

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 13, 9 Saving Works, Essential Results, Part 2, Sending the Spirit at Pentecost

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christ's saving work. This is session 13, 9 Saving Works, Essential Results, Part 2. Sending the Spirit at Pentecost.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you for your holy word. We pray you would use it this day to bring honor to your name, to build us up in our holy faith, and to encourage us in the way everlasting; we pray through Jesus Christ, the mediator. Amen.

The Bible is a storybook and a picture book. It's a storybook. It tells God's true story from the beginning, that is, creation, through the rebellion or the fall, and then redemption, that's Israel in the Old Testament and the church in the New, on to the consummation.

Along with that storyline, God paints pictures to communicate his truths to us. So it is, as we study Christ's saving accomplishment, that we are, first of all, still working our way through his nine saving deeds or works. The heart and soul of what he did to save us is plain in the New Testament.

He died for our sins according to the scriptures; he was buried, and he was raised again on the third day according to the scriptures. That is, his death and resurrection are the very heartbeat of salvation. But they are not alone.

God contextualizes them as part of the story of Jesus. So, incarnation is an absolutely essential precondition for the cross and empty tomb, as Saint Anselm already saw. Likewise, our Lord's sinless life is essential.

If he had sinned, he could not save us. As a matter of fact, I speak reverently, he would have needed a Savior himself. But he did not sin, and thus, his incarnation and sinlessness are preconditions for his death and resurrection.

And they are the death and resurrection of Christ, the center, the core, the heartbeat, the essence of salvation, no question. But they're so; here I am, reaching for adjectives again, monumental and so weak that they have astonishing repercussions or results. Five results follow from the resurrection of our Lord, and we are working our way through them now.

Last time, we saw the ascension, which moved Jesus in his state of humiliation from the limited earthly sphere to the state of exaltation in the upper transcendent

heavenly sphere. And we marveled at the fact, as the old hymn writer said, that there is a man in the glory. Oh, he never was merely a man, but the God-man, one of our human race, is at God's right hand.

And he's our forerunner, Hebrews tells us, assuring us that we will follow in his train. That is, the fact that Christ is ascended and is at God's right hand assures us of ultimate salvation. His session is also one of the results of his saving death and resurrection, his sitting at God's right hand.

Listen to Philip Edge-Camus in his wonderful commentary on Hebrews. Although it was written many years ago, it is still distinctive because he gave great attention, unlike most biblical scholars, including evangelicals, to the history of biblical interpretation. That should not take the place of exegesis of the text, but he uses it so wisely. Quoting Hughes, he made purification for sins, Hebrews 1-3, this he did within the course of human history when as Aquinas said, he offered himself on the altar of the cross as a sacrifice to God in satisfaction of the punishment to which man, because of his guilt, was subject.

That's the penal substitution theory of the doctrine of atonement. This done, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The description of the Son as being now seated signifies the completion of his work of purification.

But more than that, his position at the right hand of God indicates that he is the place of highest honor, that he is not merely on a seat but on a throne, and that he's not just sitting but ruling. His session, moreover, his sitting at God's right hand, is on high. His exaltation, which started with his resurrection from the grave and continued with his ascension into heaven, is completed by his session.

This is the seal of the divine acceptance of his work of purification, for he is now received back to the height from which he descended for our redemption. He who humbled himself for our sakes is now supremely honored. I go to John Stott, Philip Hughes, and F. F. Bruce when I need beautiful quotations for things that I'm writing.

Orthodox, but also beautiful. Other Orthodox commentators whom I name do not write as well. Jesus' ministry should be viewed in three grand movements of descent, ascent, and descent.

He descended in the incarnation, and the eternal Son of God became a man in Jesus of Nazareth. After his 33 and a half years on earth, the last three of which were involved in his earthly ministry, he ascended from the Mount of Olives back to the Father. That is what we're focusing on right now.

In his second coming, he will descend for the second and last time. His session, sitting at God's right hand, is thus to be viewed as the culmination of the central movement

of ascent, namely his exaltation—one movement from earth to heaven, beginning with his resurrection and ascension.

