The Christian’s God-Given Titles & Attributes

What God Calls the Believer, and What He Has Made Him

The names and qualities God's word gives to those who belong to Him, book by book through the New Testament, with who each was first written to and how it pertains to us today.

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Author: John Lobota

Research Assistant: Claude Cowork

papertiq@bellsouth.net

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Anchor Passage

> **1 John 3:1** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*
>
> **2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Introduction

A. What God Calls You

People are given many names in life: a family name, a job title, nicknames, labels others pin on them, and some they give themselves. Many of those names come and go. The names God gives are different. When God calls a believer something, He is not flattering him or describing how he feels on a good day. He is stating what is true, because He has made it true.

This study gathers the titles and attributes God's word gives to the believer: what God calls those who belong to Him, and what He says He has made them. The list is drawn from the whole New Testament: first the letters written to the church, then the other letters and Revelation, and last the four Gospels (Section C explains why). Within each chapter the books and verses follow the Bible's own order, so a reader can open his Bible alongside it and find each one in its place.

In short: this study gathers what God calls the believer and what He says He has made him, book by book through the New Testament.

B. What Is a Title? What Is an Attribute?

Every entry in this study is labelled as one or the other. The difference is simple, and worth keeping clear.

A title is a name. It tells *who you are*, usually by naming a relationship or a role. "Saints," "sons of God," "ambassadors," "the body of Christ," "brethren" are titles. A title answers the question: *What does God call me?*

An attribute is a quality, condition or standing that has been given. It tells *what you are, or what has been done to you*. "Justified," "sanctified," "redeemed," "forgiven," "complete in him" are attributes. An attribute answers the question: *What has God made me, or given me?*

The two belong together. A son of God (title) has been born again (attribute). An ambassador (title) has first been reconciled (attribute). And neither one is earned. Every title and every attribute in this study is something God gives or does, not something a believer achieves. A few entries carry a condition or a charge with them, and where they do, the study says so.

In short: a title is a name that tells who you are; an attribute is a quality or standing that tells what God has made you. Both are given by God, not earned.

C. Who It Was Written To, and What It Means for Us Today

Every book of the New Testament was first written to real people in the first century. To read any title rightly, it helps to ask two questions: *Who was this first spoken or written to?* and *How does it pertain to us today?* Paul told Timothy to be **"rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15)**, and this is part of what that means.

God has dealt with mankind in different *administrations*, periods of time in which He deals with people under a stated set of terms. Two of them matter for this study.

The Gospel period. The four Gospels record the life and words of Jesus Christ before the cross. He was **"made under the law" (Galatians 4:4)**, He lived and taught among Israel under the Law of Moses, and He spoke to His disciples, who were Israelites, about the kingdom of God. The church of the Grace administration did not yet exist. The Gospel period must be held as distinct from the Grace administration. What Jesus said to His disciples was true and is profitable, but it was spoken *to* them, before the cross, under the Law.

The Grace administration. The present administration began on the day of Pentecost, after Christ's death, resurrection and ascension, when He poured out the gift of holy spirit (Acts 2:32-33). The book of Acts records its beginning. The letters Paul wrote to the churches, Romans through Thessalonians, are written directly to the church of this administration, and his letters to Timothy and Titus are written to men serving in it. These are the letters that state the believer's standing today most directly.

The other letters. Hebrews, the letters of James, Peter, John and Jude, and the book of Revelation were also written in the first century, after Pentecost. But they were addressed to particular readers: Hebrew believers, "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," believers scattered through Asia Minor, and the seven churches in Asia. Some of their titles state what God has made every born-again believer. Others are drawn from Israel's own covenant language and need care in how they are applied.

How it all pertains to us. Paul gives the principle: **"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4)**. And **"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable" (2 Timothy 3:16)**. All of scripture is written *for* us; not all of it was written *to* us. A believer today learns from every title in this study. But his own standing is stated most directly in the letters written to the church. So this study marks each book with two lines, **Written to** and **For us today**, and keeps the three groups in three chapters:

- **Chapter 1: The Grace Administration** (Acts, and the letters written to the church and its ministers, Romans to Titus).
- **Chapter 2: Hebrews, the General Letters and Revelation.**
- **Chapter 3: The Gospel Period** (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), held distinct from the Grace administration.

Why the Gospels come last. The New Testament opens with the Gospels, so a reader might expect them first here. They are placed last on purpose. A believer should learn who he is first from the letters written *to* him. The Gospels record what Jesus said to His disciples before the cross, under the Law, and many of the names He gave them were promises of what would come after Pentecost: **"for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39)**. Read first, the Gospel titles are easily taken as a statement of the church's own standing, which they were not spoken to give. Read after the letters, they can be seen for what they were: true words spoken to Israel's believers in

their day, pointing forward to what God now gives every believer. Each Gospel entry points to where its title, or the reality behind it, is stated to the church.

In short: every book was written to real first-century readers. All scripture is written *for* us, but not all of it *to* us. The letters to the church state our standing most directly, so they come first. The Gospel period is held distinct from the Grace administration, and comes last.

D. How to Read This Study

The text. The King James Version is used throughout. Greek words are explained in plain English.

Scripture in bold. When a verse is quoted inside a sentence, the whole quotation and its reference are printed in bold, so the reader can always tell scripture from comment. Longer passages are set apart with a green bar.

Where a title appears more than once, it is explained once, and its other places are pointed to there. When a title appears in both the letters and the Gospels, each entry points to the other by chapter.

"In short." Each book's entries close with a short summary.

In short: the King James text, terms explained, scripture in bold, each title explained once with pointers to its other places, and a summary for each book.

Chapter 1: The Grace Administration — Titles Written to the Church

The Grace administration began on the day of Pentecost. Christ had died, risen and ascended, and from God's right hand He poured out the promised gift of holy spirit (Acts 2:32-33). From that day, everyone who believes is born again, made a member of one body (1 Corinthians 12:13), and given everything this chapter describes.

The titles in this chapter come from Acts, which records the start of this administration, and from the letters written directly to the church and its ministers, Romans through Titus. They describe the believer's standing today most directly. Almost every one of them rests on the same spiritual event: the new birth, and the believer's union with Christ in His death, resurrection and ascension.

Acts

Written to: Luke wrote Acts to Theophilus (Acts 1:1), recording the first years of the church, from Pentecost onward.

For us today: Acts describes believers in the same administration we live in, so its names for them are names for believers today.

Witnesses — Title

> **Acts 1:8** *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

A witness tells what he has seen and heard. These words were first spoken to the apostles, who had seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:22), and the power to bear witness came with the gift of holy spirit on the day of Pentecost. Paul was given the same charge: **"For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:15)**. And it did not stay with the apostles. When the church at Jerusalem was scattered, **"they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4)**. Every believer can tell what God has done for him.

Saved — Attribute

> **Acts 2:47** *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

To be saved is to be rescued and made whole. From the first days of the church, those who believed were added to it as the saved. Paul states how it happens: **"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9)**. And he states whose doing it is: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8)**. Salvation is not something a believer works toward. It is what God has done for him.

Believers — Title

> **Acts 5:14** *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)*

The simplest name of all: one who believes. It is the name for the one thing that makes a person a member of God's family: **"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26)**. Paul uses the same word: **"be thou an example of the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12)**. Nothing is added to faith to earn the name.

Disciples — Title

> **Acts 6:7** *And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.*

In Acts, "disciples" is Luke's ordinary word for believers. It is the name Jesus used in the Gospel period (John 8:31, Chapter 3), now carried over to the church. A disciple is a learner, and the name reminds every believer that he is still in his Master's school.

Of the Way — A Name

> **Acts 9:2** *And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*

Before believers were called Christians, they were known as those "of this way" (also Acts 19:9, 23; 24:22). As with "Christians," the text does not say who first used the name. Paul used it of his own faith before the governor Felix: **"after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers" (Acts 24:14)**. The name fits. Jesus had said, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6)**. Believers were known as the people of that way.

Christians — A Name

> **Acts 11:26** *And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

This name is different from the others in this study, and it is worth being careful about. The text says the disciples "were called Christians first in Antioch," but it does not say who first called them that.

The Greek word for "were called," *chrematizo*, is used in the New Testament mostly of a message from God: **"being warned of God" (Matthew 2:12)**, **"it was revealed unto him" (Luke 2:26)**, **"warned from God" (Acts 10:22)**, **"admonished of God" (Hebrews 8:5)**. It is used once of ordinary naming (Romans 7:3). So some read Acts 11:26 as a name given by God; others read it as the name the disciples became publicly known by. The text does not settle it.

What scripture does make plain is that the name is an honourable one. "Christian" means one who belongs to Christ. King Agrippa used it (Acts 26:28), and Peter told believers, **"Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Peter 4:16)**.

Ordained to Eternal Life — Attribute

> **Acts 13:48** *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

"Ordained" (*tasso*) means appointed, set in order. When Paul preached to the Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, those appointed to eternal life believed. God's appointing and man's believing are not set against each other here: the ones appointed are the ones who believed. Paul writes of God's purpose for every believer in the same way (Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:4-5).

Hearts Purified by Faith — Attribute

> **Acts 15:9** *And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*

Peter said this at the council in Jerusalem, of the Gentiles who had believed at the house of Cornelius. God "put no difference" between Jew and Gentile. Both had their hearts made clean the same way: by faith, not by circumcision or the Law. A believer's heart is made pure by God, through believing.

A People for His Name — Title

> **Acts 15:14** *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.*

James said this at the same council. God visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people who would bear His name. Believers are not a crowd gathered by chance. They are a people God has taken out of the nations for Himself.

