

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 13, Foundations Union, 1 & 2 Corinthians,

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 13, Foundations Union, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's lecture, the thirteenth session on "The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ", specifically examines the foundations of this concept within **Paul's letters**, particularly **1 and 2 Corinthians**. The session explores **how Paul uses the phrase "in Christ"** to denote a fundamental relationship and participation with Him, illustrated through the **Lord's Supper as communion** and **baptism as signifying initial union**. Peterson analyzes key passages, such as **1 Corinthians 10** on participation in Christ's body and blood versus demonic involvement, and **1 Corinthians 15** on the contrast between being "in Adam" and "in Christ" regarding death and resurrection. Furthermore, the lecture investigates **2 Corinthians**, focusing on themes of shared suffering and comfort in Christ, the stability of God's promises fulfilled in Him, and the **new creation status** of believers who are "in Christ" through reconciliation and justification.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 13 – 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 13, Foundations Union, 1 & 2 Corinthians

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Union with Christ in 1 & 2 Corinthians

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 13 of his teaching on the Holy Spirit and union with Christ. This session focuses specifically on the foundations for union with Christ as taught by the Apostle Paul in his letters to the Corinthians. Peterson emphasizes the pervasive nature of "in Christ" language in Paul's writings and explores specific passages in 1 and 2 Corinthians to illustrate different facets of this union.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Pervasiveness of "In Christ" Language:

- Peterson highlights that references to "in Christ" permeate Paul's letters, extending beyond explicit discussions of union.
- He notes that "in Christ" can function as a synonym for "Christian" and underscores a fundamental relationship with Christ.
- While not every instance of "in him" or "in Christ" directly refers to union, it frequently does, possessing a basic substratum of relationship with Christ and often carrying other nuances.
- *"Half of those [salutations and closings of letters] have references to union with Christ. It just became part of his vocabulary. Somebody's name and then in Christ, for example, Timothy, and in Christ is a synonym for Christian sometimes."*

1. Union with Christ in the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16-22):

- Peterson argues that 1 Corinthians 10:16-22, concerning the Lord's Supper, should be understood as a key passage on union with Christ, providing context for the more famous institution narrative in 1 Corinthians 11.
- He emphasizes the concept of **participation (κοινωνία)** in the body and blood of Christ through the Lord's Supper.
- *"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? Is the bread that we break not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16)*

- This participation signifies partaking in the benefits of Christ's sacrifice and establishes true communion with God.
- Peterson connects this vertical communion with Christ to a horizontal union with other believers, symbolized by the one bread (1 Corinthians 10:17). *"Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."*
- He contrasts participation in the Lord's Supper with participation in pagan worship, where believers risk communion with demons.
- He clarifies that while the Lord's Supper doesn't automatically save (not *ex opere operato*), it is a means of grace, a ceremonialized gospel that strengthens faith when received by believing participants. *"But it is the gospel, ceremonialized, so the church would never forget the gospel."*

1. **Union with Christ in the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:21-23, 58):**

- Peterson examines Paul's comparison of Adam and Christ, highlighting how death came through Adam and life through Christ.
- He explains that being "in Adam" signifies belonging to the domain of death, while being "in Christ" signifies belonging to the domain of life and resurrection.
- *"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."* (1 Corinthians 15:22)
- He emphasizes the corporate solidarity implied by "in Adam" and "in Christ," where individuals share in the destiny brought about by their respective covenant heads.
- The resurrection of Christ is presented as the firstfruits, guaranteeing the future resurrection of those who "belong to Christ."
- Peterson concludes this section by noting that Christian labor, done "in the Lord," is not in vain because of Christ's resurrection and victory over death. *"knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."* (1 Corinthians 15:58)

1. **Sharing in Christ's Sufferings and Comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-7):**

- Peterson explores Paul's teaching on believers sharing in Christ's sufferings, emphasizing that this is not redemptive suffering but a participation in the afflictions faced by Christ (though he is now glorified).

- Through this sharing in suffering, believers also abundantly share in God's comfort. *"For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ, we share abundantly in comfort too."* (2 Corinthians 1:5)
- God comforts believers in their afflictions so that they can, in turn, comfort others.
- This union with Christ in his death and resurrection brings not only future glory but also present glory experienced as God's aid and encouragement.

1. **Stability in Christ and the Role of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:17-22):**

- Peterson discusses Paul's defense against accusations of vacillation, highlighting that while his plans might change, his message centered on Christ remains stable.
- He emphasizes that God's promises find their "yes" in Christ. *"For all the promises of God find their yes in him."* (2 Corinthians 1:20)
- The stability of believers is grounded in the Trinity, particularly through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- God establishes believers "in Christ" and anoints them with the Holy Spirit, who serves as a seal (guarantee of final salvation), and a down payment (ἀρραβών) of their inheritance.
- *"And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."* (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is presented as an inseparable companion to union with Christ.

1. **New Creation and Reconciliation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16-21):**

- Peterson examines the concept of believers being a "new creation" in Christ. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, and behold, the new has come."* (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- Being "in Christ" signifies entering a new domain or realm.
- He highlights that God reconciled the world to himself "through Christ" and "in Christ," using these phrases instrumentally. *"That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself."* (2 Corinthians 5:19)

- Peterson discusses justification in relation to union with Christ, noting that believers become the righteousness of God "in him" because God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for our sake. *"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- Quoting Constantine Campbell, Peterson suggests that the symmetry of Christ becoming sin and believers becoming righteousness "in him" strongly indicates union with Christ, where believers share in Christ's righteous standing.

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's Session 13 provides a foundational understanding of union with Christ as presented in Paul's letters to the Corinthians. He demonstrates how this central theme permeates various aspects of the Christian life, from participating in the Lord's Supper and understanding the significance of Christ's resurrection to experiencing God's comfort in suffering and the stability provided by the Holy Spirit. The pervasive "in Christ" language signifies a deep and multifaceted relationship with Christ that defines the identity and experience of believers.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 13, Foundations Union, 1 & 2 Corinthians

Study Guide: Union with Christ in 1 and 2 Corinthians

Key Concepts

- **Union with Christ:** A fundamental aspect of Pauline theology describing the believer's intimate and comprehensive relationship with Jesus Christ. This involves participation in his life, death, and resurrection, and encompasses spiritual, relational, and corporate dimensions.
- **"In Christ":** A phrase frequently used by Paul to denote this union, carrying various nuances such as location (realm), participation, identification, and instrumentality. It often signifies being a Christian.
- **Participation (Koinonia):** Refers to a sharing or communion, particularly in the context of the Lord's Supper, where believers participate in the body and blood of Christ and the benefits of his sacrifice. It also extends to fellowship with God and with other believers.
- **Means of Grace:** Practices ordained by God through which he conveys his grace and strengthens faith. In this context, the Lord's Supper and the Word of God are highlighted as means of grace that nurture union with Christ.
- **Vertical Union:** The believer's relationship and communion directly with Christ.
- **Horizontal Union:** The believer's relationship and unity with other believers as a result of their shared union with Christ, forming the body of Christ.
- **The Two Adams:** A Pauline comparison between Adam, whose sin brought death to humanity, and Christ, the second Adam, whose obedience and resurrection bring life to those who are in him.
- **Corporate Solidarity:** The idea that believers are united together in Christ, sharing a common identity and destiny. This is contrasted with the corporate solidarity of humanity in Adam.
- **New Creation:** The transformative work of God in believers who are in Christ, resulting in a new identity and a break from the old ways of life under the domain of sin.

- **Reconciliation:** The act of God through Christ, restoring the broken relationship between humanity and himself. Believers in Christ are reconciled to God.
- **Justification:** The act of God declaring believers righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. In Christ, believers receive his righteousness.
- **The Holy Spirit:** The third person of the Trinity, who plays a crucial role in establishing and guaranteeing the believer's union with Christ. The Spirit indwells believers, seals them, and serves as a down payment of their future inheritance.

Quiz

1. Explain the significance of Paul's frequent use of the phrase "in Christ" in his letters, according to the lecture. Provide at least two different nuances the phrase can carry.
2. How does Paul connect the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 10 with the concept of participation (*koinonia*)? What are believers participating in when they partake of the elements in faith?
3. According to the lecture, what is the relationship between vertical union with Christ in the Lord's Supper and horizontal union among believers? Why does Paul invert the order of the elements in 1 Corinthians 10:16?
4. Explain Paul's comparison between Adam and Christ in 1 Corinthians 15. How do the concepts of "in Adam" and "in Christ" illustrate corporate solidarity?
5. While believers share in Christ's sufferings, what does the lecture emphasize that they *do not* participate in? What kind of comfort do believers experience through their union with Christ, according to 2 Corinthians 1?
6. How does Paul defend the stability and truthfulness of his message in 2 Corinthians 1:17-22? What role does Christ play in the "yes" of God's promises?
7. Describe the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to a believer's union with Christ, as highlighted in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22. Mention at least two actions of the Father involving the Spirit.
8. What does it mean for a believer to be a "new creation" in Christ according to 2 Corinthians 5:17? How does this relate to the idea of the old having passed away?
9. Explain how the concept of "in Christ" is connected to reconciliation and justification in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. What exchange takes place for believers in Christ?

10. According to the lecture, why do believers need ongoing participation in the Lord's Supper if baptism signifies initial union with Christ? What is the role of the Supper in the Christian life?

Answer Key

1. Paul's frequent use of "in Christ" signifies the fundamental reality of believers' union with him. It carries a basic meaning of relationship but also encompasses nuances like location within Christ's realm, participation in his life, and identification with him. Sometimes, "in Christ" is even used as a synonym for being a Christian.
2. Paul teaches that the Lord's Supper is a participation (koinonia) in the blood and body of Christ. Believers who partake in faith are participating in the benefits of Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross and entering into communion with him.
3. Vertical union with Christ in the Supper is the foundation for horizontal union among believers. By participating in the one bread, symbolizing Christ's body, the many believers become one body. Paul inverts the order to transition from the individual's participation in Christ to the corporate unity of believers.
4. Paul contrasts Adam, through whom sin and death entered humanity, with Christ, the second Adam, through whom resurrection and life come. "In Adam" signifies being part of the human race under Adam's headship and sharing in his destiny of death, while "in Christ" means belonging to Christ's people and sharing in his resurrection life.
5. Believers do not participate in Christ's redemptive suffering, which was unique to him as the mediator of atonement. Through union with Christ, believers experience present comfort from the Father, even amidst present afflictions, as they share in Christ's sufferings in a non-atoning way.
6. Paul defends his message's stability by asserting that it is centered on Jesus Christ, in whom God's promises are always "yes." The Trinity, particularly the Father through the Holy Spirit, stabilizes believers, ensuring the steadfastness of the gospel message.
7. The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in establishing and guaranteeing union with Christ. The Father anoints believers with the Spirit, seals them with the Spirit as a mark of ownership and preservation, and gives them the Spirit in their hearts as a down payment or guarantee of their final inheritance.

8. To be a "new creation" in Christ means that a believer enters a new domain, Christ's realm, and experiences a radical transformation. The old way of life under sin passes away, and a new spiritual reality and identity in Christ come into being.
9. "In Christ" is linked to reconciliation as God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself through his person and work. It is connected to justification as God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for our sake, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God, sharing in his righteous standing.
10. Even though baptism signifies initial union with Christ, believers need ongoing participation in the Lord's Supper because it is a means of grace that strengthens their faith and enhances their bond of union with Christ. It is a ceremonialized gospel that continually proclaims Christ's death and atonement.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the various ways the phrase "in Christ" functions in the passages from 1 and 2 Corinthians, illustrating your points with specific examples from the text. How does this phrase illuminate Paul's understanding of the believer's relationship with Christ?
2. Analyze the significance of the Lord's Supper as presented in 1 Corinthians 10 in relation to the concept of "participation" (koinonia). How does Paul use the imagery of pagan sacrifices and Old Testament practices to explain the spiritual reality of partaking in the body and blood of Christ?
3. Compare and contrast Paul's use of the "two Adams" typology in 1 Corinthians 15 with his emphasis on being "in Christ" throughout the letters. How do these concepts contribute to our understanding of salvation and the Christian life?
4. Examine Paul's teaching on suffering and comfort in 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 in light of the believer's union with Christ. How does sharing in Christ's sufferings lead to abundant comfort, and what are the implications of this for the Christian experience?
5. Explore the role of the Holy Spirit in establishing and securing the believer's union with Christ, drawing from Paul's statements in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and other relevant points from the lecture. How does the Spirit function as a guarantee and seal of this union?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Atonement:** The work of Christ in his life and death by which he made satisfaction for the sins of humanity, reconciling them to God.
- **Baptism:** A Christian sacrament symbolizing the believer's union with Christ in his death and resurrection, and their entrance into the Christian community.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement between God and humanity, establishing the terms of their relationship.
- **Dogmatic:** Characterized by a rigid adherence to a set of beliefs or principles, often without considering alternative views.
- **Enlightenment:** An intellectual and cultural movement in the 18th century that emphasized reason and individualism over tradition.
- **Eschatological:** Relating to the end times or the final destiny of humanity and the world.
- **Ex opere operato:** A Latin phrase meaning "from the work performed," referring to the belief that the sacraments automatically convey grace by the very act of their administration, regardless of the recipient's faith.
- **Federal Head:** A representative who acts on behalf of a group, and whose actions have consequences for those they represent (e.g., Adam as the federal head of humanity).
- **Firstfruits:** The first portion of a harvest offered to God, symbolizing the promise of a greater harvest to come. In 1 Corinthians 15, Christ's resurrection is described as the firstfruits of those who will be raised.
- **Grace:** God's unmerited favor and love extended to humanity, particularly in salvation.
- **Indwelling:** The presence of the Holy Spirit residing within believers.
- **Instrumental:** Serving as a means or agent through which something is accomplished.
- **Justification:** The act by which God declares a sinner righteous in his sight through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Locative:** Indicating place or location.

