

Union with Christ

Men of the Word

I. The Meaning of the Phrase

■ A. What the Phrase Does Not Mean

- 1) It does not refer to the natural, non-saving union of all life to the life of God.
 - Acts 17:27-28 – He [God] is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'
- 2) It does not mean that the believer comes to possess all of Christ's attributes, including the divine attributes.

I. The Meaning of the Phrase

■ A. What the Phrase Does Not Mean

- 3) Being in Christ is not being in the church.
- 4) Being in Christ is not a mystical experience in which you stop living and Christ literally lives through you.

I. The Meaning of the Phrase

■ B. What the Phrase means

- 1) How do theologians define it?
 - Berkhof - “that intimate, vital, and spiritual union between Christ and His people, in virtue of which He is the source of their life and strength, of their blessedness and salvation.”
- 2) Why does it happen?
 - It is initiated by a sovereign act of God’s grace.
 - 1 Cor. 1:30-- But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus.

I. The Meaning of the Phrase

■ B. What the Phrase means

■ 3) How was it accomplished?

- By the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.
- 1 Cor. 12:13 - By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free.

II. The Nature of the Union

■ A. Representational

- God has permanently considered Christ to be your representative.
- 1) Began in eternity past.
 - Eph. 1:4 – chose you in Christ in eternity past.
 - 2 Tim. 1:9 – [God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.

II. The Nature of the Union

■ A. Representational

- 2) Throughout the earthly life of Christ, God considered him to be our perfect representative in the same way Adam had been in the Garden.

II. The Nature of the Union

■ A. Representational

■ His death:

- Is. 53:6 – The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- 2 Cor. 5:21 – God made Christ to be sin for us.
- 1 Pet. 2:24 – He Himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.

II. The Nature of the Union

■ A. Representational

■ His righteousness:

- Rom. 5:19 – By one's obedience, the many will be made righteous.

■ His burial and resurrection:

- Rom. 6:1-5

II. The Nature of the Union

■ B. Spiritual

- 1) A Cornerstone and a building (Eph. 2:19-22; cf. 1 Pet. 2:4-5).
- 2) The Trunk of a Vine and the branches (John 15:1-6).
- 3) A Head and a body (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:12-16).
- 4) A Husband and a wife in marriage (Eph. 5:23-32).

II. The Nature of the Union

■ C. Practical

- Grace (1 Cor. 1:4)
- Regeneration (2 Cor. 5:17)
- Justification (2 Cor. 5:21)
- Pardon & forgiveness (Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Rom. 8:1)
- Sanctification (1 Cor. 1:5)
- Security (Rom. 5:10)
- Eternal life (Rom. 6:23; 2 Tim. 1:1)

II. The Nature of the Union

■ C. Practical

- No separation from God's love (Rom. 8:39)
- Unity with Christians (Rom. 12:5; Gal. 3:28)
- Security of God's promises (2 Cor. 1:19)
- Grace to live the Christian life (2 Tim. 2:1)
- We die in Christ (1 Cor. 15:18)
- We will be resurrected in Christ (1 Cor. 15:22)
- We will be glorified in Christ (Rom. 8:17)

Two Uses...

- 1) Understanding and applying this reality is the key to overcoming the power of sin in daily battle.
 - Rom. 6:10-14 – the general application of the doctrine
 - 1 Cor. 6:15-17 – a specific illustration
- 2) Knowing and meditating on your union with Christ is intended to be a source of deep spiritual encouragement.
 - Eph. 1:3 – every spiritual blessing is in Christ.

Adopted by God

The *Ordo Salutis* (adapted from R. Reymond)



I. The Need for Adoption

- Eph. 2:2-3 - in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
- Eph. 5:6 - Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
- John 8:42-44

II. The Meaning of Adoption

■ A. The Background

■ The Old Testament

■ Four Examples:

- Moses (Ex. 2:10)
- Ephraim & Manasseh by Jacob (Gen. 48:5)?
- Genubath (1 Kings 11:20)
- Esther (Esther 2:7, 15)

II. The Meaning of Adoption

■ A. Background

■ The Old Testament

- Israel, God's Son (Ex. 4:22; Is. 1:2; Hos. 11:1)
- Israel, adopted at the Exodus (Rom. 9:4)
- The concept of God as Father of Israel.
 - Deut. 32:6 - "Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you.
 - Ps. 103:13 - Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.
 - Is. 63:16 - For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us And Israel does not recognize us. You, O LORD, are our Father, Our Redeemer from of old is Your name.