The Church of God; the Flock — Title

> **Acts 20:28** *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

"Church" translates *ekklesia*, an assembly of people called out. The church is not a building; it is the believers themselves (Acts 2:47; 5:11). Paul tells the elders at Ephesus two things about it. It is God's, purchased at the highest price: **"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold… But with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19)**. And it is a flock, to be fed and cared for. Peter says the same: **"Feed the flock of God which is among you" (1 Peter 5:2)**, and he reminds believers that they **"are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25)**.

In short: Acts calls the first believers witnesses, the saved, believers, disciples, those of the Way, and Christians; ordained to eternal life, their hearts purified by faith, a people for God's name, and the church of God, His flock. Scripture doesn't say who coined "Christian," but it treats the name as an honour: one who belongs to Christ.

Romans

Written to: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (Romans 1:7), the church at Rome, Jews and Gentiles together.

For us today: written directly to the church of the Grace administration. These titles state every believer's standing.

The Called of Jesus Christ — Title

> **Romans 1:6** *Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:*

To be called is to be summoned by name, and to answer. God called each believer through the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14), and the one who answered now belongs to the One who called him: "the called *of Jesus Christ*." Paul later shows the call is part of God's purpose from the beginning: **"whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Romans 8:30)**.

Beloved of God — Title

> **Romans 1:7** *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Before Paul says anything else about the believers at Rome, he calls them "beloved of God." The title does not rest on anything they had done. It rests on what God had done: **"he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6)**. A believer is loved by God because he is in God's beloved Son. Paul uses the title again and again: **"brethren beloved of the Lord" (2 Thessalonians 2:13)**, **"the elect of God, holy and beloved" (Colossians 3:12)**.

Saints — Title

> **Romans 1:7** *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

"Saint" is the Greek *hagios*, "holy one," one set apart for God. In the New Testament it is not a title for a few especially holy people, chosen after their death. It is Paul's ordinary name for every believer, living or dead, in every church (1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1). Why? Because something has happened to them: they have been set apart for God by His own act, sanctified **"in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:2)**. Notice the King James wording: "called to be saints." The words "to be" are added by the translators; the Greek says simply "called saints." Saints are what they are.

Justified — Attribute

> **Romans 5:1** *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

"Justified" (*dikaioo*) is a courtroom word: declared righteous, acquitted. The charge against the believer has been dealt with, and God the Judge has pronounced him not guilty. It is not based on his own record: he is **"justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)**, and it is received "by faith." Peace with God follows, because the hostility sin created has been removed.

Made Righteous — Attribute

> **Romans 5:19** *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

Paul sets two men side by side. Adam disobeyed, and many were made sinners. Christ obeyed, and many are made righteous. As a believer did nothing to inherit Adam's sinful nature, he does nothing to earn Christ's righteousness: it is given. Paul states the exchange even more sharply in 2 Corinthians 5:21 (below).

Dead to Sin, Alive unto God — Attribute

> **Romans 6:11** *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Paul has just explained that believers are identified with Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-8). When Christ died, they died with Him; when He rose, they rose with Him. So sin's claim over them has ended, and a new life toward God has begun. "Reckon" (*logizomai*) is an accounting word: count it as true, because it is true, and live accordingly.

Not Under the Law, but Under Grace — Attribute

> **Romans 6:14** *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

This is one of the clearest lines between the Gospel period and the Grace administration. Jesus lived and taught under the Law (Chapter 3). The believer today does not live under the Law of Moses, but under grace. And Paul says that is precisely why sin no longer rules him: not because the standard was lowered, but because the believer lives by a new life and a new power.

Servants to God — Title

> **Romans 6:22** *But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

Every person serves something. Freed from sin, the believer does not become ownerless; he becomes God's servant. And the fruit of that service is holiness, and its end is everlasting life. It is the service of a son who has been set free, not of a slave held by force.

Married to Another — Attribute

> **Romans 7:4** *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

Paul uses marriage to make his point (7:1-3). A wife is bound to her husband only as long as he lives. The believer has died to the Law with Christ, and so is free to belong to another: "even to him who is raised from the dead." The union has a purpose: "that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

No Condemnation — Attribute

> **Romans 8:1** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

The verse turns Romans from struggle into security. Condemnation is the sentence of a guilty man. For those "in Christ Jesus," there is none: not now, not later. The reason is not the believer's performance but his location: he is in Christ, and Christ has already borne the condemnation.

In the Spirit, Not in the Flesh — Attribute

> **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 flesh" here is man's natural condition apart from God. A believer is no longer defined by it. Because God's spirit dwells in him, God counts him "in the Spirit." This is a standing, not a feeling, and the same chapter tells believers how to walk in line with it (8:4-6, 13).

Sons of God, Children of God — Title

> **Romans 8:14** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*
>
> **Romans 8:15** *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*
>
> **Romans 8:16** *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

This is one of the greatest titles in scripture. A believer is not called a son of God the way a good man might be called a son of his country. He is a son because he has been born of God: God's own spirit is in him. That is why Paul writes, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," and why a believer can call God "Abba, Father," the word of a child to his father. Paul says the same in Galatians: **"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26)**. John marvels at it: **"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1)**, and **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God" (1 John 3:2)**.

Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ — Title

> **Romans 8:17** *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

An heir receives what belongs to his father, because he is his father's child. A believer is an heir of God for the same reason: "if children, then heirs." And he does not receive a lesser share apart from the Son; he is a joint-heir with Christ, sharing the inheritance with Him. The verse also honestly names the path: "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Predestinated to the Image of His Son — Attribute

> **Romans 8:29** *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*
>
> **Romans 8:30** *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

"Predestinated" means marked out beforehand. Paul tells what for: "to be conformed to the image of his Son." God's purpose for each believer is that he be made like Christ. And in that purpose Christ is "the firstborn among many brethren": the first of a whole family of sons. Each step in the chain — foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified — is stated as God's own work.

Glorified — Attribute

> **Romans 8:30** *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

The last link in the chain is in the past tense: "them he also glorified." For the believer, the full glory is still future (Romans 8:18). But God speaks of it as already done, because in His purpose it is as certain as if it had happened.

God's Elect — Attribute

> **Romans 8:33** *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

"Elect" means chosen. Paul tells the Thessalonians, **"Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God" (1 Thessalonians 1:4)**, and the Ephesians that God **"hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4)**. Notice "in him": the choosing is in Christ. And here Paul uses the title as a shield. No one can bring a charge against those God has chosen and declared righteous.

More Than Conquerors — Attribute

> **Romans 8:37** *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

Paul has just listed tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword (Romans 8:35). “More than conquerors” does not mean those things never come. It means that in them, the believer is not defeated, and more: they cannot separate him from God’s love. And the victory is not his own strength; it is “through him that loved us.”

Children of the Promise — Title

> **Romans 9:8** *That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

Being born into Abraham’s family by the flesh did not make anyone a child of God. Isaac was the child God promised, born by God’s word, not by human strength. Paul says believers are children in the same way: **“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (Galatians 4:28)**. A believer’s place in God’s family rests on God’s promise, not on his birth.

Vessels of Mercy — Title

> **Romans 9:23** *And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

A vessel is a container, something made to hold and carry. Believers are vessels made to hold and display God’s mercy, prepared by God “unto glory.” The title points away from the vessel to what it carries: the riches of God’s glory.

Graffed In — Attribute

> **Romans 11:17** *And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;*

Paul is writing to Gentile believers (11:13). The olive tree is the line of promise rooted in God’s word to the fathers. Some natural branches were broken off through unbelief; Gentiles who believed were grafted in and now share the root’s life. Paul adds a warning in the next verse: **“Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee” (Romans 11:18)**. And God is able to graft the natural branches in again (11:23).

A Living Sacrifice — Attribute

> **Romans 12:1** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

An Old Testament sacrifice died on the altar. The believer is a *living* sacrifice: his whole life, day by day, offered to God. Paul appeals “by the mercies of God” — not by threat, but by all God has already given, described in Romans 1-11. “Reasonable service” uses *logikos*, the root of “logical”: it is the sensible response to such mercy.

One Body in Christ, Members One of Another — Title

> **Romans 12:4** *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:*
>
> **Romans 12:5** *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

Every believer is a member of one body, and so a member of every other believer. This is not a club joined by choice; it is a body joined by God, by one spirit: **"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Corinthians 12:13)**. 1 Corinthians 12 develops this in full (below).

The Lord's — Title

> **Romans 14:8** *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

Two short words: "the Lord's." In life and in death, the believer belongs to Him. Nothing about his circumstances changes whose he is.

In short: Romans names the believer called, beloved, a saint, justified, made righteous, dead to sin and alive to God, under grace, God's servant, married to the risen Christ, uncondemned, in the spirit and not in the flesh, a son of God and heir with Christ, predestinated, glorified, elect, more than a conqueror, a child of the promise, a vessel of mercy, grafted into the olive tree, a living sacrifice, a member of one body, and the Lord's own.

1 Corinthians

Written to: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:2).

For us today: written directly to the church, and, by its own opening words, to "all that in every place" call on the Lord's name.

Sanctified — Attribute

> **1 Corinthians 6:11** *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

"Sanctified" (*hagiazo*) means set apart for God, made holy. Paul has just named some of the worst sins in Corinth (6:9-10), and says, "such were some of you." Then: "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." Three things God has already done. Sanctification here is not a slow climb toward holiness; it is a standing given in the name of the Lord Jesus. That is why Paul could address the whole troubled church as "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1:2) before he corrected a single fault.

Chosen of God: the Foolish, the Weak, the Base — Attribute

> **1 Corinthians 1:27** *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;*
> **1 Corinthians 1:28** *And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:*

Paul tells the Corinthians to look at who was called: **"not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26)**. God chose people the world thinks little of, so that no one could boast before Him (1:29). A believer's standing does not rest on his own wisdom, strength or rank. God chose him.

In Christ Jesus — Attribute

> **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:*

"In Christ" is the phrase Paul uses more than any other for the believer's standing. It is not a feeling of closeness. It is where God has placed him: "of him," that is, by God's doing, "are ye in Christ Jesus." And what Christ is, God has made to the believer: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Many of the titles in this study are stated "in Christ" or "in him."

