

## **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 12, Systematics: Virgin Birth, Deity of Christ (Heb. 1) Resources from NotebookLM**

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

### **1. Abstract of Peterson, Christology, Session 12, Systematics: Virgin Birth, Deity of Christ (Heb. 1), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Robert Peterson's Christology Session 12** examines the biblical accounts of the **virgin birth of Jesus** as presented in Luke 1 and Matthew 1, considering the perspectives of both Mary and Joseph. The lecture addresses common misconceptions surrounding the virgin conception and affirms it as a unique, divinely orchestrated event. Furthermore, the session transitions to an exploration of the **deity of Christ**, primarily using Hebrews 1 to identify key proofs such as Jesus' divine nature, titles, attributes, works, and the reception of worship. Ultimately, the discussion underscores the superiority of Christ and the gospel message compared to Old Testament revelation.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Peterson, Christology, Session 12 – 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).**



**Peterson\_Christology\_Session 12.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 12, Systematics: Virgin Birth, Deity of Christ (Heb. 1)

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Christology - Session 12

**Overview:** This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 12 of his Christology lectures. The session focuses on two key areas: the virginal conception of Jesus as described in Luke 1 and Matthew 1, and the deity of Christ as powerfully presented in Hebrews 1. Peterson emphasizes the significance of these doctrines and addresses common misconceptions.

#### Key Themes and Important Ideas:

##### I. The Virginal Conception:

- **Biblical Accounts:** Peterson examines the accounts of the annunciation to Mary in Luke 1 and the revelation to Joseph in Matthew 1, highlighting the unique and miraculous nature of Jesus' conception.
- **Mary's Response (Luke 1):** Peterson notes Mary's initial shock, confusion, and submission ("Behold, I am a servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word," Luke 1:38). He also considers the potential social stigma Mary would have faced.
- **Joseph's Response (Matthew 1):** Peterson explores Joseph's initial distress and his righteous decision to divorce Mary quietly. The angelic intervention and the explanation that the child was "from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20) are emphasized.
- **Significance of the Virgin Birth:** Peterson underscores that the virginal conception was a special, supernatural act of God, demonstrating that Jesus' coming was a unique event. He contrasts this with the idea that virgin births were commonplace in the first century, referencing the criticism Jesus faced in John 8.
- **Why Jesus was Free from Original Sin:** Peterson refutes two common misconceptions:
  - **Not because sex is inherently sinful:** He clarifies that sexual union within marriage is part of God's creation order and not inherently sinful.
  - **Not solely because Joseph, a sinful man, was not biologically involved:** While true, Peterson emphasizes that Mary was also a sinner.

- **The true reason:** Peterson argues that Jesus was free from original sin because of the Holy Spirit's direct and sanctifying work in Mary's womb ("The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you... the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God," Luke 1:35). He suggests that Mary's contribution (DNA and chromosomes) was sanctified from the moment of conception by the Holy Spirit.
- **Analogy to the Inspiration of Scripture:** Peterson draws a parallel between the virginal conception (divine and human interaction resulting in a holy outcome) and the inspiration of Scripture (God working through human authors to produce his holy word). He mentions the concept of *concursus* and references Warfield's view on the comprehensive nature of inspiration.
- **Essential Prerequisite:** Peterson concludes that the virginal conception, along with Jesus' sinless life, is an essential prerequisite for the cross and the empty tomb.

## II. The Deity of Christ (Hebrews 1):

- **Critical Importance:** Peterson states that the deity of Christ is a "very critical subject" and equally important as his humanity.
1. **Five Key Proofs (found in Hebrews 1): Jesus is of the very nature of God:** He shares that which makes God to be God and is the "exact representation of the divine essence" (implied in the discussion of Hebrews 1:3).
  2. **Jesus has the titles of God and Lord used as divine titles:** Peterson points out the Father calling the Son "God" (Hebrews 1:8) and Jesus being addressed as "Lord" in the context of creation (Hebrews 1:10).
  3. **Jesus has attributes that belong to God alone:** Specifically, Peterson highlights the immutability of the Son in contrast to the mutable creation ("You are the same, and your years will have no end," Hebrews 1:12, quoting Psalm 102). He asserts that this argument alone is sufficient to prove Christ's deity.
  4. **Jesus does works that only God performs:** Peterson astonishingly finds four of these in Hebrews 1: creation ("through whom also God created the world," Hebrews 1:2; "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning," Hebrews 1:10), providence ("upholds the universe by the word of his power," Hebrews 1:3), redemption ("after making purification for sins," Hebrews 1:3), and consummation (implied in his reign at God's right hand).

