

"Christ Within"

In order for God to accomplish His plan in man, He had to do something about man's nature because by virtue of Adam's sin, man inherited from Adam a nature that is opposed to God.

From his first parents, man inherited a fallen, lower nature, the weaker element in his human nature. The Greek word for this weaker aspect of man's nature is "*sarx*" and the King James New Testament translates this word as "*flesh*." The "*flesh*" which is distinct and different from man's "*body*," is the unregenerate condition of man, who is controlled by the impulses of the carnal, or sensual, side of his nature. Note the following Scriptures:

Romans 7:5, *"For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death."*

Romans 8:8-9, *"So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 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."*

Galatians 3:3, *"Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?"*

Galatians 6:8, *"For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."*

As one follows the Lord Jesus Christ, they should expect resistance from their lower nature because this "*sarx*" nature is opposed to God and cannot do the things of God. However, as the believer has received Jesus Christ as his Savior and has been joined to God, he is now a citizen of heaven who has been equipped with a "*new nature*."

When people hear the varied claims of so many religions in the world today, it certainly is understandable how they can wonder which one is right. These people have a longing for God within their souls, yet they hesitate to select any religion because of the confused religious scene.

If, however, one would only make the following simple observation, it should help clarify for him how Christianity differs from other so-called "*religions*." When one surveys the religions of the world, he will notice that all these religions have one thing in common in that they offer a similar philosophy of life, that is, all religions claim that there is some set of beliefs to which one must subscribe in order for him to obtain salvation. These various religions require that, in order to approach God, one must not only embrace their particular creed, but, one must also live a certain way and "*do*" certain things, and it is hoped that, eventually, in the process of "*doing*" all this one will find God.

When we look at Jesus, we see that His claims are different from all other religions claims because Jesus claims to be God **Himself**. Jesus said, "*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father*" (John 14:9). Jesus claims that eternal life is in Him alone! Other

religions claim to *know* the way to God, however, Jesus tells us the He, Himself, **IS THE WAY** to God!

CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A RELIGION - IT IS A PERSON
 ⇨ CHRISTIANITY IS CHRIST!

While other religions insist that one must believe something in order to be saved, the bible insists that one must *receives Someone* in order to be saved, in order to have eternal life.

THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

1. HAVING THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST
AND
2. BELIEVING IN A RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE

One has to do with "*knowledge*", while the other is an "*experience!*"

In the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead John 11 records that when Jesus made the journey to Bethany, *four days after the death of Lazarus*, and was met on the outskirts of the city by Mary and Martha, sister of Lazarus, Martha said to Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother would not have died" (verse 21). When Jesus assured her by saying, "Thy brother will live again," Martha responded, "I know that he shall rise in the resurrection," Then Jesus answered her by saying, in verse 25, "I am the resurrection and the life," it was as though He was saying to her, "Martha, get your eyes off the *'doctrine'* of the resurrection and get your eyes on *Me!*"

The resurrection is a **Person!** Eternal life is a **Person!**

There is no doctrine, or creed, that can bring life to anyone! There is no church, no philosophy, no religion of any kind that can save because salvation is in none of these! The Savior is a Person, and one must do business with Him, not with doctrines!

Even the Bible, with all its doctrines, can save no one, however, the Savior of the Bible can save whosoever cometh unto Him!

Don't confuse the truths of Christ with Christ Himself!

Christianity is actually about one having a personal experience with a living Person, Jesus Christ!

Regardless of the claims of Mohammed, Confucius, Buddha or any other leader of a religion, if one were to go where these religious leaders are buried one would find that they are still in their tombs today! However, if one goes to where Christ was buried in Palestine, one would find an *empty tomb* - because Christ arose from the dead!

That same Christ, Who rose from the dead 2000 years ago, today knocks at the door of men's hearts, everywhere, asking to be received within, asking to live within man's spirit to give him new life and a new nature.

