

THE' BELIEVERS' POSITION IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

(Bro. Bakht Singh, Balance of Truth 1969, Oct – Dec)

In the epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians, we have a great truth revealed to us about the believers' position in the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenly places. We have been called for a great and high purpose. We are saved by grace, and our sins are forgiven, and though this is a wonderful thing as the Apostle says, Christ has saved us also for a high and a great calling. In Eph. 3: 10, He sums up that great high calling, which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. When we read these words for the first time, we are struck by the greatness of this calling. The apostle says that the manifold wisdom of God the Father is revealed by the church, to principalities and powers in heavenly places.

Now we know that in heaven God has innumerable angels. In Rev. 5: 11, we see around the heavenly throne angels the number of whom is "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands". Again in Ps. 103:20 we read that they are mighty angels, who excel in strength, and do His commandments. They are always hearing the voice of His word.

Yet that privilege to show God's manifold wisdom is not given to the angels, even though the whole heaven is full of them. They are mighty angels and are willing to obey His commandments all the time. Unlike us they do not constantly leave the Lord. Even though we are purchased by His precious blood how many times we have disobeyed and grieved Him, and how many times we have shown many weaknesses in our lives for small reasons. And yet these mighty angels who excel in strength are not given the privilege which is given to us.

We would think that God would choose the mighty angels, that through them He should show His wisdom, and power and glory. When a king wants to show his power and glory he will not bring weak persons to manifest his greatness, but will choose the best men from his country—men who have achieved something. Nobody will bother with someone who fails thirty- five times.

Let us suppose there is a father with twelve children, of whom three children are very clever and the other nine dull and foolish. When any guests come to his house he will proudly say to the clever sons, "Come and meet so and so." But he will not refer to the dull and foolish ones. He is, ashamed to say that they are his sons.

Then surely God would use His angels to show forth His glory. How can we, foolish people, be given that privilege. Yet that is the real purpose of God, and that is why He calls it a mystery. In Eph. 3:3 the apostle says that God has shown that mystery to him by revelation. It cannot come to anyone by human wisdom, and that is why it is called a mystery. It is only by receiving the gift of the Holy. Ghost, and by divine knowledge and wisdom, that we can know it.

The Lord has explained to us in detail that this privilege can be enjoyed on earth by all of us; that is, all who have been redeemed by His precious blood become partakers of that mystery. Eph. 3:6. All who are saved by the grace of God are privileged to be partakers of the same calling. The privilege is not meant for the apostles, Jews and preachers only. The Jews thought that they had a greater privilege than the Gentiles, but here the apostle says, 'this is a mystery',—it is meant for all who are redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ and by His grace. Every believer can be partaker of that mystery—to show forth God's glory and God's manifold wisdom unto the powers and the principalities in heavenly places.

It is only when the work of salvation is complete, that we shall know how that mystery is going to be completed in us, as we see in Jude 24. So On that day that particular purpose of God is going to be accomplished, and we are going to be presented by our Lord Himself, without spot or blemish. Every believer has the hope that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming for him.

Now there are 365 references about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and every true believer has that hope that the Lord Jesus Christ will save him by His grace and is coming back for him. He is coming to take me to Himself that I may become like Him, I John 3:2. This is again a great mystery, that just by seeing the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be like Him. We shall be given the same spiritual, immortal, glorified body as that by which He went to heaven— a spiritual, glorified, immortal body, that can be anywhere in no time, just as the Lord Jesus Christ could move anywhere, so that even when the doors were shut He came right in, and when the two men of Emmaus were talking, He came into their midst and then suddenly disappeared. In the same way He went to heaven, and we are going to be given the same kind of body; and the privilege to enjoy all things.

We are going to be presented on that day to all the principalities and the powers in heavenly places. Imagine the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavens with great glory and with all the saints. On the one side there will be angels and on the other

side the saints. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is going to present the saints one by one to the angels. That is what happens when any great person comes to the city. Suppose the chief minister were to come to this place, the collector of the city would present all the great men of the city to him one by one, and he would say: "This is So and so", and mention their qualifications to the minister. In the same way the Lord Jesus Christ will present us one by one to the angels. He will say, "My dear angels, look at him, he is so and so, he is My child. Tell Me, do you find any fault or blemish in him"? Then the angels will say, "No Lord, rather we find that person far more glorious and beautiful than we are". That will be a great wonder in heaven! How could these foolish human beings who have been ruined by sin on earth, become more glorious than the angels? On that day the mystery will be revealed, how the mighty work of salvation has been wrought in sinners by the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. He has not only forgiven their sins but has transformed them completely with His glory, so that they are far more beautiful than the angels.

