

The Christing
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Mar 9, 2020

2 Cor 1:21

(NA 28th ed.)

(NKJV)

ὁ δὲ βεβαιῶν	Now He who establishes
ἡμᾶς σὺν ὑμῖν	us with you
εἰς Χριστὸν	in Christ
καὶ χρίσας ἡμᾶς	and has anointed us
θεός	<i>is</i> God

The first line features a participle with the definite article, thus “he who establishes.” Most modern translations make the sense clearer by moving God from the last word to the front, as for example ESV, “And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us.” Note that NKJV put “is” in italics since there is no corresponding Greek word for it. Simple Greek, don’t you think? If only every verse were this easy!

I take my Greek and Hebrew Bibles with me everywhere I go. I used to carry small printed texts, with a magnifying glass. They fit in my cargo pants pockets. I finally bought electronic versions and today they are on my phone at all times, along with various English translations and the Septuagint, and lexicons. So whenever I am at church or small group, I read in the original languages. (I sold my printed ones on eBay.)

Often the text arrests my attention and I see in it things that go beyond what you can see with only an English translation. Sometimes I take special note so that later I can write a devotional. Such is the case today. Because right here before your eyes is something in Greek that is utterly obscured in all English translations—and yet is irresistibly significant.

Okay, maybe not “utterly obscured”—if the layman in the pew can remember the esoteric fact that “Christ” means “Anointed.” (And so does “Messiah”). But even if readers remember this, it still isn’t in their faces that the word for “anointed” in our verse comes from the same root word as “Christ.” I know, I know, “Christ” is a noun, and “anointed” is a verb. But they both come from *xriō* and are related. And this has amazing theological implications.

The verse effectively reads like this, “Now it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has christed us.” In a single verse Jesus is called Christ, and Christians are said to be “christed.” We are anointed. Jesus is *the* Christ par excellence, the original, the fountainhead of all anointings. But we also are mini-christs who share with him the anointing with the same Spirit. We image him in that we also are christs. We are united with his Christhood and have become anointed too. How many ways can I say it? We are called to liken him by also living as christs, doing anointed work in the name of the Christ but also as christs ourselves, who are christed with the Spirit of the Christ. This was accomplished by the God who establishes us.

Let me give you that verse again, along with what follows. “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has christed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” Since we are also anointed, we can draw upon the same Spirit as we endeavor to live out the gospel. Our walk is supernatural. We live with one foot in this present world, and one foot in the world to come. Thus we are able to transcend in some

measure the temptations of this world and live above them—as christians who have been established by God in the Christ.

Despite the over-the-top good news of our own christening, there is also a big problem. It is that foot that stands in this present world. We are caught between two eons, two worlds, two spiritual conditions. And unlike Jesus, in our souls the Spirit has competition. We identify with this fallen world and all its temptations. But we also identify with Christ and the christening that strives for what is yet to come. So there is tension in us and in how we live our lives.

We sin, but we repent. We do the wrong things, but we also do the right thing. And as life progresses, the good gradually and painfully displaces the bad. This is called “eschatological tension” and is the experience of every Christian.

But not forever. Someday Jesus will return and usher us in to the final consummate christening. It is to that happy state that we press on. Amen, Come Lord Christ!