlehem, but Athens.

And He says, *“For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.”*

Yes; this is a religious world and man is a religious creature. And our Lord came to a religious world and it was religious leaders that demanded His death and His crucifixion. And when the disciples went forth to preach, they went forth to preach to a religious people.

And the thing that I dread and fear more than anything else is to be religious and not know God. You say you believe in God: *“Well the devil believes in God and trembles.”* Do you believe that Christ died on the cross and that He was buried and rose again? Every demon in hell believes that.

Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God? Did you know that when our Lord was tempted of Satan in the wilderness and on the that high mountain when Satan tried Him and tested Him and tempted Him; He quoted Scripture to him?

That’s right! He said, *“And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”*

And Jesus answering said unto him, *“It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”* Yes, Satan is also a religious creature.

And the thing that I fear more than any other thing in this world is for it to be said of me as it was said of so many back then; *“They had a form of godliness but denied the power thereof. They*

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were ever learning, and never coming to a knowledge of the truth.” To speak with my mouth and call Him Lord and my heart be far from him.

Joseph and Mary had been to Jerusalem to worship. They had been there to keep a particular Feast Day. And the child Jesus was with them. He was eleven or twelve years of age. And they were leaving Jerusalem, going back to their home, and the Scripture says in the book of **Luke** *“that they traveled a day’s journey, supposing Jesus to be with them.”*

And at the end of that day’s journey they began to look for him. Mary said to Joseph, “Where is he?” Joseph said, “I thought he was with you.” Mary said, “I thought he was with you.” They had gone that entire day’s journey supposing; now listen to this, supposing that he was with them.

Now, why is life called in the Scripture, *“A day’s journey?”* I don’t want to travel a day’s journey with all of my theology, doctrine, orthodoxy, law, religious associations, morality, works, deeds, ceremony and rituals, travel all this time and come to the end of that journey and discover that He never was with me.

That’s what He’ll say to them in the Judgment; He said, *“Many will say unto me in that day: Lord didn’t we prophesy in your name.”* They were religious. *“Didn’t we cast out devils in your name? Didn’t we do many wonderful works in your name? And I will profess unto them: I never knew you.”*

You say, “Are those people sincere?” I believe they are. They’re claiming sincerity. They’re claiming that their works were done in the name of Jesus Christ. That’s what they said, *“We did many wonderful works.”*

And notice too, the Lord didn’t deny that they preached, nor did He deny that they cast out devils, nor did He deny that they had done many wonderful works, but He denied them. He said, *“I never knew you.”*

“You are ever learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth, ever learning, having a form of godliness, having a form of religion, but not knowing the power thereof.”

I want you to listen to our text. In **1 Corinthians 1:30**; now listen to this and I believe this text will help you to understand the difference between being in religion and in Christ; there is a difference.

Man is a religious creature by nature. All men have a form of religion. All men have some kind of refuge, a religious refuge. There’s a difference in being in religion and being in Christ, being in the church, and being in Christ, being in morality and orthodoxy and being in Christ.

George Whitfield called this “the most comprehensive verse in the Bible, the most comprehensive verse in the Bible.” Listen to it, **1 Corinthians 1:30-31**; *“But of Him are ye in*

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Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: "That according as it is written; he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

Now, if you'll look at this verse with me it'll help you to answer the question; "Am I in Christ or am I in religion?" Do you dare examine yourself? I'll examine myself with you by the Word of God, not by my feelings, not by my experience, or not by the word of someone else, but by the Word of God; "Am I in Christ or am I just in religion?"

Well let's look at the first statement. I want to divide this Scripture into three parts:

First of all: The fountain of all blessings!

Secondly: The blessings!

Thirdly: The results!

First of all: The fountain of all blessings!

Now listen to this in **1 Corinthians 1:30**. You take your Bible and follow along with me; He says, "*But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, but of Him are you in Christ Jesus.*" No more important statement was ever uttered and all who lay claim to a religious hope would do well to study this statement very carefully: "*Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus.*"

Let's take the last two words first, "*In Christ,*" not in religion, not in the law, not in the right church, not in the right theology or doctrine, but in Christ Jesus.

That's what Paul was talking about when he said, "*O that I may win Christ and be found in Him.*" And then in **John 15:5 and 6**; that's what our Lord was talking about when He said; "*I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him; the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing If a man abides not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned.*"

"*But of God are you in Christ.*" Are you in Christ? You have no spiritual life at all except in Christ, none whatsoever. Because; listen to the Bible; we are chosen in Him, we are redeemed in Him, "*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*"

"*We are accepted in the beloved.*" The love of God is in Christ. "*Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.*" We are crucified in Christ, buried and seated in Christ on the right hand of God in the heavenlies.

Now my friend; if you're satisfied to make a religious profession, if that satisfies you, if you are satisfied to join a religious organization or accept one that has been handed down through the years, through your family; if you're satisfied to turn over a new leaf and memorize some doctrine and call that salvation, if you're satisfied to do that and call that salvation; that's your affair but that's not enough for me.