5. **Jesus receives worship that is due God alone:** Peterson notes that God commands all angels to worship the Son upon his entrance into heaven (Hebrews 1:6). He contrasts this with angels and righteous humans refusing worship elsewhere in Scripture.
- **Hebrews 1 as a Comprehensive Passage:** Peterson emphasizes that Hebrews 1 uniquely contains all five of these proofs for Jesus' deity, unlike other key Christological passages like John 1, Colossians 1, and Philippians 2 (which have some but not all).
  - **Literary Context of Hebrews 1:1-2:4:** Peterson views this as a unified section where the superiority of the Son (and the New Testament revelation he brings) is contrasted with Old Testament prophets and angels (who mediated the Law).
  - **Superiority of the Gospel:** Because Jesus is superior to the mediators of the Old Covenant, the gospel message he brings is even more important and carries a greater warning against neglect ("How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" Hebrews 2:3). While both Law and Gospel are inspired, rejecting the greater revelation in Christ has dire consequences.
  - **Historical Context:** Peterson reminds the audience that Hebrews was written to professing Jewish Christians facing persecution and the temptation to return to Judaism. The powerful Christology of Hebrews 1 serves as a strong warning against such apostasy.

#### Quotes:

- **Mary's Submission:** "Behold, I am a servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)
- **Angelic Message to Joseph:** "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of or from the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 1:20)
- **Reason for Jesus' Holiness:** "...the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)
- **Hebrews 1:3 on Jesus' Nature and Work:** "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact representation of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:3)

- **Immutability of the Son:** "But you are the same, and your years will have no end." (Hebrews 1:12, quoting Psalm 102:27)
- **Warning in Hebrews 2:3:** "How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3)

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Peterson's lecture provides a detailed exploration of the virginal conception and the deity of Christ, grounding his arguments firmly in the biblical texts of Luke, Matthew, and Hebrews. He clarifies theological points, addresses common misunderstandings, and emphasizes the profound significance of these doctrines for Christian faith and practice. The session highlights the unique and divine nature of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah and Son of God.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 12, Systematics: Virgin Birth, Deity of Christ (Heb. 1)

### Study Guide: The Virginal Conception and the Deity of Christ

#### Key Themes:

- The accounts of the virginal conception in Luke 1 and Matthew 1.
- Mary's and Joseph's responses to the announcement of Jesus' birth.
- The theological significance of the virginal conception, particularly in relation to original sin.
- The deity of Christ as presented in Hebrews 1.
- Five key proofs for the deity of Christ found in Hebrews 1.
- The superiority of Christ and the New Covenant to the Old Testament prophets and angels.

#### Quiz:

1. Describe Mary's initial reaction to the angel Gabriel's announcement in Luke 1 and what her eventual response reveals about her character.
2. How does Matthew's account in chapter 1 highlight Joseph's character and his initial response to the news of Mary's pregnancy?
3. According to the lecture, why was Jesus conceived free from original sin? Explain the reasons that are explicitly rejected.
4. What is the significance of the Holy Spirit's role in the conception of Jesus, as described in both Matthew and Luke?
5. Explain the parallel drawn in the lecture between the virginal conception and the inspiration of Scripture. What is the point of this comparison?
6. Identify three of the five key proofs for the deity of Christ that are found in Hebrews 1, according to the lecture.
7. In what ways does Hebrews 1 portray Jesus as superior to angels? What is the significance of this comparison?

8. According to the lecture, what is the primary theological division in God's Word, and what is the second most fundamental division? How does Hebrews 1 relate to the latter?
9. What is the main warning in Hebrews 2:1-4, and how does it connect to the high Christology presented in Hebrews 1?
10. According to the lecture, in what ways is Jesus presented as prophet, priest, and king within Hebrews 1?

