COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE
70

Ordinances Fulfilled in Jesus Christ

STUDY GUIDE 3 OF 12:

The Believer Has the Person

An overview of the believer's completeness in Christ and the indwelling life.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

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PREFACE

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The Old Covenant contained God-given figures, shadows and outward ordinances that pointed forward to Jesus Christ. These practices served an appointed purpose, teaching spiritual truths while preparing God's people for the greater reality that would come through Him. The sacrifices, priesthood, ceremonial washings and other outward requirements belonged to the people and covenant for which God appointed them.

However, the outward form was never the final spiritual reality. A ceremony could represent cleansing without cleansing the conscience. A sacrifice could represent the giving of life without producing the spiritual life found in Jesus Christ.

This distinction is central to understanding the ordinances. Representation is not production. An outward practice may represent a spiritual truth without possessing the power to accomplish what it represents. The spiritual reality must come from Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ fulfilled His promised coming as Spirit at Pentecost in A.D. 31. Everyone who is born again receives His indwelling Spirit and possesses the spiritual life that the former shadows could only represent. The believer is complete in Him, without requiring another spiritual experience or outward ceremony to complete salvation.

This does not diminish obedience, holiness, love or service. These are expressions of the life of Jesus Christ within His people. Outward conduct does not produce spiritual life; the life is received through the new birth and then expressed through the believer.

As we examine water baptism, communion and feet washing, an important distinction must remain clear. The inability of an outward ceremony to produce salvation does not, by itself, establish whether Scripture requires its continued observance. Each practice must also be examined according to its covenant setting, appointed purpose and fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

This Study Guide will therefore examine what outward ordinances represented, what they could never accomplish and what the born-again believer now possesses in Jesus Christ. Our confidence must rest in the spiritual reality found in Him rather than in religious performance.

The believer has more than the representation. The believer has the Person.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does possessing Jesus Christ give the believer more than an outward representation?

Personal Reflection

What does the difference between representing spiritual life and receiving it mean to your own understanding?

Action Step

What do you want to reconsider about looking to outward religious performance for what Christ provides? Examine where you have placed your confidence. What will you change to keep that confidence in Jesus Christ?

INTRODUCTION

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An outward religious action can be performed correctly without producing the spiritual reality it represents. Water can touch the body, bread can be eaten, a cup can be received and another person's feet can be washed. Yet outward performance cannot establish what has taken place within the heart.

This raises an important question concerning the ordinances: Can an outward religious action accomplish the inward spiritual work that it represents? Something may illustrate a spiritual truth without possessing the power to produce it. Water may represent cleansing, but it cannot cleanse the conscience or produce the new birth.

The same principle applies to communion and feet washing. Bread and a cup may represent fellowship, but eating and drinking cannot place Jesus Christ within a person. Washing another person's feet may demonstrate service, but the physical washing cannot create humility or love within the heart. Representation is not production.

Hebrews explains that the outward service of the former covenant could not make the worshipper perfect concerning the conscience. Those ceremonies served a God-given purpose, but they could not accomplish the inward spiritual work fulfilled through Jesus Christ. They pointed towards the greater reality rather than producing it.

This Study Guide will establish where the believer's righteousness, sanctification, redemption and spiritual life are found. Paul declares that Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. These realities are found in Him, not produced through religious performance.

Through the new birth, Jesus Christ dwells within every believer. His indwelling life is expressed through obedience, holiness, love, humility and service. These are not attempts to imitate Christ through human strength, but expressions of His life already received.

The distinction between spiritual completeness and continued obedience must also remain clear. An outward ceremony cannot complete salvation, but that alone does not determine whether Scripture commands its continued observance. Each ordinance must be examined according to its Scriptural purpose and covenant setting.

Our study will therefore move from outward representation to the sufficiency of Jesus Christ, and from the life received within to the conduct expressed outwardly. It leads us to an important question: Where does our confidence rest: in religious performance or in Jesus Christ Himself?

The believer does not simply possess something that represents Jesus Christ. The believer has the Person.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why can an outward religious action be performed correctly without producing an inward spiritual work?

Personal Reflection

What helps you distinguish a visible ceremony from the new birth? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

How could this distinction guide what you personally rely on for spiritual life? Choose one present decision and explain how you will respond from Christ's life within, not independent effort.

THE SHADOW COULD REPRESENT, BUT IT COULD NOT PRODUCE

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The Old Covenant shadows were given by God for an appointed purpose. Through outward sacrifices, washings and ceremonial requirements, they taught important spiritual truths and pointed forward to the greater reality that would come through Jesus Christ.

However, we must distinguish between what these outward practices could represent and what they could actually accomplish. They could teach, illustrate and point forward, but they could not produce the inward spiritual reality.

This distinction is essential when examining water baptism, communion and feet washing. We must understand both the God-given purpose of outward ordinances and the limitations of their physical performance.

The Outward Service Could Not Perfect the Conscience

The writer of Hebrews explains the limitation of the former covenant very clearly. The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 9:9-11**:

> *"Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;"*

Notice what the writer says concerning the gifts and sacrifices. They *"could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience."*

The outward service could be performed. The sacrifice could be offered, the ceremony could be completed, the washing could take place, and the ordinance could be observed. But the outward action could not perfect the conscience.

This was the limitation of the shadow. It could represent what God would accomplish, but it could not accomplish the inward spiritual work itself.

The Figure Pointed Beyond Itself

The writer calls the former system *"a figure for the time then present."* A figure represents something beyond itself. It directs attention towards a greater reality.

The outward sacrifice, washing, earthly tabernacle, priestly service and carnal ordinances all pointed beyond themselves. But the figure itself could not become the spiritual reality. This is why the writer moves from gifts and sacrifices, meats and drinks, divers washings and carnal ordinances to the great statement: *"But Christ being come."*

The outward system could represent. Jesus Christ could provide the reality.

The Shadow Could Represent Cleansing

Under the former covenant, there were many outward washings. Water could wash the body, remove outward uncleanness and represent cleansing.

But water could not cleanse the conscience. It could not remove sin from the heart or create new spiritual life within a person.

This distinction will become especially important when we later examine water baptism. Water can touch the outside of the body, but water cannot produce spiritual life. The shadow could represent cleansing. Jesus Christ provides the true cleansing.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does Hebrews 9 show about the inability of outward service to perfect the conscience?

Personal Reflection

What does the difference between washing the body and cleansing the conscience help you recognise? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

If you have relied on an outward washing as evidence of inward cleansing, what do you want to consider more carefully? Name one inherited expectation you will reconsider and explain how Christ's fulfilment changes your response.

