

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 14, Essential Results, Part 3, Pentecost, Jesus's Intercession, and Second Coming, Six Pictures of Christ's Saving Work, Substitution, Victory, Sacrifice, Restoration, Redemption, Reconciliation, Part 1

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christ's saving work. This is session 14, 9 Saving Works, Essential Results, Part 3, Pentecost, Jesus's Intercession, and Second Coming, Six Pictures of Christ's Saving Work, Substitution, Victory, Sacrifice, Restoration, Redemption, Reconciliation, Part 1, Reconciliation.

Our Lord's death and resurrection are his unique saving events, and they have awesome and necessary results for the people of God.

Jesus ascended, he sat down at God's right hand, and Pentecost is as much the work of Jesus as are any of the other nine saving events. He died on the cross; he rose from the grave, and he and the Father, as a matter of fact, poured out the Spirit at Pentecost. At Pentecost, the Lord Jesus Christ publicly announced the new covenant, publicly proclaimed the new creation, and publicly bestowed the Spirit on the new community.

The Gospel of John presents a difficult word in John 7:39, quote, as yet the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified. Actually, literally, it says, for the Spirit was not yet. Of course, John does not mean the Holy Spirit did not exist before Jesus' glorification.

He actually says the Spirit worked in the world previously. Rather, John here points to the same reality that Jesus speaks of in John 14:15 and 16. Jesus, on the day of Pentecost, gave the Holy Spirit to the people of God in a new and powerful manner.

This involves at least four truths. Number one, the fullness of salvation arrives. The people of God were always saved by grace through faith.

Before the cross, God saved people based upon the work of Christ, yet in the future. So, Jesus' death and resurrection did not bring salvation for the first time. Indeed, his achievement was so great as to be the basis of salvation at any time in redemptive history.

In a similar way, Pentecost does not represent the beginning of the Holy Spirit's work in the world. Instead, it represents the work of salvation in a grander and fuller way than previously. This is true because the risen, exalted Christ sends the Spirit as his Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

Sinclair Ferguson captures this truth. Until the exaltation of Christ, I'm quoting, the Spirit of God could not be received in his specific economic identity as the Spirit of the ascended Christ. By means of Christ's exaltation, he would be.

During the days of his humiliation, the Spirit of Christ was on Christ and, therefore, in this sense, with his disciples. But at his exaltation, Christ would breathe his Spirit on his disciples. He would now indwell them in his identity as the Spirit of the exalted Savior.

A huge transition in redemptive history occurred at Pentecost. And this affects believers' relationship with the Son and the Spirit. Faith in Christ was never so explicit.

Only now, Jesus can be believed on as the risen, vindicated Lord. And the Spirit comes with newness and power. This is because, quote, beginning with the Pentecost converts themselves, the meaning of this, the receiving of the Spirit in full new covenant blessing, has been one aspect of their conversion and new birth.

Another good book on the Spirit is Graham Cole's book, *He Who Gives Life*. There's a subtitle mentioning the Holy Spirit, but Graham Cole is a wonderful Australian theologian with a great spirit, a magnanimous spirit, and a real emphasis upon exegesis as well as a knowledge of historical and systematic theology. New power for witness is given in the bestowal of the Spirit by Jesus at Pentecost.

Wayne Grudem summarizes that disciples, however, do not receive this full new covenant empowering for ministry until the day of Pentecost. This new covenant power gave the disciples more effectiveness in their witness and their ministry. Acts 1:8, Ephesians 4:8, and Ephesians 4:11-13. Much greater power for victory over the influence of sin in the lives of all believers.

Romans 6, Romans 8, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:10. And power for victory over Satan and demonic forces that would attack believers. 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, Ephesians 1:19-21, 1 John 4:4. I'll stop with the texts. The new community was constituted as Jesus publicly bestows the Spirit at Pentecost.

Christ formed a new community, the New Testament Church, when he gave the Spirit at Pentecost. Another important way of speaking of the new community of God's people is with temple imagery. At Pentecost, the church becomes God's temple.

