

## SAINTS LINK TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

By Keith Greer

Jesus was getting ready to return to His Father. Part of His preparation involved acclimating His beloved disciples to His imminent departure. "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." {John 14:1-3} Jesus had spent about three and one-half years preparing the apostles for the work they would do following His ascension. He knew their faith needed to be bolstered; later, He would tell them He would always be with them {Matthew 28:20}. But He went a step further – he was going to send more help. "The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." {John 14:17,18}

God's word expresses, in many different ways, each person's need to have a personal attachment to Christ. This personal attachment enables us to draw closer to Christ. "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." {1 Thessalonians 5:9,10} We are united with our Lord. Paul expressed this same sentiment to the brethren in Philippi {Philippians 1:20,21}. What an exalted honor it is to know that we, His saints, are linked to Christ – now and in the hereafter! Let's consider how this is accomplished.

**One must be crucified...together with Christ.** "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." {Galatians 2:20} By His willingness to be crucified for me, He expressed great love. In a similar manner I must be willing to do the same for Him. How? "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." {Galatians 6:14} We must die to the flesh. "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." {Romans 8:13} God's child accomplishes this when he separates himself from the world. "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." {Colossians 3:3-5} When we walk in "newness of life," {Romans 6:4, this is evidence that we have been crucified with Him. We must put to death the old man of sin and be joined to a new life in Christ.

**One must be buried...together with Christ.** "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." {Romans 6:3,4} When we obey Christ's command to be baptized, we are planted and buried together with Him. "This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him."

{2 Timothy 2:11} Here, He helps us complete the picture, “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” {Colossians 2:12} We must arise out of our watery graves to live new lives apart from sin and death!

**One must be quickened...together with Christ.** “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins...even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” {Ephesians 2:1,5} One who is spiritually dead in sin must be quickened (made alive) to a new, spiritual life. “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” {Ephesians 2:4,6} We are quickened in a similar manner as Christ was. “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.” {1 Peter 3:18} This same Spirit can bring us from spiritual death to spiritual life, “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” {Colossians 2:13} Dying to sin, we have been brought back to new life. “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.” {John 5:21} Paul touched on this theme when he discussed the necessity of the resurrection. “For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” {1 Corinthians 15:21,22}

**One must be raised...together with Christ.** “And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” {Ephesians 2:6} Following our quickening, God’s saints will be raised up together with Christ. Since we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall also be raised in the likeness of His resurrection. “Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” {Colossians 2:12} We should be very confident of the change that has taken place; “Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.” {2 Corinthians 4:14} What must one do when he has been raised together with Christ? “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” {Colossians 3:1,2}

**One is to suffer...together with Christ.** “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” {Philippians 3:10,11} Trials, difficulties, and tribulations accompany being in Christ {2 Timothy 3:12}. The early disciples experienced many trials; “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” {Acts 5:41} Paul had given all he had to be together with Christ {Philippians 3:8-10}. Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered {Hebrews 5:8,9}; so do we!

**One is made an heir...together with Christ.** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” {Galatians 3:28,29} Also read Romans 8:16,17. We are heirs of the promise God made to Abraham {Ephesians 3:6}. No longer do we have servant status; we are treated as sons and daughters {Galatians 4:7}. We become partakers of an inheritance {Colossians 1:12}. It is reserved in heaven for the faithful {1 Peter 1:4,5}.

God is reaching down, and we are reaching up! What wonderful opportunities are afforded those who answer the call to become His saints! \*\*\*