Having the Mind of Christ — Attribute

> **1 Corinthians 2:16** *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

The natural man cannot receive the things of God's spirit (2:14). But the believer has received **"the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Corinthians 2:12)**. So he can understand God's wisdom, and think about it as Christ thinks. This is a gift received by every believer at the new birth, to be grown into.

Labourers Together with God; God's Husbandry; God's Building — Title

> **1 Corinthians 3:9** *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.*

Three pictures in one verse. Believers work alongside God, as fellow labourers. They are God's "husbandry," His cultivated field, where He makes things grow. And they are God's building, being built up by Him. Paul gave these pictures to a church divided over its favourite teachers ("I am of Paul… I am of Apollos"): the teachers only plant and water; the field and the building belong to God.

The Temple of God — Title

> **1 Corinthians 3:16** *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

A temple is where God dwells. In the Old Testament, God's presence was in the tabernacle and then in the temple in Jerusalem. Now, Paul says, the believers themselves — "ye," plural, the whole church together — are God's temple, because God's spirit lives in them. That is why division in the church was so serious: it was damage to God's own dwelling place.

Christ's — Title

> **1 Corinthians 3:23** *And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*

The Corinthians were dividing over teachers, some saying "I am of Paul," others "I am of Apollos" (3:4). Paul answers that their teachers all belong to them, and they belong to Christ: "ye are Christ's." The chain ends in God: "and Christ is God's." Paul says the same in Galatians: **"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed" (Galatians 3:29)**. Compare The Lord's, under Romans.

Unleavened — Attribute

> **1 Corinthians 5:7** *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:*

At Passover, Israel removed all leaven from their houses. Leaven, which spreads through the whole lump, pictures corruption. Paul tells believers they *are* unleavened, because of what Christ has done as their Passover: He was sacrificed for them, and He rose and ascended to God's right hand. Then he tells them to live like it: "purge out therefore the old leaven." The standing comes first; the walk follows.

Judges of the World and of Angels — Attribute

> **1 Corinthians 6:2** *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*
>
> **1 Corinthians 6:3** *Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*

The Corinthians were taking one another to court before unbelievers (6:1). Paul reminds them of the future God has given them: the saints will judge the world, and even angels. If that is what lies ahead of them, they are fit to settle small matters among themselves now. This attribute looks ahead, but it already belongs to them.

Members of Christ — Title

> **1 Corinthians 6:15** *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

A believer's body is a member of Christ, as a hand or foot is a member of a body. This is not a figure of speech for being on Christ's side; it is a statement of union. And Paul draws the practical conclusion: what is done with the body is never a private matter, because the body belongs to Christ.

One Spirit with the Lord — Attribute

> **1 Corinthians 6:17** *But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*

As a man and a woman are joined into one flesh, the believer who is joined to the Lord is "one spirit" with Him. It is the closest union scripture describes between God and man, and it comes from the gift of holy spirit received at the new birth.

The Temple of the Holy Ghost — Title

> **1 Corinthians 6:19** *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

In 3:16 the church together is God's temple. Here each believer's own body is a temple, because the gift of holy spirit is "in you." The two belong together: the whole church is God's dwelling, and so is each member of it.

Bought with a Price — Attribute

> **1 Corinthians 6:20** *For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 7:23** *Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.*

The believer is not his own; he has been bought. Paul does not name the price here, but Peter does: **"ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold… But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19)**. A thing bought at that price is precious to the One who paid it.

The Lord's Freeman, Christ's Servant — Title

> **1 Corinthians 7:22** *For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.*

In Corinth some believers were slaves and some were free. Paul tells the slave that in the Lord he is free, and tells the free man that he is Christ's servant. A believer's true condition is set by his relationship to Christ, not by his place in society.

One Bread — Title

> **1 Corinthians 10:17** *For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

At the Lord's table, many believers share one loaf. Paul says the loaf shows what they already are: many people, one bread, one body. The unity is not something they create by eating together. God made it, and the shared bread shows it.

The Body of Christ, and Members in Particular — Title

> **1 Corinthians 12:27** *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

Paul spends the whole of 1 Corinthians 12 on this picture. Each member has its place and function; none can say to another, "I have no need of thee" (12:21); and **"whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26)**. Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Paul draws one more picture from the body. In Ephesians 5 he compares Christ's love for the church to a husband's love for his wife, because the two are one flesh: **"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:30)**, and he adds, **"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32)**. The church is the body Christ loves and cherishes as His own. (Scripture does not give the church the title "the Bride"; Revelation names the bride as the holy city, new Jerusalem, Revelation 21:2, 9-10.)

Beloved Brethren — Title

> **1 Corinthians 15:58** *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Believers call one another brothers and sisters, and they are not merely being friendly. Something spiritual has happened that makes it true. Each believer has been born of the same Father, by the same spirit (John 1:12-13; 1 Peter 1:23). People born of the same father are brothers and sisters. So believers from every nation, background and walk of life are one family, not by blood but by the new birth: **"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26)**. That is why Paul can call a church he has just corrected for fifteen chapters "my beloved brethren."

In short: 1 Corinthians names the believer sanctified, chosen of God though the world counts him foolish and weak, in Christ Jesus, holding the mind of Christ, a fellow labourer, God's field and building, God's temple together and the spirit's temple individually, Christ's own, unleavened, a future judge of the world and of angels, a member of Christ and one spirit with Him, bought with a price, the Lord's freeman, one bread with all believers, a member of Christ's body, and a beloved brother.

2 Corinthians

Written to: "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia" (2 Corinthians 1:1).

For us today: written directly to the church.

Stablished and Anointed — Attribute

> **2 Corinthians 1:21** *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;*
>
> **2 Corinthians 1:22** *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

To anoint was to set someone apart for a purpose, as kings and priests were anointed with oil in Israel. God has stablished believers in Christ and anointed them, not with oil, but with the gift of holy spirit, given as an "earnest," a down payment on what is still to come. John says the same: **"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2:20)**. ("Unction" means anointing.) Sealing is explained under Ephesians.

A Sweet Savour of Christ — Title

> **2 Corinthians 2:15** *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:*

A sweet savour is a pleasant fragrance, the language of the Old Testament offerings that were "a sweet savour unto the LORD." Believers carry the fragrance of Christ wherever they go, and God finds it pleasing. Not everyone around them does (2:16), but to God it is sweet.

The Epistle of Christ — Title

> **2 Corinthians 3:3** *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*

The Corinthians wanted letters of recommendation. Paul answers that they themselves are a letter: written by Christ, not with ink but with the spirit of the living God, on hearts rather than stone tablets. People who never open a Bible read believers' lives.

Able Ministers of the New Testament — Title

> **2 Corinthians 3:6** *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

"Ministers" (*diakonos*) are servants who deliver what belongs to someone else. "Testament" means covenant. Paul first means himself and those with him, but the ministry he describes is the ministry of every believer (5:18). And God makes them "able": the sufficiency is from Him (3:5).

Changed into the Same Image — Attribute

> **2 Corinthians 3:18** *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD.*

Moses' face shone after he had been with God, and he covered it with a veil (3:13). Believers look on the Lord's glory with unveiled face, and they are being changed into His image, "from glory to glory." This is

a present, ongoing work of God, toward the goal Romans names: **"to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29)**.

Earthen Vessels Holding a Treasure — Title

> **2 Corinthians 4:7** *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

An earthen vessel is a common clay pot: fragile, ordinary, cheap. The treasure is **"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6)**. God puts His treasure in ordinary people on purpose, so that the power is plainly His. A believer's weakness does not disqualify him; it shows whose power is at work.

A New Creature — Title

> **2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

"New creature" can be read "new creation" (*kaine ktisis*). A believer is not a repaired version of his old self; he is something new, created by God at the new birth. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This is the clearest single statement of what happened when a person was born again.

Reconciled — Attribute

> **2 Corinthians 5:18** *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*
>
> **2 Corinthians 5:19** *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

Reconciliation means a broken relationship restored. Sin had made people enemies of God (Romans 5:10). God Himself acted to end that: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." And He then handed the reconciled the "ministry" and "word" of reconciliation.

Ambassadors for Christ — Title

> **2 Corinthians 5:20** *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

An ambassador lives in a foreign land and speaks there for his king, with his king's authority. Believers live in this world as citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20) and speak for Christ: "as though God did beseech you by us." The message is His, not theirs: "be ye reconciled to God."

The Righteousness of God in Him — Attribute

> **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.*

The great exchange: Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin; believers, who knew nothing but sin, are made the righteousness of God. Not a little better, not merely forgiven, but God's own righteousness, "in him."

The Temple of the Living God; Sons and Daughters — Title

> **2 Corinthians 6:16** *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*
>
> **2 Corinthians 6:18** *And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

Paul gathers Old Testament promises and applies them to the church: God dwells in them and walks among them, and He is their Father, and they are His "sons and daughters." Notice that daughters are named alongside sons. Every believer, man or woman, is God's own child.

Obedient to Christ — Attribute

> **2 Corinthians 10:5** *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Paul describes a believer's mind brought under Christ's authority: false reasonings pulled down, and "every thought" brought into obedience. This entry differs from most in this study. It describes something a believer is charged to keep doing, not only a standing he has been given. Paul elsewhere names believers **"the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:1)**.

A Chaste Virgin Espoused to Christ — Title

> **2 Corinthians 11:2** *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

In Paul's day a betrothal was binding, and the bride was kept faithful until the wedding. Paul had brought the Corinthians to Christ like a father arranging a betrothal, and he wanted to present them pure and faithful. His fear, in the next verse, was that their minds would be corrupted **"from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3)**. The title calls for single-hearted faithfulness to Christ.

