

Dr. Robert Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 16, Salvation: God's Love Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 16, Salvation: God's Love, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's Session 16 on Johannine Theology focuses on **salvation as presented in the Gospel of John**, specifically examining **God's love** as a primary aspect. The session analyzes John 3:16-21, emphasizing that **God's love for a sinful world is demonstrated through the giving of His Son**, leading to eternal life for believers. Peterson explores the multifaceted meaning of "world" in John and clarifies that God's love is active and involves emotion. The lecture further connects God's love to the themes of divine sovereignty, human responsibility in accepting the gospel, and the believer's present possession of eternal life, as well as the mutual love among believers as a testament to their discipleship.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 16 – 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_Session16.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 16, Salvation: God's Love

Briefing Document: Johannine Theology - Session 16, Salvation, God's Love

Overview:

This session of Dr. Peterson's Johannine Theology series focuses on the concept of salvation as presented in the Gospel of John, with a particular emphasis on God's love as the foundational aspect. Peterson outlines six ways John views salvation, dedicating this session primarily to exploring God's love through key passages, notably John 3:16-21 and John 13 onwards. He emphasizes the unique Johannine perspective on God's love for the world and for believers, its manifestation in the giving of Jesus, and its implications for eternal life, divine sovereignty, human responsibility, and the believer's relationship with God and each other.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. God's Love as the Foundation of Salvation:

- The session begins with John 3:16-21, identified as potentially the most popular verse in Scripture. Peterson emphasizes the immense nature of God's love for "the world."
- He discusses D.A. Carson's argument that "the world" in this context, while indicating largeness, also signifies a world that is "so bad" and God's enemy.
- Peterson acknowledges the ambiguity of "world" in John's Gospel, sometimes referring to the created earth (good) and sometimes to sinful humanity and the system opposed to God.
- God's love is demonstrated through the act of "giving His only Son." This giving is not mere sentimentality but involves action, words, and emotion (though divine emotions are unlike our fickle and sometimes sinful ones).
- The result of this loving act and giving is that "whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Quote: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)

2. Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility:

- While this session primarily focuses on God's love, Peterson briefly touches upon divine election as another aspect of Johannine salvation, promising a more detailed discussion in the next session.
- He notes the strong emphasis on God's sovereignty in John, including the Father giving people to the Son, the Son keeping them, and uniquely in John 15, Jesus being the author of election ("You did not choose me, but I chose you.").
- Despite this emphasis on sovereignty, Peterson stresses that it does not exclude genuine human responsibility, accountability, and culpability.
- He highlights the church's and individual believers' duty to present the gospel to "whosoever will," because God commands it and uses means (our sharing) to accomplish His ends.
- Election is known not by probing divine councils but by seeing who believes in Jesus Christ, as those whom God chooses, He effectually calls.

3. The Nature of Eternal Life:

- John's Gospel presents eternal life as a present possession of the believer ("realized eschatology").
- John 17:3 defines eternal life relationally: *"This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*
- Eternal life involves knowing, loving, delighting in, obeying, enjoying, and serving the Father, Son, and Spirit now and for eternity as resurrected beings.

Quote: *"This is eternal life, Jesus said in his high priestly prayer, that they, the ones you've given me, may know the father and the son."* (Referring to John 17:3)

4. Condemnation for Unbelief:

- While God's proper work is to save, His "strange work" is to condemn.
- Those who do not believe in God's Son "are condemned already" (John 3:18), again highlighting realized eschatology.
- The language of "perishing" in John refers to the real punishment of hell, which is understood as eternal dying, the second death, and eternal suffering, not a cessation of existence. God's plan, however, is to save, not to condemn.

5. God's Love for His "Own" (Disciples):

- Moving to John 13:1, Peterson notes a shift in audience from "the world" in the Book of Signs (chapters 1-12) to the disciples in the Book of Glory (chapters 13-21).
- John 13:1 states, *"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of the world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end."*
- Jesus' act of washing the disciples' feet is presented as an extraordinary demonstration of this love "to the end." It symbolizes both the need for daily cleansing from sin (for those already "bathed" in Christ) and an example of humble, self-effacing service for one another.

Quote: *"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of the world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end."* (John 13:1)

6. The New Commandment and Love Among Believers:

- In John 13:34-35, Jesus gives a new commandment: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*
- This love among believers, modeled after Jesus' love for them, is a key identifier of discipleship and a witness to the world.
- While John doesn't emphasize loving enemies as much as the Synoptics, he strongly emphasizes mutual love among believers.
- The "fruit" in the Vine and Branches analogy (John 15) includes love for one another, alongside answered prayer, obedience, and joy. Abiding in Jesus' love is demonstrated by keeping His commandments, mirroring Jesus' abiding in the Father's love.

Quote: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* (John 13:34-35)

7. The Father's Love for Those Who Love the Son:

- John 16:27 states, *"For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."* This indicates a direct love of the Father for believers who love Jesus and believe in His divine origin.

Quote: *"For the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."* (John 16:27)

8. Unity and Glorification of Believers:

- In his high priestly prayer (John 17), Jesus prays for the unity of believers, mirroring the unity between the Father and the Son.
- He states, *"The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one..."* (John 17:22). Peterson interprets this as a present sense of glorification, aligning with his thesis that major features of last things have an "already and not yet" aspect.
- The ultimate purpose of this unity and shared glory is that "the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me" (John 17:23). The measure of the Father's love for believers is the same as His love for the Son.

Quote: *"The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one... so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."* (John 17:22-23)

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's session on "Salvation, God's Love" in Johannine Theology highlights the centrality of God's profound love for the world as the impetus for salvation, culminating in the gift of His Son. This love extends specifically to those who believe, fostering eternal life defined by a relational knowledge of God. The session also touches upon the interplay of divine sovereignty and human responsibility in salvation and emphasizes the crucial role of love among believers as a defining characteristic and a powerful witness to the world, all while hinting at the present yet future aspects of eternal life and glorification in John's Gospel.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 16, Salvation: God's Love

Johannine Theology: Salvation and God's Love

Quiz

1. According to John 3:16, what is the primary motivation behind God sending His Son into the world, and what is the consequence for those who believe in Him?
2. Dr. Peterson discusses different meanings of the term "world" in John's Gospel. Describe at least two of these meanings and explain the significance of God loving this "world."
3. While emphasizing God's sovereignty in salvation, how does the lecture explain the role and responsibility of believers in sharing the gospel?
4. What does the Gospel of John teach about the nature and timing of "eternal life" for believers? Support your answer with a specific verse mentioned in the lecture.
5. Explain the significance of Jesus washing the disciples' feet in John 13, according to Dr. Peterson. What two key lessons did Jesus teach through this act?
6. How does Jesus' "new commandment" in John 13:34-35 relate to the identity and witness of his disciples in the world?
7. In John 15, what are identified as the "fruit" that genuine branches in the vine (believers in Christ) will bear? How does bearing fruit relate to eternal life?
8. According to John 16:27, what is the basis for the Father's love for believers? What two actions on the part of believers are mentioned in this verse?
9. In John 17, what is the purpose of the unity among believers for the world, and how does the Father's love for believers compare to His love for Jesus?
10. What does Dr. Peterson mean by the concept that "every major feature of last things is already and not yet," and how does present glorification fit into this idea based on John 17?

Answer Key

1. The primary motivation behind God sending His Son is His love for the world. The consequence for whoever believes in Him is that they "should not perish, but have eternal life."

2. The term "world" in John can refer to the physical planet created by God, or to humanity, and also carries connotations of the sinful system that is opposed to God. God's love for this "world," especially in its sinful state, highlights the depth and surprising nature of His grace.
3. Despite God's sovereign election, believers are commanded to offer the gospel freely and universally because God has chosen to use these means to accomplish His ends. We don't know who the elect are until they believe, and our role is to faithfully proclaim the message.
4. The Gospel of John teaches that eternal life is a present possession of the believer, a "realized eschatology." John 17:3 defines it relationally as "knowing the Father and the Son" now.
5. Jesus washing the disciples' feet demonstrated His love for them to the end and taught them the need for daily confession of sins (spiritual cleansing from the "dust" of the world) and provided an example of humble, self-effacing service for one another.
6. Jesus' new commandment is for his disciples to love one another as He has loved them. This mutual love is the defining characteristic by which all people will know that they are Jesus' disciples, serving as a powerful witness to the world.
7. The fruit identified in John 15 includes answered prayer, obedience, joy, and love for one another. Bearing fruit is presented as evidence of having eternal life; the absence of fruit is a serious warning.
8. The basis for the Father's love for believers, according to John 16:27, is that they have loved Jesus and have believed that He came from God. These actions of love and belief connect believers to the Father's own love for His Son.
9. The unity among believers, mirroring the unity between the Father and the Son, serves the purpose that the world may believe that the Father sent Jesus and that He loves the believers just as He loved His Son.
10. Dr. Peterson means that the blessings and realities associated with the "last days" (eschatology) are not solely future events but have already begun in the present through Christ. Present glorification, as mentioned in John 17, refers to a current sharing in God's glory among believers, even though the full manifestation of glorification is still to come.