■ The New Testament – Paul

II. The Meaning of Adoption

■ B. The Biblical Data

- “Son” (*huios*; 2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 3:26; 4:6-7; Heb. 2:10; 12:5-8; Rev. 21:7)
- “Child” (*teknon*; John 1:12; 11:52; Rom. 8:16, 21; 9:8; Eph. 5:1; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1-2, 10; 5:2)
- “Little child” (*paidion*; Heb. 2:13-14)
- “Adoption” (*huiiothesia*; Rom. 8:15; 8:23; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5; cf. Rom. 9:4 of Israel)

“Adoption” in the NT

■ Rom. 8:14-17

■ Rom. 8:23

■ Gal. 4:4-6

■ Eph. 1:4-5

■ Lessons:

- In eternity past God decided to adopt us.
- Christ was sent to accomplish it through his death.
- At conversion we were adopted and the Spirit was sent to convince us of that adoption.
- There is still a final stage to our adoption in the future.

C. Definitions

- Eph. 2:19 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household.
- Reymond: “God legally constitutes [the believer as] his child and adopts him into his family.”
- Grudem: “an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family.”
- The Shorter Catechism: “Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.”

Distinctions

■ Justification

- Lawgiver
- Deals w/ the law
- Declares us righteous
- New standing

■ Definitive Sanctification

- Master
- Deals w/ relation to sin
- Makes/Declares us free from sin's slavery
- New power

■ Adoption

- Father
- Deals w/ relation to God Himself
- Adopts us into his family as sons and daughters
- New relationship

III. The Components of Adoption

- A. When were we adopted?
 - Chosen to be adopted in eternity past (Eph. 1:5)
 - Actually adopted at the moment of salvation (Rom. 8:9, 16)
 - Fully completed at our glorification (Rom. 8:23)

III. The Components of Adoption

■ B. Why were we adopted?

- Ultimate cause: the grace of God
 - Eph. 1:4-6 - In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
- Immediate cause: the death of Christ
 - Gal. 4:4-5 - But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
- Instrumental cause: our faith
 - John 1:12 - But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,
 - Gal. 3:26 - you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

IV. The Consequences of Adoption

A. Our Privileges

- 1) God becomes our Father and we can rightfully relate to and think of Him in this way.
 - Matt. 6:9 – pray then in this way. Our Father...
 - Gal. 4:7 -- Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son.
 - This means that our new Father ...
 - Has compassion on us (Ps. 103:13 - Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.
 - Takes care of us (Matt. 6:32- "your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.)
 - Gives us good things (Matt. 7:11 - "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!)
 - Loves us (1 John 3:1 - See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us.)

IV. The Consequences of Adoption

A. Our Privileges

- 2) Christ becomes our older brother
 - Rom. 8:17 - and if children...fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.
- 3) We become a member of God's family.
 - Eph. 2:19 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household
 - Cf. 1 Tim. 5:1-2 -- Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but *rather* appeal to *him* as a father, *to* the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, *and* the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

IV. The Consequences of Adoption

A. Our Privileges

- 4) We receive an eternal inheritance.
 - Rom. 8:17 - and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.
 - Gal. 4:7 - Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.
 - 1 Pet. 1:4 - to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,
 - What exactly do we inherit?
 - Eternal life (Tit. 3:7)
 - Everything in the universe (Heb. 1:2)
 - God Himself (Lam. 3:24; Rev. 21:3)

IV. The Consequences of Adoption

A. Our Privileges

- 5) We receive the Holy Spirit
 - He gives us the confidence of God's love for us (Rom. 5:5-8)
 - He gives us an assurance of our adoption.
 - Rom. 8:15-16 - For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,
 - He leads us.
 - Rom. 8:14 - For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
- 6) We benefit from the Father's discipline.
 - Heb. 12:5-10

IV. The Consequences of Adoption

B. Our Responsibilities

- 1) To love the Father (John 14:31 – as Christ does; 1 Cor. 8:3; 1 John 2:15).
- 2) To love and care for the other members of the family (1 John 4:19-20).
- 3) To imitate our Father's actions (Eph. 5:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:14-16).
- 4) To bring glory to the Father (Matt. 5:16; 6:9; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:10).
- 5) To pursue personal purity (1 John 3:3).



