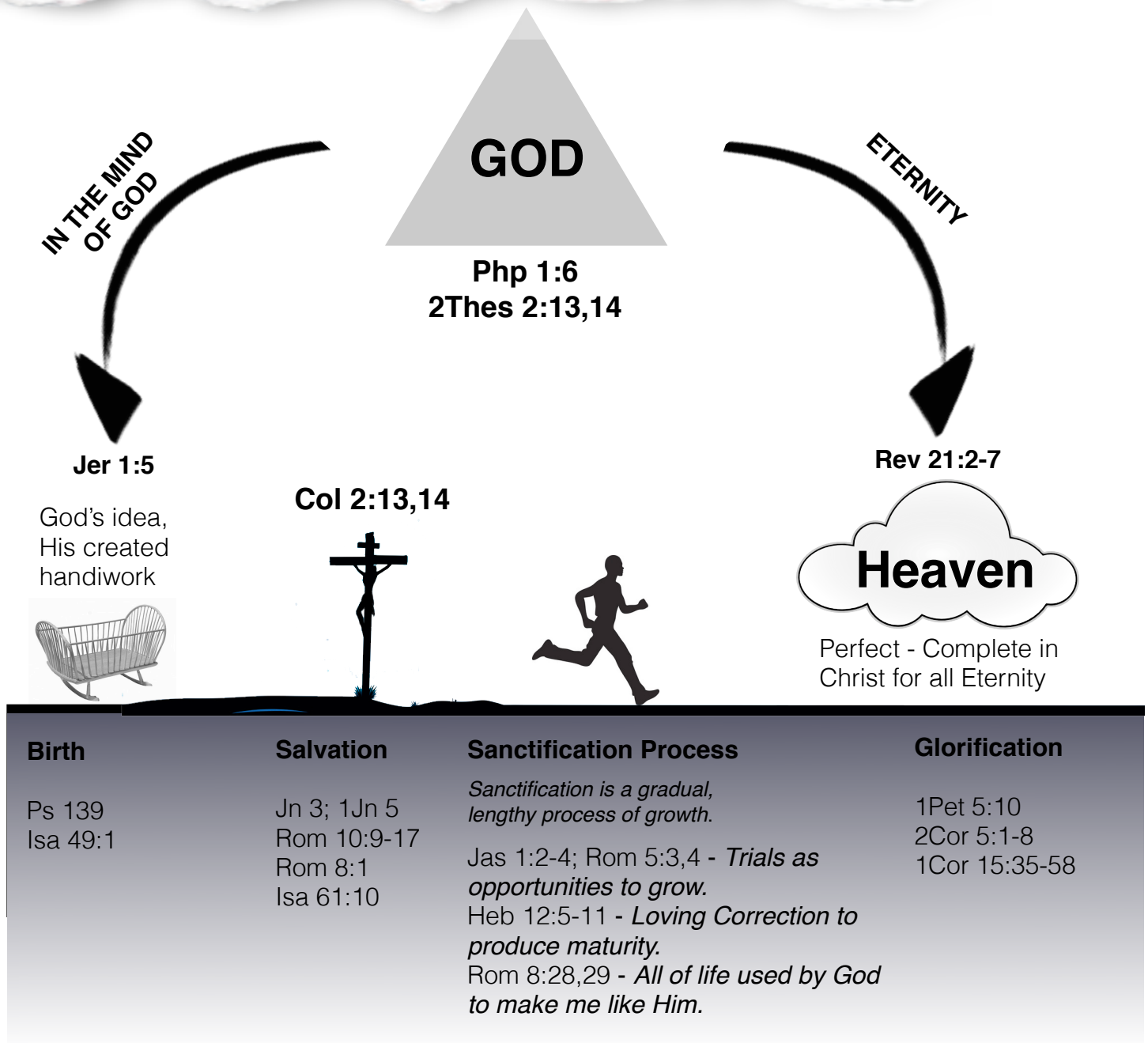
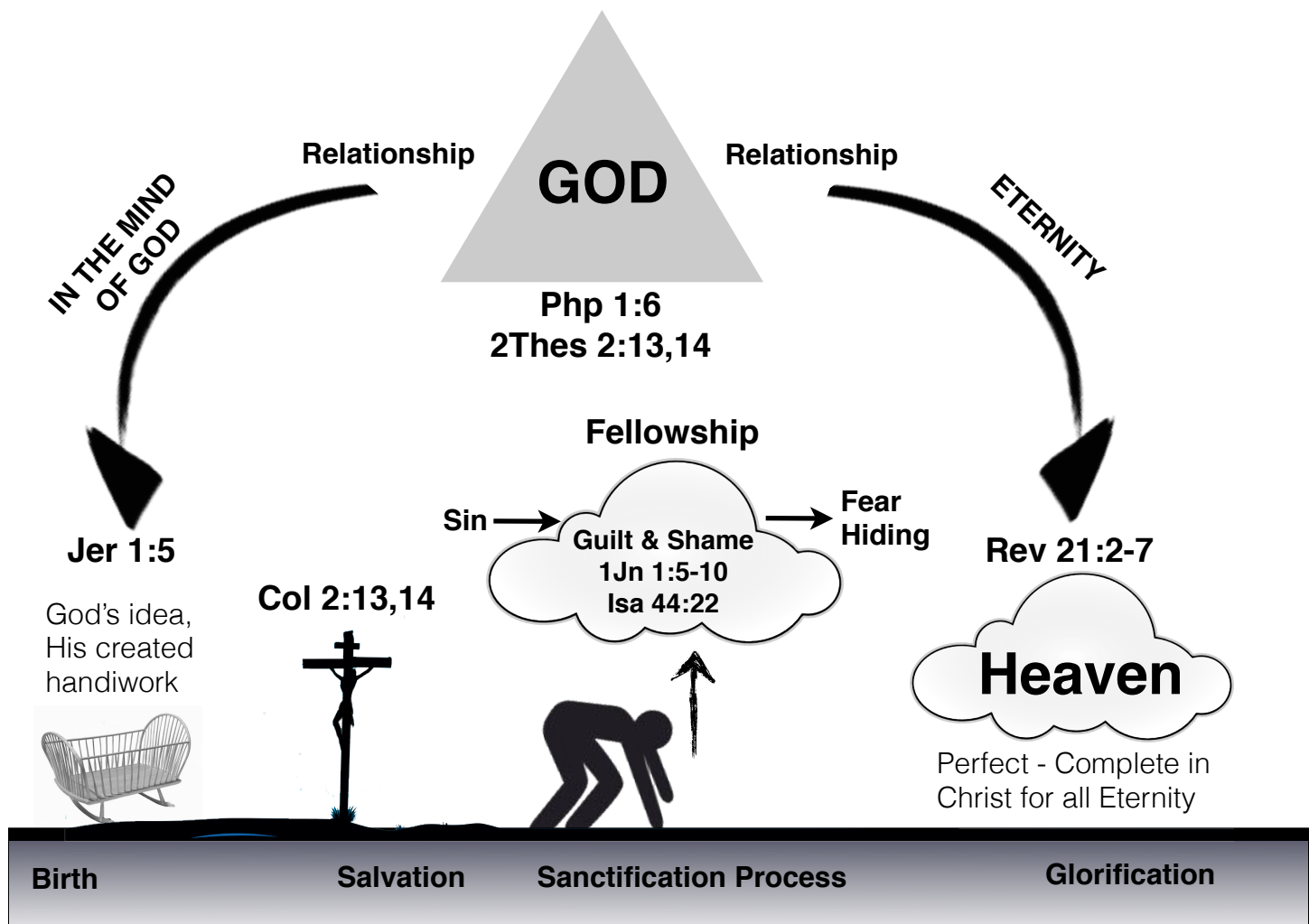