The revered Reformed theologian Hermann Bavink wrote of this matter. But it was only on the day of Pentecost that he made the church into his temple. A temple he perpetually sanctifies, builds up, and never again abandons.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit confers an independent existence on the Church of Christ. It is now no longer enclosed within the circle of Israel's existence as a people and within the boundaries of Palestine but lives independently by the Spirit who lives within it, expands over the whole earth, and reaches out to all peoples. God, by his Spirit, now moves from the temple on Zion to take up residence in the body of Christ's Church, which is consequently born on this very day, Pentecost, as a mission and world church.

Hermann Bavink's great theology, *Reformed Theology*, was in Dutch for many years but only translated in the last 10 or 15 years into English. It is magnificent. It is magnificent.

He was raised in a very conservative Dutch church, and it was frowned upon to do what he did. He went away from the church seminary, which was very safe and conservative, to the great big Dutch world seminary, which was very eclectic and, as a matter of fact, liberal. He studied under the leading liberals of his day in Holland and came out unscathed, firm in his belief but totally knowledgeable of the current theologies.

Thus, he's able to speak the truth; oh, he is solid, into late 19th or early 20th-century liberalism without peer. It's marvelous—his Reformed dogmatics.

Three big volumes, one reduced volume, reduced in size. Jesus' central saving deeds were his death and resurrection. They were so efficacious as to produce awesome and permanent effects in other saving deeds.

One of those deeds was Pentecost when Christ baptized his church with the Holy Spirit. Pentecost was Jesus' unrepeatable redemptive historical act. There he, as mediator, publicly heralded the new covenant.

He previously ratified it, but now he makes it known. As risen Lord, he publicly began the new creation. As the Christ, he publicly gave the spirit to his church, thereby constituting it as a new community.

Little carburetor trouble, excuse me. Our next saving event is Jesus' intercession. The saving work of Christ does not conclude with his ascension session and Pentecost.

The ascension is his transition from the earthly ministry to his heavenly one. When Christ ascends to heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, he begins his

heavenly ministry of intercession. How exactly does this heavenly ministry of intercession save us? First, it saves us because it is the completion of Christ's priestly work.

Christ's intercession is emphatically not the completion of his sacrificial work. His sacrificial work was forever finished on the cross. In fact, he himself, according to John 19, said it is finished.

However, his sacrificial work was not the end of his priestly work. After making a final sacrifice for sins, he rose again, ascended to heaven, sat down at God's right hand, and poured out the spirit on the church. As a result of these prior saving events, he now makes intercession for the sinners he came to save.

Even now, the exalted Christ in heaven is making continual and effective intercession for his people, thus guaranteeing our final salvation. This leads to the second way his intercession saves us. It saves us because it is one means by which God enables his people to continue in faith and obedience.

It is God's plan that his elect perseveres in faith and obedience, Romans 8:29 and 30. One means by which God accomplishes his plan is the intercessory work of his son in Romans 8:34. Christ's intercession involves the Father and the Spirit.

It is priestly, it is continual, it is effective, and it is particular. It may seem strange to suggest that Christ needed to do more than to die on the cross to ensure a believer's final salvation. However, the multifaceted problem of sin requires a multifaceted solution.

Christ's saving events must address the whole panorama of human sinfulness in order to provide complete salvation. If Christ's sinless life, death, resurrection, session, and sending of the spirit are necessary for the believer's justification, then what is necessary for the believer's perseverance until final salvation? The biblical answer is all of these events, plus his intercession and return. His intercession in Romans 8:34 is his prayer on our behalf.

His intercession as I said previously in these lectures on in Hebrews 7:25 is his presentation of his sacrifice in his person to the Father in heaven. Hebrews 7 says he lives by the power of an indestructible life, and therefore because he lives forever as the risen now ascended seated and interceding because he lives forever as the living one he lives forever to make intercession for his people, thereby assuring us of eternal salvation. Christ our Lord, in his priestly ministry, not only died on the cross, but he also intercedes for us in prayer and by perpetually presenting his sacrifice in the Father's presence in heaven.

Our Savior is at God's right hand, maintaining our salvation forever. Christ's second coming is the culmination of his saving work. Two essential preconditions incarnation of sinless life.