In short: 2 Corinthians names the believer stablished and anointed, a sweet savour of Christ, a letter written by Christ, an able minister, changed into Christ's image, an earthen vessel holding a treasure, a new creation, reconciled, an ambassador, the righteousness of God in Christ, the temple of the living God, God's son or daughter, one whose thoughts are brought to Christ's obedience, and a chaste virgin espoused to Christ.

Galatians

Written to: "unto the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2), Gentile believers being pressed to take on circumcision and the Law.

For us today: written directly to the church, and especially to believers tempted to add the Law to grace.

Crucified with Christ — Attribute

> **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.*

Paul speaks for every believer here. When Christ was crucified, the believer was identified with Him: **"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Romans 6:6)**. But the verse does not end in death: "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Identified with Christ in His death, the believer is also raised and seated with Him (Ephesians 2:6), and now lives by faith.

Children of Abraham — Title

> **Galatians 3:7** *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (3:6). The ones who believe as he believed are his children, whatever their blood. Gentile believers are Abraham's children by faith.

Redeemed — Attribute

> **Galatians 3:13** *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

"Redeemed" (*exagorazo*) means bought out of the marketplace, set free by a payment. Christ bought believers out from under the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for them. Paul says the price elsewhere: **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7)**.

All One in Christ Jesus — Attribute

> **Galatians 3:26** *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*
>
> **Galatians 3:27** *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*
>
> **Galatians 3:28** *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

The divisions that separate people in the world — Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female — do not divide believers in their standing before God. All are children of God, all have "put on Christ," all are "one in Christ Jesus." Each still lives as a man or woman, in his or her own circumstances; but no one stands closer to God than another because of birth, rank or sex.

Abraham's Seed, Heirs According to the Promise — Title

> **Galatians 3:29** *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

The promised "seed" of Abraham is Christ (3:16). Those who belong to Christ are counted in that seed, and so inherit what God promised Abraham. The inheritance comes by promise, not by the Law.

Sons by Adoption; No More a Servant, but a Son — Title

> **Galatians 4:4** *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*
>
> **Galatians 4:5** *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*
>
> **Galatians 4:6** *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

> **Galatians 4:7** *Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

"Adoption" (*huiothesia*) means "placing as a son": the legal act that gave a son his full standing and inheritance. Notice how it happens: God sent His Son to redeem, and then sent "the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." A believer is not only declared a son; he has his Father's spirit in him, crying "Abba, Father." So Paul says to each one: "thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Known of God — Attribute

> **Galatians 4:9** *But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?*

Paul corrects himself mid-sentence: "after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God." Knowing God matters, but being known by Him matters more. Paul says the same elsewhere: **"if any man love God, the same is known of him" (1 Corinthians 8:3)**, and **"The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Timothy 2:19)**.

Children of the Free — Attribute

> **Galatians 4:31** *So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

Paul's picture of Hagar and Sarah (4:21-31): Hagar the slave woman stands for the covenant of the Law and bondage; Sarah the free woman for the promise and freedom. Believers are children of the free woman. That is why the next verse says, **"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1)**.

The Household of Faith — Title

> **Galatians 6:10** *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

Believers are one household, one family, gathered by faith. Love does good to all people, "especially" to them, because they are family. Paul uses the same picture in Ephesians: **"of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19)**.

"The Israel of God" — Who Is Meant?

> **Galatians 6:16** *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*

This phrase is often taken as a title for the whole church, as if the church had become a new Israel. Looked at carefully, the verse points the other way. Paul is blessing believing Israelites, the Jews who had believed in Christ.

The grammar. Paul blesses two groups. "As many as walk according to this rule" are the believers who walk by the rule of verse 15, a new creation, not circumcision. Then he adds, "and upon the Israel of God." In the Greek the word "upon" (*epi*) is repeated before the second group ("peace be *on* them, and mercy, and *upon* the Israel of God"). The natural reading is a second group named alongside the first.

How Paul uses "Israel." Everywhere else in Paul's letters, "Israel" means the people of Israel. He calls himself **"an Israelite" (Romans 11:1)**. He speaks of **"Israel after the flesh" (1 Corinthians 10:18)**. And in

Romans 9:6 he writes, **"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel"**: there is an Israel within Israel, the Israelites who believe. That is exactly "the Israel of God."

Why it fits Galatians. The whole letter is a warning against Jewish teachers who wanted Gentile believers circumcised. At the very end, Paul does not want his readers to think he is against Israel. So he blesses the Israelites who had believed in Christ and did not trust in circumcision: the true Israel, the Israel of God.

Why it fits the rest of scripture. Paul never calls Gentile believers "Israel." He tells Gentiles they were once **"aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" (Ephesians 2:12)**, and that they are now not Israelites but **"fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19)**. God did not turn Gentiles into Israel; He made something new out of both: **"for to make in himself of twain one new man" (Ephesians 2:15)**.

The other view. Some read the Greek *kai* ("and") as "even": "peace and mercy on them, even upon the Israel of God," making the two groups one, the whole church. The Greek can be read that way. But Paul's own use of "Israel" everywhere else, and the repeated "upon," make the reading "believing Israelites" the better one.

For us today: "the Israel of God" is not a title for Gentile believers. Believing Jews and Gentiles together are one body, one new man in Christ. The Jewish believer is still an Israelite by birth, and he is also a full member of the one body, with no advantage and no disadvantage.

In short: Galatians names the believer crucified with Christ, a child of Abraham by faith, redeemed, one in Christ Jesus, Abraham's seed and heir, a son and no longer a servant, known of God, a child of the free woman, and a member of the household of faith. "The Israel of God" names the Israelites who believed.

Ephesians

Written to: "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:1).

For us today: written directly to the church. Ephesians states the believer's standing in its fullest form.

Blessed with All Spiritual Blessings — Attribute

> **Ephesians 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

Not some spiritual blessings, but all; not one day, but already: "hath blessed us." They are "in heavenly places" and "in Christ." Everything else Ephesians describes is part of this one blessing, given in Christ.

Holy and Without Blame before Him — Attribute

> **Ephesians 1:4** *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

God's purpose for the believer was set before the world began: to stand before Him holy and without blame. Paul tells the Colossians that Christ's work, from His death to His ascension, has accomplished it: **"In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight" (Colossians 1:22)**. God does not see a believer through his failures. He sees him as He has made him in Christ.

Accepted in the Beloved — Attribute

> **Ephesians 1:6** *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

"The beloved" is Christ. A believer is accepted by God not on his own merit, but because he is in God's beloved Son. God accepts him as He accepts His Son. That is the ground of every other title.

Sealed with That Holy Spirit of Promise — Attribute

> **Ephesians 1:13** *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*
>
> **Ephesians 4:30** *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

A seal marked ownership and made a thing secure; no one could break it without the owner's authority (compare Daniel 6:17). When a person believed, he was sealed with the gift of holy spirit that God had promised. The seal says he belongs to God, and it holds "unto the day of redemption."

God's Purchased Possession — Title

> **Ephesians 1:14** *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

The holy spirit given to believers is the "earnest," the down payment, of an inheritance still to come, and it marks them as God's "purchased possession," bought and owned by Him. A few verses later Paul prays that believers would know **"the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:18)**. Believers have an inheritance in God, and God counts them as His own.

Quickened, Raised Up, and Seated Together with Christ — Attribute

> **Ephesians 2:4** *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*
>
> **Ephesians 2:5** *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*
>
> **Ephesians 2:6** *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

Three things God did, each "together with" Christ: He made believers alive together with Him ("quickened"), raised them up together, and made them sit together in heavenly places. These three Greek verbs all begin with *sun-*, "together with." The believer was dead in sins; God gave him life, raised him, and seated him where Christ is seated. Colossians says the same: **"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:13)**.

His Workmanship — Attribute

> **Ephesians 2:10** *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

"Workmanship" (*poiema*, from which "poem" comes) is something made with skill. A believer is God's handiwork, "created in Christ Jesus." Good works are not how he became God's workmanship (2:8-9 has just said salvation is "not of works"); they are what he was made for.

Made Nigh by the Blood of Christ — Attribute

> **Ephesians 2:13** *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

Gentiles were once "far off": without Christ, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world (2:12). Now they have been brought near, not by becoming Jews, but "by the blood of Christ." No one is closer to God than a believer who was once far off.

One New Man — Title

> **Ephesians 2:15** *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;*
>
> **Ephesians 4:24** *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

In 2:15 the "new man" is the church: Jew and Gentile, once divided by the Law, made into one new body. In 4:24 it is the new nature in each believer, created by God "in righteousness and true holiness," which he is to "put on" in his daily walk. Both are new creations of God.

Access to the Father — Attribute

> **Ephesians 2:18** *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Access means the right of approach, like being admitted into a king's presence. Jew and Gentile alike come to the Father through Christ, by the one spirit. Paul says it twice more: **"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Romans 5:2)**, and **"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Ephesians 3:12)**.

Fellowcitizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God — Title

> **Ephesians 2:19** *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

Gentile believers had been "strangers and foreigners," outside Israel and without God (2:12). Now they are citizens, with full rights, and members of God's own household. Not guests, but family.

An Habitation of God through the Spirit — Title

> **Ephesians 2:22** *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

The church is still being built — "builded together" — into a dwelling place where God lives by His spirit. Each believer is part of that building.

Fellowheirs, of the Same Body, Partakers of His Promise — Title

> **Ephesians 3:6** *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

This is the heart of what Paul calls "the mystery," the secret hidden in former ages and now revealed (3:5): that Gentiles would be fellowheirs with Jewish believers, of the same body, and partakers of the same promise, all "in Christ by the gospel." No second-class members.

Followers of God, as Dear Children — Title

> **Ephesians 5:1** *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;*

"Followers" (*mimetes*) means imitators. Children copy their parents naturally, because they share their nature and live close to them. Believers, as God's dear children, are to copy their Father.

