

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 13, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs – Nature, Titles Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Christology, Session 13, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs – Nature, Titles, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's Christology session 13 focuses on **proving the deity of Jesus Christ** through biblical and systematic theology, primarily using **Hebrews 1** as a foundational text to illustrate five historical proofs: Christ's divine nature, titles (Lord, Son of God, Son of Man, God), and attributes (immutability). Peterson also references his book, *Jesus in Prophecy*, and briefly touches on the mystery of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, emphasizing the importance of Christ's deity for salvation and refuting contrary cultic views. The lecture explores various scriptures, including Psalms, Colossians, Philippians, and John's Gospel, to substantiate the claims of Christ's inherent divinity and the implications thereof.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Christology, Session 13 – 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_Session13.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 13, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs – Nature, Titles

Briefing Document: The Deity of Christ

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the main themes and arguments presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 13 of his Christology series, focusing on the deity of Christ. Peterson outlines five historical proofs for Christ's divinity, primarily drawing from Hebrews 1 and other relevant biblical texts. He also discusses divine titles attributed to Jesus and the importance of understanding the deity of Christ in contrast to various theological errors and cultic beliefs.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Introduction and the Importance of Christ's Deity:

- Peterson introduces the session as a continuation of the study on the doctrine of Christ, specifically focusing on his deity.
- He highlights the foundational importance of believing in the deity of Christ for salvation, contrasting it with the belief in the Holy Spirit: "The gospel is not believing in the Holy Spirit... but the gospel is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." (p. 1)
- He emphasizes that denying Jesus' deity is a "damning error" because one cannot truly trust for salvation someone considered merely an angel or a perfect human: "But how can I believe in him for salvation if I regard him as only an angel or a mere human being?" (p. 3)
- He asserts that the Bible strongly affirms the deity of Christ: "the Bible shouts the deity of Christ." (p. 1)

2. Five Historical Proofs of Christ's Deity (Primarily from Hebrews 1):

- Peterson states his intention to present five historical proofs for the deity of Christ, using Hebrews 1 as a foundational text where he believes all five are present.
- **Proof 1: He is of the very nature of God:**
- Draws from Hebrews 1:2-3: "[The Son is] the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." (p. 2)

- Explains this through two pictures: the sun and its radiance, and the minting of coins using a die.
- The "radiance" illustrates Christ as the revealer of God, implying unity ("The ray is the sun, prolonged") and a functional subordination ("It is not the invisible sun. It's the sun revealed that we know in the son of God."). (pp. 2-3)
- The "exact imprint" (Greek: *charaktēr* derived from *hypostasis*, meaning essential nature, being, and essence) signifies that Jesus shares the very nature of God. "So, the Son of God is the exact imprint of God's essential nature." (p. 4) This counters the idea that New Testament Christology is only functional.
- Connects this to Colossians 2:9: "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells in bodily form," indicating that Jesus' physical body houses the very essence of God. (p. 4) This passage influenced the Nicene Creed's affirmation that the Son is *homoousios* (of the same substance) with the Father.
- **Proof 2: He has divine titles ascribed to him:**
- Acknowledges that some titles are used for humans as well but argues that in the context of Christ, they carry divine weight.
- **Lord (*Kurios*):**
- In Hebrews 1:10, quoting Psalm 102, the title "Lord" is used in reference to the creator: "You, Lord, laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands." (p. 5) This links Christ to the creation described in Genesis 1:1.
- In Mark 12:37, Jesus uses Psalm 110:1 ("The Lord said to my Lord") to demonstrate his superiority to David, implying his divine Lordship. This passage hints at the "mystery of the two natures of the person of Christ." (p. 5)
- Philippians 2:11 declares that "every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," referencing Isaiah 45 where similar confession is made to Yahweh. This signifies universal acknowledgment of his Lordship and his role in judgment. (pp. 6-7)
- **Son of God:**
- While a royal title (2 Samuel 7), in John 5, Jesus equating his work with the Father's on the Sabbath ("my father is working until now, and I am working") was

considered blasphemy because it "was calling God his own father, making himself equal with God." (pp. 8-9)