The core events are only his death and resurrection, which we should regard as inseparable, but then five essential results of those two core events occur and are occurring, and one of them still will occur. The death and resurrection of Jesus are so awesome, wonderful and effective that they resulted in his ascending, sitting down at God's right hand, pouring out the spirit both praying for us in his heavenly ministry of intercession Romans 8:34 and presenting his sacrifice before the Father perpetually Hebrews 7:24 and 25 and his saving work will be perfectly and finally culminated in his second coming. My favorite book is still on Last Things, and I'm biased. I admit it is Anthony Hoekema's book *The Bible and the Future*.

Quote the expectation quoting Hoekema, the expectation of Christ's second advent is the most important aspect of New Testament eschatology, so much so in fact that the faith of the New Testament church is dominated by this expectation every book of the New Testament points us to the return of Christ and urges us to live in such a way as to be always ready for that return. This same lively expectation of Christ's return should mark the church of Christ today. He wrote that 50 years ago but it is just as important in our day.

Tony Hoekema *The Bible and the Future*. There is a sense then that the second coming saves when Christ returns, and he brings the final application of his saving work. That work was accomplished in his death and resurrection, but following these events, the second coming triggers the final outworking of the saving purposes of God.

Already, we have salvation, but things are not yet what they will be when he returns. Scripture gives at least seven particular ways in which Jesus' second coming saves. His return means our being with him and the father.

In John 14, he said, In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again. I love those words.

And take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also. Here, Jesus likens heaven to a large house with many rooms. And I knew people here in my home state of St. Louis who had dear friends who moved away and their kids were grown and gone.

So, the people who stayed in St. Louis said to their beloved friends, If you ever come back to our hometown here and don't visit us, we'll be mad at you, they said tongue in cheek. As a matter of fact, you can see that your name is now on this former

child's bedroom. What were they doing? They were funny to show seriously how welcome those friends would be when they visited again.

In a similar way, Jesus has gone to the Father's heavenly house to prepare a room for us. In other words, it's symbolic language for the fact that the Father knows us, the Father loves us, He welcomes us, and we belong to Him. How wonderful to belong to God, the Father of all.

Paul teaches the same truth. And so, Jesus promises to come back and take us to be with Him and the Father. And, of course, with the Holy Spirit.

Paul teaches the same truth when he clears up the Thessalonians' confusion concerning Jesus' return. Paul had preached about Jesus' return and the blessings of it. And the Thessalonians were so excited that they were looking for Jesus to come.

And then some of their numbers started to die. And they said, what is going on here? They didn't expect that. And they wondered, are our dead believers going to miss out on the return of Christ? Jesus says, no, not at all.

He explains. They will not miss out. But Jesus, when He comes back, will raise them from the dead.

Then we who are alive, who are left and don't die, who are left when Jesus comes back, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will always be with the Lord. Remember, Jesus said, I'll come and take you to be with myself.

That is where I am; you may also be. Heaven, in both its intermediate and final stages, is being with the Lord. Salvation is here expressed as being with Jesus forever.

Our eternal destination will not be a spiritual incorporeal without the body existence in heaven, but rather a resurrected, holistic existence with the Trinity and all the saints on the new earth. Jesus' return brings Him glory. Our citizenship in heaven, Paul said in Philippians 3, our citizenship is in heaven.

From there we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself. And Colossians 3:4, when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Our true identity is so bound up with Christ that that verse teaches that there is a sense that we're going to have a second coming.

When He appears in glory, we're going to appear in glory. Appearing there is a second-coming word in that context. What is the sense? The sense is we're so joined

to Him in union with Christ that although we now enjoy some of those fruits, our true identity will not be revealed until He comes again and reveals who we truly are in Him.

The meaning is all sin will be gone, and again, our bodies will be changed to be like His body. All of that brings Him the glory He rightly deserves. Jesus' return means brings eternal life.

In the sheep and the goats passage in Matthew 25, three times Jesus uses the order sheep and goats. Three times He says those words. And then at the punch line at the end, He reverses the words, the order, and says goats and sheep, thereby bringing emphasis to these very final words.

Matthew 25:31. When the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. He'll gather all the nations, and He'll separate the people from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

That's one time. He'll place the sheep on His right hand, the goats on His left, two times. And then it gets extended.

Then the King will say to those on His right, that'd be the sheep, and He goes on, come and receive the kingdom prepared for you because you ministered to me when you ministered to the least of these. That's saying. And then He talks to the goats, depart from me. You are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels because they did not demonstrate true faith by loving His people in need.