The Shadow Could Represent Rest

We have already seen this principle in the Sabbath. The Sabbath could represent rest, and the outward command caused Israel to cease from physical labour on an appointed day.

But the day could not produce the inward spiritual rest described in Hebrews. The writer said, *"We which have believed do enter into rest."*

Jesus also said, *"Come unto me ... and I will give you rest."* The shadow could represent rest. Jesus Christ gives the true rest.

The Sabbath therefore illustrates the principle clearly. The outward form could show beforehand what God would provide, but the spiritual reality had to come in Jesus Christ.

The Shadow Could Represent Access to God

The tabernacle and priesthood also gave an outward picture of access to God. There was an earthly sanctuary, a priesthood, sacrifices, appointed places and prescribed ways of entering.

These outward things taught the people that access to God was not according to human invention. God had established the way.

But the earthly sanctuary was still only a figure. The priest could enter physically into the tabernacle, yet that physical movement could not bring the worshipper into the full spiritual reality of access to God. Jesus Christ now gives the greater reality.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**:

> *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Notice His words: *"I am the way."* Jesus does not point the believer back to an outward system as the way. He directs us to Himself.

The shadow could represent access. Jesus Christ is the way.

The Shadow Could Represent Fellowship

An outward act may also represent fellowship. People may eat together, share bread and drink, and the outward meal may picture participation, fellowship and unity.

But eating bread cannot create fellowship with Jesus Christ. A person may physically eat bread and drink from a cup while having no spiritual relationship with Christ at all.

The outward action cannot produce the fellowship it represents. This will become especially important when we later examine communion. Bread may be received outwardly, and a cup may be received outwardly. But bread and a cup cannot place Jesus Christ within a person.

True fellowship with Christ is spiritual. It is found in the Person. The shadow can represent fellowship. The reality is fellowship in Jesus Christ.

The Shadow Could Represent Humility and Service

The same principle applies to feet washing. The physical washing of another person's feet can be an outward picture of humility and service.

But the physical action cannot make a proud heart humble. A person can wash another person's feet outwardly while still possessing pride, resentment, selfishness or a lack of genuine love. The outward action does not create the inward nature. True humility and service come from the life of Jesus Christ within the believer.

Therefore, the outward act can represent humility and service. But only the life of Christ within can produce true humility and service. This distinction must remain clear.

Representation Is Not Production

We can therefore state the principle simply: Representation is not production. Something can represent a spiritual truth without being able to produce that truth.

A picture of food cannot satisfy hunger. A picture of water cannot quench thirst. A picture of rest cannot make a weary person rest. In the same way, an outward religious action can represent a spiritual reality without possessing the power to create that reality.

The Old Covenant shadows could represent cleansing, sacrifice, rest, fellowship, access to God, righteousness, holiness, humility and service. But the outward form could not produce these

spiritual realities within the heart. The shadow could show beforehand what God would accomplish. Jesus Christ accomplishes the spiritual work.

An Outward Act Cannot Produce the New Birth

This becomes especially clear when we consider the new birth. Jesus said in **John 3:7**:

> *"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*

The new birth is the work of God within a person. No outward ceremony can produce it.

Water cannot cause the new birth. Bread cannot cause the new birth. A cup cannot cause the new birth. Feet washing cannot cause the new birth.

A ceremony can be performed upon someone who has never been born again. Therefore, the outward act cannot be the source of spiritual life.

John wrote in **1 John 5:11-12**:

> *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

Notice where the life is found: *"This life is in his Son."* He also says, *"He that hath the Son hath life."* Spiritual life is not in the outward ordinance. Spiritual life is in Jesus Christ.

The Believer Has More Than the Representation

This is why fulfilment does not leave us with less. Under the shadow, the worshipper had the outward representation. Under the New Covenant, the believer has the spiritual reality.

The New Covenant believer possesses more than outward representations of cleansing, rest and fellowship. These spiritual realities are found in Jesus Christ, who dwells within everyone who is born again.

Humility and service are likewise expressions of His indwelling life, not qualities produced by performing a ceremony. The outward shadow could illustrate these truths, but it could not provide the life from which they flow.

The New Covenant gives us something greater than the picture. It gives us the Person.

We Do Not Perform a Shadow to Obtain What We Already Have

This gives us an important principle for the entire ordinances module: We do not perform a shadow in order to obtain what God has already given us in Jesus Christ.

- If an outward shadow represented cleansing, and the believer has received the true spiritual cleansing in Christ, what can the shadow add?
- If an outward shadow represented fellowship, and fellowship with God is already found in Christ, what can the outward form add?
- If an outward act represented humility and service, and Christ lives within the believer, what can repeating the outward symbol produce that the life of Christ does not already provide?

The outward shadow cannot give us something greater than the reality. It cannot improve the reality, complete the reality, or produce the inward spiritual life that comes only from Jesus Christ.

The Important Distinction

We should remember this distinction throughout the rest of the module:

- The shadow could represent. Jesus Christ provides the reality.
- The outward act could point forward. Jesus Christ fulfils what it represented.
- The ceremony could be performed outwardly. Only Jesus Christ can accomplish the inward work.

Our attention must therefore continually return to Him. The question is not simply whether an outward religious action can be performed, but whether it can produce the inward spiritual reality it represents.

The answer is no. Only Jesus Christ can accomplish the inward spiritual work.

This leads to the next important truth. If the believer's spiritual reality is found entirely in Jesus Christ, we must understand where our righteousness, sanctification and redemption are found. Paul gives the answer clearly: Jesus Christ is our righteousness.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why can outward symbols neither produce the new birth nor add to the life received in Christ?

Personal Reflection

How does the difference between a picture of food and food itself help you understand spiritual representation? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

How could looking to Christ Himself rather than a religious symbol guide your own confidence before God? Name an area where you have relied on religious performance. What change will you make in your trust and response?

CHRIST IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

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We have seen that the believer is complete in Jesus Christ. We have also seen that an outward shadow could represent a spiritual reality, but it could not produce that reality.

This brings us to another important question. If our spiritual completeness is found in Jesus Christ, where are our righteousness, sanctification and redemption found?

Paul gives a very clear answer. Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:30**:

> *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"*

Notice where these spiritual realities are found: *"In Christ Jesus."* Paul says that Jesus Christ is made unto us:

- Wisdom;

- Righteousness;
- Sanctification;
- Redemption.

