

Dr. Robert Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 7, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 2, Jesus's Signs Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 7, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 2, Jesus's Signs, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Robert Peterson's Johannine Theology Session 7 explores the second part of Jesus's "I Am" sayings and introduces the first part of Jesus's signs as recorded in the Gospel of John. The lecture examines how these declarations and miracles reveal Jesus's identity and mission, particularly focusing on themes like Jesus as the true vine and the significance of the wedding at Cana. **Peterson emphasizes the interconnectedness of these elements in understanding John's theological presentation of Christ.** He discusses the deeper meanings behind these passages, considering their Old Testament context and their implications for believers. **The session highlights the glory of God manifested through Jesus's words and deeds, underlining the importance of abiding in Christ and bearing fruit.**

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 7 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → John).



Peterson_JnTheology_Session07.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 7, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 2, Jesus's Signs

Briefing Document: Johannine Theology - Jesus' "I Am" Sayings (Part 2) & Jesus' Signs (Part 1)

Prepared For: [Intended Audience - e.g., Personal Study, Bible Study Group]

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and theological insights presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 7 of his Johannine Theology series. The session focuses on the second part of Jesus' "I Am" sayings and the first part of his signs as recorded in the Gospel of John. Peterson explores the meanings behind these declarations and miracles, their Old Testament context, and their significance for understanding Jesus' identity and the nature of salvation and discipleship.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Recap of Jesus' "I Am" Sayings:

- Peterson reiterates that there are seven "I am" sayings in John's Gospel (I am the...), but these can be categorized into three core meanings summarized in John 14:6:
- **"I am the way"**: Signifies Jesus as the **Savior**. Examples include the Light of the World (concerning the way to the Father).
- **"I am the truth"**: Indicates Jesus as the **revealer of God**.
- **"I am the life"**: Denotes Jesus as the **giver/bestower of eternal life**. Examples discussed include the Bread of Life and the Good Shepherd from previous sessions, and now the True Vine and the Resurrection and the Life.

2. "I Am the True Vine" (John 15:1-17):

- **Old Testament Context:** Jesus' statement is set against the backdrop of the Old Testament, where Israel is frequently referred to as the vineyard or vine of the Lord (Isaiah 5 being a key example).
- "There's extensive background in the Old Testament, where Israel is the vineyard of the Lord and the vine of the Lord. It is against that background that Jesus says, I am the true vine."

- **Fulfillment of Israel's Purpose:** Jesus declares himself the "true vine," implying that Israel's role as God's vine was partial and incomplete, failing to produce the expected good fruit. Jesus, as the true Israelite, fulfills this purpose.
- "When it says, I'm the true vine; it doesn't mean Israel was the false vine. It means Israel was partial. It was incomplete. And it failed in its task to live up to the reputation given by God to be the true vine, if you will. Jesus is the true vine. He's the fulfillment of what Israel was meant to be. He's the true Israelite."
- **Union with Christ and Fruitfulness:** Believers, as branches abiding in the true vine (Jesus), become the New Testament Israel of God. Fruitfulness is presented as a crucial indicator of genuine union with Christ and salvation.
- "And all those who are who abide in him as branches in the vine become the true Israel, the New Testament Israel of God."
- "Every branch in me that does not bear fruit. He takes away... being fruitless consistently in both testaments indicates no salvation. Or, to use New Testament terminology or John's sermon, no eternal life."
- **The Father as the Vinedresser:** The Father is depicted as the vinedresser, highlighting the harmony and submission within the Godhead during the incarnation.
- "I'm the true vine, and my father is the vine dresser... it also shows submission on the part of the Son's oversight, if you will, on the part of the Father."
- **Judgment Based on Works (for Believers):** While faith is not directly judged, the fruit (works) produced by believers is assessed at the last judgment. These good works are ultimately the result of the Father and the Son working through believers via the Holy Spirit.
- "As an exegetical theologian, I studied the judgment passages and concluded that judgment is based on works. Very fair for unsaved people... The hard part is believers are judged by our works... But they're not ultimately their works. They are the works, the deeds of the Father... They're the works of Christ... They are the fruit of the Holy Spirit..."
- **Abiding in Christ:** Abiding is defined as continuing in a personal relationship with Jesus, akin to fellowship with God described in 1 John. It involves an awareness of Jesus' love and a reciprocal love and obedience.

