

SAINTS LINKED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST (1)

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!

How does man accomplish this task? What kind of new life must one now live to be acceptable to His Savior? One must truly put the OLD MAN of sin to Death! “*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*” {Colossians 3:5} The blood of Christ has freed us from our bondage to sin and we must strive to never allow it to control us again! ***