Children of Light — Title

> **Ephesians 5:8** *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*

Not "in the light" only, but "light": "now are ye light in the Lord." The change is in what they are, and so they are to "walk as children of light." Paul tells the Thessalonians the same: **"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:5)**. What Jesus said to His disciples in the Gospel period (Matthew 5:14, Chapter 3) is here stated to the church as its standing.

A Glorious Church, without Spot — Title

> **Ephesians 5:25** *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*
>
> **Ephesians 5:26** *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*
>
> **Ephesians 5:27** *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

Paul is writing about husbands and wives, but he says he is speaking **"concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32)**. Christ gave Himself for the church to set it apart, cleanse it, and present it to Himself glorious, without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. What Christ does for the church is the pattern for how a husband loves his wife.

Strong in the Lord — Attribute

> **Ephesians 6:10** *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

Before Paul names a single piece of the armour of God, he names the source of strength: "in the Lord, and in the power of his might." The believer's strength is the Lord's, not his own.

In short: Ephesians names the believer blessed with all spiritual blessings, holy and without blame before God, accepted in the beloved, sealed, God's purchased possession, made alive, raised and seated with Christ, God's workmanship, made nigh by the blood of Christ, one new man, given access to the Father, a fellowcitizen and member of God's household, part of God's dwelling, a fellowheir of the same body, a dear child, light in the Lord, part of a glorious church without spot, and strong in the Lord.

Philippians

Written to: "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi" (Philippians 1:1).

For us today: written directly to the church.

The Sons of God, Blameless and Harmless, Shining as Lights — Title

> **Philippians 2:15** *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*

Paul gathers several things into one verse. Believers are "the sons of God" (see Romans 8:14). They are to live "blameless" (nothing to accuse them of) and "harmless" (*akeraios*, unmixed, pure), and to "shine as lights" in a crooked world, like stars in a dark sky.

The Circumcision — Title

> **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.*

Circumcision was the mark of belonging to God's covenant people. Paul says the true circumcision now is not a cut in the flesh but something done in the heart: those who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ, and do not trust in the flesh. Colossians explains: **"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11)**.

Apprehended of Christ Jesus — Attribute

> **Philippians 3:12** *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

To "apprehend" is to lay hold of, to seize. Paul says Christ laid hold of him first, on the road to Damascus, and now he presses on to lay hold of what Christ took hold of him for. Every believer was first grasped by Christ; his own pressing on follows.

Citizens of Heaven — Title

> **Philippians 3:20** *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:*

"Conversation" here is *politeuma*, citizenship. Philippi was a Roman colony; its citizens lived far from Rome but were citizens of Rome. Believers live on earth but are citizens of heaven, and they wait for their Lord to come from there.

Names in the Book of Life — Attribute

> **Philippians 4:3** *And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.*

God keeps a record of His own. Paul mentions it in passing, of his fellow workers at Philippi, as something settled. Jesus told the seventy, **"rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20)**, and Hebrews speaks of **"the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23)**.

In short: Philippians names the believer a son of God, blameless and harmless, a light in the world, the true circumcision, apprehended of Christ Jesus, a citizen of heaven, and one whose name is in the book of life.

Colossians

Written to: "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse" (Colossians 1:2).

For us today: written directly to the church.

Strengthened with All Might — Attribute

> **Colossians 1:11** *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*

Strength from God's own glorious power. And notice what it is for: not first for great deeds, but "unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." God's strength in a believer shows in endurance with joy.

Made Meet, Delivered, and Translated — Attribute

> **Colossians 1:12** *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*
> **Colossians 1:13** *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

Three things the Father has done. He has made believers "meet" (fit, qualified) to share the inheritance of the saints. He has "delivered" them from the power of darkness, rescued them from a hostile ruler. And He has "translated" them, moved them, into the kingdom of His dear Son. They did not qualify themselves or move themselves.

Complete in Him — Attribute

> **Colossians 1:19** *For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*
> **Colossians 2:9** *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*
> **Colossians 2:10** *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

It pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in Christ. And the believer, being in Christ, is "complete in him." Nothing needs to be added: not the Law, not human philosophy, not special experiences. That was exactly what false teachers at Colosse were urging, and Paul's answer is that the believer already lacks nothing in Christ.

Christ in You, the Hope of Glory — Attribute

> **Colossians 1:27** *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:*

Paul calls this a mystery, a secret hidden in past ages and now made known (1:26). Christ is not only with the believer or for him, but in him, by the gift of holy spirit. And that is the believer's assurance of the glory to come.

Rooted and Built Up in Him — Attribute

> **Colossians 2:6** *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*
> **Colossians 2:7** *Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

Paul joins two pictures: a tree rooted in the soil, and a building rising on its foundation. In the Greek, "rooted" is a settled, completed fact, and "built up" is ongoing growth. A believer is anchored in Christ, and keeps growing in Him.

Forgiven All Trespasses — Attribute

> **Colossians 2:13** *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

"All trespasses." Not most, not the ones before believing only. The forgiveness came with the new life ("quickened together with him"), and it is complete. Paul therefore tells believers to forgive one another **"even as Christ forgave you" (Colossians 3:13)**.

Life Hid with Christ in God — Attribute

> **Colossians 3:3** *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*
>
> **Colossians 3:4** *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

The believer has died with Christ, and his true life is now kept with Christ in God, out of sight and out of reach of harm. It will not stay hidden: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

The Elect of God, Holy and Beloved — Title

> **Colossians 3:12** *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

Three titles together: chosen, set apart, and loved. Paul gives them first, and only then the instruction: "put on therefore." Believers live this way *because* of who they already are.

In short: Colossians names the believer strengthened with all might, made meet, delivered and translated, complete in Christ, indwelt by Christ, the hope of glory, rooted and built up in Him, forgiven all trespasses, hidden with Christ in God, and God's elect, holy and beloved.

1 and 2 Thessalonians

Written to: "unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:1).

For us today: written directly to the church, and especially about the hope of Christ's return.

Taught of God to Love One Another — Attribute

> **1 Thessalonians 4:9** *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*

Believers do not have to work up love for one another on their own. God teaches it to them from within, by His own spirit and love (Romans 5:5).

Not Appointed to Wrath — Attribute

> **1 Thessalonians 5:9** *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

God has not set believers aside for wrath, but for salvation. They wait for Christ's coming without dread: they wait for **"his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10)**.

Chosen to Salvation; Called to Glory — Attribute

> **2 Thessalonians 2:13** *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:*
>
> **2 Thessalonians 2:14** *Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul thanks God for "brethren beloved of the Lord," chosen "from the beginning," and called by the gospel "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." The calling has a destination: a share in Christ's own glory.

In short: the Thessalonian letters name the believer taught of God to love, not appointed to wrath, chosen to salvation, and called to share Christ's glory. (Their "children of light" is given under Ephesians 5:8, above.)

1 Timothy

Written to: "Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2), Paul's fellow worker, left at Ephesus to set the church in order.

For us today: written to a minister of the church in the Grace administration. What it says of the church describes the church today.

The House of God, the Church of the Living God — Title

> **1 Timothy 3:15** *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

In the Old Testament, the house of God was the tabernacle and then the temple. Now God's house is the church itself, the believers. And it is "the pillar and ground of the truth," what holds the truth up and holds it in place in the world. The conduct Paul has just described for the church (chapters 2-3) matters because of whose house it is.

The Man of God — Title

> **1 Timothy 6:11** *But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

In the Old Testament, "man of God" was the title of prophets such as Moses and Elijah. Paul gives it to Timothy, and then to every believer who is taught by scripture: **"That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:17)**. The title carries a charge: flee what corrupts, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness.

In short: 1 Timothy names the church the house of God, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, and the believer a man of God.

2 Timothy and Titus

Written to: "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son" (2 Timothy 1:2) and **"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith" (Titus 1:4)**, men serving the churches in the Grace administration.

For us today: written to ministers of the church, and what they describe applies to every believer who serves.

A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ — Title

> **2 Timothy 2:3** *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*
>
> **2 Timothy 2:4** *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

A soldier endures hardship, and he does not get tangled in civilian affairs that would distract him from the one who enlisted him. Paul wrote this near the end of his life, in prison. The title carries a charge: endure.

A Vessel unto Honour — Title

> **2 Timothy 2:21** *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

In a great house there are fine vessels and common ones (2:20). This title is conditional: "if a man therefore purge himself from these." A believer who keeps himself clean from what dishonours God becomes a vessel fit for the Master's use, ready for every good work.

A Peculiar People, Zealous of Good Works — Title

> **Titus 2:14** *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

"Peculiar" in the King James English does not mean odd. It means belonging particularly to someone: God's own special possession (compare Exodus 19:5). Christ gave Himself to redeem and purify such a people, and the result is zeal for good works. The order matters: redemption first, good works following.

Regenerated and Renewed — Attribute

> **Titus 3:5** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

"Regeneration" means being born again, given new life. "Renewing" means made new. Both are God's work, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy." This is the new birth Jesus promised Nicodemus (John 3:3, Chapter 3), now accomplished.

In short: Timothy and Titus name the believer a good soldier, a vessel unto honour, a people belonging to God and zealous of good works, and one born again and made new by God's mercy.

Chapter 2: Hebrews, the General Letters and Revelation

These books were written after Pentecost, in the first century, but each was addressed to a particular group of readers. Hebrews was written to Hebrew believers. James wrote to "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." Peter, the apostle to the circumcision (Galatians 2:7-8), wrote to believers scattered through Asia Minor. John wrote to believers he called his "little children," and Revelation to "the seven churches which are in Asia."

How do their titles pertain to us today? Some state plainly what God has made every born-again believer — born again, sons of God, partakers of the divine nature — and agree with what Chapter 1 found in the letters written to the church. Others are drawn from Israel's own covenant language, and are best understood alongside what Paul writes directly to the church. Each entry says which.