That is why the coming new creation is not going to be governed by the angels. God speaks in Heb. 2:5 of the coming creation. The Lord's word tells us that the earth on which we live will pass away, Matt. 24: 25 and the same thought is repeated again and again in Rev. 21: 1, — the new heaven and the new earth. The earth will pass away, and the sun, moon and stars will also pass away. There will be a new creation, which will be far more glorious than this creation, and that creation will last for ever. That creation does not need the sun and moon to give light. The Lamb is the light thereof (Rev. 21:23). Here and now we are being prepared for that new creation.

You can imagine how glorious that coming new creation is going to be, if, without the help of the sun or the moon or the stars, it will be full of glory. Only then man will know what glory can be. We are told that the coming new creation is not going to be governed by the angels, even though they are mighty and are constantly doing God's pleasure and are always in the presence of God. This is a great mystery! Heb. 2:5.

All those who are redeemed by the precious Blood are given the privilege of being part of His body, but only those who are found faithful and true overcomers will have the privilege of sharing His throne (Rev. 3:21) —the high position of governing the new creation. Paul declares in Eph. 3: 10, that by the true church the Lord Jesus Christ is going to reveal His manifold wisdom to powers and principalities

in heavenly places. Similarly God's fullness is going to be contained in the true church. Nobody can understand what God's fullness is, but first of all we see that the Lord Jesus Christ is God's fullness. Col. 2: 3, 9. "In Him is all wisdom", and that fullness should be contained finally in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Eph. 1:22, 23, we read that God's fullness is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ and that Body is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is by understanding the real meaning of the church that we understand what the church is. They call a building the church. Wherever you go you find these names given. St. John's church, St. Luke's church, and so on—all man-given names. But in the Bible nowhere do you find these names given to a building. People have become so blind by their own interpretation. They say, "I am going to church", which means they are going to a building. But we do not see anywhere in scripture, any single reference where a building is ever called a church. That is why these believers do not seem to enjoy their right and privilege as members of the heavenly church, but live in spiritual barrenness and infancy. When we could be kings, we live as beggars. When we are in trouble we start crying over a very small matter. We worry over our small temptations, and we fall down; and the enemy can deceive us by wrong teaching. That is why Paul, the apostle, here in Ephesians, is trying to show the believers their true heavenly vocation. We can be saved from many temptations, if we exercise our right as God's children, as God's co-workers and God's witnesses.

I want to tell you simple story by way of illustration of our position and rights in the Church, and how we should live up to our high and holy calling.

Some years ago they wanted to select officers and so they advertised accordingly. Many young men came for the interview; amongst them being one who had many recommendations. It was his turn to be interviewed. He had high marks. He had a very nice suit also—He had many testimonials of his character, so one man in the committee said to him, "Will you kindly bring me a cup of tea?" The boy went to the neighbouring hotel and brought a tray which contained a nice pot of tea, and with great joy gave it to the member of the committee. He thought that he would be selected. But when he returned later, he was told, "You are not fit to become an officer". "Why, sir?" He inquired. "Because instead of carrying that tray yourself you should have had a servant to carry it up." It is as simple as that. If you are going to be a king, then behave as a king. But many of us behave as beggars. There is no need to behave as such. We as God's children must behave as sons of God. Then you

will find that you will have more liberty and authority in your prayers because of the One who has given us the boldness and privilege to approach His throne of grace.

The apostle Paul gives the real meaning of the church in the Epistle to the Ephesians. He uses seven names for God's people, and by these seven names we can understand our heavenly vocation. 1. In Eph. 1:22. God's people are called the church.

2. In Eph. 1:23, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. In Eph. 2:15. the One New Man. 4. In Eph. 2 : 19 Heavenly citizens. 5. In Eph. 2:20 the House hold of God, or God's family. 6. In Eph. 2 : 21 God's habitation, God's building or temple. 7. In Eph. 5:33 The bride (the Lamb's wife).

The whole of the Epistle to the Ephesians centers round these seven names, by them we can understand what is our heavenly vocation in the Lord Jesus, and how we can enjoy our rights and privilege in the church. Many people do not know how to enjoy this privilege, because though they are actually in the true church, they do not dig deeply in the Word of God.

When I went to England many years ago, the morning after I arrived I woke up and went for breakfast. My land lady asked: "Did you sleep well?" "It was very, very cold", I replied, "I put on my sweater, socks and overcoat, and yet I was feeling very cold", She said, "Did you not see any blankets on your bed?" I replied, "No madam, there was nothing on my bed". So she said, "Come, let us see". So we went into the room. She lifted the counterpane. There was not only one blanket but three nice blankets. I have never seen such blankets in my life. Now in India we ordinarily take one blanket and wrap ourselves in it. But in England they tuck the blanket on both sides of the bed and you have to slip underneath very cleverly. I did not know I had been sleeping on top of the blankets and shivering unnecessarily all night! — because I never knew I had three lovely warm blankets.