So, it's sheep, goats, sheep, goats, sheep, goats, and then 46. I should say it this way. It's sheep, goats, sheep, goats, and then sheep, goats, in extended words, and then 46.

These, plainly the goats, will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life where both destinies are modified by the same adjective, ainos, or eternal. Yes, it means age long, with the age defined by the context, and the age to come is defined by the life of God Himself.

Hell never ends, and neither does heaven, the bliss of heaven. Jesus returned, that is, brings eternal life. The reversal of the order to goats and sheep is emphatic.

It gets our attention. So, the very last word in the teaching of Jesus is eternal life. That's what He brings.

The very last chapter of the Bible says, blessed are those who wash their robes. The meaning is in the blood, the sacrificial death of the Lamb. Blessed are those who

believe in Christ, our sacrifice, so that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, Revelation 22:14.

The tree representing eternal life with God was found in the Garden of Eden and reappeared at the end of the biblical story. When Jesus comes again, He brings eternal life. He brings joy.

That same verse, blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life. Truly happy are those, and it's so good of God to tell us these kind of things ahead of time, because we have the joy of anticipation, but the joy of anticipation is nothing compared to the joy of actual realization and being in the Lord's presence. His return brings joy.

That's why Paul urges the people of God, writing to Titus as a pastor and applying to all God's children, to look for the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us. He calls this our blessed hope. This hope inspires joy in the heart of every brother and sister in Christ.

The hope of the Lord and Savior's coming again fills Christians with joy as they anticipate being with Him forever. Jesus' return brings deliverance. He'll deliver His people from persecution, according to 2 Thessalonians 1:6 and following.

God considers it just to repay those with affliction, those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you as well who are afflicted when Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels and flaming fire. 2 Thessalonians 1:6 through 8. Second, Christ will deliver His people from eternal punishment. 1 Thessalonians 1:10.

The peoples around the Thessalonians, the cities around them, report how you turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God. And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 1:9 and 10.

Jesus' return brings the kingdom and our inheritance, back to Matthew 25, sheep and the goats. To the sheep He says, Come, you who are blessed by my Father.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Matthew 25:31. Matthew 25:34, excuse me.

Here, Jesus combines familial and royal imagery. You are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom.

That's just God's way to mix the metaphors beautifully. God is our Father, and all who trust His Son for salvation become God's children and receive an inheritance. God is also King, as is His Son.

And the inheritance of the sons and daughters of God is the kingdom God prepared for them from the foundation of the world. If we put all scripture together, our inheritance is nothing less than the Holy Trinity and the new heaven and new earth. In other words, everything.

Jesus' return, as we've seen a couple of times now, brings cosmic restoration. Peter speaks of Jesus' suffering and calls on His hearers in Jerusalem to repent. The results? That the penitent hearers may know the forgiveness of sins, personally, and that, quote, times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all things.

Acts 1:20 and 21. Jesus' return will bring many blessings for His people. It will also result in God's restoring all things, according to Old Testament prophetic prediction.

Here again, the second coming issues forth in the new heavens and new earth foretold by Isaiah 65:17, 66:22, and 23. We have actually covered Jesus' nine saving events. As I said before, events are not self-interpreting, not even God's events.

Unfortunately, the leaders of Israel some of them, stood at the foot of the cross and mocked, ironically, in fulfillment of their own scriptures, Psalm 22, for example. Mocked their Christ. Hmm.

Crucify, crucify. May His blood be on us and our children. Oh, those words are chilling to me.

May God have mercy on Jews and Gentiles in our time until Jesus comes again. Surely, all the soldiers who were involved didn't repent and didn't believe in Jesus.

One centurion did. Surely this man was the son of God, he said. Amazingly, one of the two thieves crucified on Jesus' right and left hand believed.

Lord, remember me when you come in your kingdom. And Jesus says, today you'll be with me in paradise. But many, most of those who observed that event and who were actually there, didn't understand.

Even the disciples ran away. They didn't comprehend. This means we're going to, we're winning.

No, they fled. Peter denied his Lord. The rest fled, except perhaps for John.

So, God is the acting God. He's also the speaking God. He combines deed and word revelation to give deed hyphen word revelation.