Your Life in Christ

By Sherry Allchin, M.A.



God has made a commitment to each of us, His children, to **complete** what He has begun in us. His plan for us began before the foundation of the earth when we existed only in His mind. It continued as He formed us when we were still in our mother's womb, and it continued as He brought us to the cross and washed our sins away with His own precious blood and clothed us with His robes of righteousness. He continues to do His work in our lives each day that we live on earth as He uses trials, discipline, and "all things" to make us grow and mature and become more and more like our heavenly Father and our brother Jesus Christ. Jesus is His *only* begotten son (sinless Son of God, born of a virgin), but we are His adopted children, placed into His royal family. We are made joint heirs with Jesus Christ and are the beloved children of God. One day soon, God will fulfill the promise made in Philippians 1:6. We will be glorified, given a new resurrection body in which we will reside, perfectly mature, to live for all eternity with our heavenly Father. What a joy that will be when our purpose for creation is finally completed – to relate to God perfectly, worshipping and enjoying Him forever.



The cloud of guilt and shame separates us from God. It cannot change our salvation – nothing can separate us from the love of God nor pluck us from His hand. But it can affect our fellowship with Him. 1Jn was written to believers, and believers do sin. Sin, until confessed and forgiven, makes us want to run and hide from God just as Adam and Eve did in the Garden. But just as God had come to fellowship with them every day since their creation, He also came the day they sinned. As He brought them from their hiding place, He surely reminded them that they must die for their sin. They must have been terribly afraid! But He did not kill them. Instead, He killed an innocent animal and clothed them with the skins of that animal. That was the first “substitute” death, and there in the Garden, God redeemed His first created couple. Yes, they still had the consequences of their disobedience (leaving the Garden, thorns, sweat, pain in childbirth), but the punishment (death) was paid by a substitute, foreshadowing the Messiah that would redeem the world and save all who would receive His forgiveness of sin. All through the Old Testament, lambs and other animals were sacrificed, waiting for The Lamb of God to pay the penalty for sin once and for all. When Jesus died on the Cross, all our sin was nailed to Him and the Father turned His back on that sin as Jesus hung and died. God then resurrected Jesus Christ to confirm to all that the debt of sin had been paid in full!

When we sin, God isn't surprised any more than He was with Adam and Eve's sin. We, too, hide behind fig leaves trying to look presentable to God. But nothing we can do will “fix” our sin problem. Only He can “fix” it through forgiveness. When we sin, He doesn't see us any differently than He currently sees us – sinners saved by grace, in a process of sanctification, often blundering along with sinful motives, thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Still, He is committed to perfect us.

Our position in Christ (relationship) never changes, but remains secure. It is not God who sees us differently, but we who see God differently. Just as Adam and Eve hid because they no longer saw Him as their Creator and friend but rather as their judge, when we sin, we see Him through our cloud of guilt and shame and become afraid. 1Jn 1:5-10 says that if we confess our sins, He will forgive and cleanse us and restore the fellowship. The cloud is removed! Then we can once again fellowship with God in peace and joy!