Our righteousness is not found in an outward ordinance. Our sanctification is not produced by an outward ceremony. Our redemption does not depend upon religious performance. These spiritual realities are found in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ Is Our Righteousness

Paul does not say that an ordinance becomes our righteousness. He says that Jesus Christ *"is made unto us ... righteousness."*

That distinction is extremely important. The believer does not become righteous because he has performed the correct outward action. The believer's righteousness is found in Jesus Christ. This means that if an outward practice is presented as something necessary to establish our standing before God, we must ask whether that practice is being given a place that Scripture gives to Christ Himself.

If Jesus Christ is our righteousness, what can an outward ceremony add to His righteousness? The answer is nothing. No ceremony can make Jesus Christ more righteous, and no outward act can improve the righteousness already found in Him.

The believer's standing before God is therefore not based upon religious performance. It is based upon being in Christ Jesus.

Jesus Christ Is Our Sanctification

Paul also says that Jesus Christ is made unto us *"sanctification."* Sanctification is not produced by an outward ritual.

A physical action may represent holiness or cleansing, but the physical action cannot create holiness within the heart. Jesus Christ is our sanctification. The life of holiness comes from Him.

Therefore, if Jesus Christ is our sanctification, what can an outward ceremony add to His sanctification? Again, the answer is nothing. An outward ordinance cannot make the believer more spiritually sanctified than the reality already found in Christ.

This does not mean that the believer is free to live carelessly; a holy life must be expressed. But that holy life flows from the life of Christ within; it does not come from the ceremony itself.

Jesus Christ Is Our Redemption

Paul also says that Jesus Christ is made unto us *"redemption."* Redemption is not found in water, bread and a cup, or in washing another person's feet. Redemption is found in Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews has already told us that Christ *"obtained eternal redemption for us."* Therefore, if Jesus Christ is our redemption, what can an outward religious practice add to the redemption already found in Him? The answer is nothing. The believer does not need an

outward act to complete what Jesus Christ has already obtained, because redemption is complete in Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does **1 Corinthians 1:30** *show about the source of righteousness, sanctification and redemption?*

Personal Reflection

What has this clarified about the place of religious performance in your own standing before God?

Action Step

Is there a ceremony you have treated as supplying righteousness that Christ does not provide? Explain what this means for your own trust in Him. Examine where you have placed your confidence. What will you change to keep that confidence in Jesus Christ?

Everything Necessary for Our Standing Before God Is in Christ

Paul's statement in **1 Corinthians 1:30** brings the whole matter together. Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Therefore, everything necessary for our spiritual standing before God is found in Him. We do not stand before God because we have performed the correct outward ceremony. We stand before God in Jesus Christ.

Our acceptance is in Him. Our righteousness is in Him. Our sanctification is in Him. Our redemption and our life are in Him.

This is why Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:10**:

> *"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

These verses agree and establish the same truth: everything necessary for our spiritual standing before God is found in Jesus Christ. He is our complete spiritual sufficiency.

The Ordinance Cannot Become Our Righteousness

This point is especially important because outward ordinances can easily become marks of religious identity. A person may begin to think that because he has been baptised correctly, received communion, or participated in feet washing, he has proved his spiritual standing. But if the outward act becomes part of the basis of our righteousness, then the act is being given a place that belongs to Jesus Christ.

Paul does not say, *"The ordinance is made unto us righteousness."* He says, *"Christ Jesus is made unto us righteousness."*

This must remain clear. The New Covenant does not divide righteousness between Christ and religious performance. Our righteousness is found in Him.

We Stand in the Reality

This is the position of the New Covenant believer. We do not stand in the shadow, the ceremony or religious performance. We stand in Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:21**:

> *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

Notice the final words: *"In him."* Again, the believer's righteousness is located in Jesus Christ.

Not in the outward form. Not in the ritual. Not in the ordinance. In Him.

The Foundation for the Ordinances

Before we later examine water baptism, communion and feet washing individually, this foundation must be firmly established. The believer does not need an outward ordinance to supply righteousness that Jesus Christ has failed to provide. The believer does not need a ceremony to complete sanctification that is incomplete in Christ. The believer does not need religious performance to add to the redemption already obtained in Jesus Christ.

- Our position is that Christ is our righteousness.
- Christ is our sanctification.
- Christ is our redemption.
- Christ is our life.

Therefore, we do not perform a shadow to obtain what we already possess in the reality. This brings us to the next important truth. If Jesus Christ is our righteousness and He lives within us, then how should the believer now live? Paul gives the answer: *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must an ordinance never occupy the place the Bible gives to Christ as our righteousness?

Personal Reflection

What does being accepted in Christ rather than through a ceremony mean to you? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

How could Christ being our righteousness guide your own response in a conversation where someone relies on religious performance? Choose one present decision and explain how you will respond from Christ's life within, not independent effort.

THE BELIEVER HAS THE PERSON

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We have seen that Jesus Christ is our righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But the New Covenant gives us something even greater than the blessings Christ provides. The believer has Jesus Christ Himself.

The Old Covenant gave outward pictures of spiritual realities that were still to come. The New Covenant brings the believer into the reality. We have received more than the blessings Jesus Christ provides. We have received Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ Himself Is the Way

Jesus said in **John 14:6**:

> *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Notice how Jesus speaks. He does not say that He will show us a ceremony that is the way. He says, *"I am the way."*

He does not say that He will give us an outward form that contains the truth. He says, *"I am the truth."* He does not say that He will give us a ceremony that produces life.

He says, *"I am the life."* The way, the truth and the life are all found in the Person. This is the New Covenant reality.

Jesus Promised to Come to His People

Before His crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples that He would not leave them without Him. Jesus said in **John 14:18**:

> *"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

Jesus Christ fulfilled this promise at Pentecost in AD 31 when He came as Spirit to dwell within His people. The disciples were not left with memories, teachings or outward representations of an absent Christ. Jesus had promised, *"I will come to you,"* and He fulfilled that promise.

The New Covenant reality is Jesus Christ Himself dwelling within His people. Every person who is born again now possesses His indwelling life.

Christ Liveth in Me

Paul described this reality very clearly. Paul wrote in **Galatians 2:20**:

> *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Notice the words: *"Christ liveth in me."* Paul does not say that he has a ceremony that reminds him of Christ. He says that Christ lives in him.

This is much greater than an outward representation. The believer has the Person, and the life of Jesus Christ is within. This is the inward reality of the New Covenant.