Hebrews

Written to: Hebrew believers, as the letter's whole argument from the priesthood, the tabernacle and the sacrifices shows. The writer is not named.

For us today: written to believers after Pentecost. What it says about the Son and those He sanctifies agrees with the letters written to the church.

Brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ — Title

> **Hebrews 2:11** *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*
>
> **Hebrews 2:17** *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

This is not brotherhood by earthly family. Jesus had brothers by birth (Matthew 13:55), but that is not what this verse means. Believers are Christ's brethren because of something spiritual that has happened.

Look at the verse. "He that sanctifieth" is Christ; "they who are sanctified" are believers; and they "are all of one," that is, they have one Father. Christ is the Son of God; believers have been born of God by the new birth (1 Peter 1:23) and made His sons (Romans 8:14). They share the same Father, so Christ calls them brethren, and He "is not ashamed" to. After His resurrection He said exactly this: **"go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17)**. And Paul gives the purpose behind it: God predestinated believers to be conformed to the image of His Son, **"that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29)**.

To make this possible, the Son was **"made a little lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:9)**, and was "made like unto his brethren" (2:17): a real man, of the same flesh and blood (2:14), who suffered and was tempted as they are. He became like them so that they could become His brethren.

This is also why believers call one another brothers and sisters (1 Corinthians 15:58, Chapter 1): the same new birth that makes them Christ's brethren makes them each other's.

Partakers of the Heavenly Calling; Partakers of Christ — Title

> **Hebrews 3:1** *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*
>
> **Hebrews 3:14** *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;*

"Partakers" means sharers. The calling believers share is "heavenly": it comes from heaven and leads there. And they are sharers in Christ Himself. The second verse carries a charge: "if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." It is written to believers tempted to drift back to the old ways, and it calls them to hold fast.

His House — Title

> **Hebrews 3:6** *But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

Moses was faithful in God's house as a servant; Christ is over it as a Son (3:5-6). And the house is the believers: "whose house are we." For its first readers the verse carries a condition: "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

For us today: Paul says the same of the church directly: it is the house of God (1 Timothy 3:15, Chapter 1).

Entered into Rest — Attribute

> **Hebrews 4:3** *For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

Israel in the wilderness did not enter God's rest, because of unbelief (3:19). Believers do: "we which have believed do enter into rest." The rest is ceasing from one's own works to earn a standing with God: **"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (Hebrews 4:10)**.

For us today: the same rest from works is stated to the church: **"Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9)**.

Perfected for Ever — Attribute

> **Hebrews 10:14** *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

Under the Law, sacrifices were offered year after year and never made anyone perfect (10:1). Christ offered Himself once, and then **"sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12)**. That one offering, completed by His resurrection and ascension, has perfected for ever those who are sanctified. Nothing remains to be added to it.

For us today: compare Complete in Him (Colossians 2:10, Chapter 1).

The Church of the Firstborn — Title

> **Hebrews 12:22** *But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,*

> **Hebrews 12:23** *To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

Israel came to Mount Sinai, to fire, darkness and terror (12:18-21). Believers have come to something far greater: the heavenly Jerusalem, and "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." In Israel the firstborn held the place of honour and inheritance. "Firstborn" here is plural in the Greek: every member of this church holds that standing.

In short: Hebrews names believers Christ's own brethren, because they share His Father by the new birth, partakers of a heavenly calling and of Christ, His house, those who have entered into rest, perfected for ever by one offering, and the church of the firstborn.

James

Written to: "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1), Israelite believers outside the land.

For us today: written to Israelite believers in the first century; its first title here describes what the new birth makes of any believer, and its second, God's choice of the poor to be rich in faith.

Firstfruits of His Creatures — Title

> **James 1:18** *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

The firstfruits were the first and best part of a harvest, given to God ahead of the rest, as a pledge that the full harvest was coming. God "begat" these believers "with the word of truth," and they were a kind of firstfruits: the first of a much larger harvest God intends. Paul uses the same word of believers who **"have the firstfruits of the Spirit" (Romans 8:23)**.

Rich in Faith, Heirs of the Kingdom — Title

> **James 2:5** *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

James was correcting believers who honoured the rich and despised the poor (2:1-4). God has done the opposite: He chose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. A believer's wealth is measured by God, not by the world.

For us today: believers today are likewise heirs (Romans 8:17; Titus 3:7, Chapter 1).

In short: James names believers a kind of firstfruits, begotten by God's own will through His word, and rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom.

1 and 2 Peter

Written to: "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Peter 1:1), written by Peter, the apostle to the circumcision. The second letter is written **"to them that have obtained like precious faith with us" (2 Peter 1:1)**.

For us today: written to believers after Pentecost. The titles about the new birth describe every believer. The titles taken from Israel's covenant at Sinai are explained below.

Begotten Again; Born Again of Incorruptible Seed — Attribute

> **1 Peter 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*
>
> **1 Peter 1:23** *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

This is the new birth Jesus promised Nicodemus (John 3:3, Chapter 3), now received. Peter names its cause, God's "abundant mercy"; its power, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ"; and its seed, "incorruptible." What is born of incorruptible seed cannot decay.

Kept by the Power of God — Attribute

> **1 Peter 1:4** *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*
>
> **1 Peter 1:5** *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

The inheritance is kept in heaven, and the heir is kept on earth, "by the power of God through faith." "Kept" (*phroureo*) is a military word: guarded, as a garrison guards a city.

Newborn Babes — Title

> **1 Peter 2:2** *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

A newborn has one desire: milk. And it grows by receiving it. Peter calls believers to desire the pure milk of the word with that same hunger. The title describes a stage of growth, and every believer begins there.

Lively Stones; a Spiritual House; an Holy Priesthood — Title

> **1 Peter 2:4** *To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,*
>
> **1 Peter 2:5** *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

Christ is "a living stone" (2:4). Believers, sharing His life, are living stones too, built together into a spiritual house. And in that house they are priests, offering "spiritual sacrifices." Paul describes the same reality to the church: believers are God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16) and offer themselves as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

A Chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation, a Peculiar People — Title

> **1 Peter 2:9** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*
>
> **1 Peter 2:10** *Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

These four titles are taken almost word for word from what God said to Israel at Mount Sinai: **"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure**

unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6). Peter, the apostle to the circumcision, writes them to believers scattered abroad.

- **A chosen generation:** a people chosen by God.
- **A royal priesthood:** priests who belong to the King and serve Him.
- **An holy nation:** a people set apart for God.
- **A peculiar people:** God's own possession.

For us today: these are Israel's Sinai titles, spoken to Peter's readers. Every believer today shares the reality behind them, stated directly in the letters to the church: chosen in Christ (Ephesians 1:4), with access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18), God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), and "a peculiar people" (Titus 2:14, Chapter 1). But the church is not a renamed Israel. It is one new body of Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:15).

Strangers and Pilgrims — Title

> **1 Peter 2:11** *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

A stranger lives in a land not his own; a pilgrim is passing through it. Believers live in this world, but it is not their home. So they are urged to keep themselves from the desires that war against the soul. Paul states the same standing positively: "our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20, Chapter 1).

Heirs Together of the Grace of Life — Title

> **1 Peter 3:7** *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

Peter tells husbands to honour their wives, and gives the reason: they are heirs together of the grace of life. Whatever their roles in the home, a believing husband and wife stand side by side before God as heirs of the same grace. Paul says the same of all believers: **"there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28)**.

Good Stewards of the Manifold Grace of God — Title

> **1 Peter 4:10** *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

A steward manages what belongs to his master. Every believer has received a gift from God, and is to use it in serving others. Paul uses the same word of himself and Apollos: **"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1)**.

For us today: what Peter says of every believer's gift agrees with Paul's teaching to the church on gifts given for the good of all (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7).

Of Like Precious Faith — Attribute

> **2 Peter 1:1** *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:*

Peter was an apostle who had walked with Jesus. Yet he writes that his readers have obtained faith of the same value as his own. No believer has a second-class faith.

Partakers of the Divine Nature — Attribute

> **2 Peter 1:4** *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.*

One of the boldest statements in scripture. Believers are "partakers" (*koinonos*, sharers) of the divine nature: they share God's own life and nature, received at the new birth. This does not make them God; it means God's nature is now in them, and it gives them the means to escape the world's corruption.

In short: Peter's letters name believers born again of incorruptible seed, kept by God's power, newborn babes, living stones and a holy priesthood, strangers and pilgrims, heirs together of the grace of life, good stewards of God's grace, of like precious faith, and partakers of the divine nature. His four Sinai titles describe realities every believer shares in Christ, without making the church a renamed Israel.

1 John and Jude

Written to: John writes to believers he calls **"My little children" (1 John 2:1)**. Jude writes **"to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" (Jude 1)**.

For us today: these titles describe what every born-again believer is.

Sons of God — Title

> **1 John 3:1** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*
>
> **1 John 3:2** *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

John cannot speak of it without wonder: "Behold, what manner of love." Believers are not only called sons of God; they *are* sons now. And the best is still ahead: "when he shall appear, we shall be like him." (See Romans 8:14, Chapter 1.)

Little Children, Young Men, Fathers — Title

> **1 John 2:12** *I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*
>
> **1 John 2:13** *I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*
>
> **1 John 2:14** *I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

John speaks to believers at three stages of growth. Little children know their sins are forgiven and know the Father. Young men are strong, have God's word living in them, and have overcome the wicked one. Fathers have known Him "that is from the beginning," a long, settled knowledge. Every believer is in God's family; not all are at the same stage.

Passed from Death unto Life — Attribute

> **1 John 3:14** *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

Death here is separation from God's life; life is having it. The believer has already crossed from one to the other. John gives one way to know it: love for the brethren. Jesus said the same before the cross (John 5:24, Chapter 3).

