

The **Bible** Unpacked

Comprehensive Study Series

The Bible's teaching presented
for Bible students

Paul Mallison

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for Bible students

16. The Standing of God's People

Paul Mallison

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A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are 40 booklets in the series, based on the 40 chapters of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Comprehensive Edition*. Each booklet has two sections, which can be used for two or more studies.

See *Topics in This Series* towards the end of this booklet for a full listing of all the topics. Note that studying booklets alternatively from the two major sections (*What to Know* and *What to Do*) would add variety.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who led the Israelites and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Much care has been taken in order to correctly interpret the verses. Nevertheless, if you encounter a verse that is used to teach something that is contrary to or goes beyond your understanding, assess its use by doing such things as: reading the passage it is from; and considering how its teaching fits in with Scripture as a whole (e.g. interpret OT teaching in the light of NT teaching).

For more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: www.thebibleunpacked.net.

Suggestions for Study Groups

Preliminary matters:

- Beforehand the leader should: check the context of any verses they are not familiar with; and review the questions. If need be, they should compose questions more applicable to the group.
- Each person should have a Bible, for things such as checking a verse's context. It would also be helpful to have Bible commentaries on hand.
- Pray before beginning the study. Ask God for help in understanding the meaning of the verses and to affect your lives through them. Also pray together at the end.

Doing the study:

- Ideally, read the material and answer the questions prior to the meeting. Then share answers and discuss any issues arising from the material in the meeting.
- Alternatively, read the material and answer the questions in the meeting – reading either aloud as a group or individually (prior to sharing answers). If reading as a group, **try having one person read the headings, another read the verses and another read the comments.** Additionally, a fourth person could read the Bible references.

General or concluding questions:

If time permits, conclude with one or more of the following questions:

- What is something that you either: **did not know** before; gained **greater insight** into; or **needed reminding** of?
- What verse would be helpful to memorize and bear in mind during the next week?
- In taking the verses seriously, is there anything you should change in:
 - (a) how you relate to God and/or to other people; or
 - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?

If so, are there any specific steps you could take to do this?

I. Basics

This chapter looks at the standing or position of God's people in relationship to God. Probably the most basic aspect of this is that they belong to God, as his people. As such the relationship between believers and God is both a strong one and a close one. This is underlined by them being his family and also his church.

a) Prologue: God Draws People to Himself

See also:

■ *Salvation by Grace, through Jesus Christ*, Ch. 14

This section contains some teaching which contrasts with teaching elsewhere in the Bible – and has been the subject of much debate. It teaches that God chooses (or elects) some people to be his, and so to be saved. Yet the Bible also teaches that God desires and provides for the salvation of all people (cf. *God invites all people to come to him and be saved, . . .*, Ch. 21; . . . *for God wants all people to be saved*, Ch. 21) and that all people have the choice of whether to respond to him or not.

In coming to terms with this “tension” in Scripture, one should bear in mind that as the Bible teaches both “sides”, the truth lies in both of them, as opposed to a position that is a compromise of both.

God chooses people (to be his people) . . .

MARK 13:20 [JESUS:] If the Lord had not shortened those days, no one would be saved. But for the sake of *the elect whom he has chosen*, he has shortened those days. ISV

LUKE 18:7A Won't God give justice to *his chosen ones*, who cry out to him day and night? NET

God's people are in view in the above verses as “the elect whom he has chosen” (Mark 13:20) and “his chosen ones” (Luke 18:7a).

. . . As such, God chooses people to receive spiritual blessings

JAMES 2:5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters! *Did not God choose the poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom* that he promised to those who love him? NET

ACTS 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this [that God had extended his salvation to Gentiles], they began to rejoice and praise the word of the Lord, and *all who had been appointed for eternal life* believed. NET

The use of “appointed” speaks of God choosing people for eternal life.

God calls them to himself

ACTS 2:39 [PETER, TELLING A CROWD OF THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:] For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, *everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.* ESV

This verse supports the assertion that those who are God's people have been called to be by God.

