

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Church and Last Things, Session 2, Key Passages and Pictures of the Church

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 2, Key Passages and Pictures of the Church.

We continue our lectures on the Doctrine of the Church, and let us ask for God's help.

Gracious Father, thank you for loving us, for sending your Son to be our Savior, for sending the Holy Spirit into our hearts, crying out, Father, Father, for adopting us into your family. Bless us, we pray. Help us to learn and be devoted to your people, the people of God we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

We did a brief survey of the biblical story, putting the people of God in that context. We started looking at key passages, examining Old Testament ones.

Now, we move to key passages in the New Testament, highlighting the people of God. In Matthew five through seven, the Sermon on the Mount. Here, Jesus sets forth his vision for the new kingdom community.

In the Sermon's Beatitudes, Jesus reorients his community's values. His people are to be driven not by wealth, power, honor, or comfort, but by faith, hope, and love. Jesus begins by pronouncing God's blessings on his kingdom community.

Matthew five, three to twelve in the Beatitudes. Jesus expresses these blessings in a pattern. First, by pronouncing blessed, those who are marked by particular characteristics, the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Jesus here links God's blessing, his kingdom community, and true spirituality. Jesus' people live out a spiritually marked, a spirituality, Jesus' people live out a spirituality marked by dependence on God, longing for repentance, humility, desire for true righteousness, integrity, reconciliation with others, and persecution for faithfully following Christ. Jesus then relates the blessings themselves.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven, they shall be comforted, they shall inherit the earth, they shall be satisfied, they shall receive mercy, they shall see God, they shall be called the sons of God, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The first and last Beatitudes end with the same overarching blessing; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The six Beatitudes in the middle relate to future blessings.

Note the occurring shall be, shall be, future blessings. Of course, there's a sense that the blessings are now, but primarily, they are not yet; they are the future. God blesses Jesus' people who are blessed to our community of the kingdom now.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven that awaits a fuller final display of the kingdom, shall be, repeatedly. John Stott puts it well quote: the blessing pronounced is the gloriously comprehensive blessing of God's rule, tasted now and consummated later, including the inheritance of both earth and heaven, comfort, satisfaction, and mercy, the vision and sonship of God. Stott, the message of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Bible speaks today. The rest of the Sermon on the Mount expands Jesus' vision of his kingdom community. In Matthew 5, 17 to 48, Jesus calls his people to holistic holiness as he highlights that true righteousness is word-saturated, internal, and external.

In Matthew 6:1-18, Jesus calls for genuine worship as he stresses that God, not others or ourselves, is to be the sole audience of worship. Using the examples of three spiritual disciplines, giving, praying, and fasting, which three disciplines did the Pharisees take pride in? And that living all of life in light of God's kingdom is the central focus of kingdom prayer. In Matthew 6, 19-34, Jesus sets forth kingdom values as he contrasts earthly treasures with kingdom significance.

In Matthew 7, Jesus focuses on the centrality of generous love as he overturns judgmentalism and advances the golden rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Along the way, Jesus clarifies what it means to be his disciple.

Jesus' community possesses true righteousness and lives out true spirituality, which is marked by kingdom character, holistic holiness, genuine worship, kingdom values, and generous love. A community so enthusiastic about the Messiah's arrival and committed to living out such a spirituality might be expected to be self-focused and separated from the rest of society. Jesus, however, interweaves the spirituality and the mission of his people.

Indeed, spirituality fuels mission. The discipleship and mission are inseparably linked to Eckhart Schnabel's early Christian mission, Jesus and the Twelve. Jesus' disciples are called and sent, called to follow the way of the kingdom and sent to call others to do the same.

The inherently missional nature of his kingdom community is striking as he bids it to be the salt of the earth, Matthew 5:13, and the light of the world, verse 14. These images build on the Beatitudes in which Jesus associates God's kingdom not with human strength and honor but with spiritual poverty, mourning, meekness, hunger,

mercy, peace, and persecution. Fundamental to these images is distinctiveness as the holy kingdom community, verses 3 through 12.

The world is in decay, and Jesus' people are the salt. The world is in darkness, and Jesus' people are the light. Both images not only assume the kingdom's distinctiveness but also clarify the community's mission of holy living and gospel witness.