**Answer Key:**

1. Mary's initial reaction was one of questioning ("How can this be, since I am a virgin?"). Her eventual response, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word," reveals her humility, submission, and faith despite not fully understanding the implications.
2. Matthew highlights Joseph's righteousness and his initial desire to divorce Mary quietly to avoid shaming her. His change of heart after the angelic dream demonstrates his obedience to God and his faith in the divine plan, portraying him as a godly man.
3. Jesus was conceived free from original sin because of the Holy Spirit's direct working within Mary's womb. The lecture rejects the ideas that it was because sex is inherently sinful or solely because Joseph, a sinful father, was not involved.
4. The Holy Spirit's role signifies that the conception was a supernatural work of God, emphasizing Jesus' divine origin and his unique status as the Son of God. The Spirit's action ensured that Jesus would be holy from conception.
5. The parallel suggests that in both the virginal conception and the inspiration of Scripture, there is a divine-human interaction resulting in a holy and unique outcome. God works through human instruments (Mary and biblical authors) to achieve his purposes.
6. Three of the five proofs are: Jesus is of the very nature of God (exact representation of divine essence), Jesus has divine titles (God, Lord), and Jesus possesses attributes that belong to God (immutability).
7. Hebrews 1 portrays Jesus as superior to angels by inheriting a more excellent name (Son), receiving worship from angels, and being addressed with divine pronouncements ("Your throne, O God, is forever and ever"). This highlights his divine status and authority.

8. The primary theological division is pre-fall and post-fall. The second most fundamental division is the Old and New Testaments, which Hebrews 1 reflects by contrasting God speaking through prophets and angels in the past with God speaking through his Son in the last days.
9. The main warning is against neglecting "such a great salvation" offered through Jesus Christ. It connects to Hebrews 1 by emphasizing that if the Old Testament revelation (delivered by angels) demanded obedience and brought judgment for disobedience, the superior revelation through the divine Son demands even greater attention and carries more serious consequences for neglect.
10. Jesus is presented as a prophet in Hebrews 1:2 ("God has spoken to us by his Son"), as a priest in 1:3 ("After making purification for sins"), and as a king throughout the chapter, particularly evident in his ascension and session at God's right hand (verse 3 and following).

### **Essay Format Questions:**

1. Analyze the significance of both Mary's and Joseph's responses to the news of Jesus' impending birth as presented in Luke 1 and Matthew 1. How do their reactions contribute to our understanding of their character and the nature of this miraculous event?
2. Discuss the theological implications of the virginal conception of Jesus, particularly in relation to the doctrine of original sin and the sinlessness of Christ. Evaluate the arguments presented in the lecture regarding how Jesus was conceived free from sin.
3. Explore the ways in which Hebrews 1 establishes the deity of Jesus Christ. Analyze at least three of the five proofs discussed in the lecture, providing specific examples from the text and explaining their significance.
4. Examine the contrast drawn in Hebrews 1 and 2:1-4 between Jesus and the Old Testament prophets and angels. What is the purpose of this comparison, and how does it underscore the importance of the message of the gospel?
5. Consider the enduring significance of the doctrine of the virginal conception for Christian theology and practice. Why has this doctrine been historically important, and what are some of its implications for understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ?



## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Christology:** The branch of Christian theology concerned with the person, nature, and work of Jesus Christ.
- **Virginal Conception (Virgin Birth):** The doctrine that Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary without sexual intercourse with a human father, through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Original Sin:** The state of sin and guilt inherited by humanity as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden.
- **Deity of Christ:** The theological belief that Jesus Christ is God, possessing the divine nature and attributes.
- **Incarnation:** The theological doctrine that the eternal Son of God took on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.
- **Atonement:** The work Christ did in his life and death to reconcile humanity to God and overcome the consequences of sin.
- **Providence:** God's active involvement in and governance of the created world.
- **Immutable:** Not subject to change or alteration. Used in the lecture to describe an attribute of God and Christ.
- **Concursus:** The theological concept that God and human authors worked together in the writing of Scripture, with God's direction and the authors' own styles and intentions.
- **Mediator:** One who stands between two parties to reconcile them. Jesus is presented as the mediator of the New Covenant.

