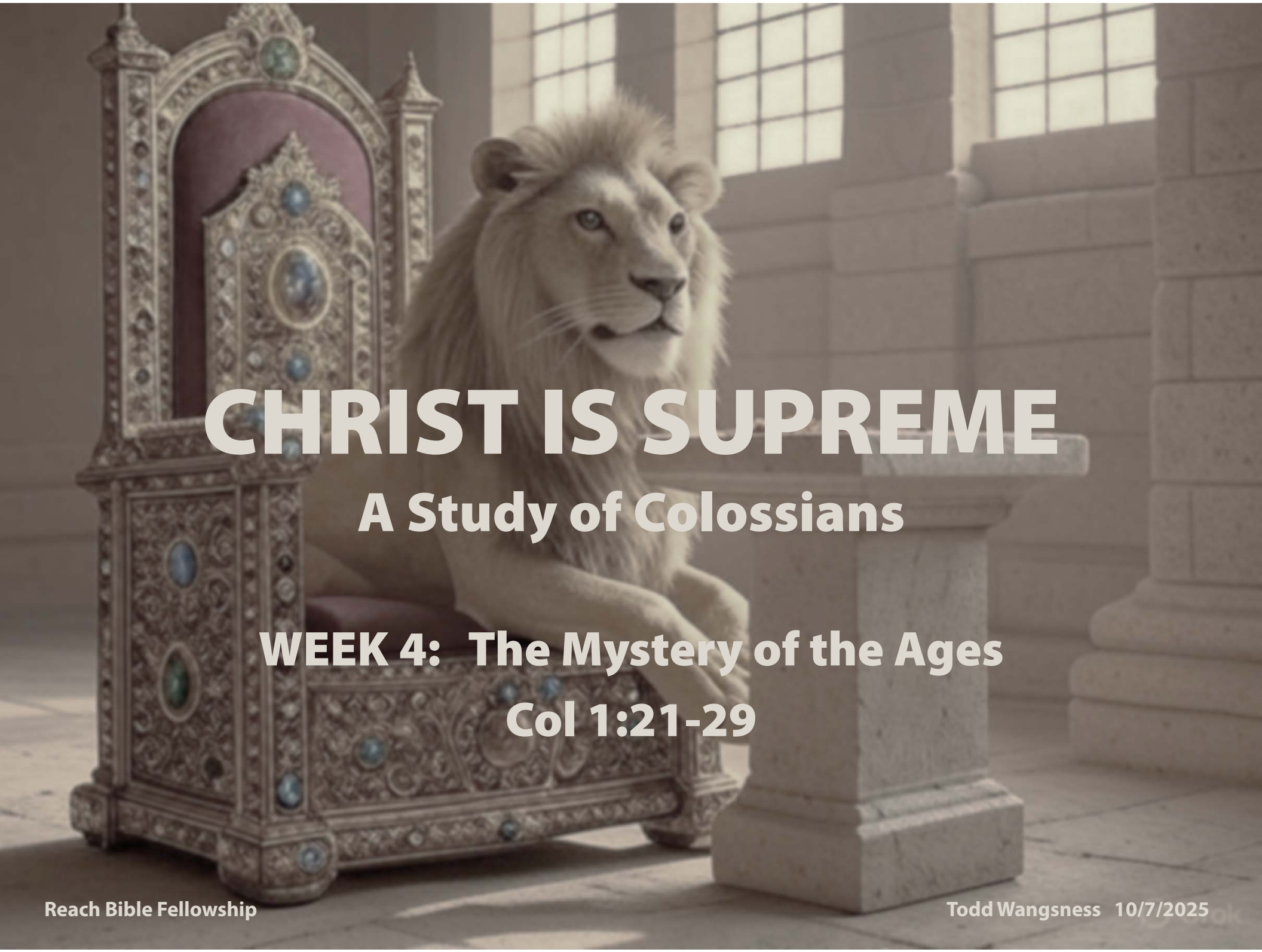


CHRIST IS SUPREME

A Study of Colossians

WEEK 4: The Mystery of the Ages

Col 1:21-29

Reach Bible Fellowship

Todd Wangsness 10/7/2025

Christ is Supreme: The Mystery of the Ages

WEEK	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Week 1	Overview	Overview of the book of Colossians
Week 2	Col 1:1 – 14	Introduction and God's Redemption
Week 3	Col 1:15 – 20	The Preeminence of Jesus Christ
Week 4	**Col 1:21 – 29**	**The Mystery of the Ages**
Week 5	Col. 2:1 – 20	The Futility of Legalism
Week 6	Col. 3:1 – 17	Set Your Mind on Things Above
Week 7	Col. 4:1 – 18	Exhortation to Prayer and Final Greetings

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Notable quotes on Col 1:21-29

"Reconciliation is not just a change in status but a transformation of life. Christ's death makes peace with God, but it also calls believers to a life of steadfast faith and hope, rooted in the gospel preached to every creature. The phrase 'Christ in you' encapsulates the extraordinary truth that the Messiah, Israel's hope, now dwells in Gentile believers, uniting them with God's promises and giving them a share in His glory."