Matthew 16:16-19. The famous Lausanne Covenant, where evangelicals from around the world agreed on certain important principles of evangelism and mission, includes this statement. We affirm that God is calling the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world, so we are determined to proclaim it faithfully, urgently, and sacrificially until he comes—the Manila Manifesto, Lausanne Movement website.

Matthew 16:16-19 is famous for its teaching about Jesus and the church. Jesus asked the disciples to tell him who people think he is. Their answers include John the Baptist, risen from the dead; Elijah, predicted in the Old Testament, Malachi 4:5; and Jeremiah or another prophet, Matthew 16:14. Then Jesus asked them as a group who they thought he was.

Simon Peter, who often serves as the leader, answers for them. You are the Messiah, the son of a living God, Matthew 16:16. Jesus says that Peter speaks not with human wisdom but with the divine. Jesus' Father in heaven has revealed Jesus' identity to Peter, verse 17.

Only after Jesus' resurrection and appearances to the disciples will they fully understand these words. Jesus makes a play on words between Peter and Rock and declares that Peter will be a key leader in building Jesus' church. D. A. Carson is insightful.

If it were not for Protestant reactions against extremes of Roman Catholic interpretation, it is doubtful whether many would have taken Rock to be anything or anyone other than Peter. Matthew's commentary, Carson's commentary on Matthew in the Expositors Bible Commentary series. It is housed with commentaries on Mark and Luke, thus the Synoptics.

I agree with Carson. The heart of Jesus' claim is often missed. It is, quote, I will build my church, close quote, verse 18.

This is an astounding declaration in light of Israel's being the people of Yahweh. Here, Jesus asserts himself as Lord and Messiah, the one who built a messianic community and the Lord of his people. These covenant people of God will be the people of Jesus.

Like Peter, they'll acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The gates of Hades is an Old Testament expression referring to death. Job 17:16, Psalm 9:13, Isaiah 38:10.

The gates of hell will not prevail against the church that Jesus will build. Gates of hell is an Old Testament picture of death. Job 17:16, Psalm 9:13, Isaiah 38:10.

Despite the fact that it is at war, Jesus' church will not die. Because of who he is and what he will accomplish, his church will be victorious over its enemies, including the arch-enemy, death. Jesus gives Peter and the other disciples the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that is, the ability to admit or refuse admittance into it, Matthew 16:19.

By preaching the gospel, the disciples will invite believers into God's kingdom and exclude unbelievers from it. Their actions on earth will mirror God's prior actions in heaven. God will use them and their increasing understanding of Jesus' identity to extend his kingdom through the gospel proclamation.

Note how Jesus speaks of the church in both universal and local terms here. The church's ultimate victory points to some sort of universal church that will stand the test of time, while the proclamation of the gospel and the keys point to a concrete, visible group of people. Acts 2:37-47.

Now, when the Jews who had gone to Jerusalem for the Jewish feast of Pentecost heard Peter's sermon proclaiming Jesus both Lord and Christ and saying that the Jews had crucified him, now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, brothers, fellow Jews, that means, what shall we do? Peter said to them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promises for you and your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. And with many other words, he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, save yourselves from this crooked generation. So those who received the word were baptized, and there were added that day about 3,000 souls.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

They sold their possessions and belongings and distributed the proceeds to all as needed. Day by day, they attended the temple together and broke bread in their homes. They received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter preaches that his hearers have rejected and crucified Jesus. But God has raised a crucified Jesus from the dead and exalted him to his right hand, publicly proclaiming him to be Lord in Christ, Acts 2:36. These words convict those who hear of their sins. These words convict those who hear of their sins.

And they ask the apostles how they should respond. Peter urges them to turn from their sins and be baptized, Acts 2:38. He explains that the gospel is for his hearers, their children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call. That's a quotation.

Verse 39, 3,000 people believe the gospel and are baptized. In verse 41, Luke summarizes activities they engage in together as the church. Quote, they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and prayers.

The believers dedicate themselves to the apostles' instruction, the heart of church life. The Christians get involved in each other's lives as their fellowship with the Father and the Son, 1 John 1:3. As their fellowship with the Father and the Son, 1 John 1:3, results in fellowship with one another, including sharing material possessions, Acts 2:44-45. A feature of the early church is that it is not commanded upon the people of God; it is voluntary. Does that mean we have to do it? Of course not, it's voluntary.