God enables people to believe and turn to Jesus Christ

JOHN 6:44 [JESUS:] *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him,* and I will raise him up at the last day. NET

ACTS 11:20–23 But among them [believers] were some men from Cyprus and Cyrene who came to Antioch and began talking to the Hellenistic Jews too, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. ²¹*The hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number of people believed and turned to the Lord.* ²²When the church in Jerusalem heard this news, they sent Barnabas all the way to Antioch. ²³When he arrived, *he rejoiced to see what the grace of God had done,* and with a hearty determination he continuously encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord. ISV

The people's belief and turning to the Lord (v. 21b) is attributed to neither how the message was presented nor the people's own initiative, but to the "hand of the Lord" (v. 21a) – evidencing "the grace of God" (v. 23).

Note: God's mercy and people's destiny

ROM 9:10–18 [PAUL:] Not only that, but when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our ancestor Isaac — ¹¹*even before they were born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose in election would stand, not by works but by his calling)* — ¹²*it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger,"* ¹³*just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."* ¹⁴What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? Absolutely not! ¹⁵For he says to Moses: *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."* ¹⁶*So then, it does not depend on human desire or exertion, but on God who shows mercy.* ¹⁷*For the scripture says to Pharaoh: "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may demonstrate my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."* ¹⁸*So then, God has mercy on whom he*

chooses to have mercy, and he hardens whom he chooses to harden.

NET

The basic thrust of this passage is that God has mercy on who he wants or chooses to – which he has the right to do. Thus God’s purpose for people and their destiny – in this life (vv. 11–12, 17) and the next (cf. vv. 22–23) – depends on God’s mercy. In illustrating this in the case of Jacob and Esau, “hated” (v. 13) is used in a relative sense (cf. AMP, CEV), to emphasize God’s choice of Jacob over Esau.

What role does God play in a person becoming a Christian? What does the person do?

How can the teaching that God chooses people be compatible with God’s justice?

What does the teaching that God chooses people show about God’s grace?

b) God's People Belong to God

God's people belong to him

1PET 2:9A [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] However, you are chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, *people who belong to God*. GW

For they are God's people . . .

COL 3:12 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] God loves you and has chosen you as *his own special people*. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient. CEV

ISA 63:8A *He* [God] *said*, "*Certainly they will be my people*, children who are not disloyal." NET

. . . and God is their God

2CHR 13:10A [ABIJAH, KING OF JUDAH:] *But as for us, the LORD is our God* and we have not rejected him. NET

God's people are called by God's name

DEUT 28:10 [MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD*, and they shall be afraid of you. NKJV

Being called by God's name identifies God's people as his, showing their unique relationship with him and is reflective of them being part of his family (as per the following section, *God's People Are His Family*). Note that references to being called (i.e. named or identified) by God's name may simply be speaking of being called "God's" (or "the LORD's"; cf. Isa 44:5) or "God's people".

God's people likewise belong to Jesus Christ . . .

ROM 14:8 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] If we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So *whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord*. GNT

. . . God gives his people to Jesus Christ

JOHN 10:29 [JESUS, REFERRING TO HIS FOLLOWERS:] *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them from my Father's hand.* NET

Why do God's people belong to him?

What are some implications of God being our God?

What is one significant way that belonging to God affects - or should affect - what we do?

c) God's People Are His Family

Each believer belongs to the household of God

EPH 2:19 [PAUL, TO NON-JEWISH BELIEVERS:] So then you are no longer foreigners and noncitizens, but *you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, ...* NET

As members of God's household, God's people are in effect his family (cf. CEV, GNT, NCV, NLT) – as the following subsections reflect.

God is their Father

ROM 1:7 To all those loved by God in Rome, called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from *God our Father* and the Lord Jesus Christ! NET

They are God's children . . .

JOHN 1:12–13 But to all who have received him [Jesus Christ] – those who believe in his name – *he has given the right to become God's children* ¹³– *children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband's decision, but by God.* NET

Those who accept Jesus and believe in him (v. 12a) are enabled to become God's children (v. 12b) – born of God (v. 13) into spiritual life.

. . . As God's children, they are also heirs of God

ROM 8:17 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ)* – if indeed we suffer with him so we may also be glorified with him. NET

God's people are Jesus Christ's brothers and sisters

MATT 12:49–50 And pointing toward his disciples *he* [Jesus] *said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"* ⁵⁰*For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.* NET

God's people are also brothers and sisters of each other

MATT 23:8 [JESUS, TO HIS FOLLOWERS:] But you must not be called 'Teacher,' because you have only one Teacher, and *you are all brothers and sisters together.* NCV™

What are some implications of God being our Father for the way we relate to him?