Jesus' session saves, although you don't hear this much, and I'll say it to the point of being boringly repetitive, the two essential preconditions do not save in and of themselves, ipso facto. They do not save automatically. They are essential.

Without them, there was no cross and an empty tomb. But it is the cross and the empty tomb that saves, and these essential results do not save in themselves. They are essential results of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord.

Having said that, Jesus' session saves. He sat down after ascending to the Father at the right hand of God, the place of the greatest honor and authority in the universe. He did not walk, as in his earthly ministry, or stretch out his arms, as on the cross, or lift his hands in priestly blessing as he was carried to heaven in the ascension.

Instead, he sat down to complete his exaltation, which began in his resurrection and ascension. He sat down as prophet, priest, and king. So, it's the session of Christ that draws attention to his saving work in terms of his threefold office, which we previously explored.

We saw it mentioned for the first time, to my knowledge, by the church historian Eusebius, and then wonderfully explicated by the reformer John Calvin. Jesus sat down as the king par excellence. I'm going to go backwards in order of the importance the Bible ascribes to each of these three offices, although I suppose whether king or prophet or priest is more important in terms of his session is debatable.

In his Pentecost sermon, Peter interprets Christ's session as his coronation, as God's official installation of him as Lord and Christ. Acts 2:23 through 36. The covenant people rejected their Messiah and crucified him, but God declared his estimation of Jesus by exalting him to God's own right hand.

God displayed his power in raising Christ from the dead and seating him at God's right hand. From this glorious position, Christ makes immense power available to his church. Ephesians 1:19 through 23.

When believers are spiritually joined to Christ, they are made partakers of his saving events, including his session. Amazingly, Ephesians 2:6 says not only that we were raised with him, but we sat down with him in heaven. God goes out of his way to assure his people that we are safe in Christ.

Safe to sin? No, not safe to sin. Safe to praise him, to love him, to serve him with our whole hearts. Though Christ's session pertains to all three of his messianic offices, it especially pertains to his royal office.

Jesus overcame our foes and sat down at God's right hand, the position of supreme honor and rule. Hebrews 12:1 and 2. Jesus' session marks the pinnacle of his victorious exaltation. Jesus not only is alive, and not only does he rule as he did on earth in a sense, as the humiliated one, but now he rules on high.

Still, not as he will rule outwardly and openly in his second coming. Nevertheless, his sitting on God's throne indicates reign, rule, and dominion. After speaking of bringing charges, I move from the royal office to the priestly one.

In Romans 8, after Paul speaks of who will bring a charge against God's elect, the meaning is to make it stick. After speaking of bringing charges, condemnation, and justification, the mention of Christ's death suggests the legal idea of penal substitution. In the Bible's strongest, sustained context on God's preservation of his saints, commonly called eternal security, in Romans 8, 28 to 39, among other things, Paul says, who shall bring any charge against God's elect? These are rhetorical questions.

It doesn't matter who brings them. Satan, demons, human opponents, they're not going to stand because our case has gone to the ultimate judge, the supreme court of supreme courts, if you will, God in heaven, who knows our sins better than anyone, including our enemies and ourselves. And in his son, he has declared us righteous.

No one will bring a charge against God's elect and make it stick. It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? I told you in a previous lecture, in the judgment passages, which I have studied quite a bit, half the time, the father is the judge, and half the time, the son is the judge.

Who is he to condemn? So, he could, Paul could say Christ Jesus, and he does say Christ Jesus, but not to condemn his people. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who comes to judge. It is true, and even is true of believers in a sense, but he does not come to condemn us.

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, who was raised, and here's our real point, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. After Paul speaks of bringing charges, condemnation, and justification in the verses I just read, he mentions Christ's death and suggests the legal idea of penal substitution to take care of those charges, to take away that condemnation.

This means that the messianic office in view is that of priest. This is confirmed by the mention of his priestly intercession as well. Christ, our priest, is not only the one who died for us; he lives at God's right hand, interceding for us, and so assures us of final salvation.