Does that mean it could never be observed anywhere by anybody else? No, it doesn't mean that's a possibility. In certain contexts, the Lord would lead, but it certainly isn't communism, my goodness. The early church committed to the breaking of bread, verse 42, which refers either to taking meals together or to the Lord's Supper.

They certainly share meals; verse 46, Acts 20, and Verse 7 refer to the observance of the Lord's Supper at Sunday worship. And so I take it to be the Lord's Supper here, too. In addition, the believers dedicate themselves to prayer, a valuable part of their shared life.

The early church is characterized by meeting and eating together, by joy, praise, a good reputation with unbelievers, and growth in numbers, verses 46-47. 1 Corinthians 12:14-31. In salvation the Holy Spirit unites all believers to Christ and one another.

The Holy Spirit makes us a part of Christ's body, 1 Corinthians 12:12 and 13. That means that we, along with other Christians, all other Christians, belong to Christ and one another. We are all members of Christ's body, 1 Corinthians 12: 14.

Therefore, less conspicuous church members are just as much a part of Christ's body as are the conspicuous ones, verses 15 and 16. Even if the inconspicuous do not think they belong to Christ, they still do, for the body needs the contribution of each member, verse 17.

Paul sets forth a key principle of divine design, quote, 1 Corinthians 12:18. But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose. Having addressed those who think they are unimportant, Paul turns to those who overestimate their importance. Regardless of what they think, every member of the body of Christ needs the other members, 1 Corinthians 12:21-24.

Indeed, God has ordered the body that there may be no division, that there may be no division in the body, verse 25, and that the members may have the same care for one another. God wants church members to enter into the suffering of one another and to rejoice when other members are honored, verse 26, because when that happens when others suffer, they're suffering because they're part of the same body. If you whack your finger with a hammer, the whole body hurts.

And if you get an award and you take it with your hands, your tootsies participate too, and you're walking up to get the award. My goodness. That is, the Bible not only speaks of the church as an organization with leaders and discipline and so forth but as an organism, as a living thing, the body of Christ on earth.

Paul repeats that the church is the body of Christ and, individually, his members, verse 27. He orders gifts according to importance and urges the Corinthians to seek them in light of this ordering. Plainly, apostles, prophets, and teachers are most important, and tongues are least important verse 28.

Then, in verses 29 and 30, Paul reinforces and quotes the point that no gift is common to all believers, as stated in verse 18. I mean, sorry, that's a quotation, not verse 18. Footnote 18.

It's a quotation from my favorite commentary on 1 Corinthians, Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, page 609. I want to emphasize the point because good brothers and sisters are confused. In 1 Corinthians 12:12, just as the body is one, the human body has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body. Jews or Greeks, slaves and free, and all were made to drink of one spirit. Every believer in Christ is baptized into the body of Christ.

And then, at the end of that same chapter, he says, are all apostles, are all prophets, and so forth. Technically, he says, all are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets,

are they? If I follow through, do they not speak in tongues? All do not interpret, do they? No is implied in every answer. For every answer, the Greek particle may is used to expect a negative answer.

So, all believers are baptized into the body of Christ, and all have that spirit baptism. But there is not one gift that everyone has. So, claiming that one gift must be universal is simply incorrect.

All believers are baptized into the body of Christ, but there is no such thing as one gift that everybody has. It is by divine design that we'll need each other. All do not speak in tongues.

Speaking in tongues is not evidence of being baptized into Christ. I speak with charity in my heart toward brothers and sisters who think that that is the case. It is thus an error to teach that possession of any particular spiritual gift, not just tongues, is essential for salvation.

That's another gospel. That's the oneness of Pentecostalism. You must speak in tongues as evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit for salvation is another gospel.

But thankfully, godly believers in the Assemblies of God and worldwide Pentecostalism, that is not oneness Pentecostalism. It doesn't teach that. We're thankful for that.

But if they teach you that speaking in tongues is essential for empowerment and service, that too is an error, and I have to point it out as a Christian theologian committed to biblical exegesis. Paul leaves the best for last when he promises to show his readers an even better way, verse 31. I will show you an excellent way, ESV.

That is the way of love. He devotes the next chapter to this theme, which strengthens his argument by setting forth the way believers are to relate to each other in the body of Christ, with the love the Old Testament commands and that Christ displays in word and deed.

See Leviticus 19:18. I want to go by memory, but I do not want to give the wrong information. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. That's what I thought.

