

# **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 7, Foundations for Union with Christ, Old Testament, and Synoptics**

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on the Holy Spirit and Union with Christ. This is session 7, Foundations for Union with Christ, Old Testament, and Synoptics.

As we continue thinking about the Old Testament foundations for union with Christ under incorporation into the people of God, we have a little section on the suffering servant.

While David is the last significant covenant mediator in the Old Testament, the prophets foreshadow a coming covenant mediator who will be both a Davidic King, Isaiah 9, 6 and 7, and also a suffering servant. Isaiah 9, 6, For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness, from this time forth and forevermore.

And in case we think this is going to happen by human will or power, the Lord adds through the prophet, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. So, the covenant mediator to come will be a Davidic King, but also a suffering servant. This servant is to be a light to the nations, functioning as one who will represent not only Israel but all the peoples of the earth, Isaiah 49 and 6 tells us.

Is it too light a thing that you should be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to bring back the preserved of Israel, Isaiah 49, 6? I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth, quoted by Luke in the book of Acts as the gospel goes to the Gentiles. Thus, he will reprove, not just excuse me. Thus, he will represent not just ethnic Israel like Abraham but all peoples like Adam. He'll come not as a reigning king, but will be Isaiah 53:3 and 4, at least in his first coming.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

He was, verses 5 and 6 of Isaiah 53 tell us, pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his

wounds we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

In his humiliation, the servant functions as a covenant mediator, taking the punishment his people deserve for their sin so that many may be accounted righteous. Isaiah 53:11. The Apostle, because many will be accounted, he'll make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Isaiah 53:11. The Apostle Peter identifies him for us in the words of Isaiah 53 in 1 Peter 2 verses 21 and 24. Peter quotes the prophecy from Isaiah and directly applies it to the Lord Jesus.

For to this, you have been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you as an example, leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps. He himself, verse 24, bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. 22, he committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth, is a quotation from Isaiah 53.

We said three big pictures in the Old Testament foundation of union with Christ. The first one was identification. God's presence gives his people an identification.

They are his people, and he is their God. The second one is incorporation. They became covenant people, a collective covenant people.

The third one is participation. The Old Testament people of God share in the covenantal story. We are united to Christ as members of his body and are incorporated in him as the ultimate covenant mediator.

We also participate in Jesus and his story. We died with him, we were raised with him, Colossians 2:20, Colossians 3:1, and sat down with him, Ephesians 2:6. The Old Testament does not speak in these terms but has a similar concept of participation in God's story when God includes his people in his story. While this idea becomes more explicit in the New Testament, the Old Testament views God's people as those who participate in the narrative God writes by being in relationship with him through covenants.

This principle of participation pertains to the concepts we've already studied. When God's covenantal presence makes his people and gives his people an identity, they experience his presence and thereby participate in his story. So, for example, when God makes a covenant with Abraham and his seed, he thereby incorporates them into his people, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob know God and love him as they walk with him in faith and obedience.

In a sense, Old Testament saints experience God's presence and belong to his people as a foretaste of union with Christ enjoyed by New Testament saints. There is more. The Old Testament also contains passages in which God promises to put his spirit within his people.

We will consider two of them. Ezekiel 36:24 through 28. This passage is a new covenant passage without using those very words, but it's a New Testament covenant passage by virtue of the ideas conveyed.

Ezekiel 36:24 to 28. I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols.

I will cleanse you, and I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove your heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I give to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. Here, God promises to bring scattered Israel back to its land.

Why? To vindicate his holy reputation and show surrounding nations that he is the Lord. Ezekiel 36:22, 23, and even 36, which we didn't read. He will do more than that.

He will do more than regather. He will also purify them from their sins. Verses 25, 29, 33.

He will do this by giving a new heart and spirit. Ezekiel's words approximate the New Testament doctrine of regeneration in verse 26. I'll give you a new heart and a new spirit I'll put within you.

I will remove your heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. This will result in renewed obedience to the Lord--verse 27.

This is an important Old Testament background for God's corporate indwelling of his people. A New Testament theme connected to union with Christ. Ezekiel 37:11 through 14.

Then the Lord said to Ezekiel, son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost. We are indeed cut off.

Therefore, prophesy and say to them, thus says the Lord God. Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel.

And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.