- "In this context, to abide in the vine is akin to John's notion of having fellowship with God, 1 John. That is, it's almost akin. It's a way of talking about salvation lived out. It means continuing a personal relationship with Jesus."
- "Abide in my love. Abiding means continuing in Jesus' love. That means continuing with an awareness that he loves me and loving him in return."
- **Human Responsibility and Divine Sovereignty:** While the passage emphasizes the responsibility of believers to abide and bear fruit, verses 16 and 19 highlight God's sovereign election. Jesus states, "You did not choose me, but I chose you." This choice is not just for discipleship but for salvation.
- "The focus is on Jesus in the upper room calling his disciples to responsible discipleship, right? Oh, but God is sovereign. And the only place in the whole Bible where Jesus is the author of election is here in John 15, verses 16 and 19... It is a choice to salvation."

3. "I Am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:1-44):

- **Life-Giver:** This "I am" saying powerfully emphasizes Jesus as the bestower of eternal life, extending beyond physical resuscitation to spiritual and eternal life.
- "Jesus replies I am the resurrection and the life. Talk about being the life-giver."
- **Context of Lazarus's Death:** Peterson highlights Jesus' love for Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, and the deliberate delay in arriving, possibly related to the Jewish belief about the soul lingering near the body for a few days.
- "Jesus allowed Lazarus, whom he loved... Jesus lets him die and waits another three or four days because of the Jewish myth about the soul hovering over the body."
- **Misunderstanding and Glory of God:** The disciples and even Martha initially misunderstand Jesus' statements about Lazarus's condition. Jesus clarifies that this event is for the glory of God and the glorification of the Son of God.
- "This illness does not lead to death. It's for the glory of God... Lazarus's death, they don't understand it's death yet. It's for the glory of God. Yes, it's exactly what Jesus says. It's for the glory of God."
- **Paradox of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility:** The narrative illustrates the tension between God's sovereign will (allowing Lazarus to die) and human emotions and responsibility (Jesus weeping). Peterson references D.A.

Carson's work on this paradox, noting that Jesus, as the God-man, embodies both sovereignty and responsibility.

- "Now, the eternal Son of God becomes a man... If we thought that the Son becoming, the eternal Son becoming a man of flesh and blood, was going to solve the problem of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, we were wrong. It exacerbates the problem. Because as the God-Man, He is sovereign... But Jesus is responsible..."
- **Martha's Confession:** Martha's response to Jesus' declaration ("Yes, Lord, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world") anticipates the central purpose of John's Gospel.
- "And here are Martha's words. Martha's words anticipate the purpose of the gospel of John. I love it. Yes, Lord, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."
- **Significance of the Miracle:** The resuscitation of Lazarus is presented as a powerful sign pointing to Jesus' power over death and his identity as the resurrection and the life. Peterson notes it's the most dramatic resuscitation recorded.
- "Here, Jesus resuscitates a dead man three times... Lazarus, his friend Lazarus. It's the same language of resurrection, no special language... But obviously, they all died. These are the IM sayings. They're beautiful."
- **Juxtaposition of Sin/Death and Glory:** The removal of the stone from Lazarus's tomb, revealing the stench of death alongside the impending glory of God, is highlighted as a powerful image.
- "Again, as I said earlier, there is a conjunction between the stench of sin and death and the glory of God. Side by side. It is amazing... The stench of sin and death and the glory of God are put right next to each other. That is amazing."

4. Introduction to Jesus' Signs:

- **Seven Signs in John's Gospel:** Peterson identifies seven key signs (miracles) in John's Gospel, noting that John explicitly uses the term "first sign" and seems to encourage readers to count them.
- "Seven signs. Water to wine, chapter 2. Official son healed, chapter 4. Lame man healed, chapter 3 [Correction: Lame man healed is in chapter 5]. 5,000 fed in

chapter 6. Lime man healed in 9. Lazarus was raised in 11... by the way, he does want us to count."

- **Water to Wine at Cana (John 2:1-11): Symbolic Significance:** This first sign is presented as highly symbolic. The six stone water jars used for Jewish purification rites are seen as representing the old covenant and the inadequacy of Jewish purification practices.
- "Now, there were six stone water jars there for the rites of Jewish purification. It turns out commentators, and I really believe they're right, have been thinking about this for many years. They really were there, but they symbolize the old cloth... Jesus takes the old wine of Judaism, and out of it, he brings the new wine of the kingdom of God."
- **Jesus as the Bridegroom:** Jesus providing the new wine (of the kingdom) is interpreted as him taking the place of the bridegroom, symbolizing the Lord of the church providing for the people of God.
- "Jesus, here's another symbol, takes the place of the bridegroom, in other words, the Lord of the church, the head of the church, providing for the people of God."
- **Manifestation of Glory and Beginning of Belief:** The miracle manifests Jesus' glory and marks the beginning of his disciples' belief in him (an initial or growing faith, not necessarily full-blown Christian belief).
- "This is the first of the signs Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, manifesting his glory. He shows his splendor... And his disciples believed in him. Full-blown Christian, it's impossible. They began to believe in him."
- **Jesus' Timetable:** Jesus' initial response to his mother ("My hour has not yet come") is briefly touched upon, hinting at the significance of Jesus' appointed time for his death, resurrection, and ascension.

Quotes:

- "There are not seven different meanings to the seven I Am's, but three different meanings. They're summarized in 14:6. I'm the way, means the Savior. I'm the truth, means the revealer of God. I'm the life, which means the giver, the bestower of eternal life."
- "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me... For apart from me, you can do nothing."

- "You did not choose me, but I chose you." (John 15:16)
- "Jesus said plainly, Lazarus has died. And for your sake, I'm glad I was not there. That is well said. Because Jesus experienced pain at Lazarus' tomb, it wasn't for His sake."
- "Jesus replies I am the resurrection and the life. Talk about being the life-giver. He who believes in me, though he dies, physically, yet shall he live. He will be raised from the dead. Everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."
- "These signs are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing, you might have life in His name." (Referring to the purpose of John's Gospel)
- "This is the first of the signs Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, manifesting his glory. He shows his splendor. He demonstrates a little bit of his magnificence in changing water to wine on such a large scale. Simply by his word. And his disciples believed in him."

Key Takeaways:

- Jesus' "I Am" sayings reveal his divine identity and his essential roles as Savior, Revealer of God, and Giver of Life.
- The "True Vine" metaphor emphasizes the necessity of abiding in Christ for true discipleship and fruitfulness, while acknowledging God's sovereignty in salvation.
- The raising of Lazarus powerfully illustrates Jesus' claim as "the Resurrection and the Life," demonstrating his power over death and foreshadowing his own resurrection.
- The seven signs in John's Gospel serve to confirm Jesus' messianic identity and invite belief. The first sign, water to wine, symbolically points to the transition from the old covenant to the new covenant in Christ.
- The Gospel of John intricately weaves together themes of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

Further Considerations:

- The connection between the "I Am" sayings and the signs could be explored further in subsequent sessions.

- The specific theological implications of Dr. Peterson's Calvinistic perspective on fruitfulness and salvation could be examined in more detail.
- The symbolic nature of John's Gospel and the deeper meanings behind the signs warrant continued study.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 7, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 2, Jesus's Signs

Johannine Theology: I Am Sayings and Signs

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Peterson, how many "I Am" sayings are there in John's Gospel, and into how many different meanings can they be summarized?
2. Explain the significance of Jesus calling himself the "true vine" in the context of the Old Testament.
3. How does Peterson interpret the branches in the vine that do not bear fruit, and what does this indicate about salvation?
4. What does it mean to "abide" in Jesus, according to Peterson's explanation of John 15?
5. Peterson states that judgment for unsaved people is based on works. What does he say about the judgment of believers?
6. In the story of Lazarus, why did Jesus wait several days before going to him after hearing he was sick?
7. What is the significance of Martha's statement, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day," in response to Jesus' statement about her brother rising?
8. According to Peterson, what was the first sign Jesus performed in John's Gospel, and what did it symbolize?
9. What is the general meaning of Jesus' "hour" in John's Gospel, and why did Jesus initially seem to refuse his mother's request at the wedding in Cana?
10. How does the miracle of turning water into wine relate to the "old wine of Judaism" and the "new wine of the kingdom of God"?

Answer Key

1. There are seven different "I Am" sayings in John's Gospel, where Jesus says "I am the" followed by a predicate nominative. These seven sayings can be summarized

into three different meanings: Savior (the way), revealer of God (the truth), and giver of eternal life (the life).

2. In the Old Testament, Israel is often referred to as the vineyard or vine of the Lord, but it failed to live up to this reputation by not producing good fruit. Jesus, by calling himself the "true vine," signifies that he is the fulfillment of what Israel was meant to be and that those who abide in him become the true Israel.
3. Peterson interprets the fruitless branches as those who are identified with Christ outwardly but are not truly saved because consistent fruitlessness indicates a lack of eternal life. These branches are taken away and burned, demonstrating that they were never genuinely united to Christ in a saving way.
4. To "abide" in Jesus, according to Peterson, is akin to having fellowship with God, as described in 1 John. It means continuing in a personal relationship with Jesus, living out one's salvation, and remaining in his love with an awareness of his love and a reciprocal love for him.
5. While the faith of believers is not directly judged, the works that their faith produces will be judged. These good works are ultimately the deeds of the Father and the Son working through the believer and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and they serve as evidence of their genuine faith at the last judgment.
6. Jesus waited three or four days after Lazarus' death due to the Jewish myth that the soul hovered over the body for three days before finally departing. By waiting, Jesus ensured there would be no doubt that Lazarus was truly dead before he was resurrected, further glorifying God.
7. Martha's statement reflects the common Jewish belief in a future, corporate resurrection on the last day. Jesus' response, "I am the resurrection and the life," goes beyond this understanding, proclaiming that he himself is the source of resurrection and eternal life in the present for those who believe in him.
8. The first sign Jesus performed was turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. This sign was symbolic, representing Jesus taking the place of the bridegroom (the Lord of the church) and providing the new wine of the kingdom of God, signifying that the old purification rites of Judaism were becoming obsolete.
9. Generally, Jesus' "hour" refers to his time to die, rise, and return to the Father. At the wedding in Cana, Jesus' seemingly resistant response to his mother ("My hour

has not yet come") indicates that the time for his public manifestation that would ultimately lead to the cross had not yet arrived, as the Father sets this timetable.

10. The miracle of turning water into wine symbolizes Jesus replacing the old covenant of Judaism with the new covenant of the kingdom of God. The six stone water jars used for Jewish purification rites represent the inadequacy of the old ways, while the abundant and excellent new wine represents the superior provision and quality of the new life offered through Christ.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the interconnectedness of Jesus' "I Am" sayings and his signs in John's Gospel, according to Peterson's lecture. How do these elements contribute to John's overall theological message about Jesus?
2. Analyze Peterson's interpretation of John 15:1-11, focusing on the meaning of "abiding" and the implications for believers regarding fruitfulness and salvation. Consider both Calvinistic and Arminian perspectives as mentioned in the lecture.
3. Explain the significance of the raising of Lazarus (John 11) in relation to Jesus' identity as "the resurrection and the life." How does this event illustrate the interplay between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, as discussed by Peterson referencing D.A. Carson?
4. Examine the symbolic meaning of the first sign at the wedding in Cana (John 2) as presented by Peterson. How does this miracle foreshadow key aspects of Jesus' ministry and the transition from the old covenant to the new?
5. Critically evaluate Peterson's emphasis on human responsibility in discipleship as presented in his discussion of John 15, while also acknowledging his points about God's sovereignty and election in the same passage. What are the potential implications of this emphasis for Christian living and assurance of salvation?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Predicate Nominative:** A noun or pronoun that renames or identifies the subject of a linking verb (e.g., in "I am the way," "way" is the predicate nominative).
- **Incarnation:** The theological doctrine that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became human, taking on flesh.

- **Godhead:** The essential nature or being of God in the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
- **Subordination (in Incarnation):** The idea that during the incarnation, the Son of God willingly took a lesser role in relation to the Father for the purpose of his earthly ministry.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of a text, especially of scripture.
- **Calvinism:** A theological system emphasizing God's sovereignty, predestination, and the total depravity of humanity.
- **Arminianism:** A theological system emphasizing human free will, conditional election, and the possibility of losing salvation.
- **Orthodoxy:** Right belief or adherence to accepted creeds and doctrines, especially in religion.
- **Discipleship:** The state of being a follower or learner of Jesus Christ, characterized by obedience and growth.
- **Abide (meno):** A Greek verb meaning to remain, continue, or dwell. In the context of John's Gospel, it signifies a deep and ongoing relationship with Jesus.
- **Fellowship:** The state of sharing mutual interests or activities; in a religious context, it often refers to a close relationship with God and with other believers.
- **Sovereignty (of God):** God's ultimate power and authority over all creation and history.
- **Election:** God's gracious choice of individuals for salvation.
- **Triumphal Entry:** Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, where he was hailed as the Messiah.
- **Ascension:** The event forty days after Jesus' resurrection when he ascended bodily into heaven.
- **Symbolic Gospel:** A characterization of John's Gospel due to its frequent use of metaphors, allegories, and signs with deeper theological meanings.
- **Rites of Jewish Purification:** Religious practices and ceremonies in Judaism aimed at cleansing from ritual impurity.

- **New Wine (of the Kingdom of God):** A metaphor for the new covenant and the life and blessings brought by Jesus Christ, contrasting with the perceived limitations of the Old Covenant.
- **Manifestation (of Glory):** The revealing or showing forth of God's divine power, splendor, and character.
- **Resuscitation:** The act of reviving someone from apparent death, implying a return to their previous mortal state.
- **Second Death:** A theological term, often found in the Book of Revelation, referring to eternal separation from God in hell.
- **Intertestamental Period:** The historical period between the Old and New Testaments (roughly 400 years).
- **Providence:** God's foreknowledge, active involvement, and continuous governance of the world and its events.
- **Paradox:** A seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true. In theology, it often describes truths that are difficult for human reason to fully grasp.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 7, Jesus's "I Am" Sayings, Part 2, Jesus's Signs, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Johannine Theology (Based on Peterson, Session 7)

1. What is the significance of Jesus' "I Am" sayings in the Gospel of John, and how many different meanings do they convey?

Dr. Peterson explains that there are seven distinct "I Am" sayings in John's Gospel where Jesus says "I am the..." followed by a predicate nominative. However, these seven sayings do not have seven different meanings. Instead, they can be summarized into three key meanings, as highlighted in John 14:6: "I am the way" signifies Jesus as the Savior, "I am the truth" indicates Jesus as the revealer of God, and "I am the life" portrays Jesus as the giver and bestower of eternal life.

2. When Jesus says, "I am the true vine" (John 15), what is the Old Testament context, and what does this statement imply about Israel and Jesus' followers?