## 5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 12, Systematics: Virgin Birth, Deity of Christ (Heb. 1), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on the Virgin Birth and the Deity of Christ

#### 1. Why is the conception of Jesus described as "virginal" rather than a typical birth?

The term "virginal conception" (often referred to as the "virgin birth") emphasizes that Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit, without the involvement of a human father. This is explicitly stated in Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38, where angelic announcements detail this unique and miraculous origin of the Messiah. This event underscores the supernatural nature of Jesus' entry into the world.

#### 2. How did Mary and Joseph respond to the news of the virginal conception?

Mary initially responded with a question of how this could be, as she was a virgin (Luke 1:34). However, upon the angel Gabriel's explanation that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, she submitted in faith, stating, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Joseph, upon discovering Mary's pregnancy before they had consummated their marriage, initially resolved to divorce her quietly to avoid public shame. However, an angel appeared to him in a dream, revealing the divine origin of the child and instructing him to take Mary as his wife and name the child Jesus (Matthew 1:20-24). Both responses demonstrate faith and obedience to God's plan, despite the social stigma and personal challenges they faced.

**3. Was Mary's role in the conception purely passive? Did Jesus inherit anything from her?** No, Mary's role was not purely passive. While the conception was divinely initiated by the Holy Spirit, Mary was truly the mother of Jesus and contributed her biological material, including her DNA and chromosomes, to the developing child. This is crucial for understanding Jesus' genuine humanity, as acknowledged in church creeds and confessions.

**4. If Mary was a sinner, how was Jesus conceived without original sin?** Jesus' freedom from original sin was not due to the absence of a human father (as Mary was still a sinner) or because sexual intercourse is inherently sinful. Rather, the Bible indicates that the Holy Spirit's direct involvement in the conception was the reason. The Holy Spirit came upon Mary, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her, resulting in a holy conception. Some theological perspectives suggest that Mary's contribution was sanctified from the moment of conception by the Holy Spirit. The biblical focus is on the Holy Spirit's work, not a biological explanation.

**5. What does the book of Hebrews teach about the deity of Christ?** Hebrews 1 is a crucial passage for understanding the deity of Christ. It presents several key proofs: (1) Jesus is of the very nature of God, the exact representation of His being. (2) Jesus has divine titles, including "Lord" (as the Creator) and "God" (as the Father calls the Son). (3) Jesus possesses attributes that belong to God alone, such as immutability (unchangeableness). (4) Jesus performs works that only God performs, including creation, providence (sustaining the universe), redemption (making purification for sins), and consummation of all things. (5) Jesus receives worship that is due to God alone, as even angels are commanded to worship Him.

**6. How does Hebrews contrast Jesus with Old Testament prophets and angels?** Hebrews 1 establishes the superiority of Jesus Christ over both Old Testament prophets and angels, who served as intermediaries of God's revelation (the law). While God spoke through prophets and involved angels in the giving of the law, He has now spoken definitively and ultimately through His Son. This new revelation in Jesus (the Gospel) is therefore more significant and carries greater consequences for those who neglect it. Jesus is the greater prophet and is far superior to angels, as evidenced by His divine titles, works, and the command for angels to worship Him.

**7. Why is the virginal conception considered important for Christian theology?** The virginal conception is the foundational aspect of the incarnation, the event where the Son of God took on human flesh. It highlights the divine initiative in salvation and underscores Jesus' unique identity as both fully God and fully human. This miraculous conception paved the way for Jesus' sinless life, which was a necessary prerequisite for His atoning death on the cross and subsequent resurrection. It demonstrates God's special providence in bringing the Messiah into the world.

**8. What is the significance of the titles given to Jesus in the accounts of His conception (e.g., Jesus, Son of God)?** The titles given to Jesus in Matthew and Luke are highly significant. The name "Jesus" itself, as explained by the angel to Joseph, means "the Lord saves," indicating His future work of saving His people from their sins. The title "Son of God" carries royal connotations rooted in Old Testament promises to David and signifies Jesus' unique relationship with God, pointing to His divine nature. These titles, revealed before His birth, foreshadow His identity and mission as the promised Messiah, the divine King and Savior.