I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord. Ezekiel 37 continues the theme that began in the previous chapter. Ezekiel tells how things will come about by God's supernatural life-giving power.

Ezekiel sees a valley of dry bones and, in obedience to God, prophesies to them. At the prophet's word, the bones rattle and come together and are covered with sinews and flesh. Again, at Ezekiel's word, breath comes into the corpses, and they come alive and stand up, constituting a great army.

Verses 1 to 10. This pictures God's recreating his scattered people and bringing them back to their land. Verses 12 and 14.

Once more, Ezekiel's words prefigure New Testament teaching—verse 14. I'll put my spirit within you.

You shall live. You will know I am the Lord. I have spoken.

I will do it. God will vivify dead scattered Israel by giving and putting his spirit within them. At Pentecost, God vivifies his New Testament saints by putting his Holy Spirit within them.

We come to an end of the Old Testament foundations for the New Testament doctrine of union with Christ. It's time to conclude. It is anachronistic to say the Old Testament teaches union with Christ.

Instead, it foreshadows it. The first is identification. God identifies with his people in the Old Testament through his covenant presence.

By doing so, he bestows on them an identity. He is their God, and they are his people. This identity foreshadows union with Christ in the new covenant as God's covenant presence par excellence.

It also foreshadows the identity of New Testament saints as those in Christ. Second, incorporation. God incorporates a chosen people into a covenant people.

They relate to God through a covenant mediator. In the Old Testament, these include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. However, the covenant mediator par excellence comes in the form of one who is both Davidic king and suffering servant, Jesus Christ.

By his mediation in his death, he makes atonement for his people's sins and, in his resurrection, makes them alive to God. He will come a second time not to suffer but to reign as the son of David par excellence. Third, participation.

God's people participate in the covenant story. Foreshadowing the way in which the church is in the New Testament will participate in Jesus' death and resurrection. This will happen when Old Testament prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit are fulfilled in Jesus and his ministry, including Pentecost.

Ultimately, the Old Testament lays the foundation for understanding the New Testament teaching of union with Christ. Foundations of union with Christ in the Synoptic Gospels. Again, I credit my former teaching assistant, Kyle Keating, for much good research and even writing.

The Synoptic Gospels introduce us to Jesus of Nazareth. Nazareth. They all testify that Jesus is the Christ of God, the Messiah who will save Israel and become a light to the nations.

Compare Luke 2:32. If the Old Testament foreshadows union with Christ, then the Synoptic Gospels are a reasonable place to begin looking for union with Christ in the New Testament, for they tell the story of Jesus. However, there are few references to union with Christ in the Synoptics.

Why? First, the Gospels focus more on telling Jesus' story than trying to explain its implications as didactic teaching. Where doctrines make an appearance, they often do so indirectly as part of the story rather than as doctrines themselves. Second, the redemptive-historical context of the Synoptic Gospels means that most of their narratives precede the death and resurrection of Christ.

If union with Christ is a doctrine rooted in Christ's death and resurrection, then it would be unusual to expect a full explanation before those events occurred. However, both of these explanations hold true for the Gospel of John as well, which has many more references to union than the Synoptics. Why? All of John's texts that clearly refer to union with Christ are unique to him and appear to be drawn from unique sources.

Also, the thematic differences between the Synoptic Gospels and John suggest a different focus. While John focuses on the relation between Jesus and the Father and Jesus and his people, the Synoptics spend less time here focusing on other themes such as the Kingdom of God or Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament. So, what do the Synoptics say about union with Christ? They point to the actual establishment of that to which believers are united.

When we say believers are united to Christ, the implicit question is, who is this Christ? The Synoptics answer this question, presenting Jesus' identity and mission. The Synoptics then establish the theological foundation for union with Christ. In addition, they establish the real redemptive historical foundation for union.

They show us the redeeming work of Christ applied to us in union with him. Union is established through the same three concepts that we saw in the Old Testament—identification in Jesus as Emmanuel and bridegroom.

Incorporation through Jesus as covenant mediator par excellence. Participation in the story of Jesus. I'll repeat those before we go through them one at a time.

Identification in Jesus as Emmanuel and bridegroom. Incorporation through Jesus as covenant mediator par excellence. And three, participation in Jesus' story.

Identification in Jesus as Emmanuel and bridegroom. Jesus as Emmanuel. The Synoptics allude to union with Christ in terms of identification when they present Jesus as Emmanuel.