There are many of us who do not look into the Bible,—who don't go inside. They keep a Bible, but they do not go digging into it. Unless we meditate on the word of God deeply our selves, we will never know the wealth we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the same epistle of Ephesians, Paul speaks of the wealth which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, (Eph. 3: 8), the unsearchable riches of Christ. Many of us speak about Christ in connection with sins forgiven, and how He can heal our bodies. But we do not preach about the riches we have in the Lord Jesus Christ, what a high calling we have in Him, and how He wants us to possess what He has in

heaven, for which we require faith and understanding to know our heavenly calling. The whole epistle of Ephesians shows us the purpose of our calling.

Eph. 1:22. The first name which the apostle gives to God's people, is the church or 'Ecclesia' as it is called in Greek. In English we say church and in Urdu it is also called "Ecclesia". The meaning is a people who have been pulled out or drawn out. That is the literal meaning of Ecclesia. In John 15:19, we read "I have chosen you out of the world". As sinners we had actually sunk in the miry clay of the world (Psa. 40:2). As long as we live in sin, we are like the person in a deep horrible pit, and that pit is so deep that no one can draw us out of it. We require a mighty hand, or a great power to pull us out. Sin is also likened to miry clay. If you go to some parts of Assam, you will find some miry places. Some time ago we went there for Gospel work and we had to go through jungles and streams, to get to a certain place. As we were walking in one place, I suddenly found my feet sinking in the ground. I sank so deep that my friend came and pulled me out. Nobody can ever come out by himself. If he tries to get out he will only sink in all the more, in Africa, many tigers and lions die in the miry clay. The miry clay sucks the animal inside, and however strong it may be, it cannot get out by itself. The Psalmist says, "I was in that condition, in a horrible pit, a deep pit, with no hope of getting out. But my Lord pulled me out. He has drawn me out of the miry clay."

The world can also be compared to a 'horrible pit' or 'miry clay' and none of us can come out of the world by ourselves. The people of Israel, even though they had been brought out of Egypt and had seen many miracles, yet they were longing for the garlic and onions of Egypt for forty years. The tasty foods of the Egyptians were attracting them; the desire was still in them, and they were longing always for the things of Egypt. In the same way many who are born again do not know their heavenly calling; they long for worldly pleasure. It is surprising how many believers go to the cinema and read worldly books, and wear fashionable clothes.

At the time of marriage all the worldliness in a couple comes out. They want only worldly music in the home. They have worldly pictures on their wall, and their conversation is worldly. Judging by their habits and conversation, nobody will think they are born again, because worldliness is there. But when we have been completely drawn out from the world, then only we will know the church. The Lord says, "I have called you out from the miry clay and have pulled you out from the world. That is why the world hates you and attacks you, because you are entirely

different." But those who are not willing to be pulled out from the pit, can not live a life of separation.

Read II Cor. 6: 14 to 19. Suppose a man who has become a Christian from the Hindu religion, no longer goes every day to the temple but decides to go once a month or once in three months. When you see this you will be shocked and ask: How can a Christian, after being baptized, continue to go to his temple, even though he may say that he now goes only once a while and not every day, also that he does not bow down to every idol but to some idols which are better than the others. Would you accept him as a Christian? It would be impossible. In the same way how can we have fellowship with worldly people when we have been drawn out from the world. By conversation and habit, by clothing or association, we must be peculiar in every way. How sad it is today to see worldliness among Christians or believers. I am not talking about nominal Christians. I am talking about believers, who say they are born again, yet are found worldly, reading cinema books, and wearing worldly dress. That is why they do not know their heavenly calling or vocation.

We are a heavenly people, we must keep our eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

The right understanding of the word *church* will comfort us and free us from all temptation to imitate worldly people. We are reminded in Phil. 3:20, that our conversation is in heaven, and by our conversation and habits we have to prove that we are His people, His church. In the same way, as we read in Col. 3: 1-2, our affection should be far above worldly things. The true church consists of those who have been pulled out, or drawn out by the Lord Jesus Christ from the world and worldly things. So wonderful is this experience and fact, that even though we are hated and despised, we do not go back into the world, but thank God for the privilege we are given to bear reproach for His name sake.

