**Dr. Robert A. Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 9, Foundations Union, John 6 & 10,
Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

**1. Abstract of Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 9, Foundations Union, John 6 & 10, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Robert Peterson's session** explores the foundational concept of **union with Christ** as presented in **John's Gospel, specifically chapters 6 and 10**. The teaching highlights the **roles of the Father and the Son in salvation**, outlining a panorama of divine actions including election, drawing believers, granting eternal life, preservation, and resurrection. Furthermore, the session examines the **significance of Jesus as the "bread of life"** and the concept of **mutual abiding** between Christ and believers, drawing parallels and distinctions with the **Trinitarian indwelling (perichoresis)**. The lecture also analyzes specific passages in John, like the Good Shepherd discourse, to illustrate the **oneness of the Father and the Son** in their work of preserving God's people.

**2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 9 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology 🡪 Theology, Peterson 🡪 Holy Spirit and Union with Christ).**



**3. Briefing Document: Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 9, Foundations Union, John 6 & 10**

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**Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Union with Christ in John 6 and 10**

**Overview:**

This document summarizes the main themes and important theological ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 9 of his lecture series on "The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ," specifically focusing on John's Gospel chapters 6 and 10 as foundational for understanding union with Christ. Peterson argues that while John's language differs from Paul's, there are overlapping themes related to salvation and the relationship between believers and the Triune God. He identifies key aspects of the Father and Son's roles in salvation in John 6 and examines the concept of mutual indwelling between the Father and the Son in John 10, laying the groundwork for understanding the union between Christ and believers.

**Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:**

**1. Panorama of the Father and Son's Roles in Salvation (John 6):**

Peterson outlines six interconnected points illustrating the Father and Son's roles in salvation, highlighting a "division of labor" within the Trinity (specifically focusing on the Father and Son in these chapters, with the Holy Spirit's role primarily discussed in John in relation to Pentecost):

* **The Father Gives People to the Son (John 6:37, 39):** This is presented as one of John's three pictures of election, indicating that the Father chooses individuals for salvation and entrusts them to the Son.
* *"The Father gives people to the Son in verses 37 and 39. This is one of John's three pictures or themes of election."*
* **The Father Draws People to the Son (John 6:44):** This action is likened to Paul's concept of "calling," where the Father effectively summons individuals to believe in Jesus.
* *"The Father further draws people to the Son, 44 of John 6, but no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. John's drawing is akin to Paul's calling."*
* **People Come to Believe in the Son (John 6:35, 37, 40, 44, 45, 47, 65):** Believing in Jesus is presented as the direct response to the Father's drawing and giving.
* *"Thirdly, as people come to Jesus, as we see from verse 35, that means believing in him. The parallelism there is plain. I'm the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall not thirst, whereas believing in Jesus is parallel to coming to Jesus."*
* **They Gain Eternal Life (John 6:40, 47, 54, 58):** Jesus is portrayed as the bestower of eternal life.
* *"They gain eternal life is the fourth point in this panorama. I guess if it's a panorama, the fourth view, the fourth picture. We see it in verses 40 and 47: they gain eternal life..."*
* **The Son Will Keep Them Saved (John 6:37, 39):** This emphasizes the doctrine of preservation, where God maintains the salvation of those he brings to himself.
* *"This is a doctrine of preservation, God maintaining his people and their salvation from when he brings them to himself until he raises them from the dead. We see it in John 37, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. We see it in 39, this is the will of the Father, the one who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he's given me, but raise it up on the last day."*
* **The Son Will Raise Them on the Last Day (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54):** This points to the future resurrection of believers.
* *"And lastly, the Son will raise them on the last day. 39 and 40 put some of this together: this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son, verse 40, and believes in him should have eternal life now, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

**2. Three Important Theological Conclusions from John 6:**

Peterson draws three crucial theological points from this "panorama":

