

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 15, Essential Results, Part 4, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Redemption, Substitution Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 15, Essential Results, Part 4, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Redemption, Substitution, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's lecture, "Christ's Saving Work, Session 15, Part 2," explores the biblical concepts of redemption and substitution as key aspects of Christ's atoning work. The lecture defines redemption through its Old and New Testament contexts, emphasizing deliverance from bondage and the payment of a ransom, sometimes viewed as the cost or effort involved. **Peterson highlights Christ as the Redeemer, voluntarily offering himself, often described as a substitution, to liberate sinners.** The discussion examines the ransom price, frequently associated with Christ's blood and sacrifice, leading to forgiveness and belonging to God across past, present, and future dimensions, affecting individuals, the church, and the cosmos. **The session then transitions to defend the doctrine of penal substitution against common objections, asserting its historical roots before the Reformation and its reliance on the corporate identity in Christ rather than individualism. Peterson refutes claims that penal substitution contradicts Jesus' teachings on non-retaliation, portrays an impersonal God, or necessitates appeasement before forgiveness.** Ultimately, the lecture aims to clarify and uphold redemption and penal substitution as vital understandings of Christ's saving actions.

**2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 15 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Christology).**



Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Christ's Saving Work - Redemption and Penal Substitution

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and arguments presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 15 of his teaching on Christ's Saving Work, focusing on the "pictures" of **Redemption** and **Substitution**, particularly **Penal Substitution**.

Part 1: Redemption

Main Themes:

- **Biblical Basis:** Peterson establishes the pervasive nature of the redemption motif throughout the entire Bible, from the Old Testament deliverance of Israel from Egypt to its culmination in Christ's saving work in the New Testament. He notes that while reconciliation appears in limited Pauline passages, "there are too many passages that pertain to redemption to list."
- **Definition:** Redemption is defined as a picture of Christ's saving work where lost individuals in bondage are set free by Christ, the Redeemer, through his death. This involves:
- **State of Bondage:** Moral or spiritual enslavement to "the domain of darkness," "elementary principles of the world," "futile ways inherited from ancestors," "all lawlessness," and "our sins."
- **Payment of a Ransom:** Christ's death serves as the price to secure this freedom.
- **Consequent State of Freedom:** Liberation from bondage.
- **New Master:** Believers now belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Initiator:** God, both as Yahweh in the Old Testament and as the Father sending Jesus in the New Testament, is consistently the initiator of redemption, motivated by love for his people. Peterson quotes Exodus 6:6 ("I will redeem you with an outstretched arm") and Revelation 1:5-6 ("to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood").
- **Mediator:** While God is the ultimate Redeemer, Christ is presented as the mediator of redemption in the New Testament, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies. Peterson cites Romans 11:26, where Paul applies the Old Testament title "Deliverer" to Christ.
- **The Work:** Redemption is not passive but requires God's active intervention, exemplified by the plagues in Egypt and Cyrus's decree. In the New Testament, it

is the direct work of Christ, who gives his life as a ransom (Mark 10:45). Revelation 5:9 describes the Lamb being slain and ransoming people for God by his blood.

- **Voluntariness:** A key distinction from Old Testament redemptions is Christ's voluntary suffering and self-giving as our Redeemer, highlighted in Mark 10:45 and reiterated in 1 Timothy 2:5-6 and Titus 2:13-14.
- **Ransom Price:** Peterson addresses the debate surrounding the "ransom price," arguing against both overemphasis and complete rejection. He asserts that while the idea of a price isn't always explicit, a cost or effort is always involved. He lists at least eight passages explicitly portraying Christ's death as the redemption price, including Acts 20:28 ("the church of God which he obtained with his own blood") and 1 Peter 1:18-19 ("ransomed... not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ").
- **Substitution:** Some texts present Christ's redemption as a substitution for sinners, most notably Mark 10:45 ("to give his life as a ransom for many"). Peterson cites William Lane's commentary linking ransom, redemption, and substitution, drawing parallels with the suffering servant in Isaiah 53. Galatians 3:13 ("Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us"), 1 Timothy 2:5-6, and Titus 2:13-14 are also presented as teaching substitutionary redemption. Graham Cole's comment on Galatians 3:13 highlights the "great exchange" and the doctrine of penal substitution.
- **Accomplishment with Blood:** The blood of Christ is consistently linked with redemption, signifying his violent death as the means of securing it. Peterson quotes Ephesians 1:7 ("redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses"), Hebrews 9:12, and Revelation 5:9. Leon Morris's view that "the New Testament writers meant that Christ has died" when speaking of his blood and that this death is a sacrifice is highlighted.
- **Forgiveness:** Christ's voluntary death as a ransom procures forgiveness for believers, leading to the association of redemption and forgiveness in scriptures like Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:13-14.
- **Temporal Perspective:** Redemption pertains to the past (purchased - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Peter 1:18-19), present (deliverance and transference - Colossians 1:13-14), and future (redemption of our bodies - Romans 8:23, the day of redemption - Ephesians 4:30).