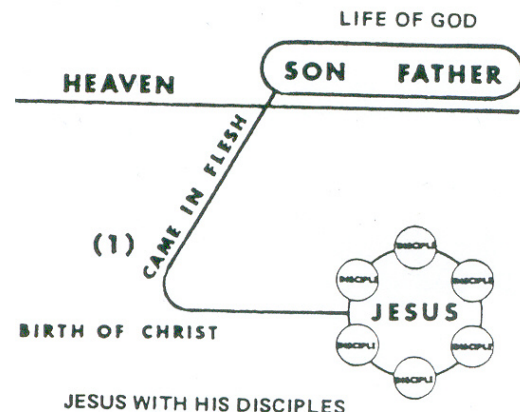
HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

- If eternal life is in one Man, Jesus Christ, how may other men come to have this life?
- If man is joined to God only by coming into possession of Christ, how is this "possession" made possible?
- If union with God is necessary for man's spiritual life, how is this union with God made possible by sharing Jesus' life with Him?

When Jesus was on earth, He was confined to His earthly tabernacle (His body) just as we are confined to our earthly body, and He was subject to the same physical limitations that we are. Because Jesus could not be two places at the same time, the work of bringing salvation to men could not be accomplished as long as He was confined to an earth-bound body, as long as He was here on earth.

JESUS WAS IN A BODY WHILE ON EARTH - WAS UNAVAILABLE IN BODY AFTER LEAVING EARTH

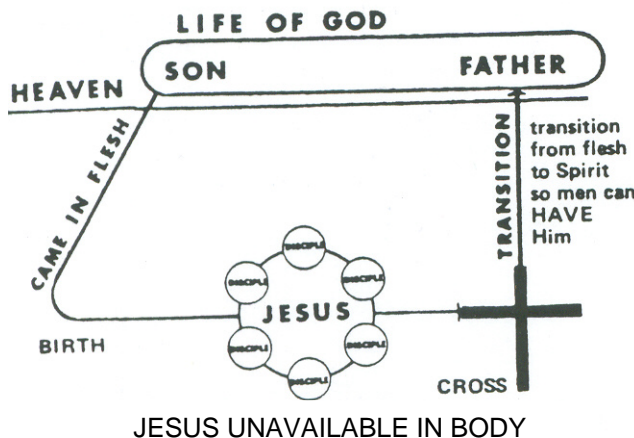
In His discussion of John 14, which takes place a few hours before the Cross, Jesus begins to teach His disciples about a very important truth, He tells them of the "Helper," (John 14:16), which is identified as the Holy Spirit in verse 26.



In verse 17, Christ makes a very important observation relative to the "Spirit of Truth," when He says, "You know Him, for He lives WITH you, and will be IN you."

In verse 18, when Jesus says, "I will come to you," He is referring to His life, by the power of the Holy Spirit, being within them.

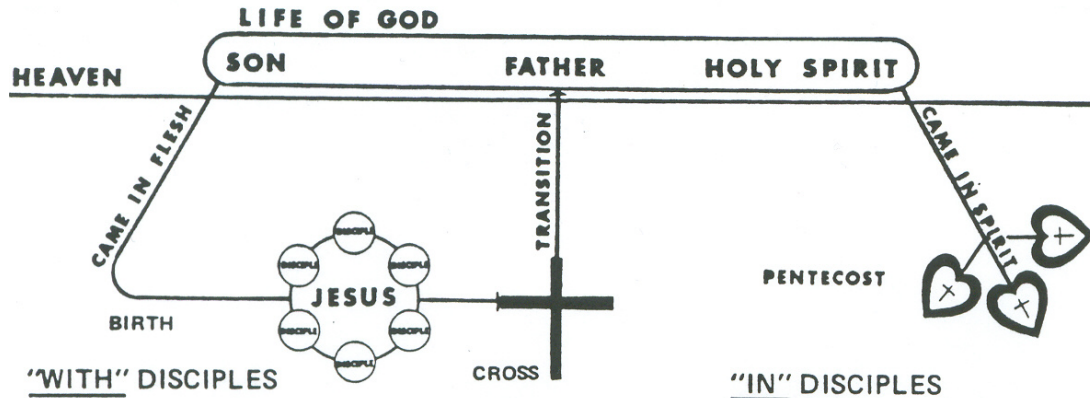
In verse 20, Jesus tells them that the day was soon coming when they would know that He was in the Father, that they were in Him, and that He was in them. Jesus was attempting to give His followers an understanding of His future indwelling in their hearts.