From Outward Picture to Inward Reality

This is one of the great changes we must understand. Under the former covenant, the shadow was presented outwardly. Under the New Covenant, the reality is received inwardly. The former covenant had the outward picture.

The New Covenant gives the inward reality. Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

The identifying reality is the Spirit of Christ dwelling within. The believer does not belong to Jesus Christ because an outward ceremony has been performed. The believer belongs to

Christ because Christ lives within. This is why no outward ordinance can replace the inward work of God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do **Galatians 2:20** *and* **Romans 8:9** *explain the reality of Christ within the believer?*

Personal Reflection

What has this clarified about the difference between knowing a representation and possessing the Person? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

What do you want to understand more clearly about belonging to Christ through His indwelling Spirit? Name one inherited expectation you will reconsider and explain how Christ's fulfilment changes your response.

The True Mark of Belonging

Because the Spirit of Christ dwelling within is the identifying reality, outward ordinances must not become marks by which we decide whether a person belongs to Jesus Christ or to His Church. A person may be water baptised, receive bread and a cup, or take part in feet washing, and yet none of those outward actions can place Jesus Christ within that person.

Belonging to Christ is determined by the inward work of God. Therefore, an outward ordinance must never become the test of whether a person belongs to the Church. The true question is not whether a ceremony has been performed, but whether the person has been born again and possesses the Spirit of Christ.

Baptised Into One Body

Paul explains how the believer is brought into the body of Christ. He shows that entrance into the one body is the work of the Spirit.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:13**:

> *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

Notice what brings the believer into the one body. It is the work of the Spirit. By one Spirit, believers are baptised into one body, and that body is the Church.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 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 might have the preeminence."*

Therefore, entrance into the Church is not established by an outward ordinance, religious ceremony or denominational requirement. The believer is brought into the one body through the inward work of God.

This also means that water baptism, communion and feet washing must never become marks of spiritual belonging. The believer belongs to Christ because Christ lives within, and the believer is part of the Church because, by one Spirit, he has been baptised into one body.

The outward act cannot place a person into Christ. The Spirit of Christ brings the believer into the one body. This is another reason why the believer has more than the representation, because the believer has the Person.

Christ in You

Paul described the mystery of the Gospel in **Colossians 1:26-27**:

> *"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

Notice the words: *"Christ in you."* This is the mystery that had been hidden through former ages but was now made manifest. The mystery is not an ordinance around the believer, a ceremony performed upon the believer, or an outward representation before the believer. It is *"Christ in you."*

This is the great New Covenant reality. The Person who had been represented by outward shadows now lives within the believer.

The Believer Has Life Because He Has the Son

John expresses the same truth. John wrote in **1 John 5:11-12**:

> *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

Notice where eternal life is found: *"This life is in his Son."* Then John says, *"He that hath the Son hath life."*

The believer has life because the believer has the Son. The life is not located in an outward ordinance. The life is in Jesus Christ.

This is another reason why an outward act cannot produce spiritual life. Water cannot give the Son. Bread and a cup cannot give the Son.

Feet washing cannot give the Son. Only God can give spiritual life. And that life is found in Jesus Christ.

We Have More Than What the Shadow Represented

The Old Covenant shadows represented important spiritual truths, but the believer now possesses something greater than the representation. The shadow could represent cleansing. The believer has Jesus Christ, who cleanses.

- The shadow could represent rest. The believer has Jesus Christ, who gives rest.
- The shadow could represent access to God. The believer has Jesus Christ, who is the way.
- The shadow could represent fellowship. The believer has fellowship in Jesus Christ.
- The shadow could represent righteousness and holiness. The believer has Jesus Christ, who is our righteousness and sanctification.

We have received more than the spiritual truths represented by the former shadows. We have received Jesus Christ Himself, the Person in whom those spiritual realities are found.

The Person Is Greater Than the Representation

This distinction must be firmly established. An outward representation can never be greater than the Person it represents.

If someone is standing before you, a photograph of that person cannot add anything to the person's reality. The photograph may have been valuable while the person was absent, but once the person is present, the picture cannot make the person more complete.

The same principle applies spiritually. The shadows pointed towards Jesus Christ. But now Jesus Christ has come.

He has come to dwell within His people. Therefore, we cannot say, *"I have Jesus Christ living within me, but I still need the outward shadow to make the reality complete."* The shadow was never intended to complete the Person. The shadow pointed towards the Person, and the Person is greater than the shadow.

We Have Received the One to Whom the Shadows Pointed

This truth brings together everything we have considered so far:

- The Old Covenant gave the shadow. The New Covenant gives the Person.
- The Old Covenant gave the outward figure. The New Covenant gives Christ within.
- The Old Covenant pointed forward. The New Covenant brings the fulfilment.

The believer is therefore not standing at a distance waiting for the spiritual reality to come. Jesus Christ has come. His Second Coming was fulfilled at Pentecost, and He now dwells within His people. We have received the One to whom the shadows pointed.

Why This Matters to the Ordinances

This is essential when we later examine water baptism, communion and feet washing. We must not ask only: *"What does this outward act represent?"* We must also ask: *"Do I already have the Person in whom that spiritual reality is found?"*

If water represents cleansing, we must ask whether Jesus Christ already provides the true cleansing. If bread and a cup represent fellowship, we must ask whether the believer already has fellowship in Jesus Christ. If feet washing represents humility and service, we must ask whether Christ within already provides the divine life from which humility and service flow. The question is not whether the outward act can give a picture.

The question is: Do we already possess the reality in Jesus Christ? The answer is yes. The believer has the Person.

We Do Not Need Christ Plus the Picture

Because the believer has received the Person, we do not need Christ plus the picture, Christ plus the shadow, or Christ plus an outward representation in order to make the spiritual reality complete. Paul has already told us: *"Ye are complete in him."* And Paul has also told us: *"Christ liveth in me."*

Therefore, the New Covenant believer possesses both completeness in Christ and Christ within. This is far greater than anything the outward shadow could provide.

The Life Within Must Now Be Expressed

This truth also prepares us for the next important question. If Jesus Christ lives within us, how should we now live?

The answer is not that obedience disappears. The answer is that obedience now has an inward source.

We do not perform outward religious actions in order to create the life. The life has already come. Jesus Christ lives within. Therefore, the life within must now be expressed through the way we live.

We have received the Person. The Person lives within us. Therefore, we walk in Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the Spirit bring believers into the one body, and why can an outward ordinance not replace that work?