Thus, his priestly session brings assurance to his people that his saving work is completed. It is finished because of where he sat. As you showed in the quotation earlier, his work is perfect.

God can require no more. God must, I speak reverently, declare righteous any person who believes in Jesus. To do otherwise would be for God to deny himself and the righteousness of his son, and the adequacy of his atonement.

So, Christ, sitting at God's right hand, indicates his work is finished, perfect, and effective for everyone who believes in Christ. The succinct but powerful words in Hebrews 1:3, quote, after making purifications for sins, he sat down at the right and of the majesty on high, suggest the very three points that I made—the finality, perfection, and efficacy effectiveness of the son's priestly sacrifice.

These attributes are made explicit later in Hebrews when the author shows the superiority of Christ and his sacrificial death to the Old Testament priests and their sacrifices. Hebrews 10:11-14, the Old Testament priests in their service never sat, but when Christ had offered, I'm quoting from Hebrews 10:12, but when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, close quote. That's his session in terms of his priestly office.

This indicated his priestly work was complete, perfect, and utterly effective. As a result, amazingly, quote, by a single offering, he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. We do not have to hope vaguely that God has accepted us in his son.

His son loved us. He gave himself for us. He was raised as our representative and God's first fruit, guaranteeing our resurrection to eternal life.

He ascended back to the Father and sat down, utterly assuring us of eternal salvation by God's grace through faith in Christ. This indicated once more the awesomeness of Jesus' accomplishment. In fact, Christ, unlike any other priest, took the fruits of his earthly priestly ministry permanently into God's heavenly presence.

Hebrews 8:1-8, the writer of Hebrews says it beautifully, quote, now the point in what we are saying is this. We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, Romans 8-1. Jesus is the crucified and risen one who has ascended back to heaven and sat down at the Father's right hand.

His session saves us in terms of his royal office and his priestly office, and Jesus sat down as well as the prophet par excellence. Jesus spoke as a prophet when put on oath by the high priest and asked if he was, quote, the Christ, the Son of God, Matthew 26:63. Jesus replied, you have said so, but I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven, close quote, Matthew 26:64, at which time they accused him of blasphemy and crucified him because he claimed to be the Son of God.

It is his session that got him in trouble, as it were. He is claiming to personally fulfill in his ministry and death ascension and return to the Father and session. Psalm 110 in verse 1, where God says, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

The prophet Jesus, who rose with those words, predicted his session and second coming. You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven. The risen, ascended, seated Christ pours out the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, Acts 2:33, Joel 2:28-32.

In so doing, he acts as a heavenly prophet, the heavenly prophet, who sends the Spirit to his disciples, enabling them to speak the word of his saving death and resurrection. The writer of the Hebrews affirms the superiority of the Son prophet to Old Testament mediators of special revelation, prophets, and angels in Hebrews 1. In these last days, God has spoken to us by his Son, Hebrews 1:2, when in the context, the author calls Christ a radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature, he also depicts him as a revealer. As a ray reveals the sun's glory and as a coin reveals the imprint of its dye, so the incarnate Son reveals the invisible God.

The point is, as O'Brien explains, that, quote, the Son is uniquely qualified to be the final manifestation of God. Jesus, our Lord, died and arose to save us, and one of the essential results of that saving work in his death and resurrection is his session as King, Priest, and Prophet par excellence. Not only so but another saving consequence of Jesus' death and resurrection is also his sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

This is a more difficult one to show theologically than the others because the scripture explains and gives the event of Pentecost in Acts 2, but it doesn't go into detail in the epistles so much and explain its significance to us. And so, I will do so, relying especially on Old Testament typology fulfilled on the day of Pentecost and its supernatural manifestations that you may not have heard before, but as always, test all things by God's holy word. I've got three points.

At Pentecost, the mediator publicly proclaims the new covenant. Okay? The Old Testament predicted the new covenant. Jesus ratified it in his death.

He's the mediator of the new covenant. He ratified it in his death, but now it's publicly proclaimed. Boom! How many people were witness to the institution of the Lord's Supper? Twelve, eventually eleven.