Because Jesus could not fulfill His promise of inner, spiritual, life to every believer as long as He was within His own earthly body, He said, "Unless I go away, the Helper will not come unto you" John 16:7. Jesus was telling His disciples that as long as He remained in His earthly body there was no way for them to have eternal, or "spiritual" life.

Jesus said, "It is expedient for you that I go away," that is, "It is to your advantage for Me to leave you." Christ's going away was for the best interest of the whole world because, if He did not go, men could not have eternal life, therefore, it was absolutely necessary that He go away!

JESUS AVAILABLE "IN" BODIES OF BELIEVERS AFTER PENTECOST



Jesus was teaching His disciples that He was going to actually live within their individual lives, so that each one of them could possess Him fully and completely. How could His "bodily" presence begin to compare with His presence in their hearts? As long as He lived in a body, that is, as long as Jesus was physically present in the world, only a few could get close to Him, only a few could embrace Him lovingly, and obviously, the great host of Christians today would never be able to enjoy His *immediate* presence. Therefore, to limit Jesus to the "body-form," would be a terrible lose to believers everywhere, except to those who would be physically near Him.

But Jesus "went away" so that He might come back, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to live within every true believer, and, the preciousness of the indwelling presence of Jesus is that He is closer to believers than their own hands, nearer to them than their own breath.

Whenever we are in any trouble, we don't have to "spell out our troubles" with the detailed accuracy of an insurance report, to Jesus because He *already* knows our hearts, He lives there and He is our Helper!

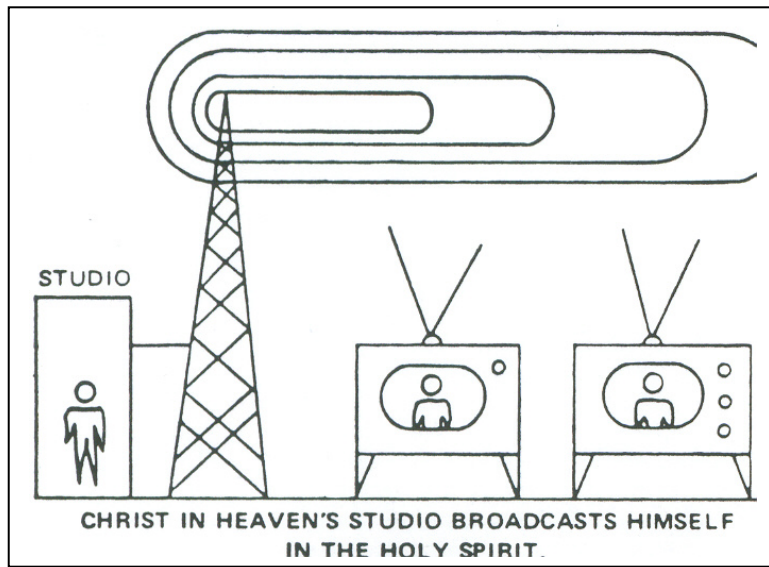
Jesus was not satisfied just to die for man, just to pay the penalty for his sin, because He desires that the benefits of His work go beyond just "saving" man, which is why, when He brings His redemptive work to each one of us personally, He remains within us to insure, and guarantee, that we will mature, and grow, into the full stature that God originally intended for man.

How can Jesus be in all of our hearts at the same time?