* **Division of Labor Among the Trinitarian Persons:** While John focuses on the Father and Son in these passages, Peterson emphasizes that systematically, there is a division of labor within the Trinity regarding salvation.
* *"First, there's a division of labor among the Trinitarian persons... So, it's the Father and the Son that are in these verses, but there's a division of labor among the Trinitarian persons."*
* **Trinitarian (or Binitarian) Harmony:** There is a harmonious working together of the persons of the Godhead for the sake of God's people.
* *"Secondly, there is a Trinitarian, or at least Binitarian, and systematics makes it a Trinitarian harmony among the persons of the Godhead, and they're working for God's people."*
* **Continuity in the Identity of the People of God:** The same individuals chosen by the Father are the ones drawn, who believe, gain eternal life, are kept by the Son, and will be raised by him.
* *"Thirdly, there is a continuity in the identity of the people of God. It is the same people the Father gives to the Son, draws to the Son, who comes to him, who believe in him, who gain eternal life, whom the Son keeps, and whom the Son will raise on the last day."*

**3. Jesus as the Bread of Life and Union with Him:**

Peterson interprets Jesus' "bread of life" discourse in John 6:48-58 as having significant implications for understanding union with Christ. "Eating" Jesus by faith signifies appropriating him and making him a part of oneself.

* *"The bread of life discourse has implications for union with Christ because of the language of eating or feeding on him for eternal life. We ingest, in quotation marks, Jesus by faith so that he becomes a part of us, even as the food that we eat does."*
* Eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood, while prompting confusion among his hearers, primarily refers to believing in his atoning death.
* *"To eat the living bread is to believe in his atoning death."*

**4. Mutual Abiding/Indwelling (John 6:56):**

Verse 56 marks the first explicit mention in John's Gospel of the mutual abiding or indwelling between Christ and believers.

* *"Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him."*
* This mutual indwelling is compared (with crucial distinctions) to the mutual indwelling (perichoresis, circumincession, co-inherence) of the Father and the Son. While the Trinity's indwelling is ontological and eternal, the believer's union is by grace and has a beginning.
* *"Astonishingly, Jesus uses the language of mutual indwelling with reference to him here, or him and the father in other places, and believers... Certainly, there are differences between the way the persons of the Trinity mutually indwell one another, good grief, and the way the persons of the Trinity and believers mutually indwell one another."*
* This union through mutual indwelling is indispensable, requiring the incarnation of the Son.
* *"Verse 56, a theological axiom, no incarnation, no union with Christ."*

**5. Mutual Indwelling of the Father and the Son (John 10:37-38):**

Peterson then shifts to John 10, specifically examining Jesus' claims about his relationship with the Father as another foundation for understanding union with Christ.

* Jesus' statement, *"the Father is in me and I in the Father"* (John 10:38), is presented as the first instance in John's Gospel of Jesus speaking about the mutual indwelling between himself and the Father.
* This mutual indwelling (perichoresis/circumincession) is highlighted as a corollary of the Trinity – the eternal existence of one God in three persons.
* *"This mutual indwelling, again, perichoresis, or circumcession, is an important corollary of the fact that God is the Holy Trinity. There's only one God who exists eternally in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit..."*
* This mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son serves as the basis for the mutual indwelling between the Triune God and believers, which will be further explored in John 14 and 17.

**6. Other Key Points in John 10:**

* **The Good Shepherd and His Sheep (John 10:26-29):** Jesus' statement that his hearers do not believe because they are not his sheep emphasizes the concept of God's prior knowledge and election. He gives his sheep eternal life, and they will never perish, emphasizing the security of believers.
* *"You do not believe because you're not among my sheep. Oh, Jesus does not beat around the bush. Wow. Once again, he is being merciful. He must confront the error."*
* *"My sheep hear my voice. I know them. They follow me. I give them eternal life. They shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father who's given them to me is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of his hand. I and the Father are one in context in our ability to preserve the sheep as the people of God."*
* **Jesus' Claim to Oneness with the Father (John 10:30):** Jesus' declaration, *"I and the Father are one,"* is the reason for the Jews accusing him of blasphemy, as they understood it to be a claim of divinity.
* **Jesus' Defense Using Psalm 82 (John 10:34-36):** Jesus defends his use of the title "Son of God" by referencing Psalm 82 where human rulers are called "gods." While this argument on the surface doesn't explicitly prove his deity, Peterson argues that the context of the Father consecrating and sending him into the world implies his pre-existence and thus divinity.