Now, Jews are gathered by the thousands in Jerusalem. Kaboom! God pours out his spirit. There is this rushing wind.

There are manifestations going on. The apostles speak in tongues, and people are astonished because no matter where they came from in the dispersion coming to Jerusalem, they hear the praises of God in their own language. God is doing some amazing things.

In that, he's reversing Babel, for example. At Pentecost, the mediator publicly proclaims a new covenant. In all three of these, the commonality is it's Jesus.

Pentecost is his work, and it's a public deal. It's a public revelation. Number two, at Pentecost, the risen Lord publicly inaugurates the new creation.

The rushing wind is supposed to remind us of the spirit of God in Genesis 1, in God's creation. Again, the New Testament doesn't explicitly do this, and that's my own theological method. That's what I say, number one, all right? It doesn't stop me from doing theology, but I distinguish between what the text plainly says and what I'm putting together based upon, actually, in this case, the biblical story, Old Testament precedent and type, and New Testament manifestation and anti-type.

At Pentecost, the mediator publicly proclaims a new covenant, publicly inaugurates a new creation, and publicly bestows the spirit on the new community. You knew that one already. That's the easiest of the three to understand.

Number one, at Pentecost, the mediator publicly proclaims the new covenant. First of all, Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant. God worked with mediators.

Plainly, Moses was the mediator of the old covenant. Who brought the law down from the mountain? Twice, Moses. Who was the man who spoke face-to-face with God? Moses.

Who's the man who stood in God's presence and said, take my life rather than destroy these people? God says, get out of the way. I'm done with the Israelites. I'm going to start up with the Mosesites.

No, Moses said. What a pastor. Just like Paul.

Paul would have gone to hell. Romans, I always forget, the beginning of 9 or 10, he would have, he in his own heart, was willing to suffer. I guess I'm right here.

It's 9. I could wish I myself were cursed. That is the language of damnation. And cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

They are Israelites. Oh, he loved his people. Moses loved his people.

Lord, don't do that. Zap me if you're going to zap. Oh, my word.

He is the meekest man in all the earth. Would you be tempted to have your name, instead of the Israelites, Jacob's name, changed to Israel, the Mosesites? That's pretty impressive. No, no.

It's not what he wants. He wants God's glory. He wants this stubborn and stiff-necked people who are God's people by oath and covenant of blood to live like God's people, to know God.

Amazing. David is surely a covenant mediator, right? Oh, but the ultimate covenant mediator. I should have started with Abraham, I suppose.

It's not Abraham. It's not Moses. It's not David.

It is Jesus, God, and man in one person. Hebrews 9:15 says it plainly. He is the mediator of the new covenant.

Hebrews 12:24, you haven't come to the old Mount Zion, which was fearful and awesome, and the people trembled. Don't let God speak to us, Moses. You speak to us.

You've come to spiritual Mount Zion, to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant and the sprinkled blood. Hebrews 12:24. Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, fulfills the Old Testament prophecies and ushers in the last days. I commend to you a little book that my pastor and I have written called *Jesus in Prophecy, How the Life of Christ Fulfills Biblical Predictions*.

Our goal in this book is to write with an audience of seekers and new Christians. We use simple language. We show exactly; we tell the story of Jesus' life, the greatest life ever, the greatest story ever told, and how, at point after point after point, his life and death and resurrection and ascension and promised return fulfill Old Testament predictions.

Bless us by sharing that book with unsaved people and praying for them. That is our goal, to see people come to know the Lord through *Jesus in Prophecy, How the Life of Christ Fulfills Old Testament Predictions*. Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant who fulfills the Old Testament prophecies and ushers in the last days.

Jesus ratifies the new covenant by his death and resurrection. The covenant is ratified at the cross while instituting the Lord's Supper. Jesus says, quote, this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

Close quote, Luke 22:20. Matthew and Mark mentioned the covenant. Luke and Paul in First Corinthians 11 actually use the words new covenant.