Essay Format Questions

1. Explore the tension between God's sovereignty in salvation and the human responsibility to believe and share the gospel as presented in the Johannine passages discussed in the lecture.
2. Analyze the multifaceted nature of God's love as portrayed in John's Gospel, paying particular attention to the object of His love and the ways in which this love is demonstrated.
3. Discuss the concept of "eternal life" in Johannine theology, focusing on its present and future dimensions and its significance for the believer's relationship with God and others.
4. Examine the importance of love within the community of believers in John's Gospel, considering its basis, its expression, and its role as a witness to the world.
5. Evaluate the significance of Jesus' actions and teachings in the Upper Room discourse (John 13-17) for understanding Johannine theology of salvation and God's love.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Johannine Theology:** The distinctive theological themes and teachings found in the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles (1, 2, and 3 John).
- **Salvation:** God's act of delivering humanity from sin and its consequences, offering reconciliation and eternal life through Jesus Christ.
- **God's Love:** The profound and unconditional affection, care, and commitment that God has for humanity and creation, demonstrated supremely in the sending of His Son.
- **Election (Divine Election):** God's sovereign choice, before the foundation of the world, of individuals to be saved and brought into a relationship with Him.
- **Eternal Life:** Not merely unending existence, but a qualitatively different kind of life characterized by a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, beginning in the present and continuing into eternity.
- **The World (in John):** A term with multiple meanings in John's Gospel, often referring to humanity in general, the sinful system opposed to God, or sometimes the physical creation.
- **Realized Eschatology:** The theological understanding that the blessings and realities associated with the end times (eschaton) have already begun in the present through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- **Glorification:** The ultimate transformation of believers into the likeness of Christ, involving the fullness of God's glory being revealed in and through them. In John, it can also refer to Jesus' exaltation and the present sharing of God's glory with believers.
- **Sovereignty (of God):** God's ultimate authority, power, and control over all things, including salvation.
- **Atonement:** Christ's work on the cross by which He paid the penalty for sin, reconciling humanity to God. (While not explicitly detailed in this excerpt, it is foundational to salvation).

5. FAQs on Peterson, Johannine Theology, Session 16, Salvation: God's Love, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Salvation and God's Love in Johannine Theology

1. How does the Gospel of John portray God's love in relation to salvation?

The Gospel of John emphasizes that God's love is the foundational motivation for salvation. John 3:16, often considered the central verse, states, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." This highlights that God's love is not just a feeling but an active giving of himself through his Son to save humanity from perishing and grant them eternal life.

2. What does John mean by "the world" in passages like John 3:16, and how does God's love extend to it?

While "the world" (κόσμος) in John can refer to the created order, it often carries connotations of the sinful, fallen state of humanity and even a system opposed to God. Despite this opposition and sinfulness, God's love extends even to this hostile "world." D.A. Carson suggests that the emphasis isn't just on the vastness of the world but on its fallen condition, underscoring the remarkable nature of God's love in giving his Son for those who are, in essence, his enemies.

3. How does believing in Jesus relate to salvation according to John's Gospel?

Belief (πιστεύω) is presented as the crucial response to God's loving gift of his Son. John 3:16 states that "whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Furthermore, John 3:18 clarifies that "whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." Therefore, faith in Jesus is the means by which individuals receive eternal life and escape condemnation.

4. What is "eternal life" in Johannine theology, and when does a believer receive it?

In the Gospel of John, eternal life (ζωὴ αἰώνιος) is not solely a future reality but is also a present possession of the believer (realized eschatology). John 17:3 defines it relationally: "This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." Thus, eternal life is about knowing and having a relationship with the Father and the Son, a reality that begins now for those who believe. It encompasses loving, delighting in, obeying, enjoying, and serving God eternally as resurrected beings.

5. How does the concept of divine sovereignty intersect with human responsibility in John's understanding of salvation?

John's Gospel strongly emphasizes divine sovereignty in salvation, including the Father giving people to the Son and Jesus himself choosing his disciples (John 15:16). Jesus also declares that his sheep hear his voice, follow him, and receive eternal life, which he keeps (John 10). Despite this emphasis on God's sovereign work, John also presents a genuine human responsibility to believe. The gospel is to be presented to "whoever will" (whosoever), and condemnation rests on those who do not believe. The tension is resolved by understanding that God uses the means of gospel proclamation to accomplish his sovereign ends, and we only know who God has chosen when they believe.

6. What is the significance of Jesus washing the disciples' feet in John 13, in relation to God's love and salvation?

Jesus washing the disciples' feet is a powerful demonstration of his love for "his own who were in the world" (John 13:1). This act of humble service, typically performed by the lowest servant, illustrates the depth of Jesus' love and sets an example for his followers to love and serve one another in the same self-effacing way. It also carries a secondary meaning of the need for daily cleansing from sin, even for those who have already been made clean through Christ.

7. How does Jesus' "new commandment" to love one another (John 13:34-35) reflect God's love and contribute to the world's understanding of salvation?

Jesus' commandment for his disciples to love one another as he has loved them is central to Johannine theology. This mutual love among believers is not just an internal matter but serves as a visible sign to the world that they are Jesus' disciples. John 13:35 states, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." This love reflects God's own love manifested in Christ and becomes a powerful witness, potentially leading others to believe in the one who sent Jesus.

8. According to John, what is the ultimate measure of the Father's love for believers?

In his high priestly prayer (John 17), Jesus reveals the astonishing truth that the Father loves believers in the same way that he loves his own Son. In John 17:23, Jesus prays that they may become perfectly one, "so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me." This profound statement highlights the immeasurable depth of God's love for those who believe in Jesus, equating it with the Father's eternal love for the Son.