**Implications for Understanding Union with Christ:**

Dr. Peterson's analysis of John 6 and 10 lays a foundational understanding that:

* Salvation is initiated and orchestrated by the Triune God (specifically the Father giving and drawing, and the Son saving and preserving).
* Union with Christ is intimately connected with receiving eternal life through faith in him, which is enabled by God's work.
* The concept of "eating" Christ by faith highlights the intimate and personal nature of this union.
* The mutual indwelling between Christ and believers mirrors, in a distinct way, the eternal mutual indwelling within the Trinity, signifying a profound and inseparable relationship.

**Next Steps (Mentioned in the Source):**

The lecture will proceed to examine the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, and their indwelling with believers, in John 14.

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**4.** **Study Guide: Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 9, Foundations Union, John 6 & 10**

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**Study Guide: The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ (Session 9)**

**Key Themes:**

* The Father and Son's roles in salvation in John 6.
* John's three themes of election.
* The concept of being drawn to and believing in Jesus.
* The gift of eternal life and the preservation of believers.
* The future resurrection of believers.
* The division of labor and harmony within the Trinity (specifically Father and Son in these passages).
* The continuity of the identity of God's people throughout the process of salvation.
* Jesus as the bread of life and the implications for union with Him.
* The significance of "eating" Jesus' flesh and "drinking" his blood as believing in his atoning death.
* The concept of mutual abiding or indwelling (perichoresis/circumincession/co-inherence) between Jesus and believers, and the Father and the Son.
* Similarities and differences between the mutual indwelling within the Trinity and the mutual indwelling between God and believers.
* The indispensable nature of the incarnation for union with Christ.
* Jesus' claims of unity with the Father in John 10 and the implications for his identity.
* Jesus' defense against accusations of blasphemy by referencing Psalm 82.
* The inseparability of the divine persons, even while maintaining their distinctiveness.

**Quiz:**

1. Describe two of the six aspects of the "panorama of the Father and Son's roles in salvation" as presented in John 6.
2. What are the three pictures or themes of election that Dr. Peterson identifies in John's Gospel? Briefly explain one of them.
3. According to John 6, what is the relationship between "coming to Jesus" and "believing in Jesus"?
4. Explain the doctrine of preservation as it is presented in the discussion of John 6.
5. What does Dr. Peterson mean by "types" in relation to the Old Testament and Jesus Christ? Provide one example.
6. In the context of John 6, what does "eating" Jesus' flesh and "drinking" his blood signify?
7. What is the significance of John 6:56 ("Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him") in relation to union with Christ?
8. Define "perichoresis" (or circumincession/co-inherence) and explain its relevance to the Trinity.
9. According to the lecture, why is the incarnation of the Son of God indispensable for union with Christ?
10. In John 10, how does Jesus respond to the accusation of blasphemy when he says, "I and the Father are one"?