He acts, and he interprets his actions. How gracious he is for us, his people. And the Bible is a storybook.

The story is about creation, rebellion, salvation, or redemption. Israel and the church are subsets there. And then the consummation in the new resurrection of the dead and new heavens and new earth.

But it's also a picture book. It's a storybook that gives events, that tells events. We've studied nine events of Jesus.

The most important of which are his death and resurrection. But God also paints pictures to interpret those events. The Bible is a storybook.

There are events, nine awesome events. Everything from the incarnation of the second coming of Christ. But God doesn't leave it to us to interpret these things on our own.

Indeed, the New Testament's major purpose is to interpret these saving events of Christ and apply them to the people of God. God does it with many pictures. And I count six major pictures to interpret the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we want to work our way through these pictures. One at a time. That we might better understand what Jesus did for us.

The pictures all say the same thing. We were in serious trouble. And God loved us in his son.

And Jesus rescues us from our sins. And yet God does it in such a way that it is beautiful. And we see six major pictures of Christ's saving accomplishment.

There's a picture of substitution. In which Jesus pays the penalty for his people. A picture of victory.

Christ, our champion, overcomes our foes and leads us in victory now and total victory at his return. There's a picture from the cultus, the worship of Old Testament Israel in Tabernacle and Temple. A picture of priestly sacrifice.

Where our Lord is both priest and sacrifice. Offering himself once and for all to purify us. There's a second Adam new creation picture, I call it.

In which Jesus restores what we lost in Adam. He brought death. Christ brings life through his obedience.

There's a picture of redemption. Whereby Jesus sets the captives free by his death and resurrection. We will also begin with this one.

There's a picture of reconciliation. In which our Lord makes peace between those who are alienated and God. And I'm going to argue that is a reflex action to his making peace between God and those who are alienated.

There are four main Pauline texts. Reconciliation is a Pauline teaching. They're found in Romans 5:1-11.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Ephesians 2:11-19. And Colossians 1:19-23.

We're going to look at each of these pictures in turn. And begin by seeing the sphere from which the metaphor, the motif, the image, and the picture are drawn. Reconciliation is a picture of Christ saving work drawn from the area of personal relations.

Of people knowing each other, loving each other, hating each other. It has to do with enmity and friendship. With foes and friends.

In a nutshell, we were God's foes because of our sins. And he acted in his son to make peace so that his foes became his friends. Unlike the other pictures, this one does not seem to have an Old Testament background.

A case can be made that its background is the Jewish martyr tradition, as expressed in 2 Maccabees. And that may well be the case. But most importantly, unlike the other five pictures, which are grounded in the Old Testament, this seems not to be such.

Definition. Paul defines it as peacemaking or making peace. Colossians 1:19-20.

For in him, Christ, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Reconciliation is peacemaking.

Since reconciliation is a picture belonging to the realm of personal relations, the need for reconciliation is broken relations, fractured relations, if you will. Romans 5:10. We were enemies of God, Paul writes.

Colossians 1:21. We were alienated and hostile in our minds to God. The initiator and the goal of reconciliation we consider next.

In Paul, God, the offended party, takes the initiative. As a sometime pastor, I've never been solely a pastor. I've always been a professor, now a retired one, who did

interim pastoral stints about, I don't know, 10 times or something at different churches in different states and enjoy it thoroughly. Sometimes I was called upon to do marriage counseling, and sometimes it's like Mohammed in the mountain.

There's a real problem between husband and wife, and neither party will move. My understanding is that male headship means that husbands make the first move. We take the lead in humbling ourselves as the leader in the relationship.

Yes, there's sin on both sides and sometimes really, stuff is really built up. But we're called to be servant leaders as Jesus was. And in any case, in this regard, we could not take the initiative to make peace with God.

God didn't have to take the initiative, but in grace, deciding to save us, did that very thing. God, the offended party, takes the initiative and accomplishes the reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18, Paul says, All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself.

Shockingly, in the first-century Greek context, which speaks of reconciliation, not the Old Testament, but Greek does, quoting a real Greek expert, Stanley Porter, amazingly, quote, Paul is the first attested Greek author to speak of the offended party, God, initiating reconciliation using the active voice of the verb, close quote. Porter reminds us, quote, Indeed, the initiator of reconciliation is always God. These are my words. Excuse me now.