- Hebrews 1:2 states God spoke "by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world," linking sonship with divine roles. (p. 10)
- Hebrews 1:8, quoting Psalm 45:6, directly calls the Son "God": "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." (p. 10)
- **Son of Man:**
 - Jesus' favorite self-designation, often used in the third person.
 - Illustrates both his humanity (e.g., having nowhere to lay his head, referencing Psalm 8) and his deity (e.g., coming in the clouds of heaven, referencing Daniel 7). (pp. 10-11)
 - In Matthew 26:64, Jesus' affirmation that they will see "the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven" is understood by the high priest as blasphemy, leading to Jesus' condemnation. (p. 12)
- **God:**
 - John 1:1 and 1:18 explicitly call Jesus "God" and "the only God." (p. 12) This forms an "inclusion" (bookends) around the prologue of John's Gospel.
 - Thomas's declaration in John 20:28, "My Lord and my God," is presented as a powerful affirmation of Jesus' deity, contrasting with cultic misinterpretations. (p. 13)
- **Proof 3: He has the attributes of God:**
 - Hebrews 1:10-12 contrasts the Son as the creator ("You, Lord, laid the foundations of the earth...") with the created order that will perish and be changed.
 - Verse 12 states of the Son: "you are the same, and your years will have no end," highlighting the divine attribute of immutability (unchangeableness). (p. 14)
 - Peterson clarifies that while the incarnation involved change for the Son, God's fundamental character, plan, and ways remain constant.
- **Proof 4: His works are divine:** (This point is introduced but will be elaborated on in the next lecture.) (p. 17)

- **Proof 5: He receives worship:** (This point is also introduced as a topic for the next lecture.) (p. 17)

3. Confronting Erroneous Views and Cults:

- Peterson strongly criticizes cults that deny the deity of Christ, stating their views are "damning errors." (p. 3)
- He uses the example of Christian Science to illustrate a misinterpretation of Scripture and Jehovah's Witnesses' mistranslation of Thomas's confession in John 20:28. (p. 13)

4. The Mystery of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility:

- While not directly a proof of Christ's deity, Peterson touches on the complex theological issue of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, using the story of Joseph and the crucifixion of Jesus as examples where both divine will and human action are simultaneously present. (pp. 15-17)
- He clarifies that while God is absolutely sovereign, human beings are still responsible for their actions. This is presented as a "biblically revealed genuine mystery." (p. 17)
- He contrasts biblical sovereignty with fatalism and the idea that creatures can ultimately nullify God's will.

Key Quotes:

- "the Bible shouts the deity of Christ." (p. 1)
- "[The Son is] the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." (Hebrews 1:3, p. 2)
- "But denying that Jesus is God is damning." (p. 3)
- "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." (Colossians 2:9, p. 4)
- "You, Lord, laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands." (Psalm 102:25, quoted in Hebrews 1:10, p. 5)
- "every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:11, p. 6)

- "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." (Psalm 45:6, quoted in Hebrews 1:8, p. 10)
- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1, p. 12)
- "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." (John 1:18, ESV, Peterson's paraphrase, p. 12)
- "My Lord and my God!" (Thomas's declaration in John 20:28, p. 13)
- "you are the same, and your years will have no end." (Hebrews 1:12, p. 14)

Next Steps/Further Discussion:

- The next session will likely delve deeper into the divine works of Christ and the fact that he receives worship, further substantiating his deity.
- Further exploration of the nuances of the divine titles used for Christ and their Old Testament context could be beneficial.
- The relationship between the functional and essential aspects of Christ's being, as introduced through the Hebrews 1 imagery, warrants further theological consideration.

This briefing document provides a concise overview of Dr. Peterson's arguments for the deity of Christ in Session 13, highlighting the scriptural basis and key theological points.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 13, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs – Nature, Titles

Christology Study Guide: The Deity of Christ

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Dr. Peterson, why is denying the deity of Christ a "damning error"?
2. Explain the two pictures used in Hebrews 1 to communicate the deity of Christ and the main truth each conveys.
3. What does the term "homoousios" mean, and why is it significant in discussions about Christ's nature?
4. Provide one example from Hebrews 1 where the title "Lord" (kurios) is used as a divine title for Christ and explain why.
5. How does Jesus' interpretation of Psalm 110:1 in Mark 12:37 implicitly argue for his deity?
6. Explain the significance of Thomas's declaration "My Lord and my God!" in John 20:28.
7. What does Hebrews 1:10-12 reveal about Christ's attributes, and which divine attribute does it specifically highlight?
8. According to Dr. Peterson, what is the difference between the two uses of the title "Son of Man" in the New Testament?
9. In John 5:17-18, why did the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus of blasphemy when he said, "My Father is working until now, and I am working"?
10. What is the "dynamic interplay" Dr. Peterson discusses, and how does it relate to the crucifixion of Jesus?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Denying Jesus' deity is a damning error because if one regards him as merely an angel or human, it undermines the basis for trusting him for salvation; the one we trust for salvation is God the Son who became human. Such Christologies that start "from below" can never fully grasp his divine nature.

