

1. **Introduction:** From the perspective of a sinner who receives salvation, the process is very simple, so simple a child can hear and understand the gospel, believe and be saved.
 - But behind that simplicity is a complex, costly process ordained in eternity and implemented in “time” by God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.
 - We know Christ’s saving work is effective for all people given to Him by the Father.
 - The benefits of salvation are applied to individuals by the Holy Spirit uniting the believer with Christ.
 - The Holy Spirit applies salvation earned for us by Jesus through the gift of new spiritual life and working faith in us which unites a believer to Christ in effectual calling. That union with Christ never ends. It is effective throughout mortal life and the eternal life to come.
 - Effectual calling is the work of God’s Spirit, in which He gives new spiritual life, convinces us of our sin and misery, enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renews our wills. He persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ.
 - Those effectually called receive the benefits of justification, adoption, and sanctification, plus any benefit either accompanying or flowing from them.
 - The one God-man Person is both fully man and fully God. To achieve a believer’s Union with Christ, the Holy Spirit establishes a spiritual bond between the believer’s human nature and the human nature of Christ.
2. **NT Metaphors on Union with Christ:** Apostles Paul, John, and Peter all emphasize “Union with Christ.”
 - In Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul repeatedly uses “in Christ,” “in Him,” and once uses “in the Beloved” as he refers to benefits of being united to Christ.
 - He does likewise in Romans 6:5; 8:1 and 2 Corinthians. 5:17. **Ephesians 1:4: “*He (God) chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*”**
 - In these passages, Paul says that “**in Christ**” believers are chosen, called, regenerated, justified, sanctified, redeemed, assured of the resurrection, and given every spiritual blessing – an impressive list of benefits. Paul uses the simple prepositional phrase “in Christ” or its equivalents more than 160 times.
 - A believer’s Union with Christ is a “spiritual union.” “Spiritual,” as used in Scripture, almost always refers to the involvement of the Holy Spirit. In this case, the Holy Spirit is the bond between believer and Christ.
 - All believers are “in Christ” and through Christ all believers are connected spiritually to one another. The spiritual bond is through the Holy Spirit.

- The indwelling Holy Spirit establishes and mediates a spiritual “bond” between each believer and Christ. The point of “connection” is through the believer’s soul (the immaterial part of a human which survives mortal death).
 - Union with Christ has many facets. To fully describe the union, New Testament authors use a variety of figures of speech, especially metaphors, to supplement and clarify direct description.
 - Figures of speech are not literal descriptions but add richness to descriptions and thereby enable increased understanding.
3. **Figures of Speech:** A “figure of speech” is a word or phrase used to convey a meaning separate from its literal meaning. There are many types of figures-of-speech. A few examples are hyperbole, personification, oxymoron, alliteration, metaphor, and simile.
- “**Alliteration**” refers to repeating consonant sounds right next to each other, which creates a memorable or melodic effect - “*She sells seashells by the seashore.*”
 - “**Hyperbole**” uses exaggeration to make a dramatic effect. Examples: (1.) “*I’ve told you a thousand times not to do that.*” (2.) “*He’s older than dirt!*”
4. **Metaphors and Similes:** Metaphors and similes are figures of speech using a quality possessed by one thing to give descriptive insight into a different thing.
- Metaphors are often used to describe important aspects of a thing by comparing it with something else if direct description is difficult.
 - Metaphors directly compare things that, though fundamentally different, share some properties. For example, two things might have high value measured different ways. A manuscript’s literary value might be compared to a diamond’s monetary value.
 - “This manuscript is worth as much as a perfect diamond!”
 - A metaphor uses aspects known to be true of the one thing to reveal something about a second thing. Some other examples: (1.) “Time is money!” (2.) “He has a heart of stone!” (2.) “The world is a stage!”
 - These metaphors convey truth about the value of a specific manuscript and the value of time. They show that some hearts are hard and difficult to penetrate, and that in some ways the actions of people in the world are like actors on a stage.
 - A metaphor is not to be interpreted literally. A metaphor’s truth is limited. It compares similarities, ignoring differences.
 - Similes are related to metaphors. Similes work grammatically by using “like” or “as” to compare different things that are in one or more ways similar. Some attributes of the two things apply to both things.
 - For example, “I’m as happy as a pig in a mud puddle.” I am not a pig and don’t like mud puddles, but happiness can rightfully apply both to a pig and a person.
 - “The world is a stage” is a metaphor, but “the world is like a stage” is a simile. Imagination (and a sense of humor) help in understanding metaphors/similes.