- **Scope:** Like reconciliation, redemption is individual (1 Corinthians 6:18-20), corporate (the church - Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Revelation 5:9), and cosmic (creation set free - Romans 8:19-22).
- **Results of Redemption:** Beyond freedom, redemption ratifies the new covenant (Hebrews 9:15), purchases believers for God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), frees from bondage (Galatians 4:7), motivates good works (Titus 2:14), and enables believers to fulfill the intended roles of God's people (Revelation 1:5-6). Christopher Wright's quote emphasizes that "sin puts us into slavery, a bondage from which we need to be released. But redemption always comes at a cost. God chose to bear that cost himself in the self-giving of his son."

Part 2: Substitution (Focus on Penal Substitution)

Transition: Peterson transitions to the concept of Christ as our legal substitute, specifically addressing objections to penal substitution. He expresses sadness that these objections come from both non-believing scholars and evangelicals, acknowledging that sometimes penal substitution has been presented poorly.

Need and Sphere:

- The fundamental need addressed by penal substitution is **guilt or condemnation before a holy and just God**.
- The sphere of penal substitution is the **law**, where God is the lawgiver and judge, and humanity are lawbreakers unable to pay the penalty for their sins.

Mechanism and Result:

- The Father sends the Son, who loves humanity and gives himself for them.
- The result of this substitution is **justification**, where God declares righteous all who believe in Jesus by his grace.

Defense Against Objections: Peterson addresses five common objections to penal substitution, drawing heavily on the work of Gary Williams:

1. **Objection:** Penal substitution was not taught until the Reformation.
 - **Response:** This is historically inaccurate. While Luther and Calvin prominently featured it, the doctrine existed before. Irenaeus and Augustine spoke of propitiation, and Thomas Aquinas made penal substitution comments. Howard Marshall's distinction between the existence and prominence of the doctrine is highlighted.

1. **Objection:** Penal substitution is merely a product of individualism.

- **Response:** This is "strange, historically inaccurate, and even ironic." Penal substitution relies on corporate categories and the concept of Christ as the covenant and corporate head (Galatians 3:13). Eusebius of Caesarea, John Calvin, and John Owen all linked penal substitution to the mystical union between Christ and his people. A quote from Eusebius illustrates this patristic understanding. The irony lies in the fact that critics who embrace individualism (as seen in the Church of England's 1995 doctrine commission report) often reject penal substitution.

1. **Objection:** Penal substitution contradicts Jesus' teaching to turn the other cheek.

- **Response:** This misunderstands the different spheres of justice. Paul in Romans 12 differentiates between God's justice and human relationships. While humans are prohibited from taking revenge, God reserves this right. Peterson quotes Romans 12:17-21 to show that Paul urges believers *not* to follow God's example of vengeance but to leave it to God's wrath. Thus, God's actions are not a "do as I say, not as I do" scenario, but rather, God tells us not to do what he does precisely because he is God and we are not.

1. **Objection:** Penal substitution makes punishment impersonal rather than personal.

- **Response:** Retributive punishment and relationships are not necessarily opposed. Punishment can be both retributive (responsive to an ill, inflicting proportional pain) and relational. Separation from Christ is a relational category and a form of pain. Sinners stand in a hostile relationship with Christ.

1. **Objection:** Penal substitution misrepresents God as needing to be appeased before he forgives.

- **Response:** Responsible proponents of penal substitution do not claim that Christ's death *causes* God to abandon his wrath. The motive for Jesus' death is God's loving purpose (Howard Marshall). There is no hint in the New Testament that Jesus died to persuade God to forgive. Rather, Christ's death is the way God acts in his grace and mercy. While God's wrath exists against those who reject the gospel, it is not appeased *before* he is merciful. God acts while we are still sinners.

Conclusion: Peterson concludes by stating that he will address five more objections and then summarize penal substitution in the next lecture. He agrees with Thomas Schreiner that penal substitution needs defending today because it is "scandalous to some scholars."

