

Teaching Orthodoxy...using Bible Verses:

Lesson 5: Salvation is Theosis—union with God via Divine Energies (Grace), but not by Divine Essence

Eternal life is **IN** Jesus.

In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. John 1:4

Jesus is the **Lamb of God** Whom the Father gave to take away the sins of the world.

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29

He [*Jesus Christ*] was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; **like a lamb that is led to slaughter**, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. Isaiah 53:7

God loves us as much as He loves His Only-begotten Son.

Then the world will know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me. John 17:23b

God is Divine love. By uniting with God, we get into perfect LOVE.

I have made You known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that **I myself may be in them**. John 17:26

Salvation is to personally and experientially **know** the God of Love, the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Now this is **eternal life**: that they **know** You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent. John 17:3

But this **saving knowledge** is not merely mental or cognitive...rather, it is **personal** to the most **intimate** degree...it is to personally lovingly unite with God. Thus, Salvation is "**theosis**"—which means "**union with God.**"

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall **believe** on Me through their word; That **they all may be one**; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that **they also may be one in Us**: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. John 17:21

I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may **know** that **Thou hast sent Me**, and **hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me**. John 17:23

that I myself may be in them. John 17:26b

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves Me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and **We will come to them and make Our home with them**. John 14:23

We humans do **not** share God's Essence, but we can **share His Glory** (i.e. His Energy/Grace/Power/Presence/Movement/Action)...as wine fills a glass...we get filled with God...but the glass does **not** become wine, so we do **not** become the Essence of God. As a sword stuck in the fire shares the energy and heat and power of the fire but does **not** become itself the essence of fire (it remains metal), so too we humans can get "stuck" into God and get empowered by His Divine Uncreated Energies, but we remain created humans. This **process of salvation**—of being made holy by having the Holy God **unite with us**—is called "**deification**"...we become **filled** with the Divine Energies/Grace/Glory of God...**filled** with God's Presence...**filled** with His "fullness" ("*pleroma*")...we become "**divinized**" ...filled with the Holy Spirit...**deified**...**sanctified**...**holy**. We become—by gift, by Grace, by sharing His Divine Energies—that which God is by Nature/Essence. (i.e. God is Love, so we therefore get to share that Divine Love, His Love can fill us and flow through us.)

God became man so that man might become "god" (or "godly") by **participation** in God's Energies/Glory/Power. With the powerful Presence of the Holy Spirit flowing through our hearts, we get **to share His Holiness**, and thereby we are made "holy", transformed into "saints". BUT we do **not** turn into God in essence.

[That idea is the false Buddhist/New Age /Hindu/Greek Platonic heresy—which all falsely claim that humans are already “god by essence”.] The Orthodox Christian truth is that we humans always remain created; God alone is uncreated, hence in this regard His Uncreated Divine Essence is always very different and distinct from our created human essence. We humans are not “homoousios” (“one-in-essence”) with God. But He can flow through us, like electricity through a lightbulb. He can unite with us—by filling us—as wine fills a glass.

And the **glory** which Thou gavest **Me I have given them**; that **they may be one, even as We are one**. John 17:22

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that **you** through His poverty **might become rich**. 2 Corinthians 8:9