Matthew and Mark mean the same thing, but Luke and Paul actually say the very words. The new covenant is in Jesus' blood because his death ratifies the covenant. That means it officially puts it into effect.

Matthew ties forgiveness—one of the predictions of the new covenant set forth in Jeremiah 31:31 to 34. Matthew ties forgiveness to the cup in the blood, quote, and he took a cup saying this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Close quote, Matthew 26:27 to 28. The forgiveness promised by the Old Testament prophets has now been realized because atonement has been accomplished. So, I'm ready for my third step.

The first two are very plain. Jesus is said to be the mediator of the new covenant. He said, and he's shown to be that, right? Number two, he himself at the Lord's institution of the Lord's Supper indicated his death ratifies that covenant.

Number three is not as clear, but the very point I'm trying to make in regards to Jesus pouring out the Spirit at Pentecost, Jesus publicly proclaims the new covenant at Pentecost. He is the mediator of the new covenant. His death ratifies it.

Now Pentecost, among other things, publicly announces it. So Jews who believed there at Pentecost and that whole week and thereafter were part of ethnic Israel, and now they became part of the new Israel of God by virtue of the new covenant predicted by Ezekiel and Jeremiah. For example, Christ performed the work needed to ratify the new covenant in his death and resurrection.

But this grand news was now broadcast 50 days after his resurrection. Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, publicly heralded that covenant at Pentecost. He did this through the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on his apostles.

I say this for three reasons. First, at Pentecost, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of John the Baptist. All four gospels, I baptize you with water, one stands in your midst, who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Didn't happen in any of the four gospels. At the end of Luke 24, we're reminded of this again. Acts 1, we hear Jesus remind us that John the Baptist again said this.

So, the linkage is just wonderful. It's so clear. Jesus recalled John's prophecy in Acts 1:5. John baptized with water, but you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

I can't get any clearer than that. And thus, Jesus baptized the church with the Spirit at Pentecost. The important point is that this is what the Old Testament prophets had predicted would happen in the last days at the dawning of the new covenant.

Isaiah 44.3, I will pour out my spirit upon your offspring and my blessing on your descendants. And it shall come to pass afterward, Joel wrote, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. I will pour out my spirit.

Joel 2:28-29. Ezekiel 36:27, and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekiel 36:27, compare Ezekiel 39:29. Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, fulfilled these Old Testament predictions along with John the Baptist predictions on the day of Pentecost. This is only possible because of his death and resurrection, which ratified the new covenant.

But God had planned to announce that covenant with a public event, and Pentecost was that event. Quoting Sinclair Ferguson in his marvelous book on the Holy Spirit, the best one that I know of on the theology of the Holy Spirit quote, Pentecost publicly marks the transition from the old to the new covenant. Second, Pentecost was Jesus heralding the new covenant because Pentecost was the fulfillment of the Old Testament type of the Tower of Babel.

You remember, in the context of the whole earth, having one language and the same words, and the people seeking to forget God and climb the heaven on their own, God, in anger, confused the language of the people so they could not understand each other and had to disperse. Michael Williams, *Far as the Cursed is Found*, the covenant story of redemption, helpfully contrasts Babel and Pentecost. At Babel, man was confused and ignorant, for he no longer spoke a common language.

But at Pentecost, mankind was amazed and confused to knowledge as they heard people from the far-flung corners of the empire communicate with one another. Rather than seeking to ascend a tower to the heavens and make a name for themselves as the people did at Babel, those gathered together at Pentecost praised God because the Spirit descended from heaven. Luke indicates in his account of Pentecost a table of nations, Acts 2: 8-12, just as the Babel story followed a table of nations, Genesis 10:1-32.

At Babel, God came to judge and scattered the nations into many tribes and tongues. At Pentecost, God comes to bless and scatter a new tribe, the church, who will take the gospel of the kingdom to many nations, close quote.

Third, Pentecost was a proclamation of the New Covenant because scripture sets Pentecost over against the giving of the law at Sinai. The New Testament itself establishes a parallel between the Old Testament given at Sinai and the New Covenant given by Jesus. Hebrews 12, I'm going to read 18-24. For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.