I just want to be careful. And as Jesus said, love one another as I have loved you. John 13:34. A new commandment I give to you is that you love one another just as I have loved you, and you are also to love one another.

Ephesians 2:11-22. The last of our pictures. And this passage deserves reading as well. Writing to largely Gentile believers, I want to remind you that the Old Testament says, therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh,

called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands, remember that you at that time, you were at that time separated from Christ.

That's their big problem. Alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. That is a terrible plight.

But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ, for he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through one spirit, sorry, for through him, we both have access in one spirit to the Father. So, then you're no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In Him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the spirit. Paul addresses Gentiles and reminds them of their situation before they came to know Christ. They were, quote, without separate, separate without Christ.

They were separated from Christ without hope and without God in the world, Ephesians 2:12. But now God joins them to Christ, and they are no longer far from God, but close to him through Christ's blood, his atoning death on the cross, verse 13. Before salvation, our sins alienated us from God in his love, but he took the initiative and sent his son as the peacemaker. Jesus' death and resurrection made peace between God and us and between us and God.

His reconciling work also unified believing Jews and Gentiles, making us one new man from the two, resulting in peace, verses 14 and 15. Because of the work of Christ the mediator, Jews and Gentiles who trust him as Lord and Savior have peace with God, verse 17. Both become part of Christ's church and obtain a relationship with the Trinity.

Through Christ, both groups come into God's, the Father's presence in one spirit, verse 18. As a result of Christ's reconciling death and resurrection, Gentile believers are not on the outside looking in. Rather, they are fellow citizens of God's kingdom and belong to the church, the people of God.

Indeed, they are verse 19, members of the household of God. Paul then expands on the church using house and temple imagery. God incorporates believing Gentiles into his family and also makes them a part of his house.

This house, which turns out to be a temple where God dwells, is built on a foundation with a cornerstone. That foundation is the apostles and the New Testament prophets who preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The cornerstone, the most important part of the building, is Christ Jesus himself, verse 20.

The church is thus built upon Jesus, crucified and risen, and his apostles and prophets who bear his message. We move next to consider biblical pictures of the church. Overview.

The Bible portrays the church in multiple pictures or images, multiple metaphors or motifs. We'll consider some of the most important ones. We are the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the new humanity, the family of God, the people of God.

We are the body of Christ. Paul teaches that the church is the body of Christ. This picture extols Christ as preeminent.

Colossians 1:18, he's also the head of his body, the church, Colossians 1:18. As head of the body, Christ is a source of the church's life. He's the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, verse 18. Risen, he inaugurates the new creation and gives eternal life.

The new heavens and earth await their fullness, but Christ's death and resurrection have initiated a new creation now so that we have eternal life now in mortal bodies as we await our immortal bodies, Romans 8:10-11. His headship also means that he is the church's ultimate authority, Colossians 2:19. Whom we must obey, whom we must obey in the world. The Holy Spirit joins us to Christ and to one another in one body, as we saw in 1 Corinthians 12:13. Christ is the head of the body. We are its members, 1 Corinthians 12:27. Christ is united with the church, yet distinct. He's always the head, and we are always the body.

The image of the body conveys the relationship of believers to members, not only to Christ, their head, Romans 12:6-8, but also to one another, as we just saw in 1 Corinthians 12:14-27. Just as our bodily members belong to us, so we belong to Christ. And by virtue of our union with him, we belong to each other and are interdependent on one another. Christ desires, quote, that there should be no division in the body but that the members should have the same concern for one another, 1 Corinthians 12:25. God entrusts the work of Christ's church to him and his people.

Church leaders are to train members to engage in ministry, to edify Christ's body, Ephesians 4:12. Christ provides the stimulus for growth, but both the head of the body and its members are active in bodily growth, verses Ephesians 4:15-16. The body image is dynamic, for the body grows and matures, Ephesians 4:19, Colossians 2:19, as it operates as Christ's instrument in the world. Biblical pictures of the church were the bride of Christ. Paul portrays the church as Christ's bride.

He uses this most intimate picture of union with Christ to teach that we are spiritually wedded to Christ. This image is replete with God's grace, for Christ initiates the marriage, offering himself up in death for his bride, the church, who is the object of his love and care, Ephesians 5:25. This picture stresses God's grace and sovereignty but does not omit our responsibility. Paul speaks as he who promised the Corinthians in marriage to one husband, even Christ, 2 Corinthians 11:2. Paul aims to present the Corinthians in purity to Jesus when he comes again.

