

# Soteriology 101

## Week 12 – Union with Christ and Glorification



**Union with Christ:** Believers are spiritually **united** to Christ through faith, encompassing all aspects of salvation, and share in the **benefits** of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. (Colossians 3:3-4)

*"Union with Christ is really the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation." – John Murray*

### Union with Christ means:

1. We have been **crucified** with Him. (Galatians 2:20)
2. We have **died** with Him. (Romans 6:8)
3. We have been **buried** with Him. (Romans 6:4)
4. We have been **raised** with Him. (Ephesians 2:5-6a)
5. We have been **enthroned** in heaven with Him. (Ephesians 2:6b, 1:3)

Christ is in believers: Romans 8:10, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Colossians 1:27, 1 John 4:13

### Union with Christ and Soteriology

*"Union with Christ is the matrix out of which all other soteriological doctrines flow... It is the unifying principle of all soteriology, spanning from eternity past to eternity future." – MacArthur and Mayhue*

1. The Father's **election** is rooted in Christ. (Ephesians 1:4)
2. God reckoned the elect to be united with Christ through His accomplishment of **redemption**. (Ephesians 1:7, Galatians 3:27)
3. Believers are **born again** unto saving faith in union with Christ. (Ephesians 2:5, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 8:1, Galatians 3:26)
4. Union with Christ is the source of believers' progressive **sanctification** and **perseverance**. (Ephesians 4:15, John 10:27-28)
5. Believers will be **raised** from the **dead** on the basis of their union with Christ. (1 Cor. 15:20-22, Rom. 6:4-11)

### Scriptural metaphors of the believer's union with Christ

1. **Building** and foundation. (Ephesians 2:19-22)
2. **Vine** and branches. (John 15:4-5)
3. **Marriage**. (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19, 21; Ephesians 5:22-33)
4. **Head** and body. (Romans 12:5, Ephesians 1:22-23)

### Characteristics of union with Christ

1. Organic
2. Legal
3. Vital
4. Spiritual
5. Permanent

*"Union with Christ is a great mystery. That the Holy Spirit is the bond of this union does not diminish the mystery but this truth does throw a flood of light upon the mystery and it also guards the mystery against sensuous notions, on the one hand, and pure sentimentality, on the other... The fact that it is a mystery underlines the preciousness of it and the intimacy of the relation it entails." – John Murray*


## Misconceptions regarding union with Christ

1. Solely the love and sympathy Jesus has for His own.
2. Union with Christ's essence.
3. Mediated through baptism or the Lord's Supper (sacramentalism).

*"Only faith receives and retains Christ; and faith is the act of the soul grasping what is purely invisible and supersensible: not the act of the body, submitting to baptism or partaking of the Supper." – A.H. Strong*

## Implications of the believer's union with Christ

1. Believers are united with God the **Father** and God the **Holy Spirit**. (John 17:23, Romans 8:9, 2 Peter 1:4)
2. Believers are united with other **believers**. (Psalm 133:1)
3. Every spiritual benefit received in salvation comes only through **Christ**. (Ephesians 1:3)

 **Glorification:** The final step in the salvation of believers where they are fully and perfectly **conformed** to the image of Christ, receiving **resurrected** bodies and unhindered **communion** with God for eternity. (Romans 8:30, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Luke 23:43, Revelation 21:1)

*"[Glorification is] the complete and final redemption of the whole person, when in the integrity of body and spirit, the people of God will be conformed to the image of the risen, exalted, and glorified Redeemer, when the very body of their humiliation will be conformed to the body of Christ's glory." – John Murray*

## Nature of the believer's glorification

1. **Completion** of sanctification. (1 John 3:2)
2. **Resurrection** of the body. (1 Corinthians 15:35-40, Philippians 3:20-21)
3. **Individual** and **corporate**. (Revelation 19:7, Ephesians 5:27)
4. **Eternal** fellowship with God. (Revelation 21:3)
5. **Consummation** of salvation – Christ's **glory**. (Romans 8:16-17)

## Nature of the glorified body (Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

1. **Imperishable**.
2. Marked by **glory**.
3. Raised in **power**.
4. **Patterned** after the resurrection body of Christ.

*"In the perfection of their sanctification, believers will have a heart undisturbed by the deceitful lusts of sin, truly godly ambitions and aspirations, and a physical body that is able to carry out those holy impulses without a moment's distraction or weariness, and therefore, they will be able to fully enjoy the bounties of the new creation God has created for His people." – MacArthur and Mayhue*

## Takeaways

1. If you are not a believer, you must first respond to the gospel in repentance and faith in Christ before these benefits can be yours.
2. As a believer, let the truth of your union with Christ drive your devotion to Him.

