

GLEANINGS — November 8, A.D. 2015  
Images of the Christian

God reveals Himself as the great I AM – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He makes Himself known as the only One to be worshiped, the Lord of all, the Savior of all who call upon Him, the Teacher, the Provider, the One in Whom we live, move, have our being (Acts 17:28), and more.

Even so, in His word He depicts His people in different but complementary ways. Here are several of them:

First of all the true Christian is a child of God, unlike others who are described as children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). All people come into this world as what we might call spiritual still births – already dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13), condemned as guilty and under the wrath of God (John 3:18, Romans 5:12).

But the true Christian is what 2 Corinthians 5:17 proclaims: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." In Christ he both has been born again (John 3:3, 7; 1 Peter 1:23) and adopted (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:5) into God's forever family. The sons and daughters of God are marked by obedience to their heavenly Father. Sharing in the Gospel work of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18), they are peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).

Being eternal children of God makes all Christians eternal brothers and sisters. As such, they live in community as we see exemplified in Acts chapter 4 and other places. They bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). They look out for one another (Philippians 2:4). In short, they LOVE one another (Romans 12:10, Hebrews 13:1)

The Christian is pictured as a spiritual brick in the temple (1 Peter 2:5) in which God dwells by His Spirit. In another figure, the apostle Paul compares each believer to a member (i.e. a part, like an eye, a hand, or a foot) of a spiritual body, which body is the church (Romans 12:4,5; 1 Corinthians 12:12)

In His days on Earth, Jesus chose SOME of his disciples to be apostles, but ALL Christians are His disciples – disciplined ones (Matthew 10:24,25). They imitate His way of life, walk as He walked doing deeds of charity and mercy, and experiencing what He experienced in the world (1 John 4:17).

In a way that by no means contradicts his estate as a "child of the King," the Christian is also a servant in the Kingdom of God (Colossians 1:7, Revelation 1:1). He puts the advancement and prosperity of that Kingdom above his own interests. Therefore according to 2 Timothy 2:3-7 he is like a soldier enduring hardship, unencumbered with civilian life...like an athlete competing according to the rules...like a hardworking, patient farmer who will be first to partake of the harvest.

Finally, the Christian is a joint heir with Christ (Romans 8:17), destined to inherit all things (Revelation 21:7). "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2)

When it comes to self esteem, (how one feels and thinks about himself), let us not assume the world's categories of value. Let the Christian form his estimate of himself (and how self needs to grow and change) in Biblical terms. Let the Christian recognize that Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:13,14)