

Chapter 2

I AM “IN CHRIST”

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJ)

In the previous chapter, you saw man’s attempt to take God’s place by exercising rights that only God possesses. In contrast, Jesus, the Son of God, laid down those same rights and lived in a way that was pleasing to God.

Is your life pleasing to God? Have you been trying to take God’s place? Satan became God’s enemy by trying to sit in God’s place. Are you behaving like God’s friend or God’s enemy? God’s enemies don’t have a good future.

*“But the wicked will perish. The LORD’s enemies are like flowers in a field – they will disappear like smoke.”
Psalm 37:20 (NLT)*

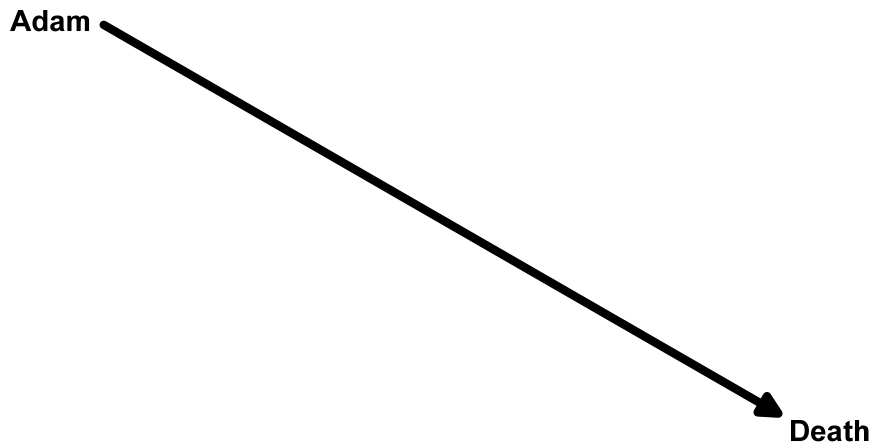
Adam and Eve were created to be God’s friends. They walked and talked with Him. But when they followed Satan’s rebellion they were acting like God’s enemies. Their rebellion cost them the intimate relationship they had with God and eventually led to their death.

“But the LORD God gave him [Adam] this warning: ‘You may freely eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die.’” Genesis 2:16–17 (NLT)

Adam's Line

Adam's sin led to his death. It also led to the *death* of every person born after him.

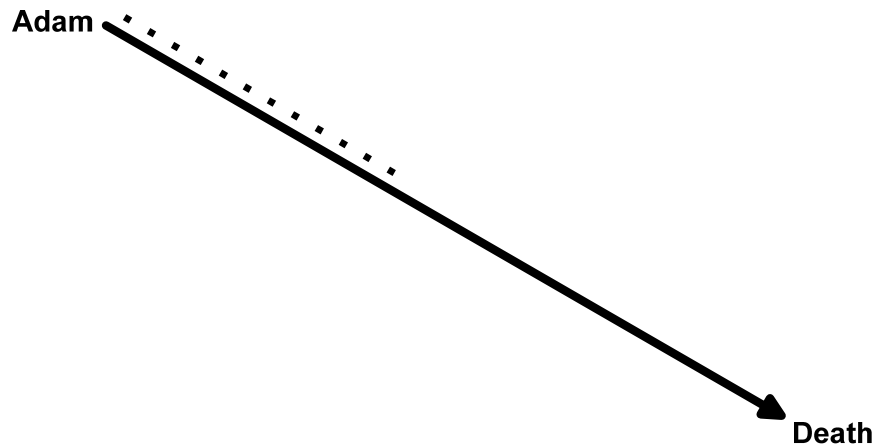
*“Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus **death** spread to all men, because all sinned.”* **Romans 5:12** (NKJ)



Everyone born into this world inherits sin from Adam and is separated from God.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
Romans 3:23 (NKJ)

In the next diagram, the squares leading down from Adam represent following generations born into sin.



