

## The churches of Christ Salute You Rom. 16:15

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Jesus, presented Himself as the shepherd for the “lost sheep of Israel.” It was the need of the hour (Matt. 9:36). After preaching the kingdom of God and role-modeling the eternal life qualities of the kingdom for over three years on earth, He gave the people the opportunity to be transferred into God’s kingdom by a new birth (Acts 2:38; Col. 1: 13).

Everything had been **made new** in relation to the administration of God’s kingdom as Jesus had promised (Luke 5:36-39). The new personalized covenant in Jesus’ blood had been ratified by God “in Christ.” Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:10-12. They could approach the throne of God boldly in prayer because of Jesus’ priesthood (Acts 2:42; 4:24; 12:5; Heb. 4:14-16). He was at the right hand of God as their advocate (Acts 7:56; I John 2:1).

The apostles and the Holy Spirit gave the people the assurance they heard God’s truth. The promises and covenants of God were being fulfilled. This laid the foundation of His church. The church members were transformed to a higher quality of life by the teachings (Acts 2:42; 20:32; Rom. 12:2). Each member was given the opportunity to re-invent his or her “self” into “fruit producers.” John, the Baptist, and Jesus had clearly emphasized this point (Luke 3:9; 8:15; 13:6-9; Acts 26:20).

The sanctified were being taught by the author of life (Acts 2:47; 3:15). The “believers” had been taught the kingdom of God for development of their faith. In their repentance, they accepted the new covenant; therefore, the laws of life of the kingdom defined their new “self.” The kingdom of God came into the “self” of the members of the church (Luke 17:20, 21). We can understand the process of the kingdom in a Christians as sanctification, or spiritual growth. Socialologists would describe the process as resocialization. This may happen when a person permanently migrates from one country to another.

The Holy Spirit lived in each Christian (Luke 11:13; John 7:37-39; Acts 2:38, 39; 5:31). He led them in life; assured them of a new body in the resurrection; bore witness with them in their new identity as sons of God and assisted in their communication with God. Please read Romans chapter eight.

Each Christian was reassured of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 4:2; 23:6; 24:15, 21; 26:8). This gave them courage to use the material things over

which God had made them stewards to secure their future home in heaven (Luke 9:59-62; 16:9-12; Acts 4:32; 18:1-3). Because the kingdom of God was within them; “Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.” Acts 8:4.

These people, who were later called Christians, immediately developed a loving fellowship centered on Jesus. They shared their food with one another (Acts 2:46; 4:32,36). The spirit of caring for the physical needs of other members of the church was an emotional attitude in their personality (Matt. 5:4, 7). Their mourner and merciful attitudes had become a component of their personalities. This quality of life had been taught by Jesus and it had developed in the members of the church (Acts 11:29; 20:1-6; 24:17; Rom. 15:26, 27).

This church Jesus built accepted the challenge to remember Jesus death on the cross each first day of the week by gathering together (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Luke 22:19, 20). This was not a ritual, it was a communion with Jesus (I Cor. 10:16, 17). They worshipped God “in spirit and in truth.” John 4:24. Jesus gave the commission to the apostles to “be My witness in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8. He also told them to teach the church “to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matt. 28:20. Jesus came into the world to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). His goal was **not** to improve the worship of God’s people, but He did this too.

The theology of “in Christ” can be understood by the way the Apostle Paul made use of this term in his letter to the church in Ephesus. “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.” Eph. 2:6.

The government ordained by God for His people is unique. A plurality of elders were ordained in every church (14:23; 20:28, 29). This is an office with specific qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9).

### Questions for Discussion

1. Make a list of things Jesus did so preachers could lay the foundation for the church throughout the world.
2. How did the office of an apostle and the baptism of the Holy Spirit give validity to Jesus’ work as “Prince and Savior?”

3. How does the terms "transformed" and "fruit producers" relate to the church Jesus built?
4. What is the new covenant? When must a person decide to accept the new covenant?
5. What is the essence, or goal, of the thing that must be happening in each member of the church, if indeed, we claim membership in the church that Jesus is building?
6. Why is it possible for the Holy Spirit to live in Christians; whereas, He did not live in the list of faithful people named in Hebrews, chapter eleven?
7. How does the promise of the things offered to Christians after our physical death strengthen us now?
8. How do the answers to the foregoing questions, declare that every faithful Christian is dedicated "to seeking and saving the lost?"
9. Which goal was more strongly emphasized for the church?
  - a. Organized worship of the church assembled.
  - b. The spiritual growth of each member and seeking and saving the lost.
10. What type of leadership appears to serve best for your foregoing answer?
  - a. A shepherd leadership. b. The paid preacher.
11. How does the concept of the "kingdom within you" enhance being a member of the body of Christ?
12. How does the loving and caring fellowship of believers for one another serve for our personal spiritual growth?
13. How does a church of Christ that has been described in the scriptures in this lesson differ from a Church of Christ that functions by the same guidelines of the denominational churches?

14. How does the "in Christ" realm along with other concepts of the church Paul used in his letter to the church at Ephesus blend with "all the churches of Christ send greetings?"

Please note, Paul did not use this as a proper name for the church. It does tell us who called these believers out of the kingdom of Satan and into the kingdom of God (Acts 26:18). It does tell us who purchased them with His own blood (Acts 20:28).