

1. **Introduction:** Paul talks about Union with Christ in Ephesians 2:1-10. Verses 2:1-3 describe what life is like before God intervenes. Verses 2:4-7, gives God’s motivation for intervening and describes what God’s intervention does “to and for” a person.
2. **Ephesians 2:8-9:** *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*
 - ◆ The result of God’s intervention is salvation. The first benefit is regeneration which gives spiritual life “in Christ.”
 - ◆ Before God’s intervention all people, as a consequence of the Fall, are spiritually dead and incapable of doing or deciding to do anything to improve their spiritual condition. Their first need is spiritual life.
 - ◆ In John 3:3 Jesus says that no one will see the kingdom of heaven unless they are born again or born from above. Jesus leaves no wiggle room.
 - ◆ God, in His own timing and for His own reasons gives spiritual rebirth (or regeneration) to those whom He chooses.
 - ◆ Regeneration is an act of God in which we are passive recipients of God’s grace. Nothing we could say or do can cause God to regenerate. It is His decision alone.
 - ◆ Together with the new spiritual life, our God who is rich in grace and mercy, when He regenerates gives “all” of salvation but not all is manifest initially.
 - ◆ With regeneration comes justification which has two facets: (1.) Pardon from the death penalty due sins based on Jesus’ substitutionary death. (2.) Being declared legally righteous before God based on Jesus life of perfect obedience under the Law.
 - ◆ Believers are regenerated “in Christ” and will ultimately be glorified “in Christ.” In fact all of salvation is “in Christ.” The Holy Spirit applies the benefits of salvation to those regenerated by uniting them with Jesus Christ.
 - ◆ All that salvation means is made available through Union with Christ.
 - ◆ **John Calvin:** *“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” (ICR 2.16.19). “First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us” (ICR 3.1.1).*
3. **When Does A New Believer Receive the Benefits of Salvation:** All of salvation is present in regeneration but not all is made manifest at that time. From the believer’s perspective, benefits of salvation are made manifest in their life at different times.

- ◆ Justification is manifest immediately upon regeneration. Some facets like sanctification are applied gradually over a period of time. Some facets will not be applied until glorification, some not until the resurrection of the body (what we will be has not been revealed).
 - ◆ Thus all benefits of salvation are latent in regeneration. All are made manifest in God's timing. As we become more like Christ more benefits are made manifest.
 - ◆ That picture seems clear in 2 Peter 1:3 where, speaking to Christians, Peter says, ***"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence."***
 - ◆ Every believer is well aware that not everything pertaining to life and godliness was manifest in their life immediately upon becoming a Christian.
 - ◆ But Peter's point is that everything needed has been given either as manifest or as latent. Everything is included in the principle of new life given at regeneration. Some things are immediately made manifest and others later.
4. **Paul's Emphasis to the Ephesians:** Notice the past-tense verbs in 2.4-10. Paul is emphasizing not what is going to happen ultimately but what has already happened.
- ◆ He wants believers to know, ***"the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places"*** (Ephesians 1:19-20).
 - ◆ Paul's prayer is that the Ephesians (and by extension all believers) would have their understanding awakened so that they might know what God has already done, what He is doing now, as well as what He will do in the future.
 - ◆ In the midst of the Ephesians' present difficulties, grasping what is *actually* true of them now will enable them to persevere. They have been saved by grace through God's gift of new spiritual life and all the benefits that brings.
 - ◆ Grace is the objective basis for our salvation. It is through God's grace that we are saved. Faith is the means by which we subjectively receive that grace.
 - ◆ Faith is trust, reliance, and dependence on something or someone external to the one who has faith. Our faith is in God.
 - ◆ We do not respond to God's free offer of salvation through our own initiative. No one can believe by their own power. Faith is itself a gift of God given at regeneration.
 - ◆ Biblical truth always includes and is surrounded by facts that need to be known as well as being truth we personally accept (1 Corinthians 15:1-5).