For they could not endure the order that was given, quote, if even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned, close quote. Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I tremble with fear. But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Hebrews 12:18-24. In this description of Mount Sinai and the giving of the commandments, the writer contrasts it with the spiritual Mount Zion, God, angels, saints in heaven, and Jesus. The old covenant is associated with trembling and fear, and the new covenant is associated with celebration and joy.

Of course, this contrast is not absolute. There's much joy among God's people in the Old Testament. Compare Psalm 100.

But the joy of the Old Testament does not compare to the joy experienced by God's New Testament people. Why? The answer is simple. What makes the new covenant new is its mediator, Jesus.

Sinclair Ferguson sums up the contrasts between Sinai and Pentecost. Quote, the revelation of God to Moses at Sinai had been accompanied by fire, wind, and a divine tongue. God spoke, and they trembled.

Moses had ascended the mountain. When he descended, he had in his possession the Ten Commandments, the law of God. Christ, too, had recently ascended.

At Pentecost, he comes down, so to speak, not with the law written on tablets of clay, but with the spirit, but with the gift of the spirit to write the law in the hearts of believers by the power, by his power, to enable them to fulfill the law's commands.

Thus, the new covenant promise begins to be fulfilled. Compare Jeremiah 31, 31, 34, Romans 8:3, and 4, 2 Corinthians 3:7 to 11.

Close quote. Even more could be said. Yahweh descends on Mount Sinai, Exodus 19, 20.

Jesus bestows the spirit who descends on and fills the apostles, Acts 2:3, and 4. Quote, as Moses experiences the glory and presence of the Lord, Exodus 24:16, 18, now all the people of God experience that presence. Close quote. Plainly, when viewed with a wide-angle lens, the new covenant broadcast by Jesus at Pentecost replaces the Old Testament of Moses brought by Moses at Sinai.

At Pentecost, the risen Lord not only publicly announces the new covenant, he publicly inaugurates the new creation. The new creation will be fully revealed only in the end. In a previous lecture, I said my own conclusion; it's a hard-won conclusion over many years, which I will not trace for you because it has ups and downs and a dislike of biblical prophecy because of teachers and their effect on me and so their over-dogmatism.

Anyway, to make a long story short, I love the coming of the Lord, I love biblical prophecy now, and my contention is every major aspect of last things is both already and not yet, both fulfilled in part and yet to be fulfilled in a greater and final way. The new creation will only be fully fulfilled in the end. Isaiah predicts that God will create new heavens and a new earth, 65:17, and 66:22.

Jesus foretells a new world, literally a regeneration, quote, when the son of man will sit on his glorious throne, and believers will inherit eternal life, Matthew 19:28. Paul prophesies the creations being, quote, set free from its bondage to corruption to obtain freedom when believers experience the redemption of their bodies, Romans 8:21-23. Peter anticipates a new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells, 2 Peter 3:13.

Finally, John sees the fulfillment of these many expectations, quote, that I saw a new heavens, heaven, and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, Revelation 21:1. At this time, quote, death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning or crying or pain anymore for the former things have passed away, verse 4 of Revelation 21. Scripture is plain.

The full manifestation of the new heavens and new earth is still the future. Anybody who tells you otherwise is guilty of what we call an overly realized eschatology, and that brings fool's gold. No, right now, things are not the way they're supposed to be.

Oh, they are glorious in a sense, and we know the Lord, and that's great, that's far better than not knowing the Lord, but we are a mess, the world is a mess. No, we

look for Jesus to come to set things right. The new creation, as I'm going to say in a minute, has come, but you haven't seen anything yet.

It certainly has not come in its fullness. Scripture is plain. The full manifestation of the new heavens and new earth is still the future, but like every other eschatological theme, the new creation is already as well as not yet.

I heard somebody say that just recently. Oh, that was me. Jesus begins a new creation by his resurrection in Colossians 1, after showing Jesus prominence, his lordship over the creation, because he was God's agent in creating it.

He says he's the head of the body of the church, and Paul says he is the beginning. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. We often skip over those words.