Me, a Saint?

**A Study of
Definitive Sanctification**

The *Ordo Salutis* (adapted from R. Reymond)



I. The Biblical Words

- OT (*qadash*)
 - To be consecrated or holy
- 1) Ceremonial
 - Persons:
 - Angels (Deut. 33:2)
 - Priests (Lev. 21:7-8)
 - Prophets (2 Kings 4:9)
 - Israel (Ex. 19:6)
 - Places:
 - Mt. Sinai (Ex. 3:5)
 - Mt. Zion (Ps. 15:1)
 - Israel's land (Ps. 78:54)
- Objects:
 - Tabernacle (Ex. 40:9)
 - The altar (Ex. 29:37)
 - The sacrifices (Lev. 27:9)
 - The temple (Ps. 11:4)
- 2) Moral (Lev. 19:2; 2 Sam. 22:21; Ps. 24:3-4; 51:10)

I. The Biblical Words

- NT (*hagios*)
 - To consecrate, make holy; holy
 - Some ceremonial usage (e.g., law in Rom. 7:12).
 - Primary usage is moral and ethical

II. *The Three Stages*

- A. An event at salvation
 - Called: Definitive or Positional Sanctification
 - 1 Cor. 1:2 - To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus
 - Ultimate grounds: the death of Christ
 - Col. 1:2 – To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae
 - Heb. 10:10, 29
 - Heb. 13:12 - Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.
 - Immediate grounds: our union with Christ
 - Rom. 6:6 - knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

II. The Three Stages

- B. A process now
 - Called: Progressive Sanctification
 - Heb. 10:14 - For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.
- C. An event in the future
 - Called: Ultimate Sanctification
 - 1 Th. 5:23 - Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

III. *The Biblical Arguments for Definitive Sanctification*

- A. We are called “saints” .
 - OT believers (Ps. 16:3; 34:9; Matt. 27:52)
 - NT believers
 - Rom. 1:7 – to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints
 - Rom. 8:27 –He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.
 - 1 Cor. 1:2 - to the church of God...at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling
 - Eph. 1:1 - to the saints who are at Ephesus and *who are faithful in Christ Jesus*:
 - Eph. 4:12 - for the equipping of the saints for the work of service
 - Phil. 1:1 - Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons

III. The Biblical Arguments for Definitive Sanctification

- B. We have been sanctified as a past event.
 - Acts 20:32 (perfect tense) - "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
 - Acts 26:18 (perfect) - to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'
 - 1 Cor. 1:2 (perfect) - To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus
 - 1 Cor. 6:9-11

III. The Biblical Arguments for Definitive Sanctification

- C. We have died to sin.
 - Rom. 6:2 - How shall we who died to sin still live in it?
 - Rom. 6:6 - knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*.
 - Rom. 6:18 – and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
 - Rom. 7:4-6
 - 1 Pet. 2:24 - He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

IV. The Meaning of Definitive Sanctification - Definitions

- Robert Reymond: “Every Christian, the moment he becomes a Christian, by virtue of his union with Christ, is instantly constituted a saint and enters into a new relationship with respect to the former reign of sin in his life and with God himself, in which new relationship he ceases to be a slave to sin and becomes a servant of Christ and of God.”
- Bruce Demarest: “we mean the believer’s being set aside for God’s possession and declared holy by faith in Christ’s sanctifying work.”

IV. The Meaning of Definitive Sanctification - Elements

- 1) Set apart from sin unto God
 - 1 Cor. 6:11 - Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified
- 2) The dominion or rule of sin is broken.
 - Cf. Rom. 6:11, 14, 18
- 3) Given the new ability to obey God and pursue righteousness
 - Rom. 6:17-18

V. The Implications

- It demands that I live daily in way in keeping with my status (Eph. 5:3; Rev. 19:8).
- It serves as the basis for growing in real practical holiness (Rom. 6:1-14).