In the Old Testament, we saw God identifies with his people through his covenantal presence with them. We find this theme of identification through God's presence in the Gospel of Matthew, too. Matthew cites Isaiah 7:14 and applies it to Jesus' birth.

Joseph is perplexed when he learns Mary is pregnant and contemplates divorcing her quietly until an angel brings a welcome message. Feel free to marry her, Joseph. That which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit, Matthew 1:20 to 23.

And you shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us. Matthew presents Jesus as God's presence with his people. Twice more, Matthew does the same.

In Matthew 18:19 to 20, Jesus says, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always. To the end of the age, Matthew 28:19 and 20.

Charles Quarles, Q-U-A-R-L-E-S, Charles Quarles draws an important implication. Matthew 1:23, the Emmanuel statement, and Matthew 28:20 serve to bracket the entire Gospel. The promise that Jesus is with us at the beginning of the Gospel is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus' assurance, I am with you always, to the end of the age, at the end of the Gospel.

Charles L. Quarles, a theology of Matthew, Jesus revealed as a deliverer, king, and incarnate creator. These two promises of Jesus' presence among his people enclose a

third promise. Quote, where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

Close quote, Matthew 18:20. Again, Quarles explains, “thus Matthew 18:20 is an element of a triad, affirming God's presence with his people in the person of Jesus.”

God identifies with his people by visiting them in the person of Jesus, thus anticipating union with Christ and his indwelling spirit. Jesus as bridegroom. Another account from Matthew and Mark uses the symbol of marriage to show how Jesus identifies with his people.

Matthew 9:14, and 15 deserves to be read. Then the disciples of John came to Jesus, asking why we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast? And Jesus said to them, can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. Jesus uses wedding imagery to show the implications of his presence among them.

Listen to D. A. Carson's commentary on Matthew. “Jesus' answer was implicitly Christological. He himself is the messianic bridegroom.” But if Jesus is the bridegroom, who is the bride? In Old Testament imagery, the bridegroom is Yahweh and his people, Israel the bride. Compare Isaiah 62:5, Hosea 2:19 and 20.

Isaiah 62:5, Hosea 2:19 and 20. Similarly, Jesus appeals to himself as the groom and his people, the church, as his bride. Paul picks up the same marital imagery as we shall see in Ephesians 5:25, 27, 1 Corinthians 6:15 to 20, 2 Corinthians 11:1 to 5. That's Ephesians 5:25, 27, 1 Corinthians 6:15 to 20, 2 Corinthians 11:1 to 5. While the outworking of this imagery is the work of Paul, Jesus' words lay its foundation.

Jesus is the groom, and the church is his bride. He identifies with his people as the groom identifies himself with his bride on their wedding day. Incorporation through Jesus as covenant mediator par excellence.

So, we see the theme of identity, Jesus presents with his people and his being bridegroom with his implied people, his people, the church; his presence with them identifies them as the people of God. Now, incorporation brings in this communal accent we saw in the Old Testament. Incorporation through Jesus as covenant mediator par excellence.

The Synoptics depict Jesus as the ultimate covenant mediator, the ultimate representative of God's people. We saw covenant mediators in incorporation in the Old Testament. The Synoptics present Jesus as the new and greater Israel.

At the transfiguration, when Peter suggests that he, James, and John make three tents for their guests, Moses, Elijah, and Jesus, God interrupts. Luke 9:34, 35. Boy, does he interrupt.

Peter, you're giving the wrong impression again. Master, it's good for us to make three tents here. Oh boy.

One for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah. Not knowing what he said, Luke adds. As he was saying these things, Luke 9:34.

A cloud came and overshadowed them, the cloud of the divine presence, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud saying, this is my son, my chosen one. Listen to him.

And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. It is the Father's voice explaining the identification of Jesus. He's God's own son, the chosen one.

Moses and Elijah, representing the law and the prophets quote, spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem, verse 31. It's a fascinating reference. I referred to it in a previous lecture.

You can't translate one word two ways. The word departure is literally exodus. It is Jesus' departure from this world, his death.