Personal Reflection

Have you used a ceremony as a test of whether someone belongs to Christ's Church? What do you now understand?

Action Step

How could you respond differently when considering another person's spiritual belonging in the light of the new birth? Examine your own confidence before God. What belief or response must change because spiritual life comes from Christ?

WALK YE IN HIM

BACK TO CONTENTS

We have established that the believer has received the Person of Jesus Christ. Christ lives within us, we are complete in Him, and our righteousness, sanctification, redemption and life are found in Him.

This now brings us to an important practical question: If Jesus Christ lives within us, how are we to live? Paul gives the answer very simply. Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:6**:

> *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"*

Notice the progression. First, we have received Christ Jesus the Lord. Then, we walk in Him.

We do not receive Jesus Christ and then move on to something else. We do not receive the reality and then return to the shadow. We do not receive the Person and then look outside of Him for the Christian life. The same Jesus Christ whom we have received is the One in whom we continue to walk.

As Ye Have Received Christ Jesus the Lord

Paul begins with something that has already happened. He says, *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord."* Before Paul tells us how to walk, he reminds us whom we have received. We have received Jesus Christ the Lord.

This is important. The Christian life does not begin with an outward ceremony, a religious tradition, or something performed by human hands. The Christian life begins with Jesus Christ.

John wrote in **1 John 5:11-12**:

> *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

Notice where the life is found. John says, *"this life is in his Son,"* and then, *"He that hath the Son hath life."* The life is not found in an outward ceremony or in religious performance.

The life is in Jesus Christ. Therefore, when we receive Christ, we receive the life that is in Him.

The One We Received Is the One in Whom We Continue

Paul does not say, *"As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, now find something else to complete the Christian life."* He says, *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."*

The One whom we received is the One in whom we continue. We began with Christ, we received life in Christ, and we are complete in Christ. We now continue by considering what it means to walk in Christ.

We do not receive the Person and then depend upon the representation. We do not receive Christ and then look outside of Him for something necessary to complete what He has given us.

We have received Him. His life is within us. Having received Him, we now walk in Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does Paul direct those who have received Christ to continue walking in Him?

Personal Reflection

What does being rooted and built up in Christ clarify about spiritual growth for you? Is there a familiar expectation of yours that now needs reconsidering?

Action Step

When you feel spiritually weak, how could continuing in Christ guide your response without seeking something to complete Him? Explain one practical response in your own life that should express Christ's indwelling life.

Rooted and Built Up in Him

Paul does not stop with the words: "Walk ye in him." He continues in **Colossians 2:7**:

> *"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."*

Notice again where Paul places the believer: *"Rooted and built up in him."* A tree receives stability and nourishment through its roots. A building receives strength from the foundation upon which it stands. Paul uses both pictures to direct our attention back to Jesus Christ.

We are not rooted in a ceremony. We are not built upon an outward ordinance. We are rooted and built up in Him.

This agrees perfectly with the previous verse. We have received Christ, we walk in Christ, we are rooted in Christ, and we are built up in Christ. We are also established in the faith.

The Christian life therefore does not begin in Jesus Christ and then move away from Him towards outward religious performance. It continues in Him.

This is why spiritual growth must never be understood as adding something to Christ that was missing. Growth means that the life already received in Christ becomes more firmly established and more fully expressed in the believer.

- Paul's direction remains consistent: Receive Him.
- Walk in Him.
- Be rooted and built up in Him.

What Does It Mean to Walk in Christ?

In Scripture, our walk speaks of the way we live. It describes our daily conduct and the direction of our life.

It includes:

- How we think;
- How we speak;
- How we treat other people;
- How we respond when we are wronged;
- How we make decisions;
- How we conduct ourselves from day to day.

Therefore, when Paul says *"walk ye in him,"* he is speaking about a life that is lived in Jesus Christ. Walking in Christ is more than knowing about Him, professing His name, attending a fellowship, or performing an outward religious action. Walking in Christ is the life of Jesus Christ within us being expressed through the way we live.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 2:20**:

> *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Notice again: *"Christ liveth in me."* If Christ lives within us, His life should be seen in the way we live. That is what it means to walk in Him.

His Life Is Seen in Our Walk

The indwelling life of Jesus Christ is more than a doctrine we believe. His life within the born-again believer is expressed through the way we live.

If Christ lives within us, we walk in love, truth and holiness. We forgive, show mercy, serve others and walk humbly. These things do not create the life of Christ. They reveal the life that is already within.

We Walk in Love

John wrote in **1 John 4:7-8**:

> *"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."*

The life of God is a life of love. Therefore, when Christ lives within us, His love should be expressed through us.

Our love for others is not simply the result of following an outward rule. We love because the Divine life of Jesus Christ dwells within us. His love is expressed through the way we speak, the way we treat others, the way we respond when someone hurts us, the way we care for those in need, and the way we forgive. The inward life is expressed outwardly.

We Walk in Truth

Jesus said in **John 14:6**:

> *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

Jesus Christ is *"the truth."* Therefore, if Christ lives within us, we cannot knowingly build our lives upon falsehood. We are called to speak truth, live honestly, receive the truth of God's Word, and walk consistently with what God has revealed. We walk in truth because the Truth lives within us.

We Walk in Holiness

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 1:15-16**:

> *"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."*

The word *"conversation"* refers to our manner of life or conduct. Holiness is not simply something we confess; it must be expressed in the way we live.

However, the order is important. We do not live holy lives in order to make the Holy One come within us. We live holy lives because Jesus Christ already dwells within us.

The life comes first. The holy walk follows.

Walking in Christ Is Not Human Imitation

We must also understand what walking in Christ does not mean. It does not mean that we are simply trying to imitate Jesus Christ through our own human strength.

The Christian life is not based upon the human resolve, *"I will try harder to act like Jesus."* Such an approach places the emphasis upon personal effort rather than the indwelling life of Jesus Christ.

Paul did not say, *"I am trying to act like Christ."* He declared, *"Christ liveth in me."* The Christian life therefore flows from the Person who already dwells within the born-again believer.

The New Covenant reality is greater than outward imitation. Jesus Christ lives within His people.

Therefore, our life comes from the Christ who lives within us. We are not trying to produce His life from the outside. His life has been received within.

The Life Comes First

This gives us an important principle: The life comes first. Then the walk follows.

We do not walk correctly in order to receive Christ. We walk in Christ because we have received Christ.

We do not live holy lives in order to make Christ come within us. We live holy lives because Christ lives within us.