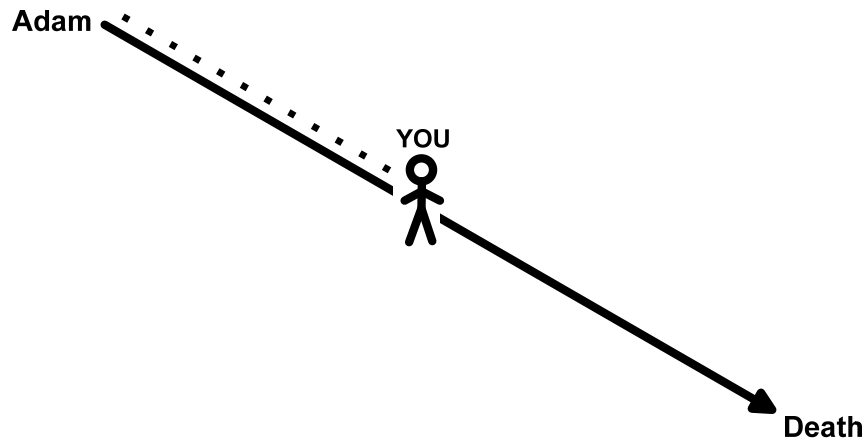
The punishment for sin is death.

"For the wages of sin is death..." **Romans 6:23** (NKJ)

Q1. Have you ever sinned? In what ways have you tried to play God?

You

Did you know that *you* inherited sin from your father, who inherited it from his father, who inherited it from his father, and so on all the way back up to Adam? That heritage made *you* God's enemy.

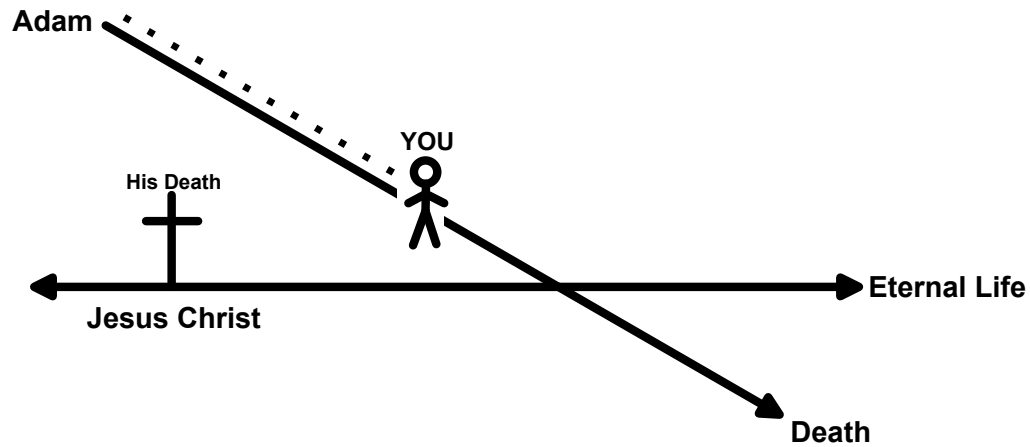


Because you are a child of Adam (“in Adam”), you have the identity of “sinner.” *You* can't change that identity no matter how hard you try. You are a sinner and death is in your future. As long as your identity is that of sinner, you will act like God's enemy.

- Q2.** What do you think you must do to escape the consequences of being a child of Adam (“in Adam”)?

Life of Jesus

On the following diagram, the life of *Jesus Christ* is shown intersecting the line of Adam. Jesus Christ's line leads to *eternal life*. His death is shown as the cross.



The life of Jesus Christ has no beginning and no end. Jesus has always existed.

*"Jesus Christ is the same **yesterday, today, and forever.**" Hebrews 13:8 (NLT)*