2. The first picture is of the sun and its rays, communicating revelation (Christ reveals God), equality (the ray is of the same essence as the sun), and subordination (the ray is not the invisible sun). The second picture is of minting coins, where the coin is the exact imprint of the die (nature), again implying revelation, equality (same substance), and distinction (the imprint is not the die).
3. "Homoousios" is a Greek term meaning "of the same substance" or "same being." It is significant because it was used at the Council of Nicaea to affirm that the Son is of the same divine nature as the Father, countering Arianism which taught the Son was a created being subordinate to the Father.
4. In Hebrews 1:10, the text quotes Psalm 102, applying the title "Lord" to the Son as the one who "laid the foundations of the earth." This use of "Lord" alludes back to Genesis 1:1 and identifies the Son as the Creator, a work only God can perform, thus making it a divine title in this context.
5. By quoting Psalm 110:1 ("The Lord said to my Lord"), Jesus highlights that David calls the Messiah "Lord," even though the Messiah is supposed to be David's descendant. This creates a conundrum that suggests the Messiah is more than just a human descendant of David, implicitly pointing towards his divine nature.
6. Thomas's exclamation "My Lord and my God!" is significant because it is a direct and personal address to the resurrected Jesus, using two explicitly divine titles. This confession by a previously doubting disciple serves as a powerful affirmation of Jesus' deity and concludes the main narrative of the Gospel of John.
7. Hebrews 1:10-12 describes the Son as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, contrasting their transience with his permanence. It specifically highlights the divine attribute of immutability, stating that the Son remains the same and his years will have no end, unlike the created order that will be changed.
8. The title "Son of Man" is used in the New Testament to denote both Jesus' humanity, highlighting his weakness and vulnerability (e.g., having nowhere to lay his head), and his deity and authority (e.g., coming in the clouds of heaven and sitting at God's right hand as seen in Daniel 7). Jesus uniquely uses this title for himself, often in the third person.
9. The Jewish leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy because by saying "My Father is working until now, and I am working," he was equating his own actions with God's providential work, even on the Sabbath. In their understanding, this made himself equal with God, a claim they considered blasphemous.

10. The "dynamic interplay" refers to the seemingly paradoxical relationship between absolute divine sovereignty and genuine human responsibility. This is illustrated in the crucifixion, where wicked men were responsible for crucifying Jesus, yet God in his sovereignty used this event to bring about the greatest good.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze and compare the two images used in Hebrews 1 (the sun/rays and the die/imprint) as arguments for the deity of Christ, discussing the primary and ancillary truths conveyed by each.
2. Discuss the significance of the divine titles ascribed to Jesus (Lord, Son of God, Son of Man, God) as presented in the source material. How do these titles, in their respective contexts, contribute to the argument for Christ's deity?
3. Explain how Jesus' interactions and claims in John's Gospel, particularly in John 5 and John 20, support the assertion of his deity, focusing on specific statements and the reactions they provoked.
4. Critically evaluate Dr. Peterson's statement that "the Bible shouts the deity of Christ" in comparison to the "whispers" of the Holy Spirit's deity. Provide biblical examples from the source material to support or challenge this assessment.
5. Discuss the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility as it relates to the person and work of Christ, particularly the crucifixion. How does understanding this "dynamic interplay" impact our understanding of God's plan and human agency?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Deity of Christ:** The doctrine that Jesus Christ is God, possessing the full nature and attributes of God.
- **Homoousios:** A Greek term meaning "of the same substance" or "same being," used in the Nicene Creed to affirm that the Son is of the same divine nature as the Father.
- **Incarnation:** The theological doctrine that the Son of God became human in the person of Jesus Christ, taking on flesh while remaining fully God.
- **Immutability:** A divine attribute referring to God's unchanging nature in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises.
- **Syllogism:** A logical argument that consists of three parts: a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.
- **Eschaton:** The final period of history, often referring to the end times or the ultimate destiny of humanity and the cosmos.
- **Kurios:** A Greek word meaning "lord," often used as a title for both humans and God/Jesus, with the context determining its specific meaning and significance.
- **Messianic Secret:** A motif in Mark's Gospel where Jesus often commands those he heals or who recognize him not to reveal his identity.
- **Inclusion:** A literary device where the same word or concept appears at the beginning and end of a literary unit, creating a sense of unity and framing.
- **Apostasis:** A Greek word used in Hebrews 1:3, often translated as "exact imprint" or "representation" of God's nature or being.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 13, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs – Nature, Titles, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Deity of Christ Based on Dr. Peterson's Christology Lecture:

- 1. What is the central focus of Dr. Peterson's lecture on Christology, and what foundational scripture does he emphasize?** Dr. Peterson's lecture primarily focuses on defending and promoting the deity of Jesus Christ. He uses Hebrews 1 as the foundational scripture, stating it uniquely contains all five historical proofs for Christ's deity within a single text.
- 2. What is the first historical proof for the deity of Christ presented in the lecture, and how does Hebrews 1 illustrate this?** The first historical proof is that Christ is of the very nature of God. Hebrews 1:3 illustrates this by describing the Son as "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." Peterson explains this through the analogy of the sun and its rays (revelation, equality, subordination) and the minting of coins (exact imprint of God's essential nature).
- 3. How does the lecture explain the seemingly contradictory ideas of equality and subordination between the Son and the Father as presented in Hebrews 1?** The lecture explains that while Hebrews 1 indicates both equality and subordination, the subordination is functional or economic, not essential. The Son, as the radiance of the Father's glory, is equal in nature (homoousios) but has a subordinate role in terms of revelation and function within the Godhead.
- 4. Why does Dr. Peterson argue that denying the deity of Christ is a "damning error"?** Denying Jesus' deity is considered a damning error because if one regards Jesus as merely an angel or a human being, it undermines the basis for trusting in him for salvation. The lecture emphasizes that salvation comes through faith in God the Son, who became human, not just a divinized man.
- 5. What are some of the divine titles ascribed to Jesus discussed in the lecture, and how do these support his deity?** The lecture discusses several divine titles ascribed to Jesus, including "Lord" (Kurios), "Son of God," and "Son of Man," as well as the title "God" itself.
 - **Lord:** Used in Hebrews 1:10 quoting Psalm 102 in reference to the creator, indicating Jesus' role in creation. Also seen in Mark 12:37 where Jesus uses Psalm

110:1 to show the Messiah is David's Lord. Philippians 2:11 speaks of universal confession of Jesus Christ as Lord.

- **Son of God:** Presented initially as a royal title (2 Samuel 7), but in John 5, Jesus' claim to work as his Father works is seen as making himself equal with God, highlighting the divine aspect of the title. Hebrews 1:2 and 1:8 also use "Son" in a divine context, referring to him as the heir of all things and addressing him as "God."
- **Son of Man:** While sometimes referring to his humanity (e.g., Matthew 8:20), in passages like Matthew 26:64, Jesus uses it in a divine sense, referring to the figure in Daniel 7 who sits at God's right hand and comes on the clouds.
- **God:** Explicitly stated in John 1:1 and 1:18 ("the Word was God" and "the only God") and reaffirmed by Thomas's declaration in John 20:28, "My Lord and my God."

6. What divine attributes of Christ are highlighted in Hebrews 1 according to the lecture? The lecture highlights the divine attribute of immutability in Hebrews 1:10-12. In contrast to the created heavens and earth that will perish and be changed, the Son remains the same, and his years will have no end. This changelessness in his being and eternal nature is presented as a quality belonging only to God.

7. How does the lecture address the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, and where is this best exemplified? The lecture acknowledges the mysterious interplay between God's absolute sovereignty and genuine human responsibility. This is best exemplified at the cross, where wicked men were responsible for crucifying Jesus, yet God, in his sovereignty, used this event to bring about the greatest good. The lecture emphasizes that both divine action and human accountability are true, even if the exact nature of their interaction is not fully comprehensible.

8. What other proofs for the deity of Christ does Dr. Peterson mention will be discussed in future lectures? Dr. Peterson indicates that future lectures will delve into other proofs for the deity of Christ, specifically mentioning his works (likely referring to miracles and his role in salvation) and the fact that, unlike even good humans and angels, Jesus rightfully receives worship.