Of God — Attribute

> **1 John 4:4** *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*

To be "of God" is to have come from Him, born of Him. John uses the phrase as a settled fact: **"We are of God" (1 John 4:6)**, and **"we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19)**. It also explains how believers overcome: "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Overcomers — Title

> **1 John 5:4** *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*
>
> **1 John 5:5** *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

Whatever is born of God overcomes the world, and the means is faith: believing that Jesus is the Son of God. The victory comes from the new birth, not from personal strength.

Having Eternal Life — Attribute

> **1 John 5:11** *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*
>
> **1 John 5:12** *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*
>
> **1 John 5:13** *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

Eternal life is not only something a believer will receive after this life. God "hath given" it, and it is in His Son. John wrote so that believers would know it, not merely hope for it: "that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Paul calls it a gift: **"the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23)**.

Sanctified, Preserved and Called — Attribute

> **Jude 1:1** *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:*

Jude's letter warns about false teachers and those who turned away. But he opens by naming his readers "preserved in Jesus Christ": kept, guarded (*tereo*). He ends the same way, with God **"able to keep you from falling" (Jude 24)**.

In short: John names believers sons of God now, growing children, young men and fathers in God's family, passed from death to life, of God, overcomers by faith, and possessors of eternal life. Jude names them sanctified, preserved and called.

Revelation

Written to: "to the seven churches which are in Asia" (Revelation 1:4). Its prophecy looks ahead to the day of the Lord.

For us today: written to real churches in the first century. Its titles look toward Christ's coming and His reign.

Kings and Priests unto God — Title

> **Revelation 1:5** *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,*
>
> **Revelation 1:6** *And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

John gives glory to Christ, who loved us, washed us from our sins in His own blood, and "made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." Kings reign; priests serve and draw near to God. The full reign is still ahead: **"and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10)**. Paul writes the same hope to the church: **"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2:12)**.

Called, and Chosen, and Faithful — Title

> **Revelation 17:14** *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

These words describe those who are with the Lamb when He overcomes the kings of the earth, at His coming. They are called and chosen by God, and faithful in return. The first two are God's doing; the third is how His people answer.

For us today: believers today are likewise called and chosen (Romans 1:6; 8:33, Chapter 1).

In short: Revelation names those Christ has loved and washed kings and priests unto God, with the reign itself still to come, and those with the Lamb at His coming called, chosen and faithful.

Chapter 3: The Gospel Period — Words Spoken Before the Cross

The titles in this chapter were spoken by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. He spoke them to His disciples, who were Israelites living under the Law of Moses, before the cross, before Pentecost, and before the church of the Grace administration existed. They are held here as distinct from the Grace administration, as they must be.

That does not make them less true. They show what Christ intended for those who followed Him. And many of them are restated, after Pentecost, in the letters written to the church, where they become part of every believer's standing. Each entry notes where that happens.

Matthew

Written to: Matthew records Jesus' words to His disciples and to the crowds of Israel, under the Law. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) was spoken to disciples in Galilee.

For us today: these words were spoken *to* the disciples and are written *for* our learning (Romans 15:4).

Fishers of Men — Title

> **Matthew 4:19** *And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

Peter and Andrew were fishermen. Jesus called them to follow Him, and promised to make them catchers of men instead of fish (also Mark 1:17). The title is a calling to a work, given by the one who would train them for it.

For us today: the church is given its own work under other names: witnesses (Acts 1:8) and ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20), both in Chapter 1.

Blessed — Attribute

> **Matthew 5:3** *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
>
> **Matthew 5:11** *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*
>
> **Matthew 5:12** *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

"Blessed" (*makarios*) means happy, favoured by God. Jesus opened the Sermon on the Mount by naming who is blessed: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted (5:3-10). Then He turned to His disciples directly: "Blessed are ye." Each blessing looks ahead to the kingdom and its reward.

For us today: the church is told it has already been blessed: **"who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3)**; see Chapter 1.

Children of Your Father — Title

> **Matthew 5:9** *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*
>
> **Matthew 5:45** *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Jesus told His disciples to love their enemies, "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." God sends sun and rain on good and evil alike, and His children are to act like Him. Luke records the same: **"ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35)**. Here "children" describes likeness to the Father, shown in how one lives.

For us today: in the Grace administration, believers are sons of God by birth, not only by likeness: **"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26)**. See Sons of God, Children of God (Romans 8:14-16, Chapter 1).

The Salt of the Earth — Title

> **Matthew 5:13** *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

Salt did two things in the ancient world: it kept food from spoiling, and it gave flavour. Jesus told His disciples that they were to be that to the world around them: a preserving, flavouring presence among people. The title describes a purpose, not only a privilege. And it carries a warning: salt that has lost its savour is good for nothing.

For us today: the church is never called "salt" in the letters written to it, but the same idea appears there. Paul tells believers, **"Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6)**.

The Light of the World — Title

> **Matthew 5:14** *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

Jesus said of Himself, **"I am the light of the world" (John 8:12)**. His disciples were the light of the world only because He was. Their light was reflected, like the moon's light from the sun. And light is not meant to be hidden: "a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

For us today: this title is restated to the church in the Grace administration, and becomes part of every believer's standing: "now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8, Chapter 1).

Children of the Bridechamber — Title

> **Matthew 9:15** *And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*

The children of the bridechamber were the bridegroom's friends and attendants at a wedding, there to celebrate with him. Jesus used the name of His disciples when He was asked why they did not fast. While He was with them, it was a time of joy. Fasting would come when He was taken away.

Babes — Title

> **Matthew 11:25** *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*

Jesus thanked the Father that what the wise and prudent had missed was revealed to "babes": His disciples, ordinary men without learning or rank (also Luke 10:21). God's truth is received by those willing to be taught, not by the proud.

For us today: Paul makes the same point to the church: **"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise" (1 Corinthians 1:27)**; see Chapter 1.

My Brethren — Title

> **Matthew 12:49** *And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!*
>
> **Matthew 12:50** *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

Jesus' mother and brothers came looking for Him. He pointed to His disciples and said they were His family: whoever does the will of His Father. He told them, **"one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matthew 23:8)**, and after His resurrection He called them **"my brethren" (Matthew 28:10)**.

For us today: see Brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:11, Chapter 2) and Beloved Brethren (1 Corinthians 15:58, Chapter 1).

Children of the Kingdom — Title

> **Matthew 13:38** *The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;*

Jesus explained the parable of the wheat and the tares Himself. The good seed, sown by the Son of man, are "the children of the kingdom." They grow in the world alongside the children of the wicked one until the harvest at the end of the age. Then **"shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43)**.

I Will Build My Church — Christ's Word to Peter

> **Matthew 16:18** *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Jesus spoke of a church He *would* build, in the future. The church of the Grace administration began on the day of Pentecost, and Paul says its full form, Jew and Gentile together in one body, **"in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men" (Ephesians 3:5)**. So this word to Peter is held here as Christ's promise of the assembly He would build.

For us today: see The Church of God; the Flock (Acts 20:28, Chapter 1).

Little Ones — Title

> **Matthew 18:6** *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Jesus called those who believe in Him "these little ones," and warned of the judgment on anyone who causes one of them to stumble. They are watched over in heaven (18:10), and **"it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:14)**.

The Elect — Title

> **Matthew 24:22** *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*
>
> **Matthew 24:31** *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

In His prophecy on the Mount of Olives, Jesus spoke of the elect, God's chosen people, in the days of great tribulation before His coming. For their sake those days will be shortened, and at His coming they will be gathered from the four winds. These words concern the end of the age, which is still future.

For us today: the church's own election is stated in the letters written to it; see God's Elect (Romans 8:33, Chapter 1).

In short: in Matthew Jesus called His disciples fishers of men, blessed, children of their Father, the salt of the earth and the light of the world, children of the bridechamber, babes, His brethren, children of the kingdom and little ones; He promised to build His church, and spoke of the elect at the end of the age.

Mark

Written to: Mark does not name his readers. He records Jesus' ministry to Israel, under the Law, before the cross.

For us today: written *for* our learning (Romans 15:4).

Belonging to Christ — Title

> **Mark 9:41** *For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.*

"Because ye belong to Christ" reads literally "because ye are Christ's." Jesus said that even a cup of water given to His disciples for that reason would be rewarded. They were His, and God would count what was done for them as done for Christ.

For us today: the church is told the same: **"And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Corinthians 3:23)**. See Christ's, and The Lord's (Romans 14:8), both in Chapter 1.

In short: Mark records Jesus calling His disciples fishers of men (1:17, given under Matthew) and those who belong to Christ.

Luke

Written to: "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3). Luke records Jesus' ministry to Israel, under the Law, before the cross.

For us today: written *for* our learning (Romans 15:4). Luke's second book, Acts, records the beginning of the Grace administration.

Names Written in Heaven — Attribute

> **Luke 10:20** *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

The seventy came back rejoicing that even devils were subject to them. Jesus told them to rejoice in something greater: their names were written in heaven. What God had done for them mattered more than what they could do.

For us today: see Names in the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3, Chapter 1).

Little Flock — Title

> **Luke 12:32** *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

A flock is small and defenceless, and depends on its shepherd. Jesus told His few followers not to be afraid: it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom.

For us today: see The Church of God; the Flock (Acts 20:28, Chapter 1).

Children of Light — Title

> **Luke 16:8** *And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*

Jesus ended the parable of the unjust steward by setting "the children of this world" beside "the children of light." Later, in Jerusalem, He told the people, **"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (John 12:36)**. A child of light belongs to the light, and to Christ, the light of the world.

For us today: see Children of Light (Ephesians 5:8, Chapter 1).

Children of the Resurrection — Title

> **Luke 20:35** *But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:*
>
> **Luke 20:36** *Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*

The Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, tried to trap Jesus with a question about marriage. He answered by describing those counted worthy of the resurrection from the dead: they do not marry, they cannot die any more, and they are "the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." This title looks entirely to the future.