**Quiz Answer Key:**

1. Two aspects of the panorama include: (1) The Father gives people to the Son (election), entrusting them for salvation. (2) The Father draws people to the Son, effectively calling them to believe. (Other options: people come to believe, they gain eternal life, the Son will keep them saved, the Son will raise them on the last day.)
2. The three themes are: Jesus as the author of election (John 15:16, 19), the antecedent identity of God's people (John 10), and the Father giving people to the Son (John 6, 17). The antecedent identity suggests that God knows his people before they believe, and their belief reveals this prior identity.
3. In John 6, "coming to Jesus" is presented as parallel to "believing in Jesus." Verse 35 states, "whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall not thirst," indicating that these actions are synonymous expressions of faith.
4. The doctrine of preservation, as discussed in John 6, refers to God's act of maintaining his people and their salvation from the moment he brings them to himself until their resurrection. Jesus promises not to cast out those who come to him and that he will lose nothing of what the Father has given him.
5. "Types" are Old Testament historical persons, events, or institutions that prefigure a greater eschatological reality in the life and work of Christ. An example is manna, the miraculous food in the wilderness, which is presented as a type of the true bread from heaven, Jesus Christ.
6. In John 6, "eating" Jesus' flesh and "drinking" his blood are not literal acts of cannibalism but signify believing in his atoning death on the cross. It means appropriating Jesus by faith, recognizing his sacrifice as the means of gaining eternal life.
7. John 6:56 marks the first appearance in John's Gospel of the concept of mutual abiding or indwelling between Christ and believers. It signifies a deep and intimate union where the believer lives in Christ and Christ lives in the believer.
8. Perichoresis (or circumincession/co-inherence) describes the mutual indwelling of the three persons of the Trinity. It signifies that each person of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) fully indwells and interpenetrates the others, while remaining distinct persons.
9. The incarnation, the eternal Son of God becoming a human being, is indispensable for union with Christ because it was through his sinless life, crucifixion, resurrection, and the subsequent sending of the Holy Spirit that humanity could be joined to him by grace through faith.
10. In John 10, Jesus defends himself against the charge of blasphemy by referencing Psalm 82:6, where human rulers are called "gods" as representatives of God. He argues that if those who represent God can be called gods, then it is not blasphemy for him, whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, to call himself the Son of God.

**Essay Format Questions:**

1. Discuss the interconnected roles of the Father and the Son in the salvation of believers as presented in John 6. How does this "panorama" lay a foundation for understanding union with Christ?
2. Explain the concept of "mutual abiding" (perichoresis) as it relates to both the Trinity and the union between Christ and believers. What are the key similarities and crucial differences between these two forms of indwelling?
3. Analyze the significance of Jesus' "bread of life" discourse in John 6 for the doctrine of union with Christ. How does the imagery of eating and drinking contribute to our understanding of this union?
4. Examine the three themes of election identified in John's Gospel according to the lecture. How do these themes contribute to a comprehensive understanding of God's initiative in salvation and its relationship to union with Christ?
5. Discuss the importance of the incarnation of Jesus Christ for the possibility of union between God and humanity. What specific aspects of Christ's earthly ministry are essential for this union to occur?

**Glossary of Key Terms:**

* **Election:** God's sovereign choice in eternity past to save a particular people for himself.
* **Preservation:** God's ongoing work of sustaining and keeping saved those whom he has chosen and brought to faith in Christ.
* **Type:** An Old Testament historical person, event, or institution that foreshadows or points to a greater reality in the New Testament, particularly the person and work of Jesus Christ.
* **Atoning Death:** Jesus Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, which satisfied God's justice and reconciled humanity to God.
* **Mutual Abiding/Indwelling:** The concept of two or more parties living in one another, as seen in the relationship between Christ and believers (John 6:56, John 14-17) and between the Father and the Son (John 10, John 14).
* **Perichoresis (Circumincession/Co-inherence):** A theological term describing the mutual indwelling and interpenetration of the three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), where each fully possesses the divine nature while remaining distinct.
* **Incarnation:** The act by which the eternal Son of God took on human flesh and became Jesus Christ, fully God and fully human.
* **Efficacious Calling:** God's sovereign call to salvation that inevitably results in the person coming to faith in Christ.
* **Antecedent Identity:** The idea that God knows and identifies his people before they come to believe in Jesus Christ.
* **Realized Eschatology:** The theological understanding that some or all of the blessings and benefits associated with the end times are already present and experienced in the lives of believers in this present age.

