

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 13, Systematics, Deity of Christ, Hebrews 1, 5 Proofs, and Other Texts, Nature and Titles

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christology. This is session 13, Systematics, Deity of Christ, Hebrews 1, 5 proofs, and Other Texts, Nature and Titles.

We continue our study of the doctrine of Christ with the biblical and systematic material.

And we're studying the deity of Christ. I want to mention a book that I recently co-authored because it's right on this subject. It's called *Jesus in Prophecy, How the Life of Christ Fulfills Biblical Predictions*. My pastor, who's a scholarly pastor, Van Lees, and I wrote this book directed at seekers and new Christians. It explains the gospel very, very clearly and repeatedly. It's in simple prose, and it's sort of the burden of our hearts.

I'm free to advertise this because any royalties we get, we're not taking any profit. We plow them back into buying more books and making them available for other people. So, anyway, I wanted to mention that one.

I have edited and written a number of books. You can Google me, but the burden on my heart right now is *Jesus in Prophecy*. The I-C-H-T-H-U-S, like the fish, and the Christian acronym, which you may know.

But the deity of Christ, we worked with the context of Hebrews 1:1 to 2, 4, and we're ready to argue now in terms of defending, promoting, and discussing the five great historical proofs of the deity of our Lord. First of all, he is of the very nature of God. And for each of these proofs, I'm going to start with Hebrews 1. I'm going to go to other places because the Bible shouts the deity of Christ.

If we were discussing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, we would say he's a person, and then we would say he's a divine person, he is God, and we would use arguments to argue for the deity of the Holy Spirit. But I would say it this way: the Bible whispers the deity of the Holy Spirit; it shouts the deity of Christ. If you think of it, it makes sense.

The gospel is not believing in the Holy Spirit, whom I do believe in, and I love his ministries and rejoice in him and his work, but the gospel is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. In any case, the first historical proof of Christ's

deity is that he is of the very nature of God. We see it here in Hebrews 1. He's the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.

And he opposed the universe by the word of his power. The writer to the Hebrews paints two pictures to communicate one fundamental truth and two ancillary truths with each picture. Different pictures.

The first one is from the world of the sun and rays coming out and illumination. The second picture is from the minting of coins, as they did it in a first-century manner. But both of them communicate three truths.

In the context of Hebrews 1, the main truth is revelation. The second truth is equality. The third truth is subordination.

Let me explain. The sun is the radiance of the glory of God. The S-O-N is likened to the ray, the outshining.

The Greek word also means effulgence, which we don't use anymore. The shining forth of the S-U-N. It's a picture from the sky, looking in the sky.

And certainly, we know more about the sun, but they knew if you stared at it too long, you could go blind. And so what we see is the light coming out from the sun that reaches our eyes. And the son of God is the radiance, the shining forth, the effulgence of the glory of God, which is the S-U-N.

It's a beautiful picture of Christ being, first of all, the revealer of God. The ray is the sun, prolonged. The rays that reach us are the light of the sun that hits our eyes.

In the same way, and in the context, it's the major point. Christ is superior to Old Testament mediators of revelation, superior to prophets, superior to angels. He's the revealer.

He's the ray that makes known the invisible sun, S-U-N. Get it? But two other things are inseparable from that image. The ray is the sun, prolonged and revealed.

That is, there is an implication of the unity of the son of God and the Father, whose glory is pictured as the sun in the sky. Thirdly, there's a distinction. There's a subordination.

It is not the invisible sun. It's invisible because if you stare at it, you'll burn your retina, all right, and go blind. It's not the sun in the sky.

It's the sun revealed that we know in the son of God. So, there are three truths: revelation, the primary one in context.

Secondly, equality between the Son of God and the Father.

Thirdly, the subordination of the son to the Father. We'll argue later on that this subordination is a functional or economic one and not an essential one. I meant to begin this lecture by saying the damning error of the cults.

The cults have all kinds of strange ideas. Some are fatal errors. Some cults deny blood transfusions on the Levitical truth that the life of the flesh is in the blood.

It's absurd, and it's fatal. You could lose your life by not getting a transfusion because of that bad exegesis, right? But it's not damning. But denying that Jesus is God is damning.

Why is it so? Does it change who he is? It doesn't change who he is. But how can I believe in him for salvation if I regard him as only an angel or a mere human being? That's the problem with those Christologies that start absolutely from below. They never can get above.

And the one that we must trust for salvation is not just a divinized perfect man. He is God the Son who became a man for us sinners and our salvation. The second image very clearly shows that Jesus has the nature of God.

The first one implied it when it's one of the implied equality. The ray is of his homoousios with the sun. It is the sun shining forth.

It's of the same substance. But the second one actually uses the word nature. This is an image of coins being minted.

The sun is the exact imprint of God's nature. The word nature is apostasis. And it's used in the Bible differently than it was used in those theological debates.

Here, according to the standard dictionary lexicon of the Greek New Testament, it means essential nature, being, and essence. Those are the definitions of it. So, it is wrong to say, well, the Christology New Testament is only functional.

It's never essential. It never speaks of nature. That's wrong.

Oh, it is largely functional, right? But here is one place where it speaks of the use of the word nature to describe the Son of God. It's a picture. It's an image from the minting of coins.

In the first century world, a soft metal would be put in a die. It'd be banged with a hammer. And there's a difference between the die here, which is the word nature or essence, and the exact imprint.

All right. So, number one, let's say it's a denarius. The denarius coin is the imprint of the denarius die.

That is, the main idea in context is revelation. You don't get a dime from a nickel die in that modern context, right? Like begets light in that way. L-I-K-E begets L-I-K-E.

So, the denarius is a manifestation of the denarius' death. In the same way, the Son of God is the exact imprint of God's essential nature. Secondly, by implication, good implication, the denarius and the die are the same.

They're of the same stuff. And in this context, explicitly of the Son of God is said what could not be said of angels or mere human beings. He's the exact imprint of the divine nature or essence.

Jesus is of the nature of God. What makes God to be God is characteristic of the Son of God himself. The third point, of course, is, again, once again, distinction.

The denarius is not the die, but it is the die imprinted, revealed, as it were. Other passages beside Hebrews 1, for each of the five proofs, I'm starting with Hebrews 1. I chose it as our representative passage, our base passage, and our foundational passage for the deity of Christ because it's the only passage I know of in the New Testament where all five proofs are present in one text. Jesus is of the very nature of God.

We see it in Colossians 2:9, which we previously looked at a little bit. There, we learn of the Son. See to it, no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition, according to the elementary spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

For in him, the whole fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. His body is the body of God. He's the God-man.

He is of the very essence or nature of God. It is these places, these kinds of places, that move the Father, in Scripture, move the Father to confess at Nicaea that the Son is homoousios, with the Father. He's of the same nature or essence or essential being as God the Father.

Jesus is of the nature of God. The incarnate Son also has titles, divine titles ascribed to him. My claim is not that these titles are always and only used of deity, because they're used of other things too, and I'll mention that on the way through.

But my claim is in the context that they're used of Christ, and they are divine titles. So Lord, kurios, it's used by human lords who have slaves quite regularly. In Ephesians and Colossians, for example, in those household codes where Paul addresses parents and children, he also addresses masters and slaves.

But when used of the Christ, the incarnate Son, look at Hebrews 1.10. You, Lord, the juxtaposition is angels and the Son, angels and the Son, back and forth. You, Lord, laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands, quoting Psalm 102. Here, Lord is the creator Lord.

Once again, Genesis 1:1 makes itself felt in the New Testament, mediated through Psalm 102, which is meditating on Genesis 1:1. Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth in the beginning, in the beginning, Genesis 1:1, and the heavens are the work of your hands. There are heavens and earth, and in the beginning. That's a pretty good allusion to Genesis 1:1 through Psalm 102.

In other words, this use of Lord is creator Lord. That is, it's a divine title. It is the same in other places as well.

The Christology of the synoptics is largely implied. It is not as boldly stated as it is in the Gospel of John and Paul and Hebrews. It's an implicit Christology.

Nevertheless, it's a highly implicit Christology. In Mark 12:37, Jesus befuddles the scribes and the Pharisees by putting them in a conundrum. How can the scribes say that Christ, the promised one, is the son of David, the descendant of David, and a human being right? Obviously, a descendant of someone is a human being.

David himself in the Holy Spirit declared, and he quotes Psalm 110.1, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make you put your enemies under your feet. Lord is Yahweh. Now, David was the king of Israel, and every other Israelite had two lords, God in heaven and David, the king, right? David doesn't have two lords.

He's got God in heaven. He is the king. He is the Lord, small L on earth.

But David does have two lords. What? The Lord said to my Lord, God says to David's Lord, sit at my right hand, the place of the greatest honor and authority in the universe, until I put your enemies under your feet. Jesus exegetes Psalm 110:1 to blow the minds of his enemies.

Now, isn't the Messiah David's son? Yes, they all agree. He's a man. Well, then, how could that be true if this is also true? What he's doing is actually, in an embryonic way, appealing to the mystery of the two natures of the person of Christ.

David himself calls him Lord. He calls the promised one. He calls David's the coming one that David speaks of.

Also, in that Psalm in verse 4, he says, you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. So, he says quite a bit about the coming one. He's David's Lord.

He's a king. God fights for him and defeats his enemies. He's a priest in this order of Melchizedek.

What is that going on with that one? So, it's loaded with good stuff, and it might be one of the very few, or maybe the only, purely messianic psalm that is, I think, entirely predictive. That's very unusual. David himself calls him Lord.

So how is he his son? David himself regards his Lord as divine. How can he be a mere man? Here, the title Lord is used for the coming one, and Jesus is talking about himself. We understand that, and the enemies did, too.

They didn't like it at all. The great throng heard him gladly, and the rulers gnashed their teeth, but they stopped asking him questions. Philippians 2:11, we did the first part of the two states, the great two states passage.

We did the humiliation, at least in a cursory fashion. Lord willing, we'll do more with it in a future lecture. But the second part shows the state of exaltation.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him, Philippians 2:9, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. We don't have time to look at this now, but is it really every knee and every tongue? Yes, it is. Well, then, that's universalism, right? Everybody's saved, right? Wrong.

The background is Isaiah 45, and as we'll see in more detail later, there every tongue will confess to Yahweh, and every knee will bow before Him, but some of them will rejoice that He has forgiven them. Others will hate Him and be forced to bow the knee. That wasn't a very good paraphrase.

We'll work with the very words, but that's the sense of the words. That is, all humanity will bow before Christ in the eschaton, but not everybody will be saved, but all will acknowledge His Lordship. It'll be from a worshiping heart for the believers, for those who are justified.

Isaiah 45 speaks in that kind of language near the end. It'll be forced, and an admission will be made of the one they have rejected and the one who is condemning them. Certainly, this is a divine title, Lord, in this context.

He's doing the work of judgment. He is getting the glory that is due Him as Lord. The glory He did not insist on grabbing when He, although He existed in the form of God, did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped.

He could have said in eternity past, Father, I want every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that I am Lord, and that would have been right, but He didn't do it. He didn't reach out and grab that which was His by right. Instead, He humbled Himself, and although He was in the form of God, He took the form of a bond slave and obeyed the Father and humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on the cross.

But because of that, God highly exalted Him, and so forth. In that scenario, we learn that He will receive the universal recognition of His Lordship, which He did not insist upon when He humbled Himself to become God's servant and our Savior. Son of God is a royal title, there's no question.

2 Samuel 7, I'll be father to Him, and Solomon and the other Davidic kings will be sons to me, God said. So, the first thing to be said about Jesus being the Son of God is that it's a royal title. It's exactly what Gabriel, speaking for God, told Mary.

He's going to have the throne of his father, David, and your son's going to rule forever. Wow. She is, as Elizabeth said, the mother of my Lord visits me.

That does not magnify Mary. It certainly shows she's a godly servant and the vehicle of God's use to bring His Son into the world. And yet, we have opposed the Catholic Mariology.

Son of God, John 5 is a good place to go. Jesus heals a man who has not walked for 38 years. The amazing thing about His healing and the Apostles' healing, well, there's certainly a difference.

They do it in the name of Jesus. He gets the glory. Luke writes in Acts of the things Jesus began to do and to teach in his former book, and the implication is now he's writing about the things Jesus continued to do and to teach by His Holy Spirit through His Apostles in this book of Acts.

They're one book with one author, Luke X. And it's not by us that this man is made whole. Peter says of a lame man whom God healed through him, and it's in the name of Jesus Christ that I said to him, take up your bed and walk, right? Like that. Here, Jesus, in His own name, does these things.

He heals a man who had been lame for 38 years. As you might imagine, this caused quite a ruckus. And, of course, Jesus did it on Saturday, deliberately running afoul of the leaders in mercy because He cared for them.

If He never challenged them, they would have all perished. I don't know what percentage perished, but not all of them did, as we learned from Acts 6. Six. Many, even priests in the Levi tribe, believed in Him.

Amazing. Counter-cultural for them. It glorifies the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who worked in their lives.

Anyway, Jesus heals a man born blind, and that is not well received by the Jewish intelligentsia and leadership. The man, Jesus found him in the temple. He sought him out.

See you are well, John 5, 14. Sin no more. That nothing worse may happen to you.

On the one hand, Jesus tells the disciples in John 9 that neither this man nor his parents sinned that he was born blind. It's an occasion for me to manifest God's glory. So, He's denying that all illness is directly the result of sin.

On the other hand, here, He implies that sin can lead to physical calamity. The man went away and told the Jews that wasn't such a good move, that it was Jesus who healed him. This was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus.

Perhaps the man had no malicious intent. Perhaps he just was naive and didn't even understand. Oh, maybe they want to learn more about him too.

I don't know. We don't know what's going on in his heart. The Jews are persecuting him.

Why? Because he was doing these things during the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, my father is working until now, and I am working. This is an outlandish statement.

All right. What he's saying is, in effect, I'm able to do these things on the Sabbath because of who I am. In Mark's gospel, he says, I'm the Lord of the Sabbath.

He is putting himself in the place of God. Now, we're going to see down in verse 18, the next one, it's the proof that the son of God is a divine title. But already here with this language, my father is working until today and I too am working.

Jesus puts his healing of the lame man on par with the providential working of God. The Talmud is a fascinating collection of Jewish wisdom, humor, nonsense, all kinds of stuff going on. And it's later than the New Testament.

And yet it sometimes gives us insight. My father is working until now. The rabbis debated as to what the good Lord did seven days a week, including Saturday.

They said, he keeps the world going. God doesn't stop doing his providence on Saturday. Or the world would cease.

Furthermore, as pertains to the Jewish community directly, babies were born seven days a week. Are they going to attribute those born on Saturday to some other source? No. God worked in providence seven days a week.

God worked in the birth of babies seven days a week. And guess what? Old people died on Saturday, too. God took them out of the world on Saturday.

With that kind of background, what is later ensconced in the Talmudic writings as the rabbis debated these things, we can understand Jesus' words better. My father is working until now. He means those kinds of things.

Divine working, which they admitted God did on Saturday. And I am working. This was why, in verse 18, the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him.

Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but we surely know that the Old Testament says, thou shalt not heal men who have been lame for 38 years on Saturday, right? It's absurd. They should have been doing backflips like Ozzie Smith used to do. Whoops, the St. Louis reference sneaks out here.

And they should have praised God that this guy was healed, that a son of Abraham was healed. And now he can live a normal life and glorify God and serve him. Oh, no.

Oh, no. They're nitpickers. You shouldn't heal him on Saturday.

But they also hated Jesus all the more because he was calling God his own father, making himself equal with God. In a basic sense, not the intimate sense Jesus brought to that, to the fatherhood of God, they thought they were God's children. In being Abraham's children, they thought they were God's children.

Jesus has a problem with that in John 8, as we said, calling them children of the devil, at least many of the Jews. But when he calls God his own father, he does it. They pick up on this.

He's doing it in a way much more meaningfully. He's claiming a lot more than they would. My father is working until now, and I too am working.

He's putting his healing of the lame man on the same level as the supernatural, providential acts of God seven days a week. In so doing, making himself equal with the father by calling God his father, which, of course, implies he is calling himself the son of God. Twice in Hebrews 1, we have the son as a divine title.

We're still working with titles. I told you that son in Hebrews is a divine title. Indeed, it is.

And in verse 2, in these last days, in contrast to God speaking to the prophets, but to the fathers by the prophets, in these last days, he's spoken to us by his son. Now, watch what he says about the son, whom he appointed the heir of all things. That's only God who occupies that place, to whom He also created the world.

The creator is God himself. And then he's the radiance of God's glory and so forth. So in 1, and 2, we have a son used in a divine way.

Likewise, in 1:8, of the son, in contrast to what God says about angels, they serve God. Of the son, he says, your throne, oh God, is forever and ever, quoting Psalm 45, 6, and 7. When Hebrews calls the son, son. It uses it as a divine title. Of course, the word son doesn't always mean God in the scripture.

It's in this context that it means that very thing. Lord is a divine title. Son of God is a divine title.

Son of man, likewise. Matthew 26, Jesus gets himself in big trouble. Son of man is a fascinating Christological title.

Number one is Jesus' favorite self-designation. Number two, he always uses it in the third person. He never says I'm the son of man.

To this day, liberals think he's talking about somebody else. Some of them do. Yeah, wow, that is right.

It's just incredible to me. And the New Testament data varies. So, for example, birds have their nests.

Foxes have their dens. The son of man has no place to lay his head. That is the human, weak, vulnerable son of man.

On the other hand, when you see the son of man come in the clouds of heaven, that's a divine son of man. You know what? Those two strains of revelation come from the Old Testament. Psalm 8 is the former idea.

What is, when I look at the heavens that you prepared, the sun and the moon and the stars, how great they are. What is man? The little man that you're mindful of him. The son of man that you care for him.

That's weak, human, son of man, right? In Daniel 7, the son of man sits at God's right hand, and worship is directed toward him. And Jesus quotes passages pertaining to both of those. It's even more complicated, but both his, guess what? Humanity, his lowly humanity, and his magnificent deity are referred to; Jesus refers to himself with this language, always in the third person, befuddling his enemies.

We think perhaps it's part of the Messianic secret. Jesus didn't come, you know, in his first sermon and say, I'm the Messiah, come and get me. No, he didn't.

The triumphal entry was toward the end of his ministry, and it led to his crucifixion, right? So my take is that in John 2, when he does, he changes the water to wine at Cana, he gently puts Mary in her place and says, Mary, I've got to follow the father's mother. The word woman is not disrespectful. It's the same word he uses from the cross in John 19 to John.

John, behold your mother. Woman, behold your son. Is he being sarcastic to his mother? No, he's saying, dear mother, here's yours.

John's going to take care of you, my beloved disciple. In the similar way, but he does put her in her place. Mother, don't thrust me into the limelight.

It's not the father's time for that. He's not talking about Joseph, who's a good stepfather, apparently, for as long as he lives. No, and in John 7, it's similar.

His brother, even his own brothers didn't believe in him. Go up to the feast of tabernacles, you magician, and show them some fancy tricks. Oh, Jesus said, the world hates me because I condemn it, say that its deeds are evil.

The world cannot hate you because you belong to the world. Oh my, big brother's a tough guy here. I'm not going up to the feast.

The meaning is at this time. He goes up in secret midway through and says outrageous things that reveal his identity in part, but still a number of times he heals in the so-called messianic secret, which in liberal hands was abused terribly. There's something to the idea.

You know, he heals and says, go and make the offering to the priest, but don't tell other people. Now, sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't. But as we saw in an earlier lecture in John 7, Jesus stayed away from Judea because he knew the Jews there wanted to kill him.

So, he did not make the big splash right away. The triumphal entry leads to the cross. And always and only doing the father's will, that was for later in his life and ministry.

Son of man in Matthew 26:64 is incredible. Jesus is before the high priest Caiaphas, the high priest, and the Sanhedrin. And the high priest said to him, I adjure you by the living God.

He's putting him on oath. Tell us if you are the Christ, the son of God. Jesus said to him, you have said so.

Meaning is, I am. Slightly obliquely answered, but nevertheless. But I tell you, from now on, you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power.

A circumlocution, a way of avoiding the name of God common in between the testaments and into the New Testament and coming on the clouds of heaven. Oh, the high priest understands this language from Daniel 7. Then the high priest tore his robes and said, he has uttered blasphemy. What further witness do you need? You have now heard his blasphemy.

What is your judgment? They said he deserved death. And they start beating on him. This is a divine title as Jesus uses it.

Sometimes it is in this context indeed. And it leads to his cross. Jesus had the titles of God, Lord, son of man, the title God itself.

Not only does John 1:1, 18 twice call him God. In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, and the word was God. And then verse 18 speaks of the only God.

No one has ever seen God, but the only God who is at the father's side has made him known. Not only is there an inclusion or other bookends in John 1:1 to 18 with this direct affirmation of Jesus' deity, but the gospel of John as a whole has these bookends, this inclusion. And inclusion, of course, is a figure of speech where the same word or concept appears at two ends of a unit of literature.

It can be as small as one verse. We'll see it in Colossians 1 later on. Or it could be as big as a whole document, the gospel of John.

Not only does Chapter 1 twice say he's God, but in Chapter 20, Thomas, who had been absent the first time when Jesus appeared to the disciples, is there this time. The first time, he said, unless I put my hand in his side and his hands, I'm not going to believe, right? Jesus appeals and appears to him. Thomas knows who it is.

What is his response? The Greek says he said to him, my Lord and my God. I have a heart for the cults. And for the years, I prayed for, for years, that God would raise up a student or more to have a ministry to the cults.

In my last years in my St. Louis seminary teaching, the Lord did. I was surprised. It was a woman.

She was from a Christian science background. She was being drawn to Christ. Oh, then she came to Christ.

She was growing in Christ. Was she a capable student? Yes. Was she one of the best students? No.

But you know what? God had his hand on her, and she understood. Katie has started a ministry to former Southerners, who, excuse me, are former Christian scientists. Ah, what a terrible slip.

Katie has started a ministry to former Christian scientists that the Lord is using wonderfully. It's a wonderful thing. In my prayer, God answered my prayer by using a humble, sweet, intelligent lady who loves the Lord and doesn't forget her people.

She was raised on the campus of Principia High School, a Christian scientific high school. And the Lord's using her marvelously. I rejoice in that, the Lord doing that.

But they, of course, deny that Jesus is God. And the cults, there's no, well, there's Mary Baker Eddy's Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures, her misinterpretation of the Bible. There's no Christian science Bible, but the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses mistranslation says that he said, oh my God, Thomas said, Oh my God.

No, he didn't say, Oh my God. The Greek text says that Thomas said to him, this is not an epithet dessert going heavenward. It's an address to another Jewish man.

And Thomas, the doubting Thomas, thank the Lord for him, said to Jesus, my Lord and my God. There are two divine titles. The second part of this big inclusion is the two references to Jesus' deity in chapter one.

The Gospel of John does not hide the deity of Christ. It shouts it in chapter after chapter, especially the first 12—my goodness.

Jesus has divine titles used by him. It's a syllogism. Certain titles are used by God in a divine way.

Lord, son of man, God, and son of God are used by Jesus in that way. Therefore, Jesus is God, the son. Not only so, but Hebrews one has another proof for the deity of Christ. And that is, he has the attributes of God.

There are certain qualities that only God possesses. Hebrews 1:12, 11, and 12 contrast the creator with his creation. After verse 10, you, Lord, laid the foundations of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

Emphasis, the son created the heavens, the earth, and the heavens that Psalm 102 reverses the order from Genesis 1, one earth and heavens. They verse 11, heavens and earth will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment, like a robe.

You will roll them up like a garment. They will be changed, but you are the same, and your years will have no end. In contrast to the transient heaven and earth, which is constantly in flux and which God will only totally renew on the last day, which had a beginning and it has an end in the sense that there'll be a new heavens and new earth.

The current heavens and earth will be renovated. It will be cleansed and renovated. In contrast, the son is the same, and his years will have no end.

This is a divine attribute of immutability. God himself, in many important ways, does not change. In some ways, the incarnation shows that the son of God did change, and the very biblical story shows that God changes in the sense of relating, really relating to his people, but I should be positive.

Immutability means God is changeless as the Lord says through Malachi. I, the Lord, do not change. Therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not destroyed.

And in James 1, in contrast to shifting shadows and human faithlessness, the Lord does not change. He is stable in his character, in his ultimate plan and will, and in his ways. But he does change, if you want to call it that, in entering into covenant with his people, in answering our prayers, in announcing judgment, and then withholding it when it is met by repentance, and so forth.

This is only saying the attribute of immutability is coherent with God being an infinite person who has chosen to enter into a give-and-take relationship with his people. Oh, he's the Lord of the relationship, my goodness, and he's the sovereign Lord, but

there is a real relationship. And again, I was really clear that the first two mysteries, the Trinity and the two natures of Christ, are essential to the Christian faith.

And the third one, my own Calvinistic compatibilism between absolute divine sovereignty and genuine human responsibility, is not as important, but it is equally mysterious. And you don't have to be a Calvinist to be a Christian, thankfully. You believe in Jesus to be a Christian.

