

# Dr. Robert Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 10, Responses and Witnesses to Jesus Resources from NotebookLM

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

## 1. Abstract of Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 10, Responses and Witnesses to Jesus, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture on Johannine theology, specifically Session 10, explores two central themes within the Gospel of John: responses to Jesus and witnesses to Jesus. The lecture begins by examining the **two fundamental responses to Jesus presented in the prologue: rejection by the world and acceptance by those who believe**. Peterson traces this dichotomy throughout the Gospel, highlighting various encounters where individuals and groups exhibit either negative or positive reactions to Jesus' ministry, including figures like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. The session then shifts to the theme of **witnesses to Jesus, starting with John the Baptist and extending to Jesus himself, his works, the Father, the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus' disciples**. Peterson analyzes key passages to illustrate how these various entities bear testimony to Jesus' identity and mission, setting the stage for a discussion on Christology in the subsequent session.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 10 – 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\_JnTheolo  
gy\_Session10.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 10, Responses and Witnesses to Jesus

#### Briefing Document: Johannine Theology - Responses to Jesus & Witnesses to Jesus

**Overview:** This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 10 of his Johannine Theology course, focusing on the two key themes: "Responses to Jesus" and "Witnesses to Jesus" as depicted in the Gospel of John.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas:

##### 1. Responses to Jesus:

- **Two Major Responses:** The prologue of John's Gospel (John 1:10-13) strategically introduces the theme of two primary responses to Jesus' incarnation as the "true light" and the "word become flesh." These responses shape the narrative of the entire book.
- **Negative Response (Rejection):** The world, despite being created through him, "did not know him" (John 1:10). This rejection extends to his "own people" (Israel), who "did not receive him" (John 1:11). This negative response, exemplified by the unbelief despite Jesus' signs (John 12:37), largely characterizes the first half of the Gospel (the Book of Signs).
- **Quote:** "He was in the world because he came into the world, verse 9, and the world was made through him, as John said up above, in verse 3, yet the world did not know him."
- **Quote:** "He came to his own home, but his own people did not receive him."
- **Positive Response (Reception/Belief):** "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave them the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). This positive response, linked to believing in Jesus' name, leads to adoption as children of God, with Jesus uniquely taking the Father's role in this adoption (potentially the only explicit instance in Scripture). This belief is ultimately enabled by God (John 1:13), suggesting regeneration precedes faith.
- **Quote:** "But to all who did receive him, and that is explained in the parenthetical clause, who believed in his name, receiving Jesus is not different than believing in Jesus. To them, he gave them the right to become children of God."

- **Quote:** "It's not a human doing, ultimately, although people truly believe. God doesn't believe for anybody, but he enables faith. It looks here to me like faith is the result of regeneration."
- **Pattern of Responses:** The Gospel illustrates these two responses through various encounters:
- **Nicodemus (Negative/Inadequate) vs. Samaritan Woman (Positive):** Nicodemus, a respected Jewish leader, demonstrates a lack of understanding of the "new birth," while the marginalized Samaritan woman believes and becomes an evangelist.
- **Galileans (Unbelief/Demand for Signs) vs. Samaritans (Belief through Word):** Despite Jesus' miracles in Galilee, belief is hesitant, whereas many Samaritans believe based on the woman's testimony and their own hearing of Jesus.
- **Division among the People:** Jesus' words and actions consistently cause division and differing opinions among the people (e.g., John 7:40-43, John 9).
- **Response to Lazarus' Resurrection:** While many Jews believed after witnessing the miracle, some reported it to the Pharisees, leading to plans to kill Jesus (John 11:45-53).
- **Inadequate Faith:** John's Gospel presents instances of belief that are not genuine or complete. Jesus does not entrust himself to those who believe merely based on signs (John 2:23-25). Examples include those who claimed to believe in John 8 but then revealed their lack of true faith through their actions and words, and authorities in John 12 who believed but did not confess for fear of the Pharisees, valuing human glory over God's.
- **Quote:** "but Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them. Surely, he's a faithful covenant Lord who entrusts himself to those who truly believe in him, but they don't truly believe in him."
- **Quote:** "for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God."
- **Disciples' Response:** The disciples initially follow Jesus and will also face similar conflicting responses (more negative than positive) in their ministry. Jesus serves as their Lord, Savior, revealer of God, and example in facing the world's hatred and persecution (John 15:18-20).

- **Quote:** "Remember the word that I spoke to you: a servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, guess what? They will persecute you."