We do not love in order to create the divine life. We love because the divine life is within us.

We do not serve in order to become complete in Christ. We serve because we are complete in Him, and His life is expressed through us. Therefore, our walk does not produce the life; our walk expresses the life we have received.

The Tree First Has Life

Jesus illustrated this principle through a tree and its fruit. Jesus said in **Matthew 7:17-18**:

> *"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."*

The fruit does not give life to the tree. The tree must first have life, and then the life within produces the fruit. Life first, then fruit.

In the same way, outward conduct does not create the life of Christ within us. His indwelling life produces the outward fruit.

That is the New Covenant order: Christ lives within first, and His life is then expressed through us. The inward reality comes first. The outward walk follows.

Obedience Flows From the Inward Life

This helps us understand New Covenant obedience. Jesus said in **John 14:15**:

> *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."*

Jesus did not remove obedience. The New Covenant does not mean that how we live is unimportant. We obey Jesus Christ, follow His teaching, walk in truth, live holy lives, love one another, forgive, serve and show mercy.

But our obedience has an inward source. It flows from the life of Christ within.

This is very different from performing outward religious actions in an attempt to create inward righteousness. The inward life is already present. The walk expresses that life.

Partakers of the Divine Nature

Peter described the life believers have received. Peter wrote in **2 Peter 1:4-7**:

> *"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."*

Notice the expression: *"Partakers of the divine nature."* The believer has received something much greater than an outward religious form. The Divine life is within.

Peter then speaks of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. These are not outward ordinances. They are qualities of life.

They are expressed because the believer has become a partaker of the Divine nature. Again, the order is clear.

The life comes first. Then the nature of that life is expressed.

The Walk Does Not Replace the Reality

Walking in Christ does not mean that our conduct becomes another form of religious performance. Our confidence does not move from ceremonies to our own behaviour. We do not say, *"I am accepted because I have lived well enough."*

Our acceptance remains in Jesus Christ. Our righteousness remains in Jesus Christ. Our completeness remains in Jesus Christ.

The walk is not the source of the life. It is the expression of the life. Therefore, even as we speak of obedience, holiness, love and service, our attention remains upon Jesus Christ within.

The Connection With the Ordinances

This principle is very important to the subject of ordinances. An outward act cannot produce what must first exist within.

Water cannot produce spiritual life. Bread and a cup cannot produce fellowship with Christ. Feet washing cannot produce humility, love or service. But when Jesus Christ lives within the believer, spiritual life is present, fellowship with Christ is present, and love, humility and service can be expressed.

The outward walk flows from the inward reality. Therefore, we do not perform an outward action in order to create the life. We live from the life already received in Jesus Christ.

We Have Received Christ, Therefore We Walk in Him

We can now bring the principle together. Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:6**:

> *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"*

We have received Christ. Christ lives within us. We are complete in Him, and His life is the source from which we live.

Therefore, we walk in Him. Our walk does not produce the life; it expresses the life we have received. The inward life comes first, and the outward walk follows. This is the New Covenant order.

This brings us to the final practical question: where is our confidence? Is our confidence in something we have performed, in an outward ceremony, or in religious tradition? Or is our confidence in Jesus Christ?

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the example of a living tree and its fruit explain the relationship between Christ's life and the believer's conduct?

Personal Reflection

What does this help you understand about obedience arising from inward life rather than human imitation? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

Think of a situation calling for honesty, love or forgiveness. How could responding from Christ's life guide your choice? State what you will do differently in that situation, and why.

OUR CONFIDENCE MUST BE IN JESUS CHRIST

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We have now come to a practical question that brings together everything we have considered in this Study Guide: where is our confidence? Is our confidence in something we have done, in an outward ceremony we have performed, or in a religious tradition we have followed? Or is our confidence in Jesus Christ?

This question is especially important when considering ordinances. An outward act may be visible, may be performed correctly, may have been practised for many generations, and may even represent an important spiritual truth. But none of these things means that our confidence should rest in the outward action. Our confidence must remain in the Person to whom the outward form pointed.

Rejoice in Christ Jesus

Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:3**:

> *"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."*

Notice the two expressions: *"Rejoice in Christ Jesus"* and *"Have no confidence in the flesh."* Paul places these truths together. Our rejoicing is in Christ Jesus, and our confidence is not in what the flesh can perform outwardly.

This does not mean that the body is unimportant, that obedience is unnecessary, or that our conduct does not matter. It means that our spiritual standing before God does not rest upon something outward that we have performed. Our confidence rests in Jesus Christ.

Our Standing Is in Christ

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:10**:

> *"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

These words must become the foundation of our confidence: *"Ye are complete in him."* Our standing before God is not based upon outward religious performance. Our righteousness, sanctification, redemption, rest and life are all found in Jesus Christ.

Everything necessary for our spiritual standing before God is found in Jesus Christ. Therefore, our confidence cannot rest in something outward.

An Outward Act Cannot Become the Basis of Our Confidence

Consider what this means in relation to the ordinances.

- We cannot say, "I know I am right with God because I was placed in water." Water cannot establish our spiritual standing before God.
- We cannot say, "I know I have fellowship with Christ because I ate bread and drank from a cup." Bread and a cup cannot create fellowship with Jesus Christ.
- We cannot say, "I know I am humble because I washed another person's feet." The outward washing cannot create humility within the heart. Those outward acts may represent spiritual truths, but they cannot provide the spiritual reality. Therefore, our confidence must go deeper than the outward act. Our confidence must be in Jesus Christ Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does Paul place rejoicing in Christ together with having no confidence in the flesh?

Personal Reflection

What have you treated as evidence of being right with God: a visible action or the reality found in Christ? Explain.

Action Step

How could you reconsider any confidence you place in having performed a ceremony correctly? Name one inherited expectation you will reconsider and explain how Christ's fulfilment changes your response.

The Difference Between the Act and the Person

There is a great difference between trusting in an outward act and trusting in Jesus Christ. An outward action can be seen by other people, but only Jesus Christ can give spiritual life. An outward ceremony can be performed correctly, but only Jesus Christ can cleanse the heart. An outward act can appear religious, but only Jesus Christ can be our righteousness.

Therefore, we must be careful where we place our confidence. If our confidence rests in something we have performed, our attention has moved from the Person to the act. If our confidence rests in the ceremony, the ceremony has begun to occupy a place that belongs to Jesus Christ.

The shadow was given to point towards the Person. It was never intended to become the object of our confidence.