But his departure from this world and his death by crucifixion is his exodus. That is the antitype to which the Old Testament event of the great deliverance of Egypt from Egyptian bondage was the type that pointed toward the great redemption that Christ alone would accomplish for his people once and for all time. The words God's son, this is my son, the father said from heaven, portray Jesus in a manner similar to Old Testament Israel's being God's son, just as Jesus, as representative of Israel, is Messiah.

The second title, he's my son, my chosen one, confirms this conclusion. Just as Israel is God's chosen people, so Jesus is God's chosen one, the Messiah, who will represent Israel as the only perfectly faithful Israelite. Darrell Bock is pithy.

"When one puts the two titles together, God's son, chosen one, Jesus is identified as the messianic servant," Darrell Bock, Baker's exegetical commentary on the New Testament, Luke, volume one. As the Messiah, Jesus is the covenant mediator par excellence.

He's the ultimate covenant mediator who stands as a representative of God's people for eternity. Via a generation at the beginning, via a genealogy at the beginning of his

gospel, Matthew links Jesus to David and Abraham, as we have seen, Matthew one, one to 17. Both David and Abraham were Old Testament covenant mediators.

Matthew's genealogy shows Jesus to be a covenant mediator of the same kind as Abraham and David, yet he is greater than them. Quarles sums up Matthew one, one, "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Jesus is the new David, our King. He is the fulfillment of God's covenant with David. Jesus is the new Abraham, our founder. He fulfills God's covenant with Abraham by creating a new chosen people composed of both Jews and Gentiles who will be holy as God is holy and who will serve as a light to the nations."

Not only is Jesus a covenant mediator, but he is the mediator of the new covenant prophesied by Old Testament prophets such as Jeremiah 31 and, as we saw, Ezekiel 36 and 37. During the last supper, Jesus breaks the bread saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, Luke 22:19 and 20. Jesus inaugurates the new covenant of which he is a mediator with his death and resurrection, sealed and celebrated in the Lord's Supper.

All three synoptic gospels establish Jesus' messianic credentials. There's no doubt by the end of each of them that Jesus is the Messiah following the previous covenant mediators, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, but greater than all of them put together. Implicit in this identification of Jesus as Messiah is the reality that as a covenant mediator, he represents God's people.

The synoptics provide a foundation for union with Christ when they establish Jesus as the covenant mediator to whom God's people are joined and by whom they are represented. So, as with the Old Testament, we see in the synoptic gospels. First of all, the theme of identity.

Jesus identifies his people with himself as the people of God, and then with incorporation implied in Jesus' words about himself and his roles as covenant mediator and suffering servant is his incorporating his people as the people of God as individuals, of course, but also as a body, as his body, the church, as Paul will make explicit. Thirdly, participation in the story of Jesus. Our third Old Testament theme reverberates in the synoptic gospels.

The synoptic gospels paint a vivid description of the story of Jesus, from his incarnation to his resurrection. The language of participation vis-a-vis union with Christ means we share in his story. That is, we participate in the events that shape the story of Jesus' life on earth.

Thus, as the Synoptics depict the story of Jesus, they show us the story that we take part in as well. The Synoptics tell the story of Jesus in terms of what he accomplished

in history. If participation ensures sharing in the work he has accomplished, what is that work? The synoptics present Jesus' virginal conception and incarnation.

Matthew 1:18-25. Luke 1:26-38. Luke 2:6-7.

I don't think we read that one. And while they were there in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn.

Matthew says this one is named, and both Joseph and Mary were told to name him Jesus, which means Savior or the Lord saves because he would save his people from their sins. The eternal Son of God became a human being in Jesus of Nazareth. Christian tradition has understood from its earliest days that Jesus' incarnation is unique, but establishing a kind of union between the human and the divine.

Theologians use the term hypostatic, or personal union, to describe the relation between the divine and human natures of Jesus. The divine Son took to himself a human nature. He is henceforth one person with two natures, one divine and one human.

The two natures are united in his person, and thus, their union is a personal or hypostatic one. The union God's people have with Christ is not identical to this unique hypostatic union. We are not the God-men, but the hypostatic union paves the way for seeing how deity can condescend to humanity and establish a union between the two.

The unique incarnation of the Son of God is the basis for our union with him in salvation. He, the eternal Son, did not take to himself a man but rather a human nature within the womb of the Virgin Mary. She was his mother and contributed to him what every mother contributes to her son: DNA and chromosomes.