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And that's not the salvation of the Bible and that's not the redemption of the Bible; the salvation and redemption which God speaks of in His Word is a vital, living, union, with a person in Christ. He said, *"I am the head and you are the body."*

And we're as much in Christ as this body is one with this head and just as much as the vine and the branch. He said, *"I'm the vine; you're the branches. Without me you can do nothing."* Are you in Christ, in a living, personal, vital union, in Christ?

Now watch this, *"But of Him are you in Christ."* Now you can get into religion by yourself but it takes an act of God to get you in Christ. You can get in the church by yourself; that's no problem, most churches are pretty anxious to get members; they'll take about anything.

But you can get in the church by yourself but not in Christ except by a miracle of God's grace. You can get in the church simply by expressing a desire to do so but it takes regeneration and the new birth and a miracle of God to put you in Christ.

"But of Him are you in Christ Jesus." The first cause of this living, vital union with Christ lies with the eternal God who gave you to Christ before the world began. Listen to our Lord in **John 6:37**; *"All that my Father giveth me shall come to me. And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent me. And this is the will of Him that sent me that all which He hath given me I should lose nothing but raise it up again at the last day."*

That's right! If you are in Christ, according to the Master Himself, you were given to Christ before the world began. You were chosen in Him; that's right.

And not only your election is of God but your new birth is of God: *"Of God are you in Christ."* The preacher didn't put you there. Mom and Daddy didn't put you there; God put you there. That's what the Bible says.

In **John 1:11** it says; *"He came unto His own and His own received Him not. But to as many as received Him to them gave He the right, the privilege, to become sons of God which were born not of blood, (that is not of natural family inheritance), not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God."* They were born of God. Those who receive Christ, those who are sons of God were born of God.

And then your repentance and faith, your call to faith, is of God. Paul said in **Galatians 1:15**; *"God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace was pleased to reveal His Son in me."*

Paul had a revelation of Christ to his heart. And that revelation was given by God Himself. That's what Christ said to His disciples; He said; *"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"*

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And they said, “*Well some say you’re John the Baptist and some say you are Elias and some say you are one of the prophets.*” But He said, “*Whom do you say that I the Son of man am?*” And Peter said: “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*”

And our Lord replied, “*Blessed are thou Simon Barjona. Flesh and blood did not reveal that to you but my Father which is in heaven.*” What am I saying? I’m saying what Paul wrote here in **1 Corinthians 1:30**; is the fountain of blessings is Christ.

And the way a man gets in Christ is by an act of God, “*Of Him are you in Christ Jesus.*” And not only that; but right now, you who are in Christ are kept in Christ by an act of God. You read **1 Peter chapter 1** and it tells us: “*We’re kept by the power of God through faith, (not apart from faith, not in spite of faith), but through faith.*”

But it’s God who keeps us. “*Of Him are you in Christ*” and it doesn’t matter who you are either. It doesn’t matter whether you’re a preacher, a deacon, a Sunday school teacher, or whether you do nothing; if you are in Christ, “*But of Him are you in Christ Jesus.*”

You say, “I believe.” Certainly you do; the Holy Spirit enables a man to believe but that man believes. You say, “I repented.” Certainly you did. The Holy Spirit enables you to repent and gives you cause to repent and gives you power to repent, but you repent.

But you say, “But I believed on Christ.” Well of course you did: “*Without faith it’s impossible to please God*” and God doesn’t believe for you. “*Faith is the gift of God*” but you believe.

“*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Son of God and believe in thine heart that God raised you from the dead thou shalt be saved.*” God doesn’t believe for you but God enables you believe. “*It’s of Him that you are in Christ Jesus.*”

As I said before, if you’re in religion, you got there by yourself. If you’re in tradition, you got there by yourself. If you’re in ritualism you got there by yourself. If you are in legalism you got there by yourself, but if you are in Christ; that was the gift of God: “*But of Him are you in Christ Jesus.*”

Secondly: We’ve seen the fountain of all blessings, now; let’s look at the blessings. “*But of Him are you in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us;*” not only are we in Christ by the power of God but Christ is our Surety by the power of God. Not only are we in Christ by the purpose of God but Christ is unto us all of these things by the purpose of God.

He said, “*I came to do the will of Him that sent me.*” God sent His Son into the world to redeem sinners. It’s God who purposed and planned salvation and predestinated His mercy and His grace to sinners. God did it! “*Of God are you in Christ who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*”

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Now the finger of God points at Christ and says, “There’s wisdom, there’s wisdom.” All you need to know of God is in Christ. *“He that hath seen me, hath seen my Father,”* Christ said. All you need to know of God is in Christ.

All you need to know of creation is in Christ; all things were made by Him and for Him and because of Him. *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and was God and all things were made by Him.”*

All you need to know of truth is in Christ. He said, *“I am the truth. You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.”* Christ is the truth. The truth is not a systematic theology. The truth is not a list of doctrines. The truth is not some discovery of a certain way to do things; the truth is Christ. All you need to know of truth is in Christ.

