

1. **Introduction:** More on “Union with Christ.”
2. **Definition of Union with Christ:** “Believers are spiritually joined with Christ in a manner such that they are made spiritually one with Him. Christ and the believer remain distinct persons but no longer separated spiritually.”
3. **Union - An Effect of Faith:** **Charles Hodge (Systematic Theology)** says, “The first effect of faith, according to Scriptures, is union with Christ” (p.104).
4. **Benefits of Union with Christ:** All benefits of salvation flow from Union with Christ. The gospel calls us to life “in Christ.” All, who in faith believe, have their sins imputed to Christ and Christ’s righteousness imputed to them.
 - In this incredible exchange, spiritually dead individuals are given new life and begin a process of transformation that will end in glorification. Imputed righteousness from Christ is the only possible righteousness available to Adam’s fallen race.
5. **Receiving the Redemption Earned for Us by Christ:** Christ’s salvation work was accomplished for and is effective for all the people given to Him by the Father before the creation of the universe.
 - Salvation purchased by Christ is sufficient for all who believe. There is no shortage of saving grace. People who believe receive salvation one individual at a time.
 - **WSC Q. 29:** “*How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*”
ANS: “*We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by His Holy Spirit.*”
 - **WSC Q. 30:** “*How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*”
 - **ANS:** “*The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.*”
 - From an individual’s subjective perspective, the first step in salvation is the Holy Spirit works faith in them (regeneration), making them spiritually alive to God, thus spiritually uniting them to Christ. In the Bible “spiritual” refers to events involving the Holy Spirit.
 - From the instant the Holy Spirit works faith in us to the end of our mortal life and then in glory “Union with Christ” is forever manifest in us .
 - No one can of themselves generate saving faith. Faith is a gift from our loving Father, made possible by the work of the Son, our Mediator, and applied (that is, worked in us) by the Holy Spirit.
6. **Effectual Calling:** The Holy Spirit works faith in individuals uniting them to Christ and all the benefits flowing from the salvation Jesus vicariously earned for them.
 - **WSC Q. 31:** “*What is effectual calling?*” **ANS:** “*Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.*”

- By faith we believe the gospel and receive the benefits prepared for those who turn to Christ. ***“He (God) is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption”*** (1 Cor. 1:30).
 - All who believe receive salvation in the same way. The Holy Spirit works faith in them thereby uniting them with Christ from whom all benefits of salvation are received.
 - **WSC Q. 32:** *“What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?”*
ANS: *“They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.”*
 - **Calvin Quote:** *“We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ (Acts 4:12). We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else.”* (John Calvin, ICR 2.16.19)
7. **In What Sense Can A Redeemed Person Become One with Christ:** The source of Union with Christ is the Father. The foundation for union is Christ’s completed redemptive work.
- The purpose of this union is to spiritually unite the believer to Christ such that they receive all the benefits vicariously earned for them in the life and death of Jesus..
 - The Holy Spirit is the living bond binding believers to Christ. The Holy Spirit not only works faith in us, thereby uniting us to Christ, He immediately indwells and continues to indwell us, binding us in a dynamic, ongoing Union with Christ.
 - Christ, to whom we are united, is one Person having both a divine and a human nature.
 - His divine nature is of the same essence and has the same attributes as God the Father and the Holy Spirit. His human nature, derived through His mother, Mary, is fully human, like unto our own in every respect, except without sin.
 - Though God’s creatures, made in His image to be compatible with Him, our essence and attributes differ from His. God is Spirit, we are flesh and spirit. God is infinite with godly attributes. We are finite creatures with creaturely attributes. He is Creator.
 - How can a finite fleshly creature become one with the infinite spirit who is the second Person of the Trinity?
 - The Trinity, the incarnation, and Union with Christ are all divine mysteries. Their secrets belong to God (Dt. 29:29) but what has been revealed is ours to understand.
 - We are permitted to reason from that which is revealed, recognizing we are not trying to solve a puzzle, but to understand as fully as possible that which has been revealed.
 - By the incarnation, God made it possible for humans to become spiritually one with Christ. In the incarnation the Second Person of the Trinity took to Himself a human nature, becoming the God-Man having both a divine nature and a human nature.
8. **How Can a Believer be United to Christ:** Thinking about this question requires an understanding of the distinction between “a nature” and “a person.”
9. **God, Angels, and Humans:** God is an uncreated infinite spiritual Being consisting of 3 Divine Persons sharing one divine nature.

10. **Angels**: An angel is a created finite spiritual being, one person with one spiritual nature.
11. **Humans**: A human is one created finite physical/spirit person having one human nature.
12. **Incarnate Son (The God-Man)**: The incarnate second Person of the Trinity is one “God-Man,” one person with two distinct natures, fully God and fully man.
- A person (God, human, or angel) has one or more “natures.” “A nature” is not “a person.” The incarnate Son is one Person with both a divine and a human nature.
 - The Trinitarian God is one being with one nature shared by 3 Divine Persons. The nature determines attributes for all 3 Persons who thus have the same attributes. Each Person is fully and truly God.
13. **Defining a Nature**: Everything that exists (living or inanimate) has qualities (attributes) that taken together define what it is. Some attributes are essential, some nonessential.
- The distinction is that if changing a quality causes a “thing” to become something else, that quality is an “essential quality.”
 - In general, the “nature” of anything that exists is defined as the complete set of its essential qualities (that which makes it what it is.) Changing even one essential quality changes a thing’s nature.
 - To help understand what this means, consider a specific inanimate object, say a pipe.
 - **Example**: Think of a 2-inch diameter iron pipe 3-feet long, painted white. The pipe’s essential qualities are those things that can’t be changed without changing it from an iron pipe to something else.
 - The material iron, length, and hollowness are essential qualities of an iron pipe. Color, weight, and dimensions are nonessential qualities. If we flatten the pipe eliminating the essential quality of hollowness, we change the iron pipe into an iron bar.
 - If a pipe’s essential quality of length is reduced to say 1/16th inch, it becomes a washer.
14. **Human Nature**: Human nature: Human nature is the complete set of essential human attributes. Human nature includes body, mind, will, and emotions. A human person has a human nature, but a human nature is not a person.
- As originally created, Adam and Eve’s human nature was holy and obedient. When they sinned their essential quality of holiness was lost. Their nature changed from “holy” to “unholy” with a corresponding change from holy thoughts and behavior to unholy.
 - The change in their nature led to many problems but chief among them is that they became spiritually disconnected from God, disobedient and dominated by sin.
15. **Persons**: Whether divine, angelic, or human, a person consists of one or more “natures” plus an independent source of identity, “I.”
- The source of “I” can be thought of as something like a “mission control center.” A person’s “I” directs the use of the attributes of their nature or natures.
 - A human person is thus a human nature plus an independent source of their “I.”
 - The “I” is the subject that lives, thinks, wills, and acts though the nature or natures. The “I” is the owner, possessor, and master of the nature.

- The “I” can be thought of as a “mission control center.” A person’s “I” directs the use of the attributes of the person’s nature or natures.
16. **Human Person**: A human person is a human nature plus an independent source of “I” or identity that controls and uses the attributes of their nature. Another way to say this is that a human consists of a material body in union with an immaterial soul.
17. **The Incarnate Son**: One Person with two distinct natures. One nature is fully divine, the other fully human. His two natures do not interact nor interfere with one another.
- Both natures controlled by His divine “I.” Christ’s one Person, two natures is a vital truth in the understanding the union of a human person with Christ.
18. **Next**: Explore how union is possible between a human person and Christ, the God-Man.