Sometimes the Father, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, Colossians 1:20, and sometimes the Son, Ephesians 2:14-16. God himself is not only the initiator of reconciliation, but also its goal. In all the uses of the verb of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5, verses 18, 19, 20, the object or goal of the action is God. We are reconciled to God.

As a matter of fact, Scripture never says God is reconciled to us. I think it implies it. I think it means it.

But you know my theological method by now. It does not say it, and I freely admit that. So, my theological move is based, takes that into account, and works with the evidence to draw a conclusion the Bible doesn't specifically say.

H. Dermot McDonald, whose wonderful work on the history of the doctrine of the atonement I exploited much previously in these lectures, wrote, He himself is our peace. Ephesians 2 uses that language in verse 14. Christ is our personal peace or peacemaker.

Christ must be God and man in one person for this to be accomplished. His deity is taught in Colossians 1:19. In him all the fullness of deity was pleased to dwell.

And through him, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things. Jesus' humanity is underscored by references to the blood of his cross, his body of flesh, and his death. Every reconciliation passage, all four, communicates that Christ is the mediator of reconciliation.

This is done with the use of prepositions. Reconciliation was made through, by, or in Christ. Romans 5:1, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:13, but now, in Christ Jesus, you once were far off, you Gentiles, have been brought near. 2 Corinthians 5:18, all this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself. Colossians 1:19 and 20.

For in him, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through him reconcile all things to himself. The mediator of salvation in every way you look at it.

So here, specifically in reconciliation, is the Lord Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, the focus of reconciliation is on the person and work of Christ. Demonstrating one of our theological principles at the beginning, the introduction of Christology.

His person and work are inseparable. The work in reconciliation, the focus on the atonement, is on the atonement, not his resurrection, it's on the atonement. Accomplished by the death of his son, Romans 5:10. Through the cross, Ephesians 2:16. By the blood of the cross and in the body of his flesh by his death, Colossians 1:20.22. In one place, Paul does mention the resurrection of Jesus as the basis of reconciliation.

Romans 5:10 includes both his death and resurrection in his reconciling work. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. It is a mistake, however, to divide Christ's saving accomplishment between his death and resurrection based on this text.

Rather, Schreiner is correct. Romans 5:11, reminiscent of Romans 4:25. Christ's death and resurrection are inseparable in effecting salvation. Scope.

Christ's saving work of reconciliation is so great that it operates on multiple levels. Individual, corporate, and cosmic. Individual reconciliation brings sinners one at a time into God's family.

Corporate reconciliation makes peace between God and groups of people, constituting churches. Graham Cole's comment is pithy. Enmity gives way to embrace.

Cosmic reconciliation serves, quote, to unite all things in him. Things in heaven and things on earth, Ephesians 1:10. How did this occur? Again, quoting, for in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through him, they reconciled to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross, Colossians 1:19, 20. This universal uniting brings harmony or reconciliation to God's universe.

It involves the subjugation of the powers, Colossians 2:14, and the unification of the church, Ephesians 2. But this cosmic reconciliation is not universalism, which contradicts the truth of scripture. Everybody will not be saved. Aspects.

Paul distinguishes two inseparable aspects of reconciliation. First, Christ's unique accomplishment of reconciliation on the cross, an empty tomb, is the foundation of reconciliation. Second, reconciliation also includes Christian preaching that reconciling atonement.

God gave us the ministry of reconciliation. He entrusted to us the message of reconciliation, 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. We may call these objective and subjective aspects to reconciliation, respectively. Objectively, Jesus' saving work reconciles.

Subjectively, people need to believe to be saved. And God has made us ambassadors of Christ's reconciliation. Again, 2 Corinthians 5. Douglas Moo, a very favorite commentator of mine, achieves a healthy balance distinguishing or not separating the two aspects.

Quote, reconciliation in Paul has two aspects or moments. The accomplishment of reconciliation through Christ on the cross and the acceptance of that completed work by the believer. Naturally, while the focus can be on one of these moments or the other, the reconciling activity of God is ultimately one act.

And in the present verse, Romans 5:10, the complete process is in view. Is God reconciled, too? Scripture never says that God reconciled himself to us. Many have concluded, however, that most who think about this deeply, that he was reconciled and that this is even more basic than reconciling us to himself.