*"There is no truth more suited to impart confidence and strength, comfort and joy in the Lord than this one of union with Christ. It also promotes sanctification, not only because all sanctifying grace is derived from Christ as the crucified and exalted Redeemer, but also because the recognition of fellowship with Christ and of the high privilege it entails incites to gratitude, obedience, and devotion." – John Murray*

3. Focus on Christ, not just His benefits.
4. If you are a believer, your future glorification is certain.

## Soteriology – Definitions

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**Soteriology:** A branch of theology that focuses on the study of salvation, describing why we need saving, what we are saved from, Who saves us, how we are saved, and the purpose for which we have been saved.

**Salvation:** The sovereign act of God in which He redeems sinners from sin and its consequences through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, applied to them by the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing them eternal life.

**Election:** Before the foundation of the world, God sovereignly chose certain individuals for salvation, not based on their merits, but according to His grace and divine will.

**Reprobation:** Before the foundation of the world, God sovereignly chose not to elect certain individuals for salvation, justly leaving them in their fallen state and subject to the consequences of their sin, eternal punishment in hell.

**Atonement:** Jesus Christ, as the sinless Lamb of God, willingly and vicariously endured – once for all – on the cross the eternal penalty due to the sins of God's chosen people, thereby satisfying divine justice, removing God's wrath toward them, reconciling them to the Father through the purchase of their redemption, delivering them from slavery to sin, and securing for them eternal life and adoption as God's children.

**Obedience:** Christ's complete submission to the Father's will by His willingness to endure suffering and death on the cross to accomplish redemption for His elect.

**Penal Substitution:** Christ suffered the penalty for the sins of the elect as a substitute for them.

**Sacrifice:** Christ once for all offered Himself to die on the cross to pay for the sins of the elect and expiate their guilt.

**Expiation:** Christ's sacrifice on the cross removes the guilt and liability of sin of the elect.

**Propitiation:** Through His sacrifice, Christ satisfied God's righteous anger against sin and turned away His wrath from the elect.

**Reconciliation:** Because of Christ's sacrifice, the ground of the enmity between God and men is removed and dealt with, thus accomplishing peace.

**Redemption:** Man is delivered from the bondage of sin and the law through the payment of Christ's shed blood as a ransom to God the Father.

**Conquest:** By His sacrifice, Christ accomplished victory over Satan, all rulers, authorities, and powers, and death itself.

**External Call:** The proclamation of the gospel by which all sinners are called to turn from their sin and trust in Christ for salvation.

**Internal Call:** God's sovereign summons to the elect, drawing them to faith in Christ.

**Regeneration:** God's impartation of eternal spiritual life into spiritually dead sinners.

**Monergism:** God is the sole active agent in regeneration.

**Repentance:** A genuine sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.

**Faith:** The soul's turn to God and trusting in the person and work of Christ to provide forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life.

**Conversion:** Repentance and faith (see above).

**Justification:** The instantaneous act of God whereby, as a gift of His grace, He imputes to believing sinners the full and perfect righteousness of Christ through faith alone and legally declares them perfectly righteous in His sight, forgiving them of all unrighteousness and thus delivering them from all condemnation.

**Imputation:** The sin of believers is reckoned to Christ, who bears its penalty on the cross, while Christ's righteousness is credited to believers, granting them a standing of justification before God.

**Adoption:** God legally places regenerated and justified sinners into His family, so that they become sons and daughters of God and thus enjoy all the rights and privileges of one who is a member of God's eternal family.

**Sanctification:** The Holy Spirit separates believers unto Himself and makes them increasingly holy, progressively transforming them into the image of Christ by subduing the power of sin in their life and enabling them to bear the fruit of obedience.

**Perseverance:** Believers are kept secure in their faith by the power of God and will ultimately reach eternal life.

**Union with Christ:** Believers are spiritually united to Christ through faith, encompassing all aspects of salvation, and share in the benefits of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

**Glorification:** The final step in the salvation of believers where they are fully and perfectly conformed to the image of Christ, receiving resurrected bodies and unhindered communion with God for eternity.

## Soteriology – Recommended Reading

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### Introductory

- R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklets:
  - What is Predestination?
  - What is the Gospel?
  - What is Repentance?
  - What is Faith?
  - What Does It Mean to Be Born Again?
  - Can I Be Sure I'm Saved?
  - Can I Lose My Salvation?

### Intermediate

- Chosen by God (R.C. Sproul)
- 40 Questions About Salvation (Matthew Barrett)
- Just Love: Why God Must Punish Sin (Ben Cooper)

### Comprehensive

- Biblical Doctrine (John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue)
- Essential Christian Doctrine (John MacArthur)
- Redemption Accomplished and Applied (John Murray)
- Martyn Lloyd-Jones commentary on Romans 3:20-4:25, Atonement and Justification

### Advanced

- The Cross and Salvation (Bruce Demarest)
- Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution (Jeffery, Ovey, Sach)
- The Doctrine of Regeneration (Stephen Charnock)

Download all handouts:



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