With godly jealousy, Paul fears, lest his readers, Paul fears, lest his readers, quote, be seduced from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ into spiritual adultery, 2 Corinthians 11:3. Instead, as a bride submits to her loving husband exclusively in marriage, so the church must submit to Christ, its loving husband, Ephesians 5:23-24. John, too, builds on the Old Testament picture of God's people adorning themselves as a bride for her husband, Isaiah 61:10. John depicts the fulfillment of God's covenantal promises of affection for his saints. John proclaims, Delight in heaven at the magnificent expectation of the wedding of Christ and his church, preceded by the joyful marriage supper. Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself.

Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb, Revelation 19:7-9. John interprets the wedding imagery of 19:6-8 in terms of the ultimate union between Christ and his church: quote, I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God, Revelation 21:2-3. We are the body of Christ, the bride of Christ.

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Paul depicts the church, God's people, as a temple. Against the background of Solomon's magnificent temple, he boldly calls Christians, quote, God's temple.

You are God's temple, 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 17. Paul teaches that the spirit occupies the place of the god or goddess in a Greco-Roman temple. In fact, in passages treating the church as a temple, including 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:19-22.

In passages treating the church as a temple, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:19-22. Paul says it is God's presence that makes a church a church. This temple of God's people is dynamic and organic, a building growing into a temple before our eyes, verses 21 and 22.

Paul affirms that God dwells in his people individually, but his emphasis falls on his dwelling in them communally as God's temple. In Christ, we are the temple of the living God, worshipping the triune God, Ephesians 2:18. Peter also presents the church as a temple, a living temple with Christ as a living stone, 1 Peter 2:4, recalling Jesus' reference to himself as the cornerstone.

Compare Psalm 118:52 in Matthew 21:42. Jesus called himself the cornerstone, the most important stone that the builders rejected in his criticism of the Jewish leaders who were stumbling over him. Psalm 118:22 in Matthew 21:42. Peter presents Christ as the cornerstone who saves those who believe and judges those who reject him. 1 Peter 2:6 through 8. Peter presents the risen Christ as the living stone, verse 4. He's alive from death and the source of eternal spiritual life for his people.

1 Peter 1:3, 1:23. Peter extends his stone imagery to encompass God's people. As believers in Christ, the living stone, we are living stones ourselves, deriving spiritual life from him. 1 Peter 2:4, and 5. God uses these stones to build a building, a spiritual house, Peter calls it, where we serve as believer priests to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Verse 5. Peter thus portrays the church as an organism. We are alive with the resurrection life of Jesus. Through union with Christ, God has given us new birth into a living hope.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who's caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3. And God forms us as the church, a living temple where God is worshipped. We are the new humanity.

The church is also the new humanity. Christ is the new Adam, and God's reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in him is the creation of a new humanity. Christ, our peace, removes the hostility between Jews and Gentiles, and God creates one new humanity out of the two divided peoples.

Paul uses new creation language to describe the church as a living display of what humanity is supposed to be. Ephesians 2:13 through 16. Although he is created in God's image, Adam fails to display God to the cosmos, and Israel, also the image of God, does the same.

But Christ comes as the new Adam and the perfect image of God, succeeding where they fail. Through his death and resurrection, he recreates a people into that same image. Through union with Christ, the church is now the image of God.

We're the one new people, the new humanity, called to display God to the world. Ephesians 2:15, Ephesians 4:13 and 24. Ephesians 2:15, Ephesians 4:13 and 24.

The church is already the new humanity. Ephesians 2:14 to 18. But to attain unto a... is to attain unto a mature humanity.

Ephesians 4:13. This is because God's eternal purpose of cosmic reconciliation is not yet fully realized. Sin and injustice still occur. However, God will bring about a new creation.

Strikingly, God's new creation is already underway in the church. The church is the firstfruit of the ultimate new creation still to come. We are both a genuine reality of the new creation and the foretaste of more to come.

Thus, the church is the new humanity. A glimpse of the way things are supposed to be and a glimpse of the way the cosmos ultimately will be. We're the family of God.

By virtue, as we continue our look, our glimpse of biblical pictures of the church, New Testament pictures of the church, we're the family of God. By virtue of our adoption in Christ, we are also the family of God. Before adoption, we were children of the devil and slaves of sin.