The statement "I am the true vine" has a rich Old Testament background, particularly in passages like Isaiah 5, where Israel is depicted as the vineyard of the Lord. However, Israel failed to live up to this divine reputation by producing bad fruit. Jesus' declaration does not mean Israel was a false vine but rather a partial and incomplete one. Jesus, as the true vine, is the fulfillment of what Israel was meant to be, the true Israelite. Those who abide in Him as branches become the New Testament Israel of God, demonstrating a spiritual continuity and fulfillment.

3. In the analogy of the vine and the branches (John 15), what is the fate of the branches that do not bear fruit, and does this relate to salvation?

Dr. Peterson clarifies that the fruitless branches in the vine analogy, as discussed in John 15:2 and 6, represent those who, despite being outwardly associated with Christ (being "in the vine"), do not demonstrate genuine faith through consistent fruit-bearing. These branches are "taken away" and ultimately "burned," which Peterson interprets as hellfire. He argues, from a Calvinistic perspective informed by engagement with Arminian viewpoints, that consistent fruitlessness is an indicator of a lack of true salvation or eternal life, not merely a loss of rewards for believers.

4. What does it mean to "abide" in Jesus, according to John 15, and what are some of the fruits that result from this abiding?

Abiding in Jesus, or "meno" in Greek meaning to continue or remain, is central to the vine and branches analogy. Peterson equates it to John's concept of having fellowship with God (1 John). It signifies a continuous personal relationship with Jesus, remaining in His love by being aware of His love and loving Him in return. The fruits of abiding include answered prayer, the glorification of the Father, joy, obedience to Jesus' commandments, and love for one another, demonstrating true discipleship.

5. While John 15 emphasizes human responsibility in abiding and bearing fruit, does it also address God's sovereignty?

Yes, while the initial verses of John 15 focus on the disciples' responsibility to abide and bear fruit, verses 16 and 19 highlight God's sovereignty in election. Jesus states, "You did not choose me, but I chose you," indicating that God's initiative underlies their salvation and appointment to bear fruit. This emphasizes that even within the call to responsible discipleship, God's sovereign choice is foundational, providing the "everlasting arms" beneath their efforts.

6. How does the "I am the resurrection and the life" saying (John 11) relate to the miracle of raising Lazarus and Martha's understanding of resurrection?

When Martha states her belief that Lazarus will rise again in the resurrection on the last day (reflecting Jewish understanding from Daniel and Isaiah), Jesus' response, "I am the resurrection and the life," is a shocking declaration of His own divine power as the source of resurrection and eternal life in the present. The raising of Lazarus is a powerful sign illustrating this truth, demonstrating Jesus' ability to conquer death. Martha's initial understanding was of a future, corporate resurrection, while Jesus reveals that He Himself embodies the power of resurrection.

7. What is the significance of the seven signs (miracles) recorded in the Gospel of John, and what was the purpose of the first sign at the wedding in Cana?

The seven signs in John's Gospel are not merely displays of power but are intended to point to Jesus' identity as the Christ, the Son of God, so that people might believe and have life in His name (John 20:30-31). The first sign, turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana, is symbolic. The six stone water jars used for Jewish purification rites represent the inadequacy of the old covenant and Jewish tradition. Jesus' act of providing new, excellent wine symbolizes the new wine of the Kingdom of God that He brings, surpassing and replacing the old. This sign manifested Jesus' glory and initiated His disciples' belief in Him.

8. How does the raising of Lazarus illustrate the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, and how does it relate to Christian responses to death?

The raising of Lazarus poignantly illustrates the paradox of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Jesus deliberately waits before going to Lazarus, aligning with God's will for His glory to be revealed. Yet, the human emotions of grief and love are also deeply present, with Jesus weeping at Lazarus' tomb. This event highlights that God's sovereign plan does not negate human emotions or the reality of death as an enemy (1 Corinthians 15). Dr. Peterson suggests that Christian funerals should be bittersweet, acknowledging both the sorrow of loss and the victory over death in Christ, reflecting the complexity seen in Jesus' response to Lazarus' death.