What do heirs of God inherit?

What else could you do to better relate to or treat other believers as your brothers and sisters?

Pray for persecuted Christians

d) God's People Are His Church

The term "church" denotes an assembly or body of believers that belong to God. Additionally it can be used more generally of God's people as a whole – the worldwide church.

God's people form God's church

ACTS 20:28 [PAUL, TO THE EPHESIAN CHURCH LEADERS:] Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to *shepherd the church of God* that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. NET

Jesus Christ is the church's Lord and ruler

JOHN 13:13–14 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and do so correctly, for that is what I am.* ¹⁴*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you too ought to wash one another's feet.* NET

HEB 3:6A *But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house.* NET

This speaks of Jesus Christ being "in charge" (CEV, GNT, NLT) of God's house or church – i.e. its ruler.

The church is God's temple, in which God dwells by his Holy Spirit . . .

1COR 3:16 [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH:] Do you not know that *you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?* NET

EPH 2:21–22 He [Jesus Christ] is the one who holds the whole building together and *makes it grow into a sacred temple dedicated to the Lord.* ²²*In union with him you too are being built together with all the others into a place where God lives through his Spirit.* GNT

In v. 21 the universal church appears to be in view. This may also be the case in v. 22, although there Paul may be turning the focus to the Ephesian church in particular. Bear in mind that the assertion in the above subheading is applicable to the universal church and also to individual churches, with each church's members together forming a spiritual building.

. . . As such, God's people meet together in his presence

ACTS 10:33 [CORNELIUS, TO PETER:] Therefore I sent for you at once, and you were kind enough to come. So now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to say to us. NET

What is the "church"?

How should Jesus Christ being the church's Lord and ruler affect the running of a local church? In what way could your church better reflect this?

Explain the assertion that the church is God's temple.

II. Being 'in' Jesus Christ

Arguably the most fundamental change in the standing of God's people in relationship to him that followed what Jesus Christ accomplished, is that they are now "in" Jesus Christ. Being "in" Jesus Christ involves the association or correlation of believers with Jesus Christ, by which God views them in association with his Son.

Due to this connection with Jesus Christ, they participate with him in such things as: his victory over sin and death; his life; and other blessings he has secured. As such it has great significance in the relationship of believers to God.

Note that expressions like "in Jesus Christ" sometimes have other meanings, such as "through Jesus Christ". While the verses in this section have been interpreted here as using such expressions to speak of believers being "in" Jesus Christ, in some instances the meaning is debatable.

a) God's People Are 'in' Jesus Christ

God's people are "in" Jesus Christ

EPH 1:1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints [in Ephesus], *the faithful in Christ Jesus.* NET

They are "in" Jesus Christ because of what God has done

1COR 1:30 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And *because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ...* ESV

God's people are "in" Jesus Christ because of what God has accomplished through Christ for his people, such as securing for them "righteousness and sanctification and redemption".

Jesus Christ identifies himself with God's people

MATT 25:40 Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, *anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.*' NCV™

The King in this parable represents Jesus Christ himself. Commentators generally interpret "my people" to be referring to Christians.

God's people live with Jesus Christ . . .

2COR 13:4 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] For indeed he was crucified by reason of weakness, but he lives because of God's power. For we also are weak in him, but *we will live together with him,* because of God's power toward you. NET

. . . and Jesus Christ is in them

JOHN 14:20 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] You will know at that time that I am in my Father and you are in me and *I am in you.* NET

EPH 3:16–17A [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, ¹⁷*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, ...* NET

List a couple of points that you would mention in explaining the concept of believers being "in" Jesus Christ.

In what way are believers united with Christ?

In our everyday lives, how conscious should we be of being "in" Jesus Christ and how should it affect our thinking?

Pray for persecuted Christians

b) The Significance of Being 'in' Jesus Christ

Generally speaking at least, the spiritual standing and blessings that believers have are based on them being "in" Jesus Christ, by which they are associated and even identified with him. As referred to earlier, this means that they are granted by God the standing and blessings that Jesus Christ has attained on behalf of those so associated with him.

"In" Jesus Christ God's people are saved, . . .