5. **Ephesians 2:10:** *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*
- ◆ In this verse Paul answers the question, What difference does God’s intervention make during the remainder of a person’s mortal life?
 - ◆ Believers are God’s workmanship designed for an active role in achieving God’s Plan. They have been spiritually recreated in “Christ Jesus” for the purpose of doing good works prepared by God beforehand. Salvation leads to good works.
 - ◆ God’s plan for us does not end with believing the gospel. When we are regenerated and first believe, we are at the beginning of fulfilling God’s plan for us.
 - ◆ The good works God has prepared can only be done by believers who are empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Because of the indwelling Holy Spirit, a believer is able to determine and carry out things pleasing to God (Philippians. 2:13).
6. **5 Unusual Types of Union Found in Scripture:** Five unusual unions are found in Scripture. Each one is a divine mystery. Each one is a mystery whose depth is beyond human comprehension (Deuteronomy 29:29).
7. **Union of the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity to form One God:** The three divine persons are united as One God, Jehovah. The Persons are of the same essence, each eternal and infinite, each possessing the same attributes of being, mutually indwelling one another. Within the divine union, there is order and distinction of Persons.
8. **Union of a Divine and a Human Nature to form Jesus Christ:** The second Person of the Trinity took to Himself a human nature in union with His eternal divine nature. A union of a divine and a human nature forming one person. This astounding union results in one person, Jesus of Nazareth, who is Christ the Lord.
- ◆ Jesus has two distinct natures (*a nature is all the essential attributes of a person or thing*). His two natures do not mix or blend and have no interchange of attributes. Jesus’ divine nature is exactly the eternal divine nature of the divine Son.
 - ◆ There was no change to the Son’s divine nature when He became incarnate.
 - ◆ Concerning Jesus’ earthly actions: *“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise’”* (John 5:19). *“For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak* (John 12:49).
9. **Union of Believers with Christ:** Every believer is united to Christ by the Holy Spirit. The union is between the human nature of each believer and the human nature of the incarnate Christ (who continues forever to have both a human and His divine nature).

- ◆ Because of the Son’s union through His divine nature to the Father and Holy Spirit, the union with Christ is also a union with the Trinity as a whole. In this spiritual union, no mixing or blending of divine and human attributes occurs.
 - ◆ The collective union of individual believers in Christ is often referred to as the mystical body of Christ.
 - ◆ Believers are “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3) sharing in His life of perfect obedience to the Law, His atoning death, resurrection, justification, holiness, and glorification.
 - ◆ “Christ in us” (2Corinthians 13:5, John 13:5, Colossian 1:27) brings to believers regeneration, sanctification, and the hope of glory.
 - ◆ Believers are “in Christ” and Christ is in believers. We are like Christ, and we are with Christ. The union is an eternal union of grace. It is the foundation of all Christ’s gracious actions toward His church in time and eternity.
- 10. A Common-sense Definition of Union with Christ:** A common-sense definition of Union with Christ is **“believers are joined together with Christ by the Holy Spirit in such manner that they are, in some sense, made one with Him. In Christ believers remain distinct persons but not separate. ‘Persons in Christ’ are in union with Him much as the three persons of the Trinity are in union with one another through Their sharing the same essence.”** In John 15 Jesus describes union with Him as being like a vine with branches. The same essence flows through the vine and the branches. He says He is the vine and believers are the branches. Being “in Christ” means that which is true of Christ is true of believers.
- 11. Union of All Believers:** A union of all believers joined to one another through their union with Christ.
- 12. Union of Material Body with Immaterial Soul:** Humans are created as body and soul, made in an image of God. They have an immaterial soul and a material body.
- ◆ A most remarkable thing about people is they consist of body and soul in union.
 - ◆ Have you considered how astounding that is – this union of an immaterial soul and body of “clay” forming a living person?
 - ◆ The union of body and soul forming one person is reality. In normal life, soul and body cannot be separated. At mortal death, the union dissolves. Body and soul separate. The body goes to the ground from which it came and the soul goes to God.
 - ◆ Body and soul will be reunited in the resurrection when Christ comes again, but that new union will be of a glorified soul and a resurrection body.
- 13. What is Next:** The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ.