

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 2, Application of Salvation and Union with Christ Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Salvation, Session 2, Application of Salvation and Union with Christ, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This source presents a theological lecture by Dr. Robert Peterson on the topic of salvation, specifically focusing on the **application of salvation** and **union with Christ**. Peterson outlines a broad view of salvation as planned by God, accomplished through Christ, applied by the Holy Spirit, and ultimately consummated. The lecture series will primarily explore the application of salvation, including doctrines like **union with Christ, calling, regeneration, and justification**. Peterson also discusses the importance of **theological methodology**, incorporating exegesis, biblical theology, and historical theology to understand these doctrines, particularly highlighting election, justification, and sanctification. The lecture then begins its proper focus by introducing the concept of **union with Christ**, emphasizing its biblical basis in representation and Paul's theology, as well as its systematic definition as the Holy Spirit joining believers to Christ and his benefits, further explaining the believer's **need for and the nature of this union within the Trinity**.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Salvation, Session 2 – 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 → Salvation).



**Peterson_Salvation_
Session02.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 2, Application of Salvation and Union with Christ

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on the Application of Salvation and Union with Christ

Overview:

This session by Dr. Robert A. Peterson introduces the "Application of Salvation" within the broader panorama of God's saving work. Peterson outlines the stages of salvation as planned by God before creation (Election), accomplished by Christ in the first century, applied by the Holy Spirit through union with Christ, and ultimately consummated on the last day (Glorification). The primary focus of this session is on "Union with Christ," which Peterson argues is the central and most comprehensive aspect of the application of salvation, encompassing other doctrines like calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, and perseverance. The lecture also touches upon theological methodology, emphasizing the primacy of Scripture (Sola Scriptura) while acknowledging the importance of biblical and historical theology.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Panorama of Salvation:

- Salvation is a comprehensive work of God, spanning from eternity past to eternity future.
- Peterson identifies four key stages:
- **Planning (Election/Predestination):** God's sovereign choice before creation. He considers "Election... not part of the Application of Salvation" but belonging to God's plan.
- **Accomplishment:** Christ's work in the first century, including his incarnation, sinless life, death, resurrection, ascension, the sending of the Holy Spirit, and his ongoing intercession, culminating in his Second Coming. "God accomplishes Salvation in the first century in Christ, His Incarnation, Sinless Life, Death and Resurrection especially..."

- **Application:** The work of the Holy Spirit in uniting believers to Christ in time and space. "He applies Salvation in time and space when the Holy Spirit unites us to Christ. This is the Application of Salvation and most of the doctrines we will study have to do with the Application of Salvation."
- **Consummation (Glorification/Eternal Life):** The final realization of salvation on the last day.

2. Theological Methodology:

- Peterson advocates for a practical theological approach grounded in a standard evangelical methodology.
- This methodology involves:
- **Exegesis:** Careful study of the Bible in both Old and New Testaments. "We begin with the Bible and carefully study the Bible's teachings in the Old and New Testaments."
- **Biblical Theology:** Building upon exegesis to understand the unfolding story of redemption (creation, fall, redemption, consummation).
- **Historical Theology:** Understanding the church's attempts to interpret the Bible throughout history (patristic, medieval, Reformation, post-Reformation, modern). While not in a direct line from exegesis and biblical theology, historical theology is crucial for understanding the development of doctrines. "Historical theology is often diagrammed, coming in at an angle. It needs to be taken into account in understanding the Bible's teachings. We can't ignore the wisdom of the ages and those who have gone before us."
- **Systematic Theology:** The human attempt to synthesize the Bible's teachings into a coherent whole, informed by exegesis, biblical theology, and historical theology. "The ultimate goal is systematizing the teaching that God has given in his word as it unfolds, as it is informed by the history of Christian doctrine, and much, much more."
- **Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone):** The Bible is the supreme authority in constructing theology, even though theologians are influenced by tradition, reason, and experience. "Sola Scriptura, or the Bible alone, doesn't mean we only use the Bible to construct the theology. It means the Bible is supreme in constructing theology, and our goal is to deliberately and consistently elevate scripture over our reason, tradition, and experience."