- **N.T. Wright**

"By the death of Christ, we are reconciled to God; at the same time, we are called to holiness, that we may be blameless and unreprovable in His sight. For the design of the gospel is not merely to give us life, but to transform us into the image of God. The hope of glory is Christ in us, the indwelling of His Spirit, which is the pledge of our inheritance. This mystery, hidden for ages, is now revealed to the saints, showing the riches of God's grace to all who believe."

- **John Calvin**

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Col 1:21a ***And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works ...***

- **"Alienated" means *estranged*. The gentiles in Colossae were *estranged* from God**
- **The gods they worshiped were false gods and their rituals could not absolve their guilt**
- **Not only were they estranged – they were also enemies! They were actively hostile to God.**
- **As we saw in our study of Romans 1 and 2, *all people* have an inherent knowledge of God our Creator through the evidence of creation and the conscience He has implanted in every human**
- **The enmity of their minds led to wicked works**
  - ***Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.***
- **Consequently, *every unbeliever must repent* (change his/her mind) before they can be saved (justified)**
- **Repentance does not mean just being sorry! It means being sorry enough to quit!**

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Col 1:21b-22 … yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

- **As we know, unbelievers *do not* reconcile themselves to God – rather, it is God who does the reconciling**
  - ***2 Cor 5:20-21 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***
  - ***Rom 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.***
- **We can – however – reject the reconciliation God offers us!**
  - ***Joh 3:18-19 "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."***
- **God did not make peace with us so that we can continue to be rebels! We are to be:**
  - **"Holy": Set apart for sacred use!**
  - **"Blameless": Without any blemish!**
  - **"Above reproach": Free from accusation! Satan can accuse all he wants, but God *does not accept* his accusations!**

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Col 1:23 ***… if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.***

- **Paul places a condition on our reconciliation!**
  - **We are reconciled *if and only if* we continue in the faith**
- **Note that Paul is not saying we can *lose our salvation!***
  - **He is using architectural imagery of a house firmly set on a foundation**
  - **His point is that we are not *saved* by continuing in the faith**
  - **Rather, as we continue in the faith – we prove that our salvation was valid**
  - **If we drift away – that proves that we were never saved in the first place!**
    - ***2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.***
    - ***2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;***

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Col 1:24-25 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,

- **Paul's enemies were making much of the fact that Paul was a prisoner of Rome**
- **These false teachers were ridiculing Paul and using his incarceration as a weapon to fight the truth of the gospel Paul preached**
- **Paul turned this around and used it to defeat his enemies**
- **Instead of being ashamed that he was suffering as a prisoner – he rejoiced in it!**
  - ***Acts 5:41 ... counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.***
  - ***1 Pet 4:10 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.***
- **Paul was the chosen apostle to the Gentiles and he was suffering for their sake!**
  - ***Eph 3:1-2,8 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you … 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.***

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Col 1:26-27 ***The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,***

- **Today, the word *mystery* implies something eerie and perhaps frightening**
- **In Paul's day, the word had an entirely different meaning**
  - **Greek: '*mystērion*'. Divine truths or plans <u>previously hidden</u> but now revealed through Christ, the apostles, or the Holy Spirit.**
  - **"The New Testament is in the Old concealed … the Old Testament is in the New revealed"!**
- **Mysteries in the New Testament (some overlap in the references)**
  - **Mystery of Christ: Eph 3:3-6, Col 1:26-27, 2:2**
  - **Mystery of the Kingdom of God: Mar 4:11, Mat 13:11, Luk 8:10**
  - **Mystery of the Gospel: Eph 6:19, Rom 16:25-26**
  - **Mystery of Israel's Salvation: Rom 11:25-26**
  - **Mystery of the Church: Eph 5:32**
  - **Mystery of the Resurrection: 1 Cor 15:51-52**
  - **Mystery of God's Will: Eph 1:9-10**

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- **The OT prophets wrote about a Messiah that would come and suffer, but they also wrote about a Messiah that would come and reign for eternity**
  - **The Suffering Servant – Messiah Ben Joseph**
    - ***Isa 53:3-5 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him.***
  - **The Reigning King – Messiah Ben David**
    - ***Isa 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.***
- **They *could not explain* the apparent contradiction**
  - ***1 Pet 1:10-11 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.***