Witnesses — Title

> **Luke 24:48** *And ye are witnesses of these things.*

After His resurrection, Jesus opened the scriptures to His disciples and told them they were witnesses of it all: His suffering, His rising, and the message to be preached among all nations (24:46-47). They were to wait in Jerusalem until they were **"endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49)**.

For us today: see Witnesses (Acts 1:8, Chapter 1).

In short: Luke records Jesus telling His disciples that their names were written in heaven, and calling them a little flock, children of light, and witnesses. He also named the children of the resurrection.

John

Written to: John records Jesus' words to Nicodemus, to the Jews who believed on Him, and to the eleven on the night before the cross, all before Pentecost.

For us today: the new birth Jesus spoke of became available on the day of Pentecost, and is described in the letters written after it.

Power to Become the Sons of God — Title

> **John 1:12** *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*
>
> **John 1:13** *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

"Power" here is *exousia*, the right or authority. John wrote his Gospel looking back, after Pentecost. Those who received Christ were given the right to become sons of God, born not of human descent or human effort, but of God. Jesus' words to Nicodemus, in the next entry, show how.

For us today: see Sons of God, Children of God (Romans 8:14-16, Chapter 1).

Born Again — Attribute

> **John 3:3** *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*
>
> **John 3:7** *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

Jesus told Nicodemus, a ruler of Israel, that no one could see the kingdom of God without being born again, literally "born from above." A man can be born physically only once. This is a second birth, a spiritual one, which God alone can give: **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6)**.

At the time, it was a promise. No one was yet born again in this sense; the gift of holy spirit had not been given (John 7:39). It became available on the day of Pentecost.

For us today: every believer in the Grace administration has been born again. Peter writes: **"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23)**. Paul calls it a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) and **"the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5)**. The new birth is the root of nearly every title in Chapter 1.

True Worshippers — Title

> **John 4:23** *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

Jesus told a Samaritan woman that the argument over where to worship, on her mountain or in Jerusalem, was coming to an end. The Father seeks worshippers who worship "in spirit and in truth." The hour was coming, and in Jesus' presence it had already begun.

For us today: the church is described as those **"which worship God in the spirit" (Philippians 3:3)**, made possible by the gift of holy spirit; see The Circumcision, Chapter 1.

Hath Everlasting Life; Passed from Death unto Life — Attribute

> **John 5:24** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

Jesus spoke of everlasting life as a present possession: the one who hears and believes "hath" it, and "is passed from death unto life." He also said that one "shall not come into condemnation."

For us today: see Passed from Death unto Life and Having Eternal Life (1 John 3:14; 5:11-13, Chapter 2), and No Condemnation (Romans 8:1, Chapter 1).

Taught of God — Attribute

> **John 6:45** *It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

Jesus quoted the prophets (Isaiah 54:13): "they shall be all taught of God." Those who heard and learned from the Father came to Him. No one comes to Christ by his own cleverness; God teaches him.

For us today: see Taught of God to Love One Another (1 Thessalonians 4:9, Chapter 1).

Disciples Indeed — Title

> **John 8:31** *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

A disciple is a learner, a pupil who follows a teacher. Jesus gave His own test of a true disciple: not merely beginning to believe, but continuing in His word.

For us today: after Pentecost, "disciples" becomes Luke's ordinary word in Acts for believers (Acts 6:7, Chapter 1). The test still holds: a believer learns by continuing in the word.

Sheep; My Sheep — Title

> **John 10:14** *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*
>
> **John 10:27** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*
>
> **John 10:28** *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

Sheep know their shepherd's voice and follow him. Jesus called His followers His sheep: He knows them, they hear Him and follow Him, and He gives them eternal life. He also said, **"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold" (John 10:16)**, who would be brought in so that there would be "one fold, and one shepherd." He sent His disciples out **"as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matthew 10:16)**.

For us today: Peter tells believers they **"are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25)**. See The Church of God; the Flock (Acts 20:28, Chapter 1).

My Servant — Title

> **John 12:26** *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

Jesus said that whoever serves Him must follow Him, that where He is His servant will be, and that the Father will honour him. A few days later He told the eleven, **"Henceforth I call you not servants… but I have called you friends" (John 15:15)**; see Friends, below. Service and friendship are not opposed: the one who serves Him is also told his master's plans.

For us today: see Servants to God (Romans 6:22) and The Lord's Freeman, Christ's Servant (1 Corinthians 7:22), both in Chapter 1.

Little Children — Title

> **John 13:33** *Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.*

On His last night with them, after Judas had gone out, Jesus called the eleven "little children" (*teknia*), the tender word of a father. After His resurrection, on the shore of Galilee, He called to them, **"Children, have ye any meat?" (John 21:5)**.

For us today: John uses the same word for believers in his first letter; see Little Children, Young Men, Fathers (1 John 2:12-14, Chapter 2).

Clean — Attribute

> **John 15:3** *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

The disciples had been made clean by the word Jesus had spoken to them. On the same night, at the foot washing, He told them, **"ye are clean, but not all" (John 13:10)**, because Judas was still among them.

For us today: see Sanctified (1 Corinthians 6:11, "ye are washed," Chapter 1).

Branches — Title

> **John 15:5** *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

A branch has no life of its own. Cut off from the vine, it withers. Joined to the vine, it bears fruit without straining, because the vine's life flows through it. Jesus said this to the eleven on the last night before the cross: their fruitfulness would depend entirely on abiding in Him.

For us today: the letters to the church describe this union even more closely: Christ in the believer (Colossians 1:27) and the believer **"in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17)**.

Friends — Title

> **John 15:14** *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*
>
> **John 15:15** *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

A servant does what he is told without knowing why. A friend is told his master's plans. Jesus called His disciples friends because He had shared with them everything the Father had shown Him. The title rests on shared knowledge and trust. It also carries a condition, in verse 14: "if ye do whatsoever I command you."

For us today: in the Grace administration, believers are given a closer relationship still: sons of God (Romans 8:14; Galatians 4:7, Chapter 1), with the Father's will made known to them (Ephesians 1:9).

Chosen and Ordained — Attribute

> **John 15:16** *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

The disciples had not chosen Jesus; He had chosen them, and appointed them to go and bear lasting fruit. He chose them **"out of the world" (John 15:19)**, and so the world would hate them.

For us today: see God's Elect (Romans 8:33) and Chosen to Salvation; Called to Glory (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14), both in Chapter 1.

Given to the Son by the Father — Attribute

> **John 17:6** *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

In His prayer on the last night, Jesus spoke of His disciples as men the Father had given Him out of the world. They had been the Father's, He gave them to the Son, and they had kept His word. Jesus says it again and again in that prayer (17:2, 9, 24).

Not of the World — Attribute

> **John 17:14** *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*
>
> **John 17:16** *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

The disciples lived in the world, but they did not belong to it, as Jesus did not. Because they had received His word, the world hated them.

For us today: see Citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3:20, Chapter 1) and Strangers and Pilgrims (1 Peter 2:11, Chapter 2).

Sent — Title

> **John 17:18** *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

The Father sent the Son into the world, and the Son sent His disciples into the world in the same way. After His resurrection He said it to them directly: **"as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21)**.

For us today: see Ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20, Chapter 1).

In short: in John's Gospel Jesus promised a new birth and the right to become sons of God, spoke of true worshippers, of everlasting life now, and of those taught of God; and He called His followers disciples, sheep, His servants, little children, clean, branches, friends, chosen, given Him by the Father, not of the world, and sent.

In short (Chapter 3): in the Gospel period Jesus called His disciples by many names: salt and light, His brethren, His sheep and little flock, disciples, branches, friends, witnesses and sent ones; and He promised a new birth to come. These were spoken before the cross, under the Law, and are held distinct from the Grace administration. But most of them point forward to what God gives every believer after Pentecost.

Conclusion: What God Calls You

Gather all these titles together, and a picture emerges. Almost every one rests on the same few things God has done:

- **He gave a new birth.** Believers are born again, sons and daughters of God, partakers of His nature, brethren of Christ and of one another.
- **He joined them to Christ.** They are in Him: crucified, raised and seated with Him, complete in Him, members of His body, one spirit with Him.
- **He dealt with their sin.** They are redeemed, forgiven, justified, made righteous, reconciled, uncondemned.
- **He set them apart.** They are saints, sanctified, the temple of God, His own possession.
- **He gave them a purpose.** They are ambassadors, ministers, labourers together with God, soldiers, lights in the world.
- **He gave them a hope.** They are heirs, joint-heirs with Christ, citizens of heaven, waiting for His Son.

Not one of these was earned. Every one is God's gift, which is why every one can be believed and lived. A believer does not try to become what God calls him. He learns what God has already made him, and walks in it.

In short: God calls the believer by what He has made him: born of God, joined to Christ, forgiven, set apart, sent, and heir to glory. Knowing these names is knowing who you are.

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Author: John Lobota

Research Assistant: Claude Cowork

papertiq@bellsouth.net

Sources Consulted

Scripture. The King James Version (1769 text) is the text used throughout. Every quotation was checked word for word against it.

Language references. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*; Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Word meanings and occurrences were confirmed with standard online reference tools (Blue Letter Bible, BibleHub).

Other works. E. W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible* (Appendices on the names and titles, and on the Pauline epistles) and *How to Enjoy the Bible* (on reading every passage with attention to whom it was written).

Outside works were used for their language and background facts. Every conclusion in this study was tested directly against the text of scripture itself.

Scripture Index

References are listed in the order of the books of the Bible. “Anchor” is the Anchor Passage; “Intro” with a letter is a section of the Introduction; “Ch” with a number and a book name is the chapter and the book section where the verse appears; “Concl.” is the Conclusion.

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