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**5. FAQs on Peterson, Christ’s Saving Work, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 9, Foundations Union, John 6 & 10, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**
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**Frequently Asked Questions: Foundations for Union with Christ in John's Gospel**

**1. What is the significance of John 6 in understanding union with Christ?** John 6 presents Jesus as the "bread of life," emphasizing that believing in him and partaking in him (metaphorically eating his flesh and drinking his blood) are essential for eternal life. This language of eating and feeding signifies an intimate appropriation of Christ by faith, leading to a union where he becomes a vital part of the believer, similar to how food nourishes and becomes part of us. Verse 56 explicitly states this union through mutual abiding: "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." This chapter lays foundational imagery and language for understanding the profound connection between Christ and believers.

**2. How does the Father contribute to our union with Christ according to John 6?** John 6 highlights the active role of the Father in initiating and enabling our union with Christ. The Father "gives people to the Son" (vv. 37, 39), which is presented as a form of divine election, establishing a prior identity for God's people. Furthermore, the Father "draws people to the Son" (v. 44), effectively summoning or calling them to believe in Jesus. This drawing is likened to Paul's concept of calling. Without the Father's giving and drawing, no one can come to or believe in Jesus.

**3. What does the concept of "eternal life" signify in the context of union with Christ in John's Gospel?** In John's Gospel, eternal life is not solely a future hope but also a present possession of the believer (vv. 40, 47). It is gained through believing in Jesus, the giver of this life. This eternal life, which resides inherently in the Father and the Son, is communicated to believers through the incarnate Son, his atoning death, resurrection, and the application of the Spirit. Union with Christ is the means by which this eternal life is experienced and maintained.

**4. What is the doctrine of preservation as presented in John 6?** John 6 teaches that the Son will keep saved those whom the Father gives to him (vv. 37, 39). Jesus states, "Whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (v. 37) and affirms that it is the Father's will that he should lose nothing of all that has been given to him but raise it up on the last day (v. 39). This indicates God's active role in maintaining the salvation of his people from the moment they come to him until their resurrection.

**5. How does the concept of "types" in the Old Testament relate to Jesus and union with him?** John's Gospel, as discussed in the source, presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament "types." These types are historical persons, events, or institutions (like manna, the priesthood, and the prophetic office) that prefigure and point forward to the greater reality of Christ and his redemptive work. Jesus being the "true" bread of life, the fulfillment of the manna, illustrates how these Old Testament shadows find their ultimate meaning and substance in Christ, with whom believers are called to unite.

**6. What is "perichoresis" (or circumincession/co-inherence) and why is it important for understanding union with Christ?** Perichoresis refers to the mutual indwelling of the three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), where each person fully indwells and is fully indwelt by the others. While John 6 and 10 primarily focus on the Father and the Son, this concept is crucial because the mutual indwelling within the Trinity serves as a foundational pattern for understanding the mutual indwelling between Christ (and by extension, the Trinity) and believers. Though different in nature and origin, the shared language of abiding or indwelling highlights a profound and intimate relationship.

**7. How does John 10 contribute to our understanding of union with Christ?** John 10, particularly the Good Shepherd discourse, emphasizes the intimate relationship between Jesus and his "sheep" (believers). Jesus knows his sheep, they hear his voice and follow him, and he gives them eternal life, promising they will never perish, and no one can snatch them out of his hand or the Father's hand (vv. 27-29). This illustrates a secure and personal union characterized by Christ's care, protection, and the gift of eternal life. The declaration "I and the Father are one" (v. 30) in the context of preserving the sheep further underscores the divine power at work in this union.

**8. What are the implications of the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son for the believer's union with Christ?** The mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, first explicitly mentioned in John 10:38 and hinted at in John 6, is a significant basis for the mutual indwelling between Christ and believers discussed later in John (chapters 14 and 17, not detailed in this source). Because the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father, our union with the Son through faith also brings us into a relationship with the Father through the Spirit. This foundational divine intimacy provides the framework for the believer's participation in the divine life and fellowship with the Triune God.

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