2TIM 2:10 [PAUL:] So I endure all things for the sake of those chosen by God, that *they too may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus* and its eternal glory. NET

This may be meaning that salvation comes to those who are "in" or "belong to" (CEV) Jesus Christ – hence its use here. However it could simply be referring to salvation coming through Christ (cf. GNT).

. . . for "in" Jesus Christ they are redeemed and have righteousness

COL 1:13–14 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of *the Son he loves*, ¹⁴*in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*. NET

2COR 5:21 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so *that in him we would become the righteousness of God*. NET

"In" Jesus Christ believers share in the righteousness of God (cf. GNT).

"In" Jesus Christ God's people are sanctified

1COR 1:2 [PAUL:] To the church of God that is in Corinth, *to those sanctified in Christ Jesus*, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: ... ESV

"In" Jesus Christ they are identified with him in his death, resurrection and life

COL 2:11–13 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *In him you also were circumcised* – not, however, with a circumcision performed by human hands, but *by the removal of the fleshly body, that is, through the circumcision*

done by Christ. ¹²Having been buried with him in baptism, you also have been raised with him through your faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead. ¹³And even though you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he [God] nevertheless made you alive with him [Christ], having forgiven all your transgressions. NET

Verses 11–12 speak of one's sinful nature being cut off through one being buried and raised with Christ. Following on from this, Paul speaks of believers being given life with Christ (v. 13).

“In” Jesus Christ God’s people are given God’s grace

1COR 1:4–5 [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS:] I always thank my God for you because of *the grace of God that was given to you in Christ Jesus*. ⁵For you were made rich in every way in him, in all your speech and in every kind of knowledge – ... NET

“In” Jesus Christ God’s people have spiritual “fruits”

JOHN 16:33 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] I have told you these things so that *in me you may have peace*. In the world you have trouble and suffering, but take courage – I have conquered the world. NET

1TIM 1:14 [PAUL:] But the grace of our Lord was fully given to me, and with that grace came *the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus*. NCV™

This appears to be speaking of the faith and love “that are [to be realized] in Christ Jesus” (AMP), “in union with Christ Jesus” (GNT). However it has also been interpreted as referring to this faith and love as coming from or being of Jesus Christ (cf. NIV, NLT).

“In” Jesus Christ God’s people have eternal life . . .

1JN 5:11B–12 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*. ¹²*The one who has the Son has this eternal life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have this eternal life*. NET

Verse 11 may be speaking of eternal life having its source in Jesus Christ (cf. GNT), rather than being realized through one being “in” him. However v. 12 certainly has the believer’s union with Christ in view.

. . . and “in” Jesus Christ they will have glory

1PET 5:10B He [God] called you *to share in his glory in Christ*, a glory that will continue forever. NCV™

Why is being “in” Jesus Christ important for our salvation?

Explain the concept of believers being identified with Jesus Christ in his death.

How does being “in” Jesus Christ affect our everyday relationship with God (e.g. in how God views us and how we relate to God)?

c) God's People Are One Body 'in' Jesus Christ

See also:

- *The Church as One Body*, Ch. 26

All believers – including Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free – are one body “in” Jesus Christ . . .

GAL 3:28 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female – for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.* NET

Oneness in Jesus Christ takes primacy over all distinctions. In him “there is no difference” (GNT, NCV) between contrasting groups such as Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people, and males and females. For no group is spiritually superior to another, and all are equal before God (cf. Eph 6:8–9). Note that the use of “Greek”, as opposed to “Jew”, appears to denote all Gentiles.

. . . The church is in fact the body of Christ

EPH 1:23 *Now the church is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.* NET

The description of the church as the “body” of Christ figuratively depicts the spiritual union of Jesus Christ with his people, and points to the oneness that his people have together in their relationship to Christ. Note that the phrase “the fullness of him” (v. 23) has a few possible meanings. It may mean that: the church is filled by Christ’s presence and/or by the blessings he gives it; the fullness of Christ is manifested in the church; or the church is the complement of Christ, in a sense the completion of what he represents.

God’s people are many different parts making up one body “in” Jesus Christ

ROM 12:4–5 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Each one of us has a body with many parts, and these parts all have different uses. ⁵In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body. Each one is a part of that body, and each part belongs to all the other parts.* NCV™

The church body is built “in” Jesus Christ . . .