- Historical theology is particularly important for understanding the doctrines of election, justification, and sanctification, requiring engagement with historical debates and differing viewpoints.

3. Union with Christ: The Core of the Application of Salvation:

- Peterson positions "Union with Christ" as the foundational doctrine within the application of salvation, acting as an "umbrella" under which other aspects of salvation fit. "Because union is the umbrella under which the other aspects fit. It's the bigger circle of which justification and sanctification and adoption and so forth are little circles within it, are subsets of the bigger set."
- **Biblical Summary:** Union with Christ has roots in the Old Testament concept of representation (Adam, Israel's leaders) and is fully revealed in the New Testament through Jesus Christ as the true representative and the Pauline "in Christ" theology. "Those who desire to belong to Israel must be united to Jesus Christ, for he is the true vine, and those in him are the branches. The notion of union with Christ is also communicated in Paul's in Christ theology. And we will see that every soteriological blessing is ours in Christ."
- **Systematic Formulation (Overview):** The lecture will delve into the definition of union with Christ, our need for it, the Trinity's role in it, a detailed description, Jesus' story in relation to it, and how other aspects of salvation are understood within this union.

4. Definition and Need for Union with Christ:

- **Definition:** "Union with Christ is the Holy Spirit's work of joining people to Jesus and all his saving benefits." Peterson quotes Calvin: "as long as we are separated from Christ, all that he has done for us does not benefit us. It is only when we are engrafted into him... that he becomes ours, and all that he has accomplished for us becomes ours."
- **Need:** Our fundamental need for union with Christ stems from our separation from him due to sin, resulting in a lack of relationship and access to God's blessings. "Our need for union with Christ is, as we already hinted at, separation from him... Here we were, separated from him. Thus, this language uses the language of space or location to indicate a lack of relationship." Through union with Christ, believers are "brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13) and gain "access in one spirit to the Father" (Ephesians 2:18).

5. The Trinity and Union with Christ:

- Being united to Christ means being united to the Trinity, as God is one, and the persons are inseparable. "Being united to Christ means we are united to the Trinity. God is one. We distinguish the persons. We don't confuse them, but we never separate them."
- Peterson briefly outlines the doctrine of the Trinity: one God existing eternally in three persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
- He emphasizes the mutual indwelling (perichoresis, circumcession, co-inherence) of the Trinitarian persons. "Perichoresis is the mutual indwelling of the persons of the Godhead... Theologians call the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one another, perichoresis, circumcession, and co-inherence."
- Astonishingly, through God's grace, believers also indwell the Godhead in a creaturely and limited sense. "By virtue of God's magnificent grace, not only does the Trinity indwell us, but there is a creaturely, finite, derivative, limited sense we indwell the Godhead."
- The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and indeed the Trinity, in believers is a key aspect of present union with Christ. "The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Trinity in believers, is a way of talking about present union with Christ. That's what it is! The Lord is with us, and in us means we are joined to Christ."
- Peterson cites numerous New Testament passages indicating the indwelling of the Spirit, the Son (Romans 8:10, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:27, 3:11), and the Father (2 Corinthians 6:16, Ephesians 2:22) in believers.

6. Description of Union with Christ:

- **Definitive:** Union with Christ defines our identity as the people of God. "Union with Christ is definitive. It defines our existence as the people of God." Believers are like "living stones to build a temple to God through Christ" (1 Peter 2:4-5).
- **Personal:** Union with Christ is an intimate and personal relationship, moving beyond God being "for us" in Christ's objective work to God being "in us" through the Holy Spirit. Peterson highlights the use of marital imagery and the analogy of sexual union to depict this profound intimacy (1 Corinthians 6:15-17). "Paul not only uses the most intimate of human relationships, marriage, but the most

intimate aspect of human relationships, sexual intercourse, to portray union with Christ. It is definitive. It is as personal as it gets. God loves us. We are his. He is ours."

- **Enduring:** Union with Christ is permanent and cannot be broken. Believers are "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30), signifying the permanence of salvation and God's preservation of his saints. "Union with Christ is not temporary but permanent... You were sealed by him for the day of redemption." Even death cannot sever this bond (Revelation 14:13).