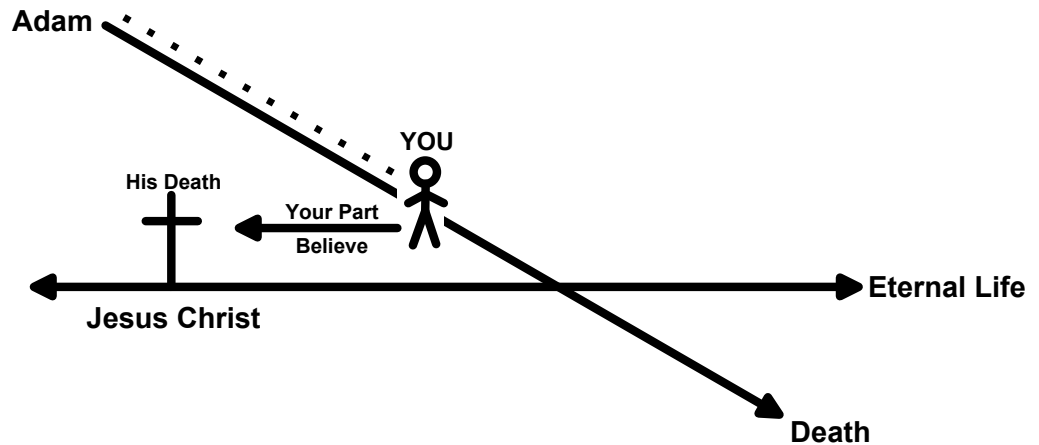
The good news is that Jesus came to take your punishment for being God's enemy, a sinner, and died in *your* place.

*"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still **sinners.**"*
Romans 5:8 (NLT)

Escaping Death

To escape the line leading to death, you must BELIEVE that Jesus took the punishment for your sins.

*"For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we **believe** that Jesus shed His blood, sacrificing His life for us..."* **Romans 3:25 (NLT)**



Q3. Have you made the choice to believe Jesus took the punishment for your sins? If so, when?

If you have not, would you like to do that now? You could say a prayer similar to the following:

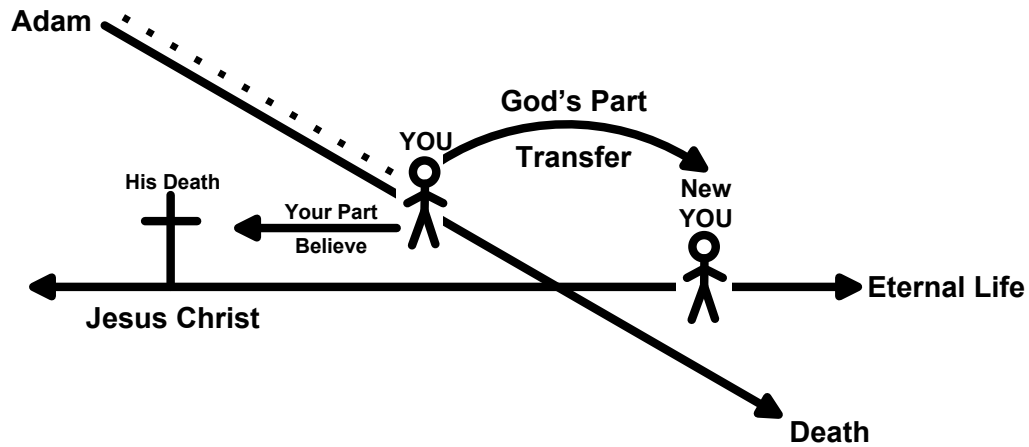
Prayer

“Jesus, I acknowledge I am a sinner and can do nothing to save myself. I believe that Your death on the cross was the full payment for my sins. I put my trust in what You have done for me. I give up all of my rebellion. Thank you for forgiving me. I receive You into my life. You are my new Leader.”

The New You

After you have done your part of *believing* that Jesus died for your sins, God’s part is to *transfer* you into Christ’s line. As soon as you are transferred into Christ’s line, God gives you a *new* identity.

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”
Colossians 1:13 (NASB)



When you believe in what Jesus did for you on the cross, you are no longer a sinner; you have escaped death. You have been placed "in Christ."

Born Again

Since you are "in Christ," you are a brand new person. Your parents gave you physical life. God gives you spiritual life; it is called being "born again."

*"For you have been **born again**. Your new life did not come from your earthly parents because the life they gave you will end in death. But this new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God." 1 Peter 1:23 (NLT)*

Q4. What does it mean to you to be born again?

New Creation

You are a new creation “in Christ;” all that you were has passed away. You are not the same person anymore.

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJ)*

New Future

Instead of death and separation from God, you have a new future. You have eternal life with God.

