

Union with Christ

➤ Definition

- Union with Christ is the biblical description of the believer's relationship to his Savior.
- By faith, the believer embraces Jesus as presented in the Scriptures, God the Son, Savior, and the only way to eternal life.
- God the Father unites the believer spiritually, and irreversibly, to Jesus as his Mediator.
- This personal connection to Jesus is the source of all the believer's privileges. All that Christ accomplished for the believer is shared by virtue of this unbreakable union.

➤ Scripture

- Romans 6:5 For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection
- Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

➤ Description

- "The heart of Paul's religion is union with Christ. This, more than any other conception...is the key which unlocks the secrets of his soul."¹
- Similar to the idea of reconciliation, no one has union with Christ prior to regeneration. We are separated from Christ:

Ephesians 2:11-12 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in

¹ James Stuart quoted by Bruce Demarest, p. 313-4.

the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” *which is performed in the flesh by human hands* — ¹² *remember that you were at that time separate from Christ...*

- There is no worse status of existence possible than “separate from Christ”
 - Separated from Christ is to be at enmity with God, under condemnation for our sins, having no protection from the just wrath of God, unable to please God as we live without spiritual life, and facing an eternal wrath.
- There is no better station of existence possible than “united with Christ”
 - United with Christ is to be reconciled to God, under the grace of God, forgiven of all sin, having had propitiation for our sins, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and guaranteed eternity in heaven.
- Permanent union with Christ occurs at the moment of regeneration.
- Biblical word pictures teaching union with Christ:²
 - Vine and branches (John 15:1-11)
 - Divine Son and Father (John 14:20)
 - The parts of a building (cornerstone, foundation, individual stones) (Eph. 2:19-22)
 - The human race corporately united to Adam (1 Cor. 15:22)
 - arts of the human body united to the head (Eph. 1:22-23)
 - A husband and wife (Eph. 5:23-32)
- Sanctification is the guaranteed result of all who are united with Christ.
 - By virtue of our union with him, we will become more like him. He will not become more like us, thankfully.

² Demarest, pp. 327-9.

John 15:4-5 “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

- The reason every Christian experiences progressive transformation into the likeness and word of God is because we are united with Christ.
- Heaven shall be the culmination of our union with Christ. Upon death or the rapture, we will be in his immediate presence, consequent of our union with him.
- Recommended resource:
 - *The Cross and Salvation*, Bruce Demarest, Chapter 8, (Crossway, 1997).
 - *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray, Chapter 9, (Eerdmans, 2015).