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's Session 2 lays the groundwork for understanding salvation through the lens of its application, with "Union with Christ" presented as the central and defining reality for believers. This union, facilitated by the Holy Spirit, encompasses all the saving benefits of Christ and establishes a definitive, personal, and enduring relationship with the Triune God. The session emphasizes the importance of a robust theological methodology rooted in Scripture and informed by the historical understanding of Christian doctrine.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 2, Application of Salvation and Union with Christ

Study Guide: Application of Salvation and Union with Christ

Key Concepts and Themes:

- **The Panorama of Salvation:** Understand the four stages of salvation as presented: planning (Election), accomplishment (Christ's life, death, resurrection, etc.), application (Union with Christ and subsequent doctrines), and consummation (Glorification, Eternal Life).
- **Application of Salvation:** Recognize this as the primary focus of the lectures, encompassing doctrines like Union with Christ, Calling, Regeneration, Conversion, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, and Perseverance.
- **Theological Methodology:** Understand the importance of exegesis, biblical theology, historical theology, and systematic theology in constructing theological understanding, with Scripture being supreme (Sola Scriptura).
- **Historical Theology's Role:** Appreciate the significance of historical theological discussions for specific doctrines like Election, Justification, and Sanctification.
- **Union with Christ as Central:** Grasp the concept of Union with Christ as the foundational doctrine within the application of salvation, under which other aspects fit.
- **Biblical Basis of Union with Christ:** Understand the Old Testament roots in the concept of representation and the New Testament emphasis in Paul's "in Christ" theology and the metaphor of the vine and branches.
- **Definition of Union with Christ:** Learn the definition: the Holy Spirit's work of joining people to Jesus and all his saving benefits.
- **Need for Union with Christ:** Recognize that our fundamental need is separation from Christ, which results in a lack of salvific blessings.
- **Trinity and Union with Christ:** Understand that union with Christ necessarily involves union with the entire Trinity, emphasizing the unity of God and the distinct yet inseparable persons.

- **Mutual Indwelling (Perichoresis):** Grasp the Trinitarian concept of mutual indwelling and how it provides a framework for understanding God's indwelling of believers and our being "in" God through grace.
- **Indwelling as Present Union:** Understand that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (and consequently the Father and the Son) in believers is a key aspect and a way of describing present, ongoing union with Christ.
- **Definitive Nature of Union:** Recognize that union with Christ defines our identity as God's people and the recipients of his mercy and grace.
- **Personal Nature of Union:** Understand the intimate and personal aspect of union with Christ, likened to marital union and sexual intimacy, where God works within believers.
- **Enduring Nature of Union:** Appreciate the permanence of union with Christ, secured by the sealing of the Holy Spirit, which even death cannot break.

Quiz:

1. Briefly explain the four stages of salvation as outlined in the lecture.
2. List three doctrines that fall under the "Application of Salvation."
3. What is the relationship between exegesis, biblical theology, and systematic theology?
4. Why is historical theology particularly important for understanding the doctrines of election and justification?
5. Define "Union with Christ" as presented in the lecture.
6. According to the lecture, what is the primary need that necessitates union with Christ?
7. Explain how the doctrine of the Trinity relates to the believer's union with Christ.
8. What does the concept of "indwelling" signify in the context of union with Christ?
9. Describe two of the three characteristics (definitive, personal, enduring) of union with Christ.
10. What is the significance of the Holy Spirit as a "seal" in relation to the believer's union with Christ?

