

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 3, Union with Christ Continued Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Salvation, Session 3, Union with Christ Continued, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's lecture, "Union with Christ Continued," explores the concept of believers' fundamental connection with Jesus in salvation. The lecture outlines how this union means Christians participate in Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and eventual return. **Peterson emphasizes that all aspects of salvation, such as regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, preservation, and glorification, are experienced through this vital union.** He supports this understanding by examining various biblical passages, particularly from Galatians, Colossians, Romans, and Ephesians. **The lecture highlights that this union is definitive, personal, and permanent, shaping the believer's identity and future.** Ultimately, Peterson argues that this deep connection with Christ is central to understanding and experiencing God's saving grace.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Salvation, Session 3 – 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_
Session03.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 3, Union with Christ Continued

Briefing Document: "Union with Christ Continued" - Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 3

Overview:

This session, the third in Dr. Peterson's teaching on salvation, continues the exploration of "union with Christ" as the overarching framework for understanding the application of salvation. Peterson emphasizes that believers participate in Jesus' story through this union, experiencing his death, resurrection, ascension, session in heaven, and even, in a spiritual sense, his return. He argues that all aspects of salvation – including regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, preservation, and glorification – occur *in union with Christ*.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Union with Christ as Participation in Jesus' Story:

- Peterson posits that the Apostle Paul ministers union with Christ by showing believers as participants in Jesus' life events.
- This participation is not merely symbolic but has real spiritual implications for believers.
- He outlines five key aspects of this participation: dying with Christ, being raised with him, ascending and sitting in heaven with him, and returning with him.

1. Dying with Christ:

- Drawing from Galatians 2:20 ("I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.") and Colossians 2:20 ("If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you still were alive in the world, do you submit to its regulations?"), Peterson explains that believers retroactively participate in Christ's crucifixion.
- This death with Christ signifies a death to the power of sin and the "elemental spirits of the world."

1. Being Raised with Christ:

- Referencing Colossians 3:1 ("**If then you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.**") and Romans 6, Peterson highlights that believers are not only dead to sin but also raised to new life through union with Christ's resurrection.
- Romans 6 emphasizes that this union breaks the power of sin in the believer's life: "**How can we who died to sin still live in it?**" and "**our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer... be enslaved to sin.**"
- This resurrection union empowers believers to "walk in newness of life."

1. Ascending and Sitting with Christ in Heavenly Places:

- Ephesians 2:6 is central to this point: "**and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**"
- Peterson shares an anecdote of someone overcoming temptation by remembering their seated position with Christ.
- This signifies the security of salvation and a present spiritual reality for believers, even while still on earth.

1. Returning with Christ:

- Drawing from Colossians 3:4 ("**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**") and Romans 8:19 ("**The eager expectation of the creation awaits eagerly the revelation of the sons of God.**"), Peterson suggests that believers will participate in Christ's second coming.
- He notes the use of "revelation" (Greek: *apokalypsis*) in Romans 8, connecting it to the language used for Christ's return.
- This is not a literal second coming for believers as Christ, but a manifestation of their true identity in union with him. "**Paul means our true identity is so wrapped up in Christ that it will be fully revealed only when he and we come again.**"

1. All Salvific Blessings are in Union with Christ:

- Peterson argues that every aspect of the application of salvation is received through union with Christ. "**If all God's salvific blessings are in him and we are, God joins us to him, and then we get all those blessings.**"

- He specifically addresses:
- **Regeneration:** Occurs "with Christ," as stated in Ephesians 2:4-5 ("**made us alive together with Christ...raised us up with him**").
- **Justification:** Achieved "in him" through the "great exchange" described in 2 Corinthians 5:21 ("**For God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**") and Philippians 3:9 ("**to be found in him...the righteousness from God based on faith.**").
- **Adoption:** Believers become sons of God "in Christ Jesus" through faith (Galatians 3:26-27) and are "clothed with Christ," signifying union.
- **Sanctification:** Believers are "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Ephesians 2:10) and die to the power of sin through their union with Christ's death (Romans 6).
- **Preservation:** There is "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (alluding to Romans 8:1) because God has blessed believers with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).
- **Glorification:** Believers will "appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4) and obtain "the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:14) in union with him.

1. **Centrality of Union with Christ in Paul's Theology of Salvation:**

- Peterson quotes Richard Gaffin: "**The central soteriological reality is union with the exalted Christ by spirit-created faith. That is the nub, the essence of the way or order of salvation for Paul.**" This emphasizes the fundamental importance of this doctrine.

1. **Indicative and Imperative in Christian Life:**

- Paul's writings often present what God has done for believers in Christ (indicative) as the basis and motivation for how they should live (imperative). "**The imperative, the Christian life exhortations, are based upon the indicative of what God has done for us in Christ.**"

Key Quotes:

- "The Apostle Paul ministers union with Christ to us by placing us as participants in Jesus' story."

- "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20)
- "If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you still were alive in the world, do you submit to its regulations?" (Colossians 2:20)
- "If then you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." (Colossians 3:1)
- "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3)
- "Our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer... be enslaved to sin." (Romans 6:6)
- "and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 2:6)
- "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:4)
- "The eager expectation of the creation awaits eagerly the revelation of the sons of God." (Romans 8:19)
- "For God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- "Through faith, you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus, for those of you who are baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ." (Galatians 3:26-27)
- "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires." (Romans 13:14)
- "The central soteriological reality is union with the exalted Christ by spirit-created faith." (Richard Gaffin)

Next Steps:

The lecture will continue with a discussion of the doctrine of election, beginning with historical reconnaissance and then a study of the relevant scriptures. Peterson specifically mentions looking at the idea that "God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world."

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 3, Union with Christ Continued

Study Guide: Union with Christ

Key Concepts:

- **Union with Christ:** The overarching way of understanding the application of salvation, signifying a definitive, personal, and permanent joining of believers to Jesus Christ.
- **Participation in Christ's Story:** Believers, through grace, are participants in the key events of Jesus' life: his death, resurrection, ascension, session in heaven, and return.
- **Justification:** Being declared righteous in God's sight, which occurs in union with Christ through the imputation of his righteousness and the forgiveness of sins.
- **Regeneration:** Being made spiritually alive; a new birth that occurs in union with Christ.
- **Adoption:** Being made sons and daughters of God, which believers receive in union with Christ.
- **Sanctification:** The process of becoming more like Christ, empowered by our union with him in his death and resurrection, breaking the power of sin.
- **Preservation:** God's keeping of believers secure in their salvation, a blessing received in union with Christ.
- **Glorification:** The ultimate transformation of believers, when they will appear with Christ in glory at his return, a culmination of their union with him.
- **Indicative and Imperative:** The relationship between what God has done for believers in Christ (the indicative) and how believers are called to live in response (the imperative). The indicative provides the foundation and motivation for the imperative.
- **The Great Exchange:** The theological concept, highlighted in 2 Corinthians 5:21, where Christ, though sinless, took our sin upon himself, and we, through union with him, receive his righteousness.

- **Apocalypse/Revelation:** Often used in Scripture to refer to the second coming of Christ, but also used to describe the revealing of the sons of God, signifying the full manifestation of believers' identity in union with Christ at his return.

Quiz:

1. Describe the three key characteristics of union with Christ as presented in the lecture.
2. Explain how Paul uses the phrase "crucified with Christ" in Galatians 2:20 to illustrate union with Christ.
3. According to the lecture, how does union with Christ relate to believers' death to sin and newness of life as described in Romans 6?
4. What does Ephesians 2:6 teach about believers' present position in relation to Christ's ascension?
5. In what sense do believers participate in Christ's second coming, according to the lecture's interpretation of Colossians 3:4 and Romans 8:19?
6. Explain how regeneration is understood as a blessing received in union with Christ, referencing Ephesians 2:4-5.
7. Describe Luther's "great exchange" in light of 2 Corinthians 5:21 and how it relates to union with Christ and justification.
8. How does the concept of being "clothed with Christ" in Galatians 3:26-27 illustrate the idea of union with Christ and adoption?
9. Explain the relationship between the indicative statements about what God has done in Christ and the imperative calls to Christian living.
10. According to the lecture, how does union with Christ ensure the believer's preservation and future glorification?

Answer Key:

1. Union with Christ is described as **definitive**, meaning it is a clear and decisive act of God joining believers to Christ. It is **personal**, indicating an intimate and real connection between each believer and Christ. Finally, it is **permanent** or **enduring**, signifying that this union is unbreakable and lasts forever.
2. In Galatians 2:20, Paul states, "I have been crucified with Christ," meaning that through union with Christ, believers participate in his crucifixion. This signifies a

death to their old self and the power of sin, so that the life they now live is empowered by Christ living in them through faith.

3. Union with Christ is central to understanding the death to sin and newness of life in Romans 6. Through baptism, believers are united with Christ in his death and resurrection, signifying their death to the dominion of sin and their being raised to walk in newness of life, empowered by Christ's resurrection.
4. Ephesians 2:6 teaches that God "raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." This illustrates that believers are spiritually united with Christ in his ascension and are presently considered to be in a position of authority and security with him in heaven.
5. While believers will not literally have their own second coming as Christ does, they are so intimately united with him that their true identity as his people will be fully revealed when he returns in glory. Passages like Colossians 3:4 and Romans 8:19 suggest that believers will appear with him, sharing in his revealed glory.
6. Regeneration, being made alive spiritually, is a direct result of union with Christ. Ephesians 2:4-5 states that even when we were dead in our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ by grace. Being joined to Jesus brings the saving benefit of spiritual life.
7. Luther's "great exchange," based on 2 Corinthians 5:21, describes how God made Christ, who was sinless, to be sin for us, so that in union with him, we might become the righteousness of God. This means our sins are imputed to Christ, and his righteousness is imputed to us, leading to our justification.
8. The imagery of being "clothed with Christ" in Galatians 3:26-27, often connected with baptism, signifies the believer's union with Christ. Just as clothes cover the body, Christ covers believers, representing their new identity in him and their adoption as sons and daughters of God through faith.
9. The indicative statements in Scripture declare what God has already done for believers through Christ, such as their forgiveness, reconciliation, and new life. These truths form the foundation and motivation for the imperative calls, which are commands and exhortations for believers to live in a way that reflects their new identity and union with Christ.

10. Union with Christ guarantees the believer's preservation because all spiritual blessings, including God's keeping power, are found in him (Ephesians 1:3). Glorification, the final aspect of salvation, is also in union with Christ, as believers will appear with him in glory at his return, fully realizing their identity in him (Colossians 3:4).

Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of "union with Christ" as the overarching theme for understanding the application of salvation, drawing on specific examples from the provided source material.
2. Analyze how the Apostle Paul utilizes the concept of believers participating in Jesus' story (his death, resurrection, and ascension) to convey the meaning and implications of union with Christ.
3. Explore the interconnectedness of justification, regeneration, and adoption as blessings received by believers through their union with Christ, referencing the scriptural passages discussed in the lecture.
4. Explain how the believer's union with Christ empowers both their deliverance from the power of sin (sanctification) and their assurance of future salvation (preservation and glorification), according to the lecture.
5. Critically evaluate the relationship between the indicative truths of union with Christ and the imperative calls to Christian living, using examples from the provided text to support your analysis.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Union with Christ:** A comprehensive theological concept describing the spiritual, vital, and indissoluble bond between believers and Jesus Christ, through which they share in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension.
- **Justification:** The act by which God declares a sinner righteous in his sight, not based on their own works, but through faith in Jesus Christ, whose righteousness is imputed to them and whose sacrifice atones for their sins.
- **Regeneration:** The work of the Holy Spirit by which a spiritually dead person is made alive, receiving a new nature and the capacity to believe and obey God.
- **Adoption:** God's gracious act by which he takes believing sinners into his family, granting them the status, rights, and privileges of sons and daughters.
- **Sanctification:** The ongoing process by which the Holy Spirit works in believers to make them more like Christ in their thoughts, desires, and actions, progressively freeing them from the power of sin.
- **Preservation:** The doctrine that God will unfailingly keep all true believers in his grace until the end, ensuring their final salvation.
- **Glorification:** The ultimate and complete salvation of believers, which will occur when Christ returns or when they die and go to be with him, involving the resurrection of the body and the full perfection of their being in God's presence.
- **Imputation:** The theological concept of attributing or crediting something to another. In salvation, God imputes the guilt of our sin to Christ and the righteousness of Christ to believers.
- **Soteriology:** The branch of Christian theology concerned with the doctrine of salvation.
- **Asceticism:** A lifestyle characterized by severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 3, Union with Christ Continued, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Union with Christ