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 15, Essential Results, Part 4, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Redemption, Substitution

Christ's Saving Work: Redemption and Substitution - A Study Guide

Quiz (2-3 sentences each)

1. Define redemption as it is presented in the New Testament according to Peterson. What are the key components identified by Leon Morris and John Stott?
2. In what ways does the Old Testament concept of redemption relate to the New Testament understanding of Christ's saving work? Provide at least two examples from the Old Testament.
3. Explain the concept of the "ransom price" in relation to Christ's redemption. Does Peterson argue that a literal price is always present in the biblical concept of redemption?
4. How does the idea of "substitution" connect with Christ's work of redemption, particularly as highlighted in Mark 10:45? Explain the significance of this verse.
5. According to Peterson, what is the relationship between Christ's blood and redemption? What does the term "blood" often signify in this context?
6. Describe the temporal scope of redemption. According to the text, how does redemption relate to the past, present, and future of believers?
7. Explain the individual, corporate, and cosmic dimensions of redemption as presented in the lecture. Provide a brief example of each.
8. What are some of the results of Christ's redeeming work, beyond the initial deliverance from bondage? Name at least two significant outcomes mentioned in the text.
9. What is the central idea behind penal substitution? What is the "sphere" or context in which this picture of Christ's saving work operates?
10. What are some of the common objections raised against the doctrine of penal substitution, and how does Peterson address at least one of these objections using the arguments of scholars like Gary Williams?

Answer Key

1. Redemption in the New Testament is a picture of Christ's saving work where lost persons in bondage are set free by Christ, the Redeemer, through his death. Leon Morris identified the state of bondage, the payment of a ransom, and the consequent freedom. John Stott added the aspect of believers gaining a new master, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The Old Testament concept of redemption provides a background through events like the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and the idea of buying back something lost. Isaiah's message of a new exodus from Babylonian captivity also serves as an Old Testament root for the New Testament understanding of spiritual redemption through Christ.
3. The "ransom price" refers to Christ's death as the cost of redeeming sinners from their bondage. Peterson clarifies that while the idea of a literal price is present in some texts, scholars like Howard Marshall argue that the core concept is always the cost or effort involved in redemption, even if a specific price isn't always mentioned.
4. Substitution in redemption means that Christ took the place of sinners, offering his life as a ransom on their behalf. Mark 10:45 is significant because Jesus himself states that the purpose of his coming was "to give his life as a ransom for many," highlighting the substitutionary nature of his atoning death.
5. Christ's blood is frequently associated with redemption in Scripture and often signifies his violent death as the means by which redemption is accomplished. Drawing on Morris, Peterson explains that when Scripture speaks of Christ's blood in the context of redemption, it refers to his sacrificial death that secures forgiveness and freedom from sin.
6. Redemption has a temporal scope encompassing the past, where believers were bought with a price and ransomed from futile ways; the present, where they are delivered from darkness and experience forgiveness; and the future, as they eagerly await the redemption of their bodies. Christ's purchase of redemption is complete across all these timeframes.
7. Redemption has an individual dimension, as seen in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 where individuals are redeemed from sexual immorality. It has a corporate dimension, as highlighted in Acts 20:28 regarding the church being obtained by Christ's blood. Finally, it has a cosmic dimension, as Romans 8:19-22 speaks of the entire creation being set free from its bondage to corruption.

8. Beyond deliverance from bondage, the results of Christ's redeeming work include the ratification of the new covenant with forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:15), the purchase of believers for God so they belong to him (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), freedom from slavery to sin (Galatians 4:7), and the empowerment of Christians to do good works (Titus 2:14).
9. The central idea behind penal substitution is that Christ, as our substitute, bore the penalty of God's wrath that sinners deserved for breaking God's law. The "sphere" of penal substitution is the law, where God is the lawgiver and judge, and Christ steps in to satisfy the legal demands of justice on behalf of lawbreakers.
10. One common objection is that penal substitution was not taught until the Reformation. Peterson counters this by citing scholars like Howard Marshall who argue that while the doctrine may not have been prominent before, figures like Irenaeus, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas made statements indicating an understanding of propitiation and penal aspects of Christ's work before the Reformation.

Essay Format Questions

1. Compare and contrast the biblical concepts of redemption and reconciliation as presented in the source material. How do these two "pictures" of Christ's saving work complement each other?
2. Discuss the significance of the "ransom" metaphor in understanding Christ's redeeming work. Analyze the different perspectives on whether a literal price is always implied and the core meaning of this imagery.
3. Explore the doctrine of penal substitution, addressing at least two of the objections raised against it in the lecture. Evaluate the responses provided by Peterson and the scholars he cites.
4. Analyze the temporal, individual, corporate, and cosmic dimensions of redemption. How does understanding these different facets contribute to a more comprehensive view of Christ's saving work?
5. Based on the provided text, synthesize the key elements of Christ's saving work through redemption and substitution. How do these concepts demonstrate God's love and justice?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Redemption:** A picture of Christ's saving work depicting lost persons in bondage being claimed and set free by Christ the Redeemer through his death. It often involves the idea of a ransom or cost.
- **Bondage:** The state of being enslaved or held captive, which in the context of redemption refers to moral and spiritual captivity to sin, darkness, and the elementary principles of the world.
- **Ransom:** A price paid to secure the release of someone in bondage. In the context of Christ's saving work, it often refers to his life given as a payment for the sins of humanity.
- **Manumission:** The act of freeing a slave. This historical practice provides a relatable background for understanding the concept of redemption in the New Testament.
- **Substitution:** The act of taking the place of another. In Christ's saving work, it refers to him taking the place of sinners, bearing the consequences of their sin.
- **Penal Substitution:** A specific understanding of the atonement where Christ legally took the penalty or punishment that sinners deserved for breaking God's law, satisfying divine justice.
- **Propitiation:** The act of appeasing or satisfying divine wrath. While related to penal substitution, the lecture distinguishes it from the idea that Christ's death forces an unwilling God to forgive.
- **Atonement:** The work of Christ in reconciling God and humanity through his life, death, and resurrection. Redemption and penal substitution are different "pictures" or aspects of this broader concept.
- **New Covenant:** The agreement established by God through Jesus Christ, replacing the Old Covenant. Christ's death ratifies this new covenant, bringing forgiveness and other blessings.
- **Justification:** The act by which God declares sinners righteous in his sight through faith in Jesus Christ. This is presented as a result of Christ's substitutionary work in the context of penal substitution.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 15, Essential Results, Part 4, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Redemption, Substitution