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have **everlasting life**.” John 3:16 (NKJ)*

New Past

Look back at the diagram and notice that the *new you* has a different past. That past is not who you used to be or what you used to do. Your new past is what Jesus did on the cross.

*“**I have been crucified** with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20 (NKJ)*

Q5. How does having a new past benefit you?

Your sinful past is wiped out. There is no more reason to feel guilty.

*“Therefore there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1 (NASB)*

Q6. Have you been condemning yourself for the things you have done wrong in the past? Explain.

*"No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: **Forgetting the past** and looking forward to what lies ahead."* **Philippians 3:13** (NLT)

If you have been condemning yourself, talk to God right now and share with Him your feelings of guilt. Ask Him to help you believe what He says about you. Thank Him for giving you a new past.

You have been made right with God. Nothing you can do or have done will ever change that fact.

*"Therefore, since **we have been made right** in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us."*
Romans 5:1 (NLT)

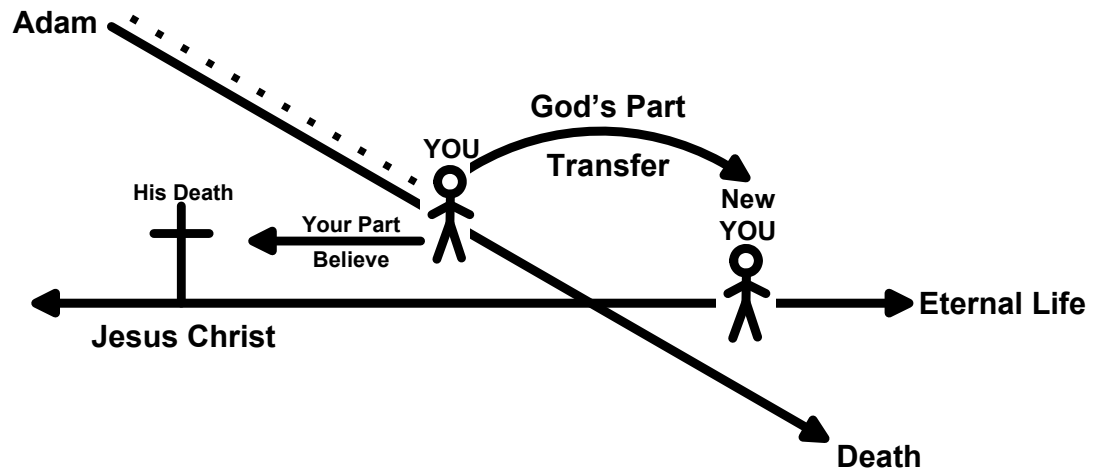
God's Child

Now that you are "in Christ," you are no longer Adam's child. You have become God's child.

*"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become **children** of God, to those who believe in His name."* **John 1:12** (NKJ)

Q7. What are the benefits of being God's child?

“In Christ”



Because you are God's child, you inherit everything God made.

“And since we are his children, we will share his treasures – for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too ” **Romans 8:17** (NLT)

God's Friend

You are no longer God's enemy; you are His friend.

*“For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his **enemies**, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God--all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us **friends** of God.”*
Romans 5:10–11 (NLT)

Q8. What does it mean to be God's friend?

A New Identity

Now that you are "in Christ," you have it made! You have a new future and a new past. You have a new identity - God's friend and child. You are a new creation.

Don't be fooled into holding onto old identities based on your past failures or *successes*.

- Q9.** Are there "good" identities that you have held onto because they made you feel significant or worthwhile? (For example: your education, your talents, heritage or your profession) Explain.

Apostle Paul

Before Paul the Apostle was "in Christ," he found his significance in his successes. After he was born again, he no longer cared about what he had accomplished on his own. He preferred to be identified with Christ.

"I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith." **Philippians 3:7-9** (NLT)

Your identity "in Christ" will endure and can never be taken away from you.

Personal Application

Tell God where you have been trying to find significance in your past successes, as well as, the areas where you have experienced guilt and failure.

Thank God that because you are "in Christ," you have a new identity from Him.

“In Christ”

Diagram

Notes