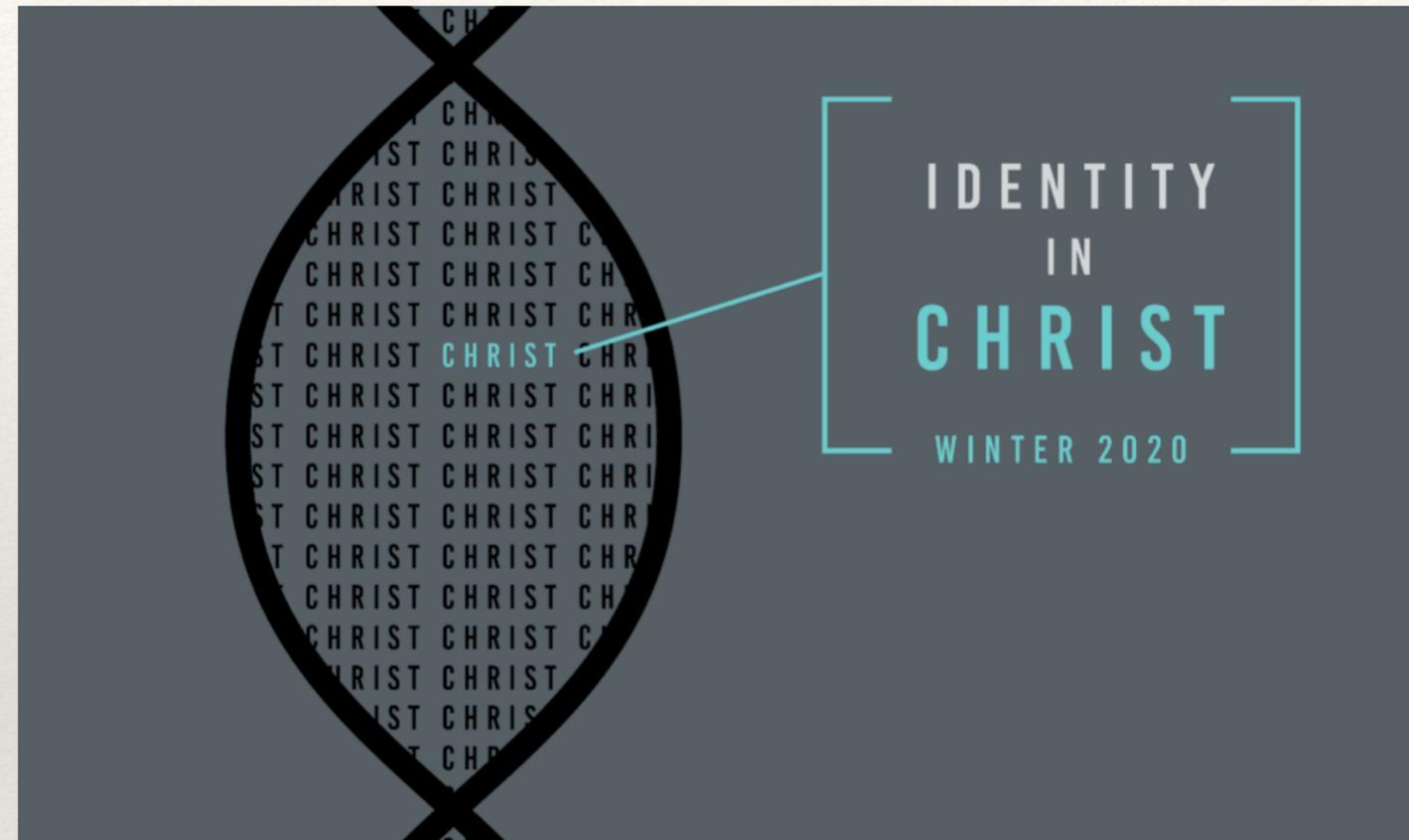


Identity in Christ



I Am Set Free

Introduction

- In Christ, we have been set free from bondage to sin.
- That doesn't mean we will never be tempted again or never sin again.
- It means we are set free from the curse of sin and declared holy before God (justification), and the Holy Spirit is working in us every day to make us more and more holy like Jesus (sanctification).
- When we set our minds on the Spirit and walk by the Spirit, we can live in righteousness, peace and joy.

In Christ, sin's reign
over us has been broken.

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- Romans 6:12-19
- We tend to think we're pretty good people. "Sure, no one's perfect, but I've never done anything that bad. Overall, I'm a pretty good person. At least, not as bad as some other people I know."
- But Scripture tells us we are all sinners by nature. There is no one righteous, not even one (Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Romans 3:10).

Sin's reign over us has been broken.