Galatians 4:3, 1 John 3:10. But our gracious God saved us and gave us a new identity as his children, as John exalts. Quote, see what love the Father has given to us that we should be called the children of God. 1 John 3:1. This happens because God sent his son, born of a woman, born under law to redeem those under law that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 4:4 and 5. Christ dies as our substitute, becoming a curse for us in his accursed death on the cross to redeem us from the curse of the law. Galatians 3:13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. We are now heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

Romans 8:15 and 17. See also Galatians 4:6 and 7. We will inherit God himself and the new heavens and the new earth. 1 Corinthians 3:21 to 23.

Revelation 21:3. I've already read that one. This is often neglected. 1 Corinthians 3 teaches.

Well, you'll see what it teaches. Everything belongs to believers. Paul says, why are you quibbling and fighting over different factions in the church in Corinth? It's absurd.

Paul and Peter belong to Christ. They're nobody. The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise.

1 Corinthians 3:20. That they are futile. Let no one boast in men, for all things are yours.

Verse 22 of 1 Corinthians 3. With all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, that's Peter, or the world or the world or life or death or the present or the future. All are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. The world is ours.

It's in promissory form now, but one day, we will; the new heavens and new earth will belong to the people of God, as will the Trinity. The Trinity belongs to us already by virtue of union with Christ, which is union with the Trinity, but it'll be outwardly shown and made known as never before. Our adoption in Christ permanently relates us to God and connects us to each other as the family of God.

James teaches the church as a spiritual family. It's a community of family-like relationships where love, truth, and service are to mark its members, James 1:18 to 27. James' use of brothers and sisters from 1:2 to 5:19 through his letter depicts the church as a family where people love one another, are bound to one another, and this family gathers to encourage one another in following Christ, which involves teaching truth, living in holiness, and ministering to the poor.

Our last picture of the people of God is we are the people of God. God enters into covenant with Abraham and his descendants to be their God, Genesis 17:7. I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you, your seed after you. Because God redeems Israelites from Egyptian slavery, they belong to him.

He pledges himself to them and claims them as his own, Leviticus 26:12. God promises that in a new covenant, he will be their God and they would be his people, Jeremiah 31:33. The New Testament applies God's new covenant promises to the church, the people of God, Hebrews 8:10.

Israel was the Lord's vineyard, Isaiah 5:1 to 7. The church remains in Jesus, the true vine, John 15, 1 to 8. Israel was the temple. Israel had the temple. The church is God's temple, 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Peter applies Old Testament descriptions of Israel to the church as we saw. You were chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession. Once you were not a people, now you are God's people.

You would not receive mercy, but now you have received mercy, 1 Peter 2:9 and 10. There's thus a continuity between believing Israelites and the church, but this is not an absolute identity. For Paul teaches there's still a future for ethnic Jews, that is ethnic Jews to find that blood descendants of Abraham, Romans 11:25 through 32.

They will be brought to Christ and become part of his church. God takes the gracious initiative in choosing, saving, keeping and perfecting his people. He chooses us for salvation apart from our works, 2 Timothy 1:9 and 10.

It's based upon his purpose and his grace that he gave us. It's based upon his purpose and grace, which grace he gave us, 1 Peter 1:10. He gave us his grace before eternal ages.

God saves us by giving Christ to die and rise for us, John 10:14 to 18. He keeps us in his love, Romans 8:35 to 39. In the end, he will present the church to himself in perfect holiness, Ephesians 5:27, without spot or wrinkle or any other thing, any other blemish on his beautiful bride, holy bride.

The church is the united people of God, not a collection of individuals. The spirit indwells God's people individually, 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 20 and corporately, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. The spirit gives us spiritual gifts as he wills, 1 Corinthians 12:11.

He empowers us to live for God and spread the gospel, Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 6:10. God empowers us, the spirit does, to live for God and spread the gospel, Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 6:10. God leads us to worship and serve him in mission.

At the end, we will be his peoples and God himself will be with us and will be our God. Close quote, Revelation 21:3. Only here does God use the plural peoples, highlighting that ethnic diversity will characterize us as his final people. Thus ends our lecture on the New Testament passages of the church.

In our next lecture, we will take up the people of God in the Old Testament.

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on Doctrines of the Church and Last Things. This is session 2, Key Passages and Pictures of the Church.