- Metaphorical thought and language are essential. It is the only way to ***bring before a person's mind things not directly available to the senses***. Things not available to our senses cover a lot of territory. Much of what everyone understands is metaphorical.
 - Having some knowledge about a new thing “B,” but “B” is not available for evaluation by our senses, we can express what we know about “B” by relating it to a known “A” using a metaphor or simile. Red like an apple. Blue as the sky. Valuable like time.
 - The imagination enabling us to do this is a wonderful gift from God. As far as we know, of all creatures, imagination is possessed only by people (and possibly angels). Imagination enables us to think about God even though, as Paul says, God is One ***“whom no one has ever seen or can see”*** (1 Tim. 6:16b).
 - God is invisible Spirit and cannot be evaluated through our senses. God’s self-revelation is the basis for thought about Him. Biblical revelation is filled with metaphors, (e.g., the right arm of God). We experience God through the God-given ability to bring before our mind that which we cannot see, hear, smell, taste, or touch.
 - To fully experience Christian life, imagination is necessary. Realities (like angels) cannot be seen, but Scripture insists they are nonetheless real. The Holy Spirit enables understanding via the remarkable gift of imagination.
5. **A Key Metaphor from Scripture:** Light is a physical reality often used in metaphors. It is used in Scripture in familiar metaphors concerning God.
- God is not physical but pure spirit, invisible to human senses, known to us only through His revelation. “Metaphors based on light” provide valuable insights.
6. **OT Examples of Light as a Metaphor:** Example: Ps 27:1: ***“The Lord is my light and my salvation.”*** Ps 36:9b: ***“In your light do we see light.”***
- Light is both visible and makes other things visible. God’s self-revelation is described as providing light. Metaphorically, light indicates purity, wisdom, and moral guidance.
 - Light is associated with the historical Jesus in the same way as it was with God the Father. Example: Isaiah wrote concerning God’s plan for Messiah in (Is. 49:6), ***“I will make you as a light for the nations ...”***
7. **NT Examples of Light as a Metaphor:** Jesus’ light both reveals the world’s darkness and is victorious over it. Example: (Jn 1:4-5) ***“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”***
- Followers of Christ are said to ***be “sons of light”*** (Jn 12:36), or ***“the light of the world”*** (Mt 5:14). Jesus refers to John the Baptist as a ***“burning and shining light”*** (Jn 5:35).
 - John says, ***“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”*** (1Jn 1:5). Metaphorically, this means God is completely holy, totally opposed to all that is sinful and false.

- The Bible associates a strong ethical meaning with the presence of light. Again, we note that one fascinating attribute of light is it is both visible and makes other things visible. By Christ's "light" we see the tragedy of sin. By His light we see the way to salvation.
8. **The Modern Scientific View of Light Adds to Its Value as a Metaphor:** The scientific perspective on light enriches its use as a metaphor in describing God. The properties of light have been rigorously investigated.
- The speed of light in vacuum defines a limiting velocity for all physical things. Nothing physical can travel faster.
 - The character of light is surprising. It exists both as a moving stream of particles (photons) and as waves. As it is emitted from a source or received by a detector, light behaves as particles (photons). Particles are like tiny lumps of something.
 - As light travels from a source to a detector, it behaves as a wave. Waves are composed of moving crests and troughs, spatially spread out like waves in the sea.
 - From the right kind of source, light waves spread out omnidirectionally (the same in every direction).
 - When a light wave arrives at a detector, the particle nature takes over. Whatever portion of a light wave impinges on a detector, the received photons carry the same information.
9. **Significance:** Think about it. This resembles the spiritual truth of our omnipresent God who is nonetheless fully present with each individual believer.
- God is light is a powerful metaphor.