But it is mysterious how Joseph's brothers could sit against him horribly in selling their brother into servitude. That is sick. And by the same, out of the mouth of Joseph, he says, you did not bring me here.

It's a long story, but he ends up second in command, the Pharaoh, even saving his own family, including his sleazy brothers. You did not bring me here, but God did. Well, you know what? They did bring him here, but not ultimately.

That is, they were humanly responsible, even culpable. Oh, his crazy childhood dreams are fulfilled, and they bow before him. Later on, he says, you intended it for evil.

He acknowledges their culpability, but God meant it for good. And he had drunk of the grace of God, my goodness, to free. He could have killed them without any question or repercussion, but he knew God's grace.

Remarkable story. I am not only humbled but rebuked by the life of God's great saints in the Old Testament with what they had and what they knew. We should be ashamed of ourselves because we know so much more and have much more.

What do we do with it compared to Joseph, for example? Wow. I'm not making him sinless. And yes, bragging before his brothers was not right, but in his childish exuberance.

But wow, that is incredible. The greatest manifestation of divine sovereignty and human responsibility is the cross of our Lord. Acts 2 and Acts 4 explicitly say that by the hands of wicked men, he was crucified; they are guilty.

But by the same token, God, in his own providence and sovereignty, brought about the greatest good to the greatest number of people in the history of the world. The cross, along with the empty tomb, are the most important divine acts in history. So do we understand this divine sovereignty and responsibility business perfectly? No, of course we don't.

All we can do is set parameters. We make biblical affirmations, just like the other mysteries. God is absolutely sovereign, and whatever comes to pass.

By the same token, human beings are responsible, accountable, and culpable. What we do matters. It is hyper-Calvinism that says, oh, God doesn't really answer prayers.

It just makes us feel better. God answers prayers. In Matthew 7, Jesus says, ask, seek, and knock, and God will answer, you will find, and the door will be opened to you.

I can't explain it fully. Oh, I can give you some partial explanations, but I'm not even going to do that. I'm just going to say that is true.

And although hyper-Calvinism, and I'm not making it up, I can show you tech books, sadly, that say we should not preach the gospel. God will save the elect whenever he wants to. Wrong.

The scripture says, in the lips of Jesus, in the Great Commission, go make disciples of all the nations. God has ordained to use us to bring the gospel. Yes, salvation is all of him, but somehow, there's this dynamic interplay.

Ah, there's the words I was looking for. Sounds much better than antinomy, paradox, or mystery, doesn't it? This dynamic interplay between divine sovereignty and, I believe, human responsibility. And yet, if that's a way of obscuring the mystery, then it's not fair.

It's not upfront. It's a mystery. And so, we need to affirm both at the same time.

Oh, we said parameters, just like with the great Trinitarian and Christological statements of the fathers. On the one hand, God's sovereignty is not fatalism because the God of the Bible has a character. He's a person.

It's not caesura; whatever will be, will be. We're not at the blind mercy of the fates, the Greek fates. No, we're at the mercy, and in the arms, and under, in the hands of the great and mighty God, who loved us and gave his son for us.

So, fatalism is canceled out, and God is our sovereign father. On the other hand, there is genuine human responsibility, and we cannot fully understand how that goes with absolute divine sovereignty. We can't even understand it in the person of Jesus.

He's both sovereign and responsible. But on that side, we cancel out what the philosophers call absolute power to the contrary. The creature with real human freedom and genuine free will, in that sense, cannot nullify the creator's will.

God is not up there kind of holding his breath, hoping things will work out. No, God is the Lord. So, setting parameters, outlawing fatalism, and the absolute power to

the contrary, some actions, as in that of Joseph's brothers betraying him and the crucifixion of our Lord, are simultaneously divine and human actions.

Go explain that one. I know it's true, and I can explain it in part, but I can't explain it fully. That is, it's another biblically revealed genuine mystery.

Is it as important as a trinity and the two natures of Christ? No. Is it equally mysterious in my understanding? Yes. We will continue in our next lecture with the deity of Christ, not only considering his qualities or attributes but also his works, perhaps the biggest proof, and the fact that he, unlike good men and good angels, receives worship.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christology. This is session 13, Systematics, Deity of Christ, Hebrews 1, 5 proofs, and Other Texts, Nature and Titles.