All you need to know of life and death is in Christ. He said, *“I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live.”* All you need to know of justice is in Christ. *“He is just and justifier.”*

And all you need to know of eternity is in Christ. He said to His disciples, *“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I’ll come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also.”*

What do you want to know about the future, about eternity, about what’s in the next millennium? You’ll find it all in Christ. It’s to be with Christ. He is our wisdom. We understand in Him how God can be just and justify the ungodly. *“Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?”*

That’s all understood in Christ. He is the wisdom of God and the power of God. The finger of God points to Christ and says, “There’s righteousness.” *“He of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness.”*

This is my need; this is your need, righteousness; that’s what we need because we are so sinful. My thoughts are sinful, my imaginations are sinful, our motives are sinful, our attitudes are sinful, and our words are sinful.

“In our flesh dwelleth no good thing.” We wouldn’t want anybody to look into our minds or into our hearts and see what’s there would we, all the time? But God sees. *“God looks not on the outward countenance but God looks on the heart.”*

And we’re so sinful. *“There’s none that doeth good. There’s none that understandeth. There’s none that seeketh after God.”* Our so-called righteousness’s which we lay claim to are nothing but *“filthy rags. We all do fade as the leaf. Who shall stand in His holy presence, he that hath spotlessly clean hands and a pure heart?”* And that leaves all of Adam’s race out.

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But Christ is our righteousness. God says; “Take a look; there is righteousness, right there in the person of His beloved Son.” *“In Adam we died. In Christ we’re made alive. And by the disobedience of one we became sinners. By the obedience of Christ we were made righteous.”* Yes sir; He is our righteousness.

Do you know who the Pharisee’s were? The Pharisees, I suppose, were the most moral, religious people, of their day. They were teachers of the Bible. And our Lord spoke one day and had something to say about, *“That which cometh out of the heart condemns a man, out of the heart the mouth speaketh.”*

And the disciples said, *“The Pharisee’s were offended by what you said.”* And He said: *“Except your righteousness exceed their righteousness you shall not enter the Kingdom of God.”* We’ve got to have a righteousness better than the best human being on this earth. You say, “How can we obtain thereunto?” Only in Christ; He is our righteousness.

And He is our sanctification. Righteousness and sanctification must always go together. I look upon righteousness as being that imputed holiness which Christ charges to our account and sanctification being that imparted holiness which the Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, brings into our hearts, in our natures, and in our life.

We’re not only legally holy but God’s people are actually holy. That’s right; *“They’re being conformed to the image of Christ.”* But Christ is our holiness. It’s His Spirit that enables us to love and to forgive and to believe.

It’s His spirit that brings us to grace and mercy that we need; it is His spirit. We don’t take any credit for it. I don’t care what you do or what you know or what you give; you take no credit for it if you’re in Christ because you know it’s not you but the grace of God in you. There’s nothing commendable about any of it but Christ.

And the finger of God points to Christ and says, “There’s redemption, there’s wisdom, there’s righteousness, there’s sanctification, and there’s redemption.” It’s all in Christ: He of God is made unto me all I need, all I need.

Now some feel that redemption ought to have been mentioned first. In other words we ought to say, “But of Him are you in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us redemption.” Well, redemption is the Alpha but it is the Omega too.

Yes sir! We are not yet, now watch this; we are redeemed but we are not yet, (and I wouldn’t offend you), fully redeemed. We consider salvation from the Scripture in three tenses; we have been saved, **Ephesians 2:8 and 9:** *“For by grace have you been saved.”* We are being saved; *“To them who are being saved it is the power of God. And now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”*

Actually my friend; someday I shall fall asleep; I shall fall asleep rejoicing that I’m redeemed in Christ, by the blood of Christ. But not even then will I realize the full measure of redemption.

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When will we have the full measure of redemption? When God brings these bodies out of the grave and they are perfectly conformed to His Holy image. David said, *“I shall be satisfied when I awake with His likeness.”*

Now that’s when we are going to be redeemed. That’s when you can say, redemption, when the redemption of the body is complete. That’s what we’re waiting for. Read **Romans 8**; we’re waiting for the redemption of our bodies so we’ll be like Christ. *“Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise,”* our Lord said to the thief. That’s when I will be fully redeemed.

Now watch the last results of being in Christ: *“Of Him are you in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”* What’s the result? *“That according as it is written he that glorieth, (and man is going to glory in something; yes sir he is man is going to glory in something).*

We are born with a natural pride. We’ll either glory in our good works or glory in our morality or glory in our doctrine or glory in our denomination or glory in our accomplishments but man’s going to glory in something.

But He said: *“He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.”* And when you realize that salvation is not something you’ve done for God but something God has done, is doing, and will do in Christ for you; you’ll start glorying in the Lord.

**“To God be the glory
Great things He hath done
So loved He the world
He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life
An atonement for sin
And opened the life gate
That all may go in.”**