1. What is meant by "union with Christ" in the context of salvation?

Union with Christ is presented as the overarching way to understand how salvation is applied to believers. It signifies a definitive, personal, and permanent joining of believers to Jesus Christ. This union means that believers participate in Jesus' story, experiencing his death, resurrection, ascension, and even his eventual return in a spiritual and real sense.

2. How do believers participate in Christ's death through this union?

Scripture teaches that believers have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:6). This means that in union with Christ, believers have died to the power of sin. This death to sin is not merely a metaphor but a spiritual reality experienced through our connection with Christ's crucifixion. It signifies a break from the dominion of sin over our lives.

3. In what ways are believers united with Christ's resurrection?

Believers are raised with Christ to newness of life (Colossians 3:1; Romans 6:4-5; Ephesians 2:5-6). Just as Christ was raised from the dead, believers, through union with him, are spiritually resurrected to live a new life empowered by the Spirit. This resurrection breaks the power of sin and enables believers to walk in obedience and please God.

4. What does it mean for believers to ascend and be seated with Christ in heavenly places?

Through union with Christ, believers are considered to have ascended with him and are seated with him in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6). This signifies the security and elevated status of believers in Christ. Even while still on earth, their spiritual identity is linked with Christ's exaltation at the right hand of God, offering comfort and strength against temptation.

5. How does union with Christ relate to the future return of Christ?

Scripture suggests that when Christ, who is the life of believers, appears at his second coming, believers will also appear with him in glory (Colossians 3:4). This indicates a profound and intimate connection between Christ and his followers, such that their true identity in him will be fully revealed at his return. This is not to say believers are little Christs, but that their destiny and glorification are intrinsically tied to Christ's.

6. How does union with Christ encompass the various aspects of salvation, such as regeneration, justification, and adoption?

According to the teaching, all the blessings and aspects of salvation are received in union with Christ. Regeneration (spiritual rebirth), justification (being declared righteous), and adoption (being made sons and daughters of God) are not obtained apart from Christ but through being joined to him. For example, believers are justified in Christ as his righteousness is imputed to them (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9), and they are adopted as sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-27).

7. How does union with Christ impact the believer's present, ongoing Christian life (sanctification and preservation)?

Union with Christ is the foundation for progressive sanctification (growing in holiness). By virtue of dying and rising with Christ (Romans 6:1-14), believers have been freed from the power of sin and are enabled to live lives that honor God. Furthermore, the preservation of believers is also secured in union with Christ (Romans 8:1, 38-39; Ephesians 1:3), as nothing can ultimately separate those who are in Christ from God's love and saving grace.

8. What is the significance of understanding salvation through the lens of union with Christ?

Understanding salvation as fundamentally rooted in union with Christ highlights the intimacy, security, and comprehensive nature of God's saving work. It emphasizes that all spiritual blessings are found in Christ and are accessible to believers through their connection with him. This perspective underscores the believer's participation in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, shaping their present identity and future hope.