## 2. Witnesses to Jesus:

- **Prologue as Introduction:** The theme of witnessing begins in the prologue with John the Baptist (John 1:6-8), whose primary role in John's Gospel is not preaching repentance but bearing witness to the light so that others might believe.
- **Quote:** "He bears witness to the light that people might believe. He wasn't the light."
- **John the Baptist's Testimony:** John explicitly denies being the Christ, the prophet, Elijah, or "the one who was to come," and consistently points to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" and the "Son of God" (John 1:19-34).
- **Quote:** "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...This is the son of God."
- **Multiple Witnesses:** John's Gospel highlights various individuals and entities that bear witness to Jesus' identity and mission:
- **The Father:** God the Father bears witness to Jesus (John 5:32, 37; John 8:18).
- **Quote:** "There's another who bears witness about me. And I know that his testimony is true. That's the father."
- **Jesus' Works:** The miracles and "divine works" performed by Jesus testify to the Father's sending of him (John 5:36).
- **Quote:** "The very works I am doing bear witness about me that the Father has sent me."
- **The Old Testament (Scriptures):** The Scriptures themselves bear witness to Jesus (John 5:39).
- **Quote:** "And it is they that bear witness of me."
- **Key Individuals:** The Samaritan woman (John 4:39), the formerly blind man (John 9), and Martha (John 11:27) all offer significant testimonies to Jesus.
- **Quote (Martha):** "Yes, Lord, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

- **The Holy Spirit:** After Jesus' ascension, the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, will bear witness about Jesus (John 15:26).
- **Quote:** "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me."
- **The Disciples:** Jesus' followers are also called to bear witness because they have been with him from the beginning (John 15:27; John 20:21-23). The breathing of the Holy Spirit upon them symbolizes their empowerment for this witness and their role in forgiveness and withholding forgiveness based on the response to Christ.
- **Quote:** "And you also will bear witness because you've been with me from the beginning."
- **Quote (Jesus to disciples):** "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they're forgiven. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Peterson emphasizes that the Gospel of John intricately weaves the themes of responses to Jesus and the multitude of witnesses who testify to his identity and mission. The prologue lays the groundwork for these themes, which are then developed through various encounters and testimonies throughout the narrative. The Gospel highlights both the tragic rejection of Jesus and the joyful acceptance leading to eternal life, while also underscoring the crucial role of various witnesses, culminating in the testimony of the Holy Spirit and the disciples.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 10, Responses and Witnesses to Jesus

### Johannine Theology: Responses to Jesus & Witnesses to Jesus - Study Guide

#### Quiz:

1. Describe the two major responses to Jesus highlighted in the prologue of John's Gospel (John 1:10-13).
2. According to the lecture, what is significant about the order in which the negative and positive responses to Jesus are presented in the prologue? How does this relate to the structure of John's Gospel?
3. Explain how the encounters with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman illustrate the two contrasting responses to Jesus presented in the prologue.
4. What is "inadequate faith" as described in the lecture, and provide one example from the Gospel of John used to illustrate this concept?
5. List three different individuals or groups, besides John the Baptist, who bear witness to Jesus in the Gospel of John as discussed in the lecture.
6. According to Jesus' words in John 5:31-47, what are at least three valid witnesses to his identity and authority?
7. Explain the significance of Jesus breathing on his disciples in John 20:19-23 in relation to the themes of witness and the Holy Spirit.
8. How does the lecture interpret John the Baptist's primary role in the Gospel of John? How does this differ from some other portrayals of his ministry?
9. What does the lecture suggest about the general pattern of responses that Jesus' disciples (and by extension, believers) can expect to receive from the world?
10. How does John's Gospel present the concept of Jesus as the "author of adoption" in John 1:12?

#### Answer Key:

1. The prologue highlights two main responses: rejection and acceptance. The world, despite being created through Jesus, did not know him, and his own people did not receive him (negative response). However, those who did receive

him, believing in his name, were given the right to become children of God (positive response).

2. The negative response precedes the positive response, mirroring the structure of the Gospel. The negative response in the prologue foreshadows the rejection Jesus faces in the first half of the book (the Book of Signs), while the positive response anticipates the purpose of the latter part (the Book of Glory), which aims to inspire belief.
3. Nicodemus, a respected Jewish leader, initially shows misunderstanding and a lack of spiritual insight, representing a form of negative response or inadequate faith. The Samaritan woman, an unlikely individual, readily believes and becomes an evangelist to her community, illustrating a positive and transformative response.
4. "Inadequate faith" refers to a belief in Jesus that is not genuine or complete, often motivated by seeing signs or for superficial reasons, lacking true commitment. An example is found in John 2:23-25, where many believed because of the signs Jesus performed, yet Jesus did not entrust himself to them because he knew their hearts.
5. Three examples of witnesses to Jesus include: the Samaritan woman (John 4:39), the formerly blind man (John 9), and Martha (John 11:27).
6. According to Jesus, valid witnesses to him include: the Father, John the Baptist (up to a certain point), and the works (miracles) that Jesus performs, which were given to him by the Father.
7. Jesus breathing on his disciples is seen as a prophetic act anticipating Pentecost and the giving of the Holy Spirit. This act empowers them to be his witnesses and signifies their role in the forgiveness and withholding of sins through the proclamation of the gospel in the Spirit's power.
8. The lecture emphasizes John the Baptist's role as a witness or pointer to Jesus, the true light. His primary ministry in John's Gospel is to bear witness so that others might believe in Jesus, rather than primarily focusing on preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
9. The lecture suggests that Jesus' followers should expect a pattern of two conflicting responses, with more negative responses than positive, mirroring the responses Jesus himself received.

10. John 1:12 uniquely presents Jesus as the one who gives the right to become children of God to those who receive him and believe in his name. This suggests Jesus takes on the father's role in the act of adoption, making him the author of this new relationship with God.

### **Essay Format Questions:**

1. Analyze the significance of the prologue (John 1:1-18) in introducing the major themes of responses to Jesus and witnesses to Jesus in the rest of the Gospel. Discuss specific examples and connections made in the lecture.
2. Compare and contrast the different types of responses to Jesus presented in the Gospel of John, including positive belief, outright rejection, and what the lecture terms "inadequate faith." What are the underlying reasons for these varying responses according to the lecture?
3. Discuss the role and importance of various witnesses to Jesus in the Gospel of John. How does the testimony of John the Baptist, Jesus himself, his works, and the Old Testament contribute to the overall portrait of Christ presented in the Gospel?
4. Explore the connection between the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples (John 20:19-23) and their role as witnesses to Jesus. How does the Spirit empower and equip them for this task, according to the lecture's interpretation?
5. Evaluate the claim that the pattern of responses to Jesus in the Gospel of John provides a model for understanding the reception of the Christian message throughout history. Consider both the positive and negative responses and their implications.



## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Incarnation:** The theological doctrine that the Son of God became human in the person of Jesus Christ.
- **Chiastic Pattern:** A literary structure using inverted parallelism (A-B-C-B'-A') to emphasize a central point.
- **Adoption (in Johannine context):** The act by which those who believe in Jesus are given the right to become children of God, with Jesus taking on the role of the one granting this right.
- **Regeneration:** Spiritual rebirth or renewal brought about by the Holy Spirit, giving a new nature and the capacity for faith.
- **Book of Signs:** The first main section of John's Gospel (roughly chapters 1-12), characterized by Jesus' miraculous signs that reveal his identity and call for belief.
- **Book of Glory:** The second main section of John's Gospel (roughly chapters 13-20), focusing on Jesus' final hours, death, resurrection, and glorification.
- **Inadequate Faith:** Belief in Jesus that is superficial, incomplete, or motivated by signs and wonders without genuine commitment or understanding.
- **Witness:** Someone who testifies or provides evidence about a person or event. In John's Gospel, various individuals and entities bear witness to Jesus' identity and mission.
- **Prologue (of John's Gospel):** The introductory verses of John's Gospel (John 1:1-18) that present key themes and the identity of Jesus.
- **Theophany/Christophany:** A visible manifestation of God (Theophany) or specifically of Christ (Christophany) in the Old Testament.

## **5. FAQs on Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 10, Responses and Witnesses to Jesus, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on Responses to and Witnesses of Jesus in John's Gospel**

#### **1. What are the two primary responses to Jesus highlighted in the prologue of John's Gospel (John 1:10-13)?**

The prologue of John's Gospel reveals two fundamental responses to Jesus. First, there is a negative response: the world, despite being created through Jesus, did not recognize him. Furthermore, his own people, the nation of Israel under the old covenant, largely did not receive him. This rejection is portrayed as a profound act of unbelief towards their Creator and covenant Lord. Second, there is a positive response: to all who did receive him, that is, those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. This adoption is described as being born not of human means but of God, suggesting that faith in Jesus leads to a new spiritual birth and a relationship with God as his children.

#### **2. How does the negative response to Jesus in John's Gospel unfold beyond the prologue, particularly in the "Book of Signs" (chapters 1-12)?**

The negative response foreshadowed in the prologue becomes a prominent theme throughout the first twelve chapters of John's Gospel, often referred to as the "Book of Signs." Despite the numerous miraculous signs and powerful teachings of Jesus, the prevailing response from many, especially the Jewish leaders, is one of unbelief and rejection. Examples include the contrasting reactions to the healing of the blind man in chapter 9, where the Pharisees actively resist the truth of Jesus' identity and power, and the response to the raising of Lazarus in chapter 11, which, while leading some to believe, ultimately hardens the resolve of others to plot Jesus' death. This widespread rejection culminates in chapter 12, where John notes that despite all the signs Jesus had performed, the majority still did not believe in him.

### **3. What does John's Gospel reveal about "inadequate faith" or "false faith" in response to Jesus?**

John's Gospel highlights that not all expressions of belief in Jesus are genuine or saving faith. Several instances illustrate this concept of inadequate faith. In John 2:23-25, many believed in Jesus because they saw his signs, yet Jesus did not entrust himself to them because he knew their hearts. Similarly, in John 8:30-47, many Jews initially believed in Jesus' words, but their subsequent responses, marked by a refusal to abide in his word and claims of never being slaves, reveal a lack of true understanding and ultimately lead Jesus to declare them children of the devil. Finally, John 12:42-43 notes that even some of the authorities believed in Jesus but did not confess him publicly for fear of the Pharisees, demonstrating a faith that prioritized human approval over divine glory. These examples underscore the distinction between superficial assent and a deep, transformative faith.

### **4. Who are the key witnesses to Jesus presented in the Gospel of John, and what is the nature of their testimony?**

John's Gospel emphasizes multiple witnesses who testify to the identity and significance of Jesus. John the Baptist is the first, bearing witness that Jesus is the Light and the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:6-8, 1:29-34). God the Father also bears witness to Jesus, through his works that Jesus performs (John 5:36) and implicitly through the scriptures (John 5:39). Jesus himself bears witness to his own identity and his relationship with the Father (John 8:14-18). The works and signs performed by Jesus serve as powerful testimonies to his divine origin and mission (John 5:36, 10:25). Even the Old Testament scriptures are presented as bearing witness to Jesus (John 5:39, 46). Later in the Gospel, the Samaritan woman's testimony leads many in her town to believe (John 4:39), the formerly blind man boldly testifies to the healing power and identity of Jesus despite opposition (John 9), and Martha confesses Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (John 11:27). Finally, Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit and his disciples will bear witness to him (John 15:26-27).

**5. How does John the Baptist function as a witness to Jesus in John's Gospel, and what is explicitly stated about his role?**

In John's Gospel, John the Baptist's primary role is explicitly defined as that of a witness to the Light, Jesus Christ. He is presented not as the Light himself, nor as the Christ, Elijah, or the prophet, but as one sent by God to testify about Jesus so that others might believe (John 1:6-8, 1:19-28). His testimony includes proclaiming Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and affirming his divine Sonship after witnessing the Spirit descend upon him (John 1:29-34). John the Baptist's ministry serves as a crucial precursor to Jesus' public ministry, directing attention and faith towards the true Messiah.

**6. According to John's Gospel, how do Jesus' miracles or "signs" function as a form of witness?**

Jesus' miracles, consistently referred to as "signs" in John's Gospel, serve as powerful and tangible witnesses to his divine identity and authority. These signs are not merely acts of power but are intended to point beyond themselves, revealing Jesus' glory and prompting belief in him as the Christ, the Son of God (John 2:11, 20:30-31). For example, the healing of the blind man in chapter 9 is not just a physical restoration but a sign illustrating Jesus as the Light of the world. Similarly, the raising of Lazarus demonstrates Jesus' power over death and foreshadows his own resurrection. These signs, therefore, are integral to the purpose of John's Gospel: to persuade readers to believe that Jesus is the Christ and to have life in his name.

**7. What role do the Holy Spirit and the disciples play as witnesses to Jesus, particularly as described in the latter part of John's Gospel?**

In the latter part of John's Gospel, especially in the "Book of Glory" (chapters 13-20), Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit, the "Helper" or "Spirit of truth," who will be sent by Jesus from the Father and will bear witness about him (John 15:26). This witnessing role of the Spirit is intrinsically linked to the witnessing of Jesus' disciples. Jesus states that his disciples will also bear witness because they have been with him from the beginning (John 15:27). After his resurrection, Jesus breathes on his disciples and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit," signifying the empowering for their witness (John 20:22-23). Their testimony, empowered by the Holy Spirit, will be crucial in proclaiming the gospel and extending belief in Jesus.

**8. How does the Gospel of John suggest that the responses to Jesus experienced during his earthly ministry would continue for his followers?**

John's Gospel indicates that the pattern of mixed responses to Jesus – both belief and rejection – would extend to his followers. Jesus tells his disciples that if the world hated him, it will also hate them (John 15:18-20). He explains that this hatred stems from the world's ignorance of God the Father who sent him. Just as Jesus faced persecution and unbelief, his disciples and those who believe through their word can expect similar opposition (John 17:20). The lecture concludes by suggesting that while believers should share the truth in love, they should anticipate both positive and negative responses to their witness, mirroring the reception Jesus himself encountered.