

## **THE BELIEVER'S INTIMATE UNION WITH CHRIST**

There are a number of word pictures given in the Scriptures to help us understand the significance of what it means to be “in Christ”.

Christ spoke of Himself as the vine and His people as the branches. We are organically and vitally connected to Him, so much so that Christ said, “without Me you can do nothing” (Jn. 15:1-5).

The oneness of a husband-and-wife relationship portrays this intimacy of union we as believers now have “in Christ”. After stating the marriage formula of “**the two shall become one flesh**,” Paul then in 1 Cor 6:17 says, “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” One flesh is close, but one spirit is even closer.

Paul likes to use the head and body analogy. Christ is the head, and we as His people are His body. Head and body are inseparably connected (cf. Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18).

All of these illustrations give us a feel for the union and communion expressed as being “in Christ”.

As Saul of Tarsus (who, after his conversion, is called Paul) was persecuting Christians, suddenly Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus. And what Jesus said to him illustrates the idea of what it means to be “in Christ.”

### **Acts 9:1–5 (NKJV)**

**1** Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

**2** and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

**3** As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

**4** Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”

**5** And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”

Jesus is so identified and connected to His people that to lay a finger on one of them is to lay a finger on Jesus Himself. To persecute those “**in Christ**” is to persecute Christ Himself. This speaks of the intimacy of relationship and union found for those who are “**in Christ**”.

So, the idea of being in Christ is to be so intimately identified with Him so as to be joined to Him. It speaks of a most intimate spiritual union and communion we now have with Jesus. It speaks of the intimacy of a relationship so close that we now share in His very life.

The word baptism is often used to express this union that we now have with the Lord. It signifies a spiritual reality but is also portrayed in the physical ordinance of water baptism. So, the spiritual reality is portrayed by a physical testimony.

Water baptism is just a testimony to the spiritual reality we as believers have now entered into by faith.

**Romans 6:3–5 (NKJV)**

**3** 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,

**Galatians 3:26–27 (NKJV)**

**26** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

**27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.