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- They *did not understand* that there were going to be two separate distinct *comings* of the Messiah
- We – of course – have the benefit of hindsight!
  - We understand that Jesus Christ initially came 2000 years ago as a suffering servant, to live, be crucified on our behalf, and be resurrected
  - We also understand that – at the end of the age – He will return again and assume the position as the reigning King of Glory forever and ever!
- What the early church and OT saints also did not understand is that God was working out a plan of salvation not only for the Jews, but the whole world!
- That is the mystery that Paul is describing in these verses!
- Not only the mystery of Jews and Gentiles being joined, but that God was working out the redemption and reconciliation of all of mankind
- The Father – through Jesus' death, burial and resurrection – satisfied two conflicting attributes of His Character, His Righteousness and His Love
  - His Righteousness demanded a Just penalty of death for our sins
  - His Love demanded that He show Mercy to the sinful beings created in His image
  - ***Rom 3:26b … that He might be <u>just</u> and the <u>justifier</u> of the one who has faith in Jesus.***

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- **Through Jesus' finished work on the Cross, we now have Peace with God!**
  - ***Rom 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***
- **Paul is also describing the mystery of the *powerful deliverance* that is ours through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**
  - ***2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.***
  - ***Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.***
    - **This is both a promise *and* an expectation!**
- **We are now delivered from the *power of sin* as we choose to submit to God's Spirit of Grace He has freely bestowed upon us!**
  - ***Rom 6:12-13 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 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.***

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- **Jesus is the "Last Adam", but the "Second Man"**
  - ***1 Cor 15:42-45 So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.***
  - ***1 Cor 15:46-49 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man***
    - **"Image": Greek '*eikon*'. An exact representation and revelation.**

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- **Jesus as the "Last Adam", IS the sum total of humanity!**
  - The curse Adam incurred through the fall was negated (reconciled) through the blood of Jesus' perfect sacrifice
  - Adam – as the first Man – is the head of the human race … our progenitor
  - As we were "in Adam", the curse of the Fall was propagated to ALL humanity
  - Jesus – in His humanity – gathered up all that was "in Adam" on the cross along with ALL of the judgment due Man because of Adam's fall
  - Jesus' crucified body was placed into the tomb … Tetelestai! (Grk *Τετέλεσται*)
    - *2 Cor 5:14 … if One died for all, then all died*

- **Jesus as the "Second Man", becomes the Head of a new race of beings (Heavenly Man)!**
  - The Second Man begins in resurrection and ends in eternity!
  - *Rom 6:5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection*
  - *Col 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

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Col 1:28-29 ***Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.***

- **The false teachers taught philosophy and empty traditions of men**
  - **They had lists of rules and regulations**
  - **Paul preached a *Person*!**
- **He proclaimed the Person of Jesus Christ!**
  - **His intent was to present every man *perfect* in Christ**
  - **Greek '*teleios*'. Wanting nothing necessary to completeness, brought to its end, finished.**
- **We have already met Paul the Preacher**
- **Now we are introduced to him as a Prayer Warrior!**
  - **Striving: Greek '*agōnizomai*'. Contend with adversaries, fight with zeal.**
  - **Mightily: Greek '*dynamis*'. Strength, power, ability.**

Grace By Design: Sanctification - Peace with God

- **Referring back to Rom 5:17** ***"… those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One …"***
  - **Are you living for God as though you are seated with Him on His throne?**
  - **It is so easy to let the cares of this life and our circumstances take our eyes off of Jesus**
- **Do we live as though we are "now children of God"?**
  - ***1 Joh 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.***
  - ***Eph 2:5-6 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus***
- **If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are now a part of the race of Heavenly Man!**
  - ***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.***
  - ***Rom 6:2-4 … How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? 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.***

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Questions to ponder …

- Can we choose to follow God on our own? Why or why not?
- Why do so many Christians believe they are the ones to 'reconcile' themselves to God?
- What is the difference between being called and being chosen?
  - Can you cite some scripture references that distinguish between the two terms?
    - Called: *Mat 22:14, Rom 8:28*
      - "Called" is broader, often referring to the general invitation to all people to accept the gospel.
    - Chosen: *1 Pet 2:9, Eph 1:4*
      - "Chosen" is narrower, referring to those who respond to the call and are selected by God for salvation or a specific role
- Are 'besetting' sins proof that a person is not saved?
  - In other words, if a someone has not overcome an entangling sin, have they really devoted their life to God? Aren't we supposed to be delivered from sin once saved?