No Confidence in the Flesh

Paul's words are very direct: *"Have no confidence in the flesh."* The flesh can perform outward actions. The body can enter water, the mouth can eat bread, the hand can receive a cup, and the hands can wash another person's feet.

But outward actions cannot produce spiritual life. They cannot make the heart righteous, give the new birth, or place Christ within.

This is why Paul directs us away from confidence in the flesh and towards Christ Jesus. The believer's confidence is not the claim, *"I have performed the correct ceremony."* It is the declaration, *"I have Jesus Christ."*

This Does Not Remove Obedience

Again, we must not misunderstand this principle. Our confidence being in Jesus Christ does not mean that obedience is unnecessary.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:6**:

> *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"*

We obey Jesus Christ. We walk in truth, holiness and love. We forgive, show mercy, serve and walk humbly.

But our confidence is not in the outward action itself. Our obedience is the expression of the life of Christ within us. It is not the foundation of our spiritual completeness.

We do not obey in order to make Christ sufficient. We obey because Christ lives within us.

Our Confidence Remains in the Person

This brings us back to the distinction we have established throughout this Study Guide. There is the outward representation, and there is the inward reality. The outward act may represent something spiritual, but our confidence must remain in the spiritual reality.

Water may represent cleansing, but our confidence is in Jesus Christ who cleanses. Bread and a cup may represent fellowship, but our confidence is in Jesus Christ in whom true fellowship is found. Feet washing may represent humility and service, but our confidence is in the life of Christ within, which produces genuine humility and service.

The outward act is not the Person. The representation is not the reality. Therefore, our confidence remains in Jesus Christ.

Christ Plus Nothing

We have already seen that the believer is complete in Christ. Therefore, we do not need Christ plus the shadow, Christ plus a ceremony, or Christ plus an outward religious performance. We need Jesus Christ, and when we have Jesus Christ, we are complete in Him.

The shadow pointed towards Him. He has come.

The shadow represented the reality. The reality is found in Him. The shadow could never make us complete. We are complete in Jesus Christ.

The Shadow Was Never Intended to Complete Christ

This principle needs to be very clear. The shadow was never intended to complete Jesus Christ. It was the other way around. Jesus Christ fulfils what the shadow could only represent.

- Therefore, if water baptism is presented as necessary to complete our spiritual cleansing, we must ask: Is the cleansing of Jesus Christ incomplete without water?
- If communion is presented as necessary to complete our fellowship with Christ, we must ask: Is our fellowship with Jesus Christ incomplete without bread and a cup?
- If feet washing is presented as necessary to produce humility and service, we must ask: Is the life of Jesus Christ within us insufficient to produce humility and service?

These are serious questions. They do not mean that we ignore the Scriptures connected with these practices. We must examine those Scriptures carefully, but we examine them from the foundation that Scripture has already established: We are complete in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ Is Sufficient

- An outward act may represent cleansing, but Jesus Christ cleanses.
- An outward act may represent fellowship, but our fellowship is in Jesus Christ.
- An outward act may represent humility and service, but the life of Christ within produces humility and service.

The shadow can represent, but the shadow cannot add to the reality. The outward act cannot supply something that Jesus Christ has failed to provide. Jesus Christ is sufficient. This is why our confidence must remain in Him.

Paul Continually Brings Us Back to "In Him"

Throughout this Study Guide, the Scriptures have continually brought us back to the same place: In Him. We have received Christ. We walk in Him. We are complete in Him.

Our righteousness, sanctification, redemption and life are in Him. Christ lives within us.

Therefore, there is no need to look outside Jesus Christ for something to complete our spiritual standing before God. There is no need to place an outward shadow beside Him or trust in a ceremony to supply what Christ has already provided. Our confidence remains in Jesus Christ.

Where Is Your Confidence?

This question must finally become personal. Where is your confidence? Is it in something you have done, in a ceremony you have performed, in a religious tradition you have followed, or in an outward act that other people can see? Or is your confidence in Jesus Christ?

Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:3**:

> *"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."*

That is the New Covenant position. We worship God in the Spirit. We rejoice in Christ Jesus.

We place no confidence in outward religious performance. Our confidence is in Jesus Christ.

He is the reality. He is our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption and our life.

And we are complete in Him. Therefore, our confidence must remain in Jesus Christ, not in the shadow, the ceremony, religious performance, or tradition.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does confidence in Christ preserve obedience without making conduct the source of spiritual completeness?

Personal Reflection

What does the difference between trusting Christ and trusting your own performance clarify for you?

Action Step

How could this distinction guide your own response when you feel tempted to measure acceptance by your religious achievements? What assumption will you examine, and how will your response change if it does not agree with the Bible?

SUMMARY: THE BELIEVER HAS THE PERSON

BACK TO CONTENTS

In this Study Guide, we have established an important distinction: The shadow could represent, but it could not produce. The outward service of the former covenant could be performed faithfully, but Hebrews tells us that it could not perfect the conscience. The outward form could teach, illustrate, represent and point forward, but it could not accomplish the inward spiritual work.

Water can wash the outside of the body, but water cannot produce spiritual life. Bread and a cup can be received outwardly, but they cannot create fellowship with Jesus Christ. Feet can be washed, but the physical action cannot create humility, love or service within the heart.

The shadow could represent the reality. Jesus Christ provides the reality.

Christ Is Our Righteousness

Paul showed us where our spiritual sufficiency is found. Jesus Christ is made unto us:

- Wisdom;
- Righteousness;
- Sanctification;
- Redemption.

Our righteousness is therefore not found in an ordinance. Our sanctification is not produced by a ceremony, and our redemption does not depend upon religious performance. These spiritual realities are found in Jesus Christ. We do not perform a shadow in order to obtain what God has already given us in Christ.

The Believer Has the Person

The New Covenant gives us something greater than an outward representation: the believer has Jesus Christ Himself. Paul testified, *"Christ liveth in me."* He also spoke of *"Christ in you."*

The believer therefore has more than the picture; the believer has the Person. Spiritual life is not located in an outward ordinance, because life is found in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, Walk in Him

Because we have received Christ, our life must now be lived from the reality we have received. Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:6**:

> *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"*

Notice the order: first, we receive Christ; then, we walk in Him. Our walk does not produce the life; it expresses the life we have received. We do not love in order to create the Divine life, because we love from the Divine life within.

We do not live holy lives in order to cause Christ to dwell within us; we live holy lives because Christ lives within us. The life comes first, and the walk follows.