He thus was born as her firstborn son, but he always had been the eternal Son of God. The incarnation says that the eternal Son became a human being, not by adopting an existing human being, but by taking a human nature within Mary's womb and being born as God and man in one person. That incarnation makes possible our union with him.

The Synoptics introduce the incarnation but focus on Jesus' death and resurrection. It is to these events that Paul so often says Christians are united. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell the story in which Paul's epistles say believers participate.

Conclusion for the Synoptic Gospels. This brief survey of union with Christ in the Synoptic Gospels reveals that union as a doctrine, a formal teaching, is not present. Instead, we find a picture of the union presented in a redemptive-historical sense.

The Synoptics reveal the identification of the person to whom believers are united in salvation. The first three gospels narrate the events Paul will later tell us they participate in. The Synoptics portray Jesus as Immanuel, God with us, representing the ultimate dwelling of God with his people, who by virtue of his sinless life, death and resurrection, ascension, and second coming will usher in the ultimate cosmic dwelling of God with his people as the new Jerusalem descends from heaven to earth and then heaven and earth will be one.

That's only possible because of Jesus' death and resurrection, and they are only possible because of his incarnation, the essential precondition of his atoning and triumphant work, along with his sinless life, of course. The Synoptics portray Jesus as Immanuel and symbolically introduce him as the bridegroom, illustrating his identity with his people through his presence with them. The disciples, my disciples, can't fast as long as the bridegroom is with them.

A time is going to come when the bridegroom leaves them, and then they'll fast. Oh yes, and the bridegroom won't leave them alone, but he'll send the Holy Spirit, who, among other things, will formally unite them to Christ in salvation individually and corporately. The Synoptics describe Jesus as the covenant mediator beyond all covenant mediators, the covenant mediator par excellence, who will incorporate believers into a new covenant community, the Christian church.

Finally, they tell the story of Jesus and call believers to follow after him, to participate in his story as disciples. By the end of the Gospels, the foundational events for union with Christ have been established. The next step in God's unfolding the foundation for union with Christ is for that union to be enacted in the life of the church.

It is to that which we now turn in the book of Acts. Foundations of union with Christ in Acts. Once again, Kyle Keating was my partner, worker, and helper for this good material.

Union does not begin with Paul. We see foundations for union with Christ in the Old Testament, Synoptic Gospels, and now Acts. Despite the emphasis upon salvation in both Luke's Gospel and Acts, the emphasis tends to be on the what of salvation as opposed to the how of salvation.

Acts is narrative and speech-driven and not straight didactic teaching like the Epistles. Thus, it is to misunderstand the intent of the text to ask if it teaches a given doctrine. Undoubtedly, all scripture is meant to teach God's people, but we must

take into account the genre of Acts, the genre, in evaluating whether Luke explains the doctrine of union with Christ.

In Acts, we see the same three concepts as in the previous two heads: identification, incorporation, and participation. Identification, incorporation, participation. Identification in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and, remarkably, dramatically, in Paul's conversion.

Incorporation in the rite of baptism. Participation in the repetition of Jesus' story and Luke's use of Isaiah's suffering servant. Identification in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and Paul's conversion.

The concept of identification as a subset of union with Christ. It appears in the ministry of the Holy Spirit and in the accounts in the book of Acts of Paul's conversion from being the greatest persecutor of the church to a great proponent of the church. Identification in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

From a redemptive-historical perspective, Pentecost lays the foundation of the book of Acts. Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, passes the ministry of Jesus to the church as the promised Holy Spirit falls on people. In his gospel, Luke focuses on the Holy Spirit in Jesus' birth, though the Spirit appears in two other key places also.

Luke highlights Jesus' foreshadowing of Pentecost, Luke 11:13, and Jesus' assurance of the Spirit's guiding of disciples in what to say when confronted. Both of those things foreshadow the apostles' experience in Acts when facing persecution. Jesus' words in John's gospel also prepare for the Spirit's arrival at Pentecost.

Jesus says it is good for him to go, that the Comforter might come, John 16:7. He will take what is Jesus and declare it to the disciples, verse 15. After Pentecost, the Spirit will mediate between Christ and the apostles, taking Christ's revelation and giving it to them. Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, says, this Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses.