To illustrate the answer to this question, let's liken the Holy Spirit to the transmitting waves of a television studio; a scene takes place in a television studio and,

then, by means of a transmitter, it is sent out over air waves to the surrounding area. Anyone with a television receiver is able to pick up those waves and have a reproduced image on his own television screen. The very scene of the studio is now transferred to his home and, not only is the scene reproduced in just **one** home, but it is also reproduced in as many homes as well receive it. There is no limit to the number of sets that can receive the image from the studio, in fact, "*whosoever will*" may turn his television set to this channel and receive what is offered.

If man can reproduce a scene, which takes place in a distant television studio, in a multitude of homes, surely Jesus can reproduce His presence in as many lives as will receive Him. In this way, in a peculiar sense, the Holy Spirit may be likened to a television studio because just as these waves transmit the scene, the image, from the studio into people's homes, the Holy Spirit "*transmits,*" forms in us, the image of Jesus Christ.



By becoming "*receiving sets*" for the divine Transmitter, we can receive the Lord completely, and there is no limit to the number who are invited to do so.

What Jesus did **for** us, two thousand years ago when He died on the Cross and rose again, He does **in** us today! In Galatians 2:20, the apostle Paul says, "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

Remember that, when Adam sinned, the Bible says that "*he died*." Adam was alive *physically*, but he died *spiritually* and since then, since the time of Adam, all men are dead, *dead* as far as their relationship to God is concerned. The man without Christ is without life, real life, he is spiritually dead, entirely destitute of divine life and, when he accepts Jesus Christ, he is "*born-again*," he is born from above and made alive in his spirit.

John 1:12 states, "*As many as receive Him [Jesus Christ] to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.*" When one accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior, he becomes a possessor of "*New Life*," the very life of God. Christ's divine life is implanted **within** him!

When an egg is laid, there floats in the midst of a sticky fluid the germ of the chicken to be. The **whole** chicken is there as an "*embryo*" but, in the beginning, it is only a little speck, floating in a great quantity of "*viscous matter*." The mother hen turns the egg twice every day for three weeks. Each day there is less and less of the sticky matter and more and more of the chicken formed within the egg. Then, one day, there is no more viscous matter because it has all become the chicken. The life within (the chicken) chips his way out of the shell and the chicken begins an entirely new life!

2 Corinthians 13:5 states, "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?*"

John 3:6 states, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" When one accepts Jesus Christ as his Savior, he is born-again, his "*spirit*" is born of the Holy Spirit, he has Christ's life as an "*embryo*" and this embryo needs care and nurturing.

In Galatians 4:19, Paul says, "*My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.*"

This "*forming Christ within the believer*" takes place as one submits to God's Word and as he lets Christ be Lord in the circumstances of his life, in the environment that he lives in, in the frustrations that he goes through, and in the disappointments that he must endure.

Romans 6:1-14 state, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 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. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*"

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

One **must identify** with Christ's death and resurrection life and draw his strength from Jesus Christ, Who lives within his life. The believer must feed on Jesus Christ's life within, and this is the lesson that the Lord's supper teaches us, that one must "*feed upon Christ's death and life*" in his Christian walk.

Jesus said in John 6:53-57, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."*

Was Jesus referring to the "*bread*" and "*wine*" of the communion service in John 6? **No!** He was referring to what the bread and wine of the communion is *symbolic* of, His death and His life! Because His own disciples could not understand what He was speaking about, beginning with verse 61 Jesus explains, "*Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."* Jesus tells us that it is the Word of God that will give us *spiritual strength, growth, and maturity, and it is through God's Word that we receive Christ's life!*

2 Peter 1:4 says, "*God has given to us His precious and splendid promises, that through them you might participate in Christ's divine nature."*

It is as one surrenders his life to God's Word and its principles, as he puts his trust in it and applies its teachings to his life, that the life of Jesus Christ develops, and grows, within him.

"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" - Galatians 2:20