We don't know what they mean. The other words are pretty clear around there, but he's the beginning. Well, what's going on with that? I'm glad you asked me that class.

When Paul says Jesus is the beginning, he refers to Genesis 1:1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Christ is lord over the creation because, in the beginning, he was God's agent in creation. He is lord over the church because he is a part of, it is a part of his re-creation.

He's the beginning, not of the creation. Paul just said that. He made all things.

All things have been created by him and for him, but now he says he's the beginning and the meaning is of the new creation. He's the source of life for the church, specifically as the firstborn from the dead. He's the new creation, the firstborn from the dead.

He's the firstborn over all creation because he made it. He's the heir of everything created. He holds the highest position.

Psalm 89:27, I will ultimately make him the Davidic king of the future, the Lord Jesus. I will make him my firstborn, the ruler of the kings of the earth. Well, God did, and he reigns now by virtue of his session as king, but again, you haven't seen anything yet.

He will reign over the whole earth. I haven't said this enough. Perhaps in a millennial prelude to the new heavens and new earth, I want to acknowledge my pre-millennial brothers and sisters, but definitely and plainly, all believers agree as the king over the new heavens and new earth.

Christ's resurrection enables him to regenerate each of the church's members. In a word, his resurrection initiates the new creation. Don't misunderstand, being born again is a new creative miracle of God.

It is a supernatural work. It actually belongs to the age to come, but God, in his grace, has broken into this age so that believers, Romans 8, have eternal life in mortal bodies. That is astonishing.

How could that be? Because Jesus died and rose again, and not only so, but because he poured out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, thereby publicly inaugurating the new creation. Furthermore, God was pleased, Paul writes in Colossians 1, through Christ to reconcile to himself all things. Verse 20, here, all things include, as I argued yesterday in a previous lecture, angels save human beings and the heavens and earth.

That angels are involved is shown in verse 16, which refers to all things in heaven, visible, invisible, and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities. Christ reconciles evil angels by subjugating them to maintain his peaceable kingdom. Compare Colossians 2:15. That human beings are reconciled is shown by the two verses that follow Colossians 1:20. And you who once were alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds, he is now reconciled in the body of his flesh by death.

That the heavens and earth are reconciled is shown by comparing verses 16 and 20. By him, all things were created in heaven and on earth, verse 16, and then verse 20, God was pleased through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven. As God incarnate reconciled all things, as God incarnate, excuse me, Christ reconciled all things, all created reality.

Doug Moo's comments on Colossians 1:20 are correct. Quote, God's work in Christ has a view, has in view, a reclamation of the entire universe, tainted as it is by human sin, Romans 8:19 to 22. At the very end of these lectures, I'm going to summarize things by, among other things, talking about the directions of the work of Christ.

Surely Christ's saving work, especially his death and resurrection, is directed toward his people. It is toward us. It is directed toward our enemies to destroy them and defeat them and condemn them.

Most profoundly, it is directed toward the life of God himself in propitiation, reconciliation, and cleansing of heaven itself. This is an astonishing notion that we'll see later on, but in the fact that the work of Christ is directed toward individuals and the church, it also is directed toward the creation. And Romans 8 says, in effect, there'll be a new heavens and new earth.

Paul doesn't use the words, but the ideas are there. A renovated creation, freed from the curse because Jesus redeemed it with his blood. And Colossians 1 explicitly says he reconciled all things in heaven and earth.

There will be a new heavens and new earth because the work of Christ is so monumental. It not only has to do with God himself, it not only has to do with our enemies; it saves us, the church, and it saves, if you will, the heavens and the earth. What a work.

What a savior. What a work. Let's take two hours out now and have a worship service.

It would be appropriate indeed. I mentioned in passing, this does not entail absolute universalism. We would distort Paul's language if we understood all things in heaven and earth to mean every single human being will be saved because they won't.

The savior of the world spoke the most about eternal destinies, including eternal hell, Jesus plainly taught. The wicked, the goats, Matthew 25, 46, will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. The new creation will only be fully revealed in the end.