- Jeremiah wrote that “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick” (Jeremiah 17:9). We have a spiritual disease: sin (Romans 5:12).
- Through Jesus, we are set free from the yoke of slavery to sin (Romans 6:18; Galatians 5:1).
- We are made new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17) and given new hearts to replace the ones that were desperately sick (Ezekiel 36:26).

Sin's reign over us has been broken.

- Jesus has redeemed us and set us free from the bondage to sin, but sin still exists in the world. Individually, we have been made new creations, but the whole earth has not yet been made new.
- One day, in God's future kingdom, He will completely destroy sin forever.
- We are new creations living in a fallen world, still tempted by sin and evil.
- We have been justified (declared holy) before God, but we are still being sanctified (being made holy) throughout our lives.

Sin's reign over us has been broken.

- Justification was accomplished through Christ's work on the Cross.
- We are already healed of sin's penalty, but not yet fully healed of sin's presence.
- Christ took the penalty for our sins, and there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ (Romans 8:1).
- From the minute we accept Christ, we take on His righteousness, and we are declared holy before God, no matter what we have done or will do.

Sin's reign over us has been broken.

- Sanctification is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- Though we have been declared holy, we still struggle between good and evil (Romans 7:13–20).
- As believers in this fallen world, we constantly live in the tension between the good we want to do and the evil all around us.
- As we walk with the Holy Spirit, He grows His fruit in us (Galatians 5:22–25) and makes us more and more like Jesus every day (Romans 8:29).

*We are still in a battle with sin every day,
but we can have the victory.*

We can have the victory

- We are still in a battle with sin every day, but we can have the victory.
- Ephesians 6:10-18
- Christ conquered sin and death on the Cross.
- Until the future kingdom, when evil will be destroyed and everything will be made new, we still live in a spiritual battle with sin every day.
- The Bible tells us that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against “the spiritual forces of evil” (Ephesians 6:12).

We can have the victory

- The good news is that because Christ conquered sin on the Cross and because of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- We can now wage war on sin, and we can be victorious (Romans 7:21–25).
- By His divine power, God has given us everything we need to live a godly life (2 Peter 1:3).
- He has given us the weapons of righteousness (Romans 6:13; 2 Corinthians 6:7).

We can have the victory

- First step one in our battle is understanding that it is a battle.
- Many of us see brokenness and sin in the world around us, and in our own lives, but we don't realize that those problems are part of a spiritual battle.
- Priscilla Shirer, *The Armor of God*: "The effects of the war going on in the unseen world reveal themselves in our strained and damaged relationships, emotional instability, mental fatigue, physical exhaustion and many other areas of life. Many of us feel pinned down by anger, unforgiveness, pride, comparisons, insecurity, discord, fear . . . and the list goes on."

In Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can have victory over sin.

We can have the victory

- In Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can have victory over sin..
- Romans 8:1-13
- God has given us the victory over sin in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57).
- We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).
- In all things, we are more than conquerors through Jesus (Romans 8:37).
- We fight sin by setting our minds on the Spirit instead of the flesh and by living according to the Spirit (Romans 8:5).

We can have the victory

- Knowing God's Word: The Bible is our weapon against sin (Hebrews 4:12).
- Paul gives us a detailed breakdown of the armor of God, telling us how we can stand firm against the devil and even fight back (Ephesians 6:14–17).
- Jesus used Scripture in the wilderness, we can fight temptation with the Word of God (Matthew 4:1–11).
- For every temptation of the devil, Jesus answered with a passage of Scripture.

We can have the victory

- Obeying God's Law: Paul tells us that when we obey God's law, we become "slaves to righteousness" rather than slaves to sin (Romans 6:16).
- We are instructed to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).
- When we supplement our faith with virtue, we will escape corruption from the sin that is in the world (2 Peter 1:3–11).

We can have the victory

- Walking by Faith: The Old Testament tells stories of heroes who through faith “conquered kingdoms, enforced justice . . .” (Hebrews 11:32–40).
- John tells us that whoever is born of God has victory over the world through faith (1 John 5:4).
- Psalms tells us that when we trust in God’s love, it will cleanse us from sin and protect us from evil (Psalms 17:7; 52:8; 61:7).
- Jesus said even faith as small as a mustard seed could move mountains (Matthew 17:20–21).

We can have the victory

- Getting Rid of Temptation: Peter tells us to rid ourselves of all sources of sin in our lives, to “put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy” (1 Peter 2:1).
- We are to abstain from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
- We are to hate what is evil but cling to what is good (Romans 12:9).
- Put up boundaries, create accountability, stay away from people, places and activities that tempt you to sin.

We can have the victory

- Setting Our Minds on the Spirit: The battle with sin starts in our minds.
- Jesus talks about how we can commit murder and adultery in our minds if we're not careful (Matthew 5:21–30).
- Paul encourages us to set our minds on the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5; Colossians 3:2) and to take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).
- Paul promises that if we keep our minds focused on holy things, we will have peace (Philippians 4:8–9).

We can have the victory

- Praying: At the end of the passage on the armor of God, Paul tells us to “pray at all times in the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:18).
- He reminds Christians to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- Finally, sanctification is a process. It is not something that happens overnight.
- God promises that the more we fight to crucify the desires of the flesh (Romans 8:29) and walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:24), the more we will become like Christ.

Iran, Imams, and the Shiite religion



Suni	Shi'ite
80% of population	Less than 15% of population
Elect successor	Successor was Ali, who was related to Muhammed
Emphasize written traditions (Sunnah, Hadith)	Emphasize authority of the Imam
Separation of civil and religious authorities	Religious authorities control political power

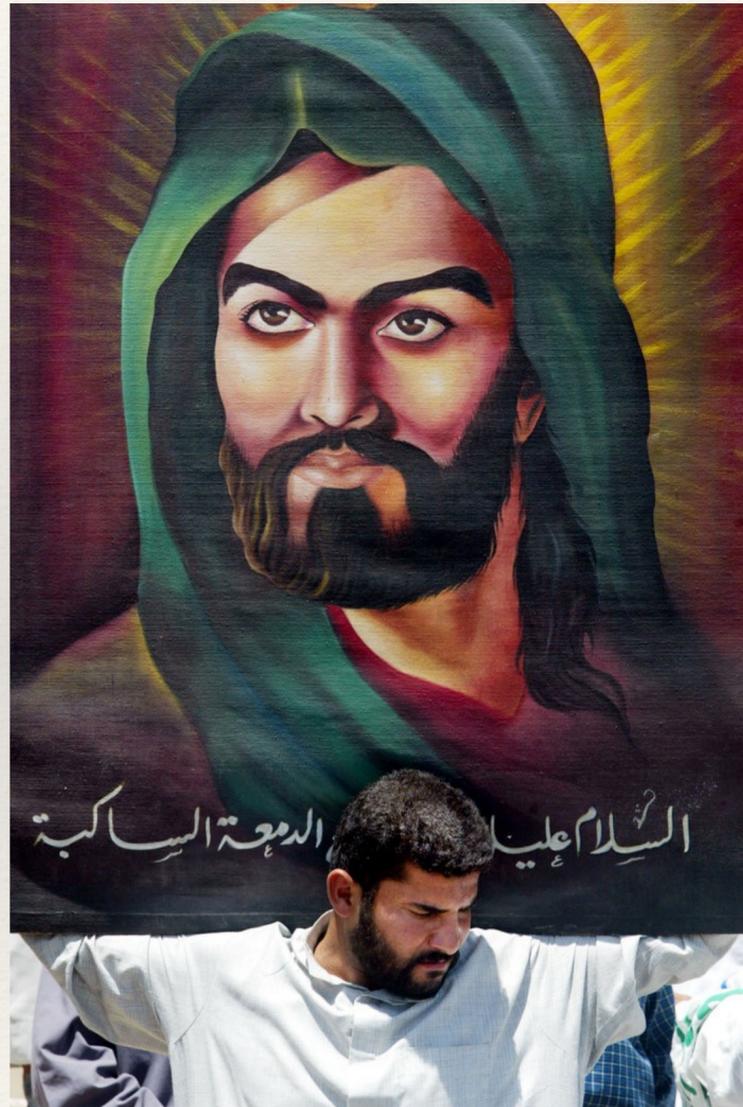
History of the Split

- There was a dispute among Muslims over the question of succession?
- Most of Muhammad's followers wanted the community of Muslims to determine who would succeed him. A smaller group thought Ali (married to Muhammad's daughter) should be the next leader.
- The Sunnis prevailed and chose a successor to be the first caliph. Eventually, Ali was chosen as the fourth caliph, but not before violent conflict broke out.
- Two of the earliest caliphs were murdered. War erupted when Ali became caliph, and he too was killed in fighting in A.D. 661 near the town of Kufa (Iraq).

History of the Split

- War split the community of Muslims into two branches that would never reunite.
- The war continued with Hussein (Ali's son) leading the Shiites. His family and companions fought against a very large Arab army of the caliph and were all massacred.
- Hussein was decapitated and his head carried in tribute.
- The symbolism of Hussein's death holds much spiritual power for Shiites.

Hussein and Ashura



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12th Imam

- In the 10th century, the 12th Shiite Imam went into hiding. They believe the Mahdi will come back at the end of time when there is a global conflict.
- Those who believe in the 12th Imam are known as Twelver Shiites. They are the majority of the Shiites in the world today.



Resources