Answer Key:

1. The four stages of salvation are planning, which involves God's election before creation; accomplishment, which occurred in Christ's first-century life, death, and resurrection; application, where the Holy Spirit unites believers to Christ; and consummation, which will occur on the last day with glorification and eternal life.
2. Three doctrines that fall under the "Application of Salvation" are Union with Christ, Justification, and Sanctification. (Other correct answers include Calling, Regeneration, Conversion, Adoption, and Perseverance).
3. Exegesis, the careful study of biblical texts, forms the foundation for biblical theology, which studies the unfolding story of redemption in the Bible. Systematic theology builds upon biblical theology and seeks to systematize the Bible's teachings into a coherent whole.
4. Historical theology is crucial for understanding election because of the long history of debate (e.g., Augustine vs. Pelagius, Calvinism vs. Arminianism). It's important for justification due to the significant differences between Roman Catholic and Reformational teachings.
5. Union with Christ is the Holy Spirit's work of joining people to Jesus and all his saving benefits. It signifies being engrafted into Christ so that what he has accomplished becomes ours.
6. The primary need that necessitates union with Christ is separation from Christ. This separation leaves individuals without forgiveness, eternal life, and the blessings of salvation.
7. Being united to Christ means being united to the Trinity because God is one, and the persons are inseparable. Through the Spirit's work of uniting us to Christ, we are brought into relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit as well.
8. "Indwelling" signifies the present and ongoing union with Christ, where God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit reside within believers. It is not just God being with us but truly living within us, joining us to Christ.
9. Union with Christ is definitive because it defines our existence as God's people, those who have received his grace and mercy through Christ. It is personal, involving an intimate relationship with God, likened to a spiritual marriage where God works within us.

10. The Holy Spirit as a "seal" signifies the permanence and security of the believer's union with Christ. It is a down payment and a guarantee of our inheritance until the final redemption, indicating that God preserves his saints.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of understanding the "panorama of salvation" for comprehending the doctrine of the application of salvation, with specific reference to the place and importance of Union with Christ.
2. Analyze the role of historical theology in informing our understanding of key soteriological doctrines, using either the doctrine of election or justification as a detailed example.
3. Elaborate on the biblical basis for the doctrine of Union with Christ, drawing connections between Old Testament foreshadowings and New Testament explications.
4. Explain the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and the believer's Union with Christ, paying particular attention to the concept of mutual indwelling and its implications for the Christian life.
5. Evaluate the three descriptive characteristics of Union with Christ (definitive, personal, and enduring), providing biblical support for each and discussing their practical significance for believers.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Application of Salvation:** The stage in God's saving work where the benefits of Christ's accomplished redemption are personally applied to believers by the Holy Spirit.
- **Biblical Theology:** A discipline that studies the progressive revelation of God's plan of redemption throughout the Bible, focusing on the unfolding story and themes.
- **Consummation of Salvation:** The final stage of salvation, which includes the glorification of believers and the establishment of eternal life in God's presence.

- **Election:** God's sovereign choice before the creation of the world to save a particular people for himself.
- **Exegesis:** The careful and critical interpretation of biblical texts to understand their original meaning in their historical and literary context.
- **Glorification:** The final transformation of believers when they receive perfect and resurrected bodies and fully experience eternal life with God.
- **Historical Theology:** The study of how Christian doctrines have been understood and articulated throughout church history by theologians and within different traditions.
- **Incarnation:** The doctrine that God the Son became fully human in the person of Jesus Christ, taking on flesh and dwelling among humanity.
- **Justification:** God's act of declaring sinners righteous in his sight through faith in Jesus Christ, based on Christ's atoning sacrifice.
- **Perichoresis (Circumcession, Co-inherence):** A theological term referring to the mutual indwelling and interpenetration of the three persons of the Trinity.
- **Predestination:** A broader term than election, referring to God's sovereign plan and purpose for all things that come to pass, including salvation.
- **Regeneration:** The Holy Spirit's work of giving new spiritual life to individuals, enabling them to believe in Jesus Christ.
- **Sanctification:** The ongoing process by which believers are progressively conformed to the image of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Sola Scriptura:** A Reformation principle asserting that the Bible alone is the ultimate and infallible authority for Christian faith and practice.
- **Systematic Theology:** A discipline that seeks to organize and synthesize all the teachings of the Bible into a coherent and logical system of doctrine.
- **Union with Christ:** The spiritual joining of believers to Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, through which they share in his life, death, resurrection, and all his saving benefits.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 2, Application of Salvation and Union with Christ, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Application of Salvation and Union with Christ

1. What is meant by the "Application of Salvation" in the broader scope of God's saving work? The "Application of Salvation" refers to how God's plan for salvation (Election) and accomplishment of salvation in Christ (His life, death, resurrection, etc.) are made effective in the lives of individual believers through the Holy Spirit. It's the stage where the benefits of Christ's work are personally bestowed upon those who believe and are united to Him. This includes doctrines like Union with Christ, Calling, Regeneration, Conversion, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, and Perseverance. It stands between God's pre-creation plan and the future consummation of salvation in Glorification.