Our Confidence Is in Jesus Christ

This brings us finally to the question: Where is our confidence? Our confidence cannot rest in water, bread and a cup, feet washing, religious tradition or outward performance.

Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:3**:

> *"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."*

Our rejoicing is in Christ Jesus. Our confidence is in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, we can bring this Study Guide together in these truths:

- The shadow could represent. Jesus Christ provides the reality.
- Jesus Christ is our righteousness, sanctification and redemption.
- The believer has the Person. Christ lives within.
- Having received Jesus, we walk in Him.
- And our confidence remains in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How are Christ's righteousness, His indwelling life and walking in Him connected?

Personal Reflection

Which connection has most clarified why the believer has more than an outward picture? Explain. Is there a familiar expectation of yours that now needs reconsidering?

Action Step

What do you want to understand or respond to more clearly about living from Christ while keeping your confidence in Him? Identify one personal response you will make, trusting in Jesus Christ rather than your own religious effort.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION REMAINS

BACK TO CONTENTS

We have established that the shadows pointed forward, Jesus Christ came, and the believer has received the Person. Christ lives within those who are born again, the believer is complete

in Him, and our confidence must remain in Jesus Christ rather than in an outward religious action.

However, an important question now arises:

- If the reality had already come in Jesus Christ, why do we still find believers performing outward practices during the period recorded in the book of Acts?
- Why do we find Jewish believers continuing to live among customs and practices connected with the former covenant?
- If an apostle or believer performed an outward action after the Day of Pentecost, does that automatically establish that action as a permanent ordinance of the New Covenant Church?

These questions are especially important because we will eventually examine water baptism, communion and feet washing individually. It would be easy to find an action recorded in Acts and conclude: *"The apostles did it; therefore the Church must continue doing it."* However, that conclusion assumes something that must first be proved.

Recorded Action Is Not Automatically a Permanent Command

The book of Acts is an inspired and truthful record of what occurred as the Gospel moved outward from Jerusalem and as believers lived through the change from the former covenant order into the New Covenant reality found in Jesus Christ. Acts records what God did, but it also records what people did as they responded according to the understanding they possessed at that time. Therefore, we must make an important distinction: *"An action being recorded in Scripture does not, by itself, make that action a permanent New Covenant command."* When Acts records something that an apostle, disciple or congregation did, we must ask more than, *"Did they do it?"*

We must also ask:

- Why did they do it?;
- What understanding did they possess at that time?;
- Was the action connected with the former covenant order or the period of transition?;
- Does the wider teaching of Scripture establish that action as part of the continuing New Covenant reality?;
- Had the spiritual reality represented by the outward action already been fulfilled in Jesus Christ?

These questions do not diminish the authority of the book of Acts. They help us read Acts according to what Acts actually records: real people living through a real period of change.

Fulfilment Came Before Full Understanding

We have already established something that must govern our understanding. The fulfilment did not wait for people's understanding.

Jesus Christ had come. The spiritual reality had arrived, and salvation was complete in Him. Yet this does not mean that everyone immediately understood every consequence of what He had accomplished.

A person may continue doing something because it has been practised throughout that person's life. A sincere believer may continue an inherited religious practice while still learning what Jesus Christ has fulfilled. The continuation of the practice does not make the fulfilment incomplete. This distinction will become extremely important when we later examine the ordinances.

Acts Must Be Read in the Light of Fulfilment

If water baptism appears in Acts, the record establishes that people were water baptised. However, the fact that the action occurred does not, by itself, answer whether water baptism was intended to remain a permanent New Covenant ordinance.

The same principle must be applied to other outward practices. If an action continued during the transition, we must still ask whether it belonged to the final spiritual reality God had established in Jesus Christ.

We must therefore distinguish carefully between:

- What people continued to practise during the transition;
- What Jesus Christ had already fulfilled;
- What Scripture establishes as the continuing New Covenant reality. This distinction prevents us from turning transitional conduct into permanent doctrine.

The Question Is How People Responded to an Established Reality

Before examining water baptism, communion and feet washing individually, we must understand the period through which the early Church was passing. The central issue is not whether the truth itself was still developing. The truth had already been established in Jesus Christ.

The question is how quickly people understood that truth and brought their conduct into agreement with it. This prepares us to examine an important question: Why did God permit outward practices to continue during the transition from the former covenant to the New Covenant, even though their spiritual fulfilment had already come in Jesus Christ?

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does an action recorded in Acts not automatically establish a permanent New Covenant command?

Personal Reflection

What does the difference between completed fulfilment and developing human understanding help you reconsider? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

When reading about an outward action in Acts, how could its setting guide your own decision about whether to practise it? Identify one practice or belief you will test against the Bible, and explain what you are prepared to change.

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

Explain the difference between an outward action representing spiritual truth and producing spiritual life. How does the teaching that Christ is our righteousness, sanctification and redemption establish where the reality is found?

2. Understanding

How does the order of receiving Christ and then walking in Him explain obedience? Use the example of the tree and its fruit to distinguish life expressed from life produced by outward conduct.

3. Personal Reflection

What has the teaching that the believer possesses Jesus Christ Himself clarified or challenged in your own understanding of spiritual belonging? Explain why an outward ceremony cannot be the true mark of belonging to His Church.

4. Response to Truth

Christ within is the source of love, holiness and service. What does this lead you to reconsider about trying to imitate Jesus through your own strength or measuring your life by religious performance?

5. Action Step

Consider a situation in which you need to show humility or serve someone. How could the difference between an outward display and Christ's inward life guide your own response? Explain what you want to consider or do differently.

6. Early Response

Have you already begun considering or responding to a situation requiring humility or service in the light of Christ's inward life rather than an outward display? If yes, explain what you now understand or have done. If not, explain what you are still considering or what has made it difficult for you to begin.

7. Ongoing Practice

What could help you continue responding with humility and service from the life of Christ rather than treating a visible action as proof of humility? Explain how you could keep your confidence in Him when your conduct needs correction.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

Why must confidence remain in Jesus Christ even when obedience, holiness and love are expressed in a believer's life? Explain how moving confidence from a ceremony to good behaviour could still miss the New Covenant order.

9. Living the Truth

Someone argues that an apostle performing an outward action in Acts proves that every believer must continue it. How would you respond using the distinction between completed fulfilment, developing understanding and a permanent command?

10. Final Response

What has become clearer to you about having the Person rather than relying on a representation? Explain how Christ as our righteousness, His life within and the conduct that follows belong together. What is your own response, or what questions remain for you?