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5. FAQs on Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 15, Essential Results, Part 4, 6 Pictures of Christ's Saving Works, Redemption, Substitution, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Redemption and Penal Substitution in Christ's Saving Work

1. What is the biblical concept of redemption as it relates to Christ's saving work?

Redemption, in the context of Christ's saving work, is a picture that depicts humanity as being in various states of bondage (moral, spiritual, and enslaved to sin, darkness, and futile ways). Christ is presented as the Redeemer who, through his death, claims people as his own and sets them free. This concept includes the ideas of being released from bondage or slavery, being bought back from a state of loss, and a ransom being paid. It's rooted in the Old Testament deliverance of Israel and the New Testament practice of freeing slaves.

2. Who initiates and mediates redemption, and what work is involved?

God is consistently portrayed as the initiator of redemption, acting out of love for his people, as seen in the Old Testament's deliverance of Israel and the New Testament's depiction of Christ freeing us from sins by his blood. Christ is the mediator of this redemption. The work of redemption involves a cost or effort. In the Old Testament, this was seen in the plagues and the exodus, while in the New Testament, it is primarily the giving of Christ's life as a ransom.

3. Is the payment of a ransom price essential to the concept of redemption?

While the idea of a ransom price is not invariably present in all biblical texts on redemption, there are at least eight passages that explicitly portray Christ's death as the redemption price. These passages use terms like "bought with a price" and "ransom," emphasizing that Christ's blood secured our eternal redemption. Therefore, while some texts focus on deliverance, the concept of a price is a significant aspect of redemption in Scripture.

4. How does the concept of substitution relate to Christ's redemptive work?

Some biblical texts present Christ's redemption as a substitution for sinners. The famous ransom saying in Mark 10:45, where Jesus gives his life as a ransom "for many," implies equivalence or substitution. Passages like Galatians 3:13, which states Christ became a curse for us, and 1 Timothy 2:6, where he gave himself as a ransom for all, further

support the idea that Christ vicariously took our place to redeem us from the curse of the law and the bondage of sin.

5. What are some common objections raised against the doctrine of penal substitution, and how are they addressed?

Several objections are raised against penal substitution, including the claims that it was not taught until the Reformation, that it's a product of individualism, that it contradicts Jesus' teaching to turn the other cheek, that it makes punishment impersonal, and that it misrepresents God as needing to be appeased. These objections are addressed by demonstrating that penal substitution has roots before the Reformation, that it relies on corporate categories rather than individualism, that God's justice operates differently from interpersonal conduct, that retributive punishment can be relational, and that Christ's death is an act of God's love and grace, not a means of appeasing an unwilling Father.

6. How does Christ's blood relate to redemption and forgiveness?

Scripture frequently associates Christ's blood with redemption, using the term "blood" to signify his violent death as a sacrifice. This sacrifice accomplishes what the Old Testament sacrifices could not: true forgiveness of sins. Passages like Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14 explicitly link redemption with the forgiveness of trespasses and sins through Christ's blood.

7. How does redemption relate to the past, present, and future for believers?

Redemption has temporal implications for believers across the past, present, and future. In the past, believers were bought with a price and ransomed from futile ways. In the present, they have been delivered from darkness and transferred to Christ's kingdom, experiencing forgiveness. In the future, believers eagerly await the redemption of their bodies and are sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption.

8. Does redemption have individual, corporate, and cosmic dimensions?

Yes, redemption extends beyond individuals. The Scriptures illustrate the redemption of individuals (e.g., concerning sexual immorality in 1 Corinthians 6), the church (e.g., Acts 20:28 speaks of the church God obtained with his own blood), and even the cosmos (as seen in Romans 8:19-22, where creation eagerly awaits liberation from its bondage to decay). Christ's redemptive work has far-reaching effects on all of creation.