Jesus begins a new creation by his resurrection, and that is why we have eternal life in mortal bodies right now. But Jesus publicly inaugurates the new creation at Pentecost. Though the new creation will only be fully disclosed at Jesus' return, he began the new creation when he died and arose, but it was not publicly manifested then.

Its public manifestation occurred on the day of Pentecost. I say this for two reasons, one found in John 20, the other found in Acts 2. Jesus' acted prophecy in John 20:21 to 23, recalls Genesis 2:7. In the Old Testament, prophets spoke the word of God, in times they acted the word of God. Think of poor Hosea in that regard, whose life and marriage to a woman with an inclination toward adultery became a prophetic series of actions illustrating Israel's waywardness and spiritual adultery to her husband, the Lord.

Those were hard prophetic actions. Man, people didn't volunteer, I want to be a prophet, I don't think so. They didn't, Amos; I don't want to be a prophet; that's not my job; it's understandable.

And poor Jeremiah, anyway, God chose them, and they were faithful for the most part, sometimes reluctantly like Jonah, and they spoke the word of God, and they acted out the word of God, even reluctant Jonah acted out the death and resurrection of the Redeemer to come, although surely he didn't even understand that. In Acts 20:21, Jesus says, as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. He then performs a prophetic action to equip them for their mission of preaching the gospel.

John writes, quote, and when Jesus had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.

John 20:22, 23. Jesus, breathing on the disciples, recalls God's breathing into Adam, the breath of life. Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature, a *nephesh hayah*, Genesis 2:7. Even as God, the creator, granted his human creature life by a divine act of in-breathing, so the risen Christ, the recreator, by his prophetic act, promises to give spiritual life to his disciples.

Jesus symbolically predicts the reception of the spirit at Pentecost. Christ's action of breathing on his disciples while saying, receive the Holy Spirit, foretells that Pentecost will be the beginning of the new creation of God. The wind of Acts 2:2, moreover, recalls Genesis 1:2. The sounds of Pentecost point to another Old Testament connection.

Suddenly, there came from heaven, this is a quote, a sound like a mighty rushing wind, something like that, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting, Acts 2:1, and 2. Ferguson notes, quote, the sound like the blowing of a violent wind echoes the imagery of the powerful operation of the *ruah elohim*, spirit of God, of creation, Genesis 1:2, suggesting that the event about to take place marks the beginning of a new world order, close quote. It's important to note that one Hebrew word means breath, wind, and spirit and that the same meanings hold true for the Greek word *pneuma*. So, when Luke refers to the mighty rushing wind that filled the house, he is symbolically speaking of the mighty spirit of God that Jesus Christ, the anointed one, was pouring on his apostles.

What is the significance of the wind in Acts 2:2, recalling the spirit of God from Genesis 1:2? Dennis Johnson has not written many books, but they are good, and he has a wonderful book, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption*. He is so careful, so thoughtful. I'll stop singing his praises, but his students just commend his teaching and his life.

Dennis Johnson answers well, saying that the sound of wind signaled the arrival of the spirit that made the dead alive. The wind was the breath of God breathed into the new humanity. Pentecost was a new creation.

The coming of the spirit at Pentecost marked a major step in God's restoration of his creation in the last days. Again, quoting Johnson, Dennis Johnson, quote now things fall apart, and suffering and death dog our steps, but the reversal of cosmic entropy has begun in the resurrection of Jesus. Faith in the name of Jesus germinating from the spirit's witness is the seed from which the restoration of all things will grow, which is a close quote.

Not yet are the new heavens and the new earth, but because Jesus died and rose again, the new creation has already begun, and he publicly inaugurated it on the day of Pentecost by sending the spirit in a new and powerful way. Amen. In our next lecture, we will finish up Pentecost as Jesus' work and an essential result of his death and resurrection as we will think about how, at Pentecost, Jesus publicly gave the spirit to the new community.

Thank you.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christ's saving work. This is session 13, 9 Saving Works, Essential Results, Part 2. Sending the Spirit at Pentecost.