- **Mediator:** One who stands between two parties to reconcile them. Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and humanity.
- **Nuance:** A subtle difference in or shade of meaning, expression, or sound.
- **Redemption:** The act of buying back or rescuing from bondage. Christ's death is the redemption of believers from sin and death.
- **Rhetorical Question:** A question asked for effect rather than to elicit an answer.
- **Sacrament:** A religious ceremony or act regarded as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual divine grace, particularly the Lord's Supper and baptism in many Christian traditions.
- **Salutation:** A customary greeting in a letter or other written communication.
- **Sanctification:** The process by which believers are progressively made holy and conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Substratum:** An underlying layer or foundation.
- **Theology:** The study of the nature of God and religious belief.
- **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that God is one being in three co-equal and co-eternal persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 13, Foundations Union, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Union with Christ in Paul's Letters (1 & 2 Corinthians)

1. How pervasive is the concept of "in Christ" in Paul's writings, and what does it generally signify?

The phrase "in Christ" permeates Paul's letters to such an extent that it became a standard part of his vocabulary, even appearing in salutations and closings. While it always carries a foundational meaning of relationship with Christ, it encompasses various nuances. Sometimes it functions as a synonym for "Christian," indicating belonging to Christ. More broadly, it often denotes a realm, domain, or kingdom in which believers exist. While not every instance of "in him" or "in Christ" explicitly refers to union with Christ, it does so frequently.

2. According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 10, how does the Lord's Supper relate to the idea of "participation"?

In 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, Paul uses the term "participation" (koinonia) to describe the act of partaking in the Lord's Supper. He states, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." This signifies a sharing and communion with Christ's body and blood, implying believers partake of the benefits of his sacrifice.

3. What is the significance of Paul's comparison between partaking in the Lord's Supper and participating in pagan sacrifices or Old Testament sacrifices?

Paul contrasts the participation in the Lord's Supper with participation in pagan religious meals and Old Testament sacrifices to emphasize the supernatural effects of partaking. Just as eating sacrifices in the Old Testament meant participating in the worship of Israel's God, and partaking in pagan meals involved participation with demons, so too does partaking in the Lord's Supper in faith constitute a communion and sharing in the body and blood of Christ, connecting believers to God and the benefits of Christ's atonement.

4. How does union with Christ relate to the horizontal unity of believers in the church, according to 1 Corinthians 10?

Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 10:17 that the shared partaking of the one bread in the Lord's Supper symbolizes the horizontal unity of believers: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." This horizontal fellowship among Christians is grounded in their vertical union with Christ. The shared participation in Christ through the Supper establishes and exhibits their unity as the body of Christ.

5. How does Paul address the question of why believers need ongoing participation in the Lord's Supper if baptism signifies initial union with Christ?

Paul answers this by comparing the Lord's Supper to other means of grace like the preaching and reading of the Word and prayer. While baptism signifies our saving union with Christ once and for all, the Lord's Supper serves as a means of strengthening our faith and enhancing our bond of union with Christ. It is an ongoing way God uses to minister grace to believers, similar to how we need ongoing nourishment from the Word.

6. In 1 Corinthians 15, how does Paul use the analogy of Adam and Christ to explain the significance of being "in Christ"?

Paul draws a contrast between Adam and Christ, portraying them as two representative figures. Just as being "in Adam" means inheriting death and the consequences of his sin, being "in Christ" signifies participating in the life and resurrection he brought. All in Adam's domain die, but all in Christ's domain will be made alive at his return. This "in Christ" reflects a realm or domain where believers find their identity and destiny through their union with Christ and his redemptive work.

7. According to 2 Corinthians, how do believers share in Christ's sufferings and comfort, and what does this imply about their union with him?

In 2 Corinthians 1:5, Paul states, "For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too." This doesn't mean believers participate in Christ's unique redemptive suffering, but rather that they experience afflictions in their lives as followers of Christ and, through their union with him, also receive God's comfort and encouragement in the present. This highlights that union with Christ involves a sharing in his experiences, both suffering and glory (presently experienced as comfort).

8. How does the concept of the Holy Spirit relate to believers being "in Christ" and being stabilized in their faith, according to 2 Corinthians 1:17-22?

Paul emphasizes that God establishes believers "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:21) through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He describes the Father anointing, sealing, and giving his Spirit in their hearts as a guarantee. This indwelling of the Holy Spirit is presented as an inseparable companion to union with Christ, signifying that believers belong to Christ and are made stable in their faith due to the active work of the Trinity, particularly the Father's gift of the Spirit.