

Heaven's Stamp of Approval

Romans 16:10a

Apelles is a man *“approved in Christ.”* This is an interesting phrase that sets Apelles apart from others in chapter 16. It's not that the others were *not* approved by God, but something occurred in Apelles' life that made his approval evident. What does it mean to be “approved” by God? The word itself is used to convey a sense of genuineness or authenticity. Apelles is the real deal. He is the real McCoy. He is “approved” by heaven.

I. Heaven's stamp of approval is received *“in Christ.”*

This is the only way you will ever receive the stamp of approval by your Maker.

There is an old spiritual entitled *“Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”*

To be “in Christ” means you were there throughout His life, death and resurrection.

(A). To be “in Christ” means you are represented by Him . . .

He is both your advocate and your activist. His mission is to get you approved.

His life was sinless, His thoughts were selfless, His death was sacrificial. In essence His life was a substitution for your life. Everything that is good about Him becomes good for you. Every blessing He earned and deserved from God becomes yours. You are clothed in Him. He is your covering and protection.

Peter called the Lord, *“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God”* (Acts 2:22).

The rejection of God deserved by you is poured out upon the Son He loved.

(B). To be “in Christ” means you are resting by faith in Him. . .

Sometimes we lose perspective. Our approval in heaven is not based upon our faith, it is based upon Christ. But our assurance and peace of God's approval comes by faith in Him. *“Therefore since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God”* (Romans 5:1). Faith in Christ brings peace with God.

The death and resurrection of Christ ends God's enmity with us. Faith in Christ ends our enmity with God. Do you want the war to end? Surrender to Christ.

II. Heaven's stamp of approval is revealed by conflict.

‘Approved’ is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint) in **Zechariah 11:13** regarding 30 pieces of silver, *“Cast them into the furnace and I will see if it is good (approved) metal.”* The Greek word “approved” is the word *“dokimos.”* Reprobate is the word that is the opposite of “approved.” Reprobate comes from Latin and means *“to disapprove.”* Probate in English means *“to prove.”* The Bible uses the term reprobate at least 10 times (8 in the New Testament) and it translates the Greek word *“adokimos”* (Romans 1:28) which means *“to not stand the test.”* This word was used in the market place for the results of the testing of precious metals. It is in the fires of affliction and turmoil that the authenticity of one's Christianity is revealed. What happens to you when your life begins to heat up? What comes out of you when you are squeezed by affliction? True grace is seen in the Spirit's fruit.

“Examine . . . prove . . . and know . . . lest ye be reprobates” (II Cor. 13:5).

“This reveals Christ in His people; He takes possession of their hearts, his graces are implanted, His image is instamped, his Spirit is put within them” **Dr. John Gill.**

Every difficult circumstance in your life is simply an opportunity for Christ to shine.