2. What is "Union with Christ" and why is it considered a central aspect of the Application of Salvation? Union with Christ is the Holy Spirit's work of joining believers to Jesus, making them participants in His life, death, resurrection, and all His saving benefits. It is considered central because it acts as the overarching framework within the Application of Salvation. Doctrines like justification, sanctification, and adoption are understood as blessings and realities that believers experience because they are in union with Christ. It's the fundamental connection through which all other saving graces flow.

3. How does the Trinity play a role in both establishing and maintaining a believer's union with Christ? The entire Trinity is involved in salvation, including our union with Christ. The Father planned salvation, the Son accomplished it, and the Holy Spirit applies it by uniting us to Christ. While the Holy Spirit is the primary agent in this union, it's essential to understand that the work of one person of the Trinity is the work of the whole. Being united to Christ means being united to the Trinity. Furthermore, the mutual indwelling (perichoresis) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit provides a framework for understanding how God can indwell believers through the Spirit, signifying and sustaining our union with Christ.

4. What does it mean to say that our need for union with Christ stems from a "separation from Him"? Before God's intervention, humanity was separated from Christ, lacking the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and other blessings found in Him. This separation, described in spatial terms as being "far away," signifies a broken relationship and absence of the life and benefits available in Christ. The application of salvation, particularly union with Christ through the Spirit, bridges this gap, bringing believers near to Christ and restoring the relationship, granting access to the Father.

5. In what ways is the concept of "representation" related to the New Testament understanding of union with Christ? The Old Testament concept of representation, where individuals or groups (like Adam or Israel) acted on behalf of others, lays a foundation for understanding union with Christ. Just as humanity was represented by Adam and experienced the consequences of his sin, believers in the New Testament are now represented by and united to Christ, the "true" representative. Through this union, they share in His righteousness and life, escaping the condemnation brought by Adam. Jesus is seen as the greater Moses, the true vine, and the final David, and belonging to God's people now necessitates being united to Him.

6. How is union with Christ described as "definitive," "personal," and "enduring" in the life of a believer? Union with Christ is **definitive** because it fundamentally shapes a believer's identity as part of God's people, who have received His mercy through Christ. It is **personal** because it's not just a corporate reality but an intimate connection, likened to a spiritual marriage where God works within the believer, bringing His grace up close. It is **enduring** because God permanently seals believers in union with Christ through the Holy Spirit, a seal that even death cannot break, guaranteeing the permanence of salvation until the day of redemption.

7. What is the theological significance of the Holy Spirit being described as the "seal" of a believer's union with Christ? The Holy Spirit as a seal signifies God's ownership, security, and guarantee of a believer's salvation and their union with Christ. This sealing, initiated by the Father and accomplished through the Spirit in the context of being "in Christ," underscores the permanence of this union. The Holy Spirit is presented as the down payment of our inheritance, assuring believers of their future redemption and God's unwavering commitment to them.

8. How does understanding historical theology contribute to a more comprehensive grasp of doctrines like Election, Justification, and Sanctification, which are part of the broader study of Salvation? Historical theology, the study of how the church has understood the Bible throughout history, is crucial for a deeper understanding of certain doctrines. For Election, it helps us navigate different viewpoints from figures like Augustine and Pelagius to the debates between Calvinism and Arminianism. For Justification, it's essential to consider the distinct teachings of Roman Catholicism and the Reformation. Similarly, for Sanctification, understanding Lutheran, Wesleyan, Keswick, Pentecostal, and Reformed perspectives enriches our comprehension of the Christian life as taught in Scripture. Ignoring these historical developments would mean neglecting the insights and debates of faithful Christians who have grappled with these very doctrines over centuries.