The Body of Christ is the second name given to believers. First of all in the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, there must be no dead member or any part paralyzed. If I were to question you: Are you a member of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ? I cannot accept that you are if you give me the name of a church only. A paralyzed man has hands and legs, at least they look like hands and legs, but there is no life or movement there. So it is not by name of a church that we are born again, but by the life of Christ lived out through us. We have to prove to other people how the life of the Lord Jesus Christ is constantly flowing into us. If you take a pin and prick any part of the body you find blood flowing. By this you can prove that the finger is a

part of your body, and not an artificial leg or hand! Some people have a wooden leg or hand, and can walk nicely, but there is no life in the member. The leg or hand has to be kept on with bolts and nuts. Similarly those who are not born again have to be kept in the church with "bolts and nuts". They cannot stay there too long! Those who are truly born again do not require all these things to keep them attached to the body of Christ. It is only in the denominations that they require "bolts and nuts" to keep them together and when they get warnings and threatenings they run away.

The union in the Body of Christ should be a real union. Our body is so made, that it must be governed by one head, otherwise there will be no cooperation. Yet sometimes we see in the Body of Christ that some will go one way, and others will go another way, and there is no cooperation. That is because there are three or four "heads". For a happy body there must be only one head. Then all the members will be able to work in harmony and cooperation. In I Cor. 12:13 we are compared to the Body and unless the Lord Jesus Christ be comes the Head, we will not grow spiritually. Alas! many Christians are governed by a committee and not by the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, there is a queen in England. She has no power of her own, but all things are governed by committees and the parliament. Only for name-sake she is the queen. Whatever is to be decided or done, is done by the parliament, and she only puts her seal. In the same way many denominations are governed by committees, where are many ungodly men who become members by canvassing votes. Those who are wealthy are favoured by the people, and they get more votes. But those who are poor are left. In the same way, sometimes the affairs of the so-called church are not governed by the Lord Jesus, but by committee members. That's why there are so many strifes and jealousies and so many different groups.

We see in the word of God, however, that the elders were not selected by votes but by praying. See Titus 1: 5. Now the elder or bishop or overseer or shepherd or pastor is a man who has charge in the church. An elder is a man of experience. A bishop or shepherd has to look after the sheep. Pastor means father, and a pastor should be like a father who looks after the family. A priest has to look after the things and keep them in order. An overseer has to get things done in a right way.

Now in some denominations they make one man Bishop over many areas, as men have a governor over a whole secular state. That is a worldly way not a spiritual way. But in the early church, the bishops or elders were those who looked after the

people. By much prayer a bishop or elder must be chosen and he must be blameless. v.7. Elders and bishops have the same office, and were chosen by much prayer and patience and testing. But now in many so-called churches, they have brought worldly men into the work of God, and you will find that many troubles begin at the time of the election of a committee member. If one party is defeated the other wins, and thus they work against each other. They may even go to court against each other. It is the same every where, where men try to bring worldly methods among God's people. We see how the early apostles, after much prayer and fasting, elected elders. Acts. 14:22. By prayer and much patience, they find those men by oneness.

That is how we acknowledge the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Head and unless He gives us His plan for our church life and family life, it will not function. Just as true headship can bring true health in a family, in the same way, the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ will bring into the church many people with oneness, unity and love collectively. In the human body every member is equally precious. I Cor. 12:21. The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee. It may be the feet, eye or hand. They are equally precious to me. In the same way he says, "Every believer before God is equal to Him". You may come from any family, educated or illiterate, wealthy or poor materially. We are all equal unto the Lord. It is such an oneness which keeps us together.

In many places, men take pride in their wealth, nationality, country or education. When they look for a match for marriage, the first question is whether the girl is high caste or low caste. They think much of caste, beauty, education, etc. They are defeated because they do not know the meaning of the body of Christ. Every member of the body must function. There must be no idle member in the body of Christ. But so many Christians, never go for the meetings. They do not take their share in the house of God. They only go there to sit comfortably and go to sleep, and then go home knowing nothing. Some go there only for the sermon. But the body tells us that you must do something. Every bone and muscle must do something. The more we take a share in the building of the house of God the more we grow spiritually. By prayer, the Lord tells us what is our share in the house of God.

Now you may say I cannot be of use, but the Lord has given every member some job. See Mark 13:34. He gave every man some work. The Lord Jesus Christ has gone to heaven and will come back again. In the mean time He has given work to every believer and you must find out what He has given you to do for Him. Ask

Him "Lord, what is my responsibility or job in the house of God among Thy people?" How many in these days depend upon preachers, not asking God if He requires anything of themselves. Then committee members come to find fault every month, and the result is spiritual poverty!

God's fullness is in the Body of Christ, so when all the members work together they know their share in His fullness. We have to recognize the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in every thing, as members of that Body. Then only shall we "grow up into Him".