I need to be clear. We needed to be reconciled to God due to our sin and alienation. He did not need to be reconciled with us because he was doing wrong.

He does not do wrong. He's holy. But does our sin also constitute a barrier on God's side? So, he also needed to be reconciled to us because of our sin and hostility against him? I. Howard Marshall, the famous New Testament scholar, wrote, The reality of final judgment as the active response to human sin is an absolutely central part of the predicament from which sinners need to be saved.

This is indeed the biblical starting point. Of course, our sin is the cause of the predicament, both from our side and God's. But it is wrong to assume that our sin has no effect upon God. As John Stott explains, Quote, Whenever the verb to reconcile occurs in the New Testament, either God is the subject, he reconciled us to himself, or if the verb is passive, we are, we were reconciled to him.

Never is God the object. It is never said that Christ reconciled the Father to us. Formally, linguistically, this is a fact.

But we must be careful not to build too much on it theologically. It is a mistake to think that the barrier between God and us, which necessitated the work of reconciliation, was entirely on our side. So that we needed to be reconciled, and God did not.

True, we were God's enemies, hostile to him in our hearts, but the enmity was on both sides. The wall or barrier between God and us was constituted both by our rebellion against him and by his wrath upon us on account of our rebellion. If we could conceive of a marital fight in which one party was totally innocent, we may or may not be able to conceive that.

I know some that were pretty much that way. I would illustrate the fact that there is enmity, and it needs to be dealt with on both sides, even in human relationships. Doug Moo agrees.

Paul may mean by this simply that we rebellious sinners are hostile to God, violating his laws and putting other gods in his place. But as Paul has repeatedly affirmed in this letter, Romans 1:18, 3:25, God is also hostile, in quotation marks, I would say justly hostile toward us. Our sins have justly incurred his wrath, which stands as a sentence over us.

Romans 1:19 and 32. To be climactically carried out on the day of judgment, 2:5. Probably then, the enmity to which Paul refers here, Romans 5:10, includes God's hostility toward human beings as well as human beings' hostility toward God.

Outside of Christ, people are in a situation of enmity with God. And in reconciliation, it is that status or relationship that changes. We go from being God's enemies to being his children, Romans 8:14-17.

Moo's conclusion is correct in the greater context of Romans as well as in the immediate context of Romans 5:9 and 10. God, as well as human beings, need to be reconciled if we would be saved. Mysteriously, the work of Christ affected God himself.

God reconciles God. I say mysteriously for a reason. It is not good for us to pretend to understand the things of God better than we do.

Leon Morris reminds us that we understand God's reconciling himself to us only in part. I say it this way. It is good for us to be put in our place.

Proud theology has no place in the kingdom of God. Oh, my word. If these truths don't humble us to make us worshippers, to make us an understanding of fellow sinners who do dumb things and terrible things without the Lord, then we're in trouble because perhaps we have forgotten the grace of God to us.

Leon Morris, in his commentary on Romans, writes, Thus we may speak of God as being reconciled. It may be necessary, indeed it is necessary, to use the term carefully when we apply it to God. But then, does not this happen with all our language? When we say God is reconciled to man, this does not mean that, due to various imperfections, he completely altered his attitude toward man.

Rather, it is our groping way of expressing the conviction that, though he reacts in the strongest possible way against sin in every shape and form, so that man comes under his condemnation, yet when reconciliation is effected, when peace is made between man and God, then that condemnation is removed. God now looks at human beings no longer as the objects of his holy and righteous wrath but as the objects of his love and his blessing. St. Augustine said it, as he said so many things memorably: here's the miracle of the gospel that when God hated us for our sins, he loved us in his Son.

God's reconciling us to himself, then, is a reflex action to his simultaneous but logically prior reconciliation of himself to us. In our next lecture, we will explore another one of these six biblical pictures, major pictures of Christ's saving work, that of redemption.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christ's saving work. This is session 14, 9 Saving Works, Essential Results, Part 3, Pentecost, Jesus's Intercession, and Second Coming, Six Pictures of Christ's Saving Work, Substitution, Victory, Sacrifice, Restoration, Redemption, Reconciliation, Part 1, Reconciliation.