Being thus exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this, that you yourselves are seeing and hearing, Acts 2:32 and 33. Jesus pours out his Spirit upon his people at Pentecost, fulfilling the Old Testament prediction of the new covenant promise, quote, I will put my Spirit within you, close quote, Ezekiel 36:27. Luke does not explain the specifics of Pentecost, but the rest of the New Testament does.

Robert Lethem explains one aspect of Pentecost, "The Spirit would come to indwell believers and unite them to Christ." Letham's book, *Union with Christ in Scripture, History and Theology*. Thus, in redemptive-historical terms, Pentecost marks the

public announcement of the indwelling of the Spirit and the beginning of his ministry of uniting people to Christ.

The rest of the New Testament explains what is going on behind the scenes in Acts, uniting believers to Christ. Thus, Pentecost functions as a redemptive-historical prerequisite for the Spirit's ministry. It is the moment when God identifies with his people, identification again, by indwelling them with his Spirit, and the Spirit engages in a ministry unpacked in the rest of the New Testament, and that ministry is known as Union with Christ.

Identification in the conversion of Paul. There are significant connections between Paul's conversion, especially in Acts 9, and the theology of his letters, including Union with Christ. For example, Romans 11, which is a biography, plays an explicit role in his theological thinking.

Saul of Tarsus travels to Damascus to persecute Christians. En route, he is struck blind as he encounters the living Christ. Who are you, Lord? Saul asks.

I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting, verses 4 and 5. The key here is Jesus' self-identity. First, he identifies himself as the God of the theophany. Second, Jesus identifies himself with the infant church.

Why are you persecuting me? Jesus asks Saul, who no doubt is beginning to be really perplexed. David Peterson, whose great commentary on Acts is one of my favorites, says that the risen Christ viewed the persecution of his disciples as an attack upon himself, clearly identifying himself with the church. Those who are united to Christ by faith suffer as he did, and he identifies with them in their struggle.

Close quote. As Campbell says in his book, Paul and Union with Christ quote, the original catalyst for the development of Paul's theology of union with Christ may be seen as Paul's words, as Jesus' words, sorry, to Paul on the Damascus road. Close quote.

Luke's recounting of Pentecost and Luke's recounting of Paul's conversion paint a picture of Jesus' self-identification with his people that Paul explains later and experiences using the concept of union with Christ. He explains and expands using the concept of union with Christ. Incorporation in the rite of Christian baptism.

The incorporation aspect of union with Christ appears in the book of Acts primarily as baptism in the name of Jesus. Baptism functions as the mark of entrance into the people of God, a mark extending to Jews and Gentiles alike. At the end of his Pentecost sermon, Peter enjoins, verse 238, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 41, those who received his word indicates Peter includes faith by implication in his commands to repent and be baptized. Verse 41 speaks of those who received his word. We read back and imply that the command to repent was believing repentance, that is, faith turning from sin, repentance, turning to Christ as he's offered in the gospel, faith.

It's a legitimate inference. Verse 41, those who received his word indicates Peter includes faith by implication in the commands to repent and be baptized. But Peter purposefully sums up the gospel response as repentance and baptism.

Repent entails; repentance entails the crowd's recognition that they had rejected Jesus. Verse 23, while baptism includes faith and functions as a change in allegiance, the Jewish crowds once were enemies of Jesus. They are now baptized into him.

Thus, baptism becomes the mark of covenant membership in the new covenant, the sign of incorporation into Jesus and, thus, into his people. Acts lack the typical Pauline in Christ language. The closest we see to a parallel is in Luke's discussion of ministry in the name of Jesus.

At least 12 times throughout Acts, Luke uses the phrase to refer to the ministry of the apostles, especially in healing and baptism. Craig Keener notes that people being baptized in his name designated whose followers they would be. Keener's *Acts, an Exegetical Commentary*.

We cannot deduce Luke intended to express union with Christ in Acts. Baptism is the physical manifestation of repentance and faith as well as incorporation into the church. Baptism, in Jesus' name, is not so much a formulation of union with Christ as a statement of ownership.

Baptism in Acts declares, quote, this is Jesus' baptism, and those who are baptized in Jesus' name are his followers. We need to wrap it up for now and take it up again in our next lecture when we talk about participation in the repetition of Jesus' story in Acts and Luke's use of Isaiah's suffering servant.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on the Holy Spirit and Union with Christ. This is session 7, Foundations for Union with Christ, Old Testament, and Synoptics.