EPH 2:21–22 [PAUL, TO THE EPHESIAN BELIEVERS:] *In him the whole building is joined together and rises into a holy sanctuary in the Lord.* ²²*You, too, are being built in him along with the others into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.* ISV

The “building” is composed of “members of God’s household” (v. 19 ↓).

. . . and Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the church

EPH 2:20 [PAUL, TO NON-JEWISH BELIEVERS:] You are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. *Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone.* GW

Jesus Christ is the head of the church body . . .

COL 1:18 *He is the head of the body, the church,* as well as the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, so that he himself may become first in all things. NET

. . . and Jesus Christ is portrayed as the husband of the church

2COR 11:2 [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH:] For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy, because *I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.* NET

The portrayal of Jesus Christ as the husband of the church points to both his headship of it and his oneness with it (cf. Gen 2:24 et al.).

In your own words explain the concept of believers being the body of Christ.

In what sense is Jesus Christ the "cornerstone" of the church?

What sorts of things should we do as working members of the body of Christ?

Pray for persecuted Christians

d) Epilogue: God's People Relate to God through Jesus Christ

Verses which speak of God's people relating to God (e.g. praying to him) "through" Jesus Christ appear to have in view one or more of the following three concepts: Jesus Christ's death opening the way into God's presence; Jesus Christ's priesthood; and God's people being "in" Jesus Christ. All three are aspects of Jesus Christ's mediatory role in a believer's relationship with God.

Jesus Christ's death and priesthood have opened the way into God's presence for God's people

HEB 10:19–22 So, brothers and sisters, *we are completely free to enter the Most Holy Place without fear because of the blood of Jesus' death. ²⁰We can enter through a new and living way that Jesus opened for us. It leads through the curtain—Christ's body. ²¹And since we have a great priest over God's house, ²²let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, because we have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.* NCV™

The reference to Jesus Christ's body as "the curtain" (v. 20) is drawing a parallel between: his death, which opened a way for believers to confidently enter into God's presence; and the curtain which the high priest went through to enter the Most Holy Place of God's presence on the Day of Atonement, in the tabernacle and later in the temple.

God's people have access to God through Jesus Christ – by the Holy Spirit

EPH 2:18 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *It is through Christ that all of us, Jews and Gentiles, are able to come in the one Spirit into the presence of the Father.* GNT

Here "through Christ" may be speaking of how people are to approach God. Alternatively it could be referring to being able to approach God because of what Jesus Christ has done (cf. NLT) – i.e. his reconciliation of people to God by his death (cf. v. 16).

God's people give thanks and praise to God through Jesus Christ

COL 3:17 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of *the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* NET

HEB 13:15 [THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, acknowledging his name.* NET

Jesus Christ's role as high priest is in view here, with him being the one through whom we offer such sacrifices.

God's people ask God for things in Jesus Christ's "name"

JOHN 16:23B, 26 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] I tell you the solemn truth, *whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. ...*²⁶*At that time you will ask in my name, and I do not say that I will ask the Father on your behalf.* NET

Being "in" Jesus Christ and relating to God "through" Christ (as per the previous couple of subsections) are connected to the concept here of relating to God in Jesus Christ's "name". The latter embodies relating to God under or by the authority of Jesus Christ. It is because of a believer's relationship with Jesus Christ – in which believers may relate to God "through" Christ – that a believer can make requests of God in Jesus Christ's "name", on his authority.

How has Jesus Christ's mission changed the way God's people relate to him?

What do you think relating to God through Jesus Christ involves?

When we give thanks and praise to God, should we be mindful of doing so through Jesus Christ? If so, how should it affect what we think or say in giving thanks and praise to God?

Pray for persecuted Christians

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Supporting Persecuted Christians

Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

Barnabas Fund – www.barnabasfund.org

It provides material and spiritual support based on locally identified needs.

Christian Faith and Freedom – www.cffreedom.org

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity International – www.csi-int.org

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – www.csw.org.uk

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Open Doors – sb.od.org; www.opendoors.org.au

It equips believers for persecution and maintaining a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org.

Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin – rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com.au

It provides weekly bulletins. Send a blank email to join-rlpb@hub.xc.org.

The Bible League – www.bibleleague.org/persecuted; www.bibleleague.com

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com; www.persecution.com.au

VOM helps persecuted Christians spread the gospel. It also gives material aid.

World Watch Monitor – www.worldwatchmonitor.org

It reports the story of Christians under pressure for their faith.

Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

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