

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 14, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Attributes, Works] Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Christology, Session 14, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Attributes, Works], Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's Christology session 14 focuses on proving the deity of Christ through scriptural analysis. The session examines texts like **Hebrews 1, John 1, and Colossians 1** to demonstrate that **Jesus possesses divine attributes** such as immutability, grace, truth, glory, and eternity. Furthermore, Peterson argues that **Jesus performs works that only God can do**, including creation, providence, redemption, judgment, and consummation, citing various biblical passages to support these claims. Ultimately, the lecture establishes the **irresistible conclusion that Jesus Christ is God incarnate** by showcasing his divine attributes and actions.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Christology, Session 14 – 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_Session14.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 14, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Attributes, Works]

Briefing Document: The Deity of Christ in Scripture

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented in Dr. Robert A. Peterson's Session 14 lecture on Christology, focusing on the deity of Christ as evidenced in Scripture, particularly Hebrews 1, Colossians 1, John 1, and Matthew 25. Peterson outlines two primary proofs for Christ's deity: his possession of divine attributes and his performance of works that only God can do.

Main Themes:

- **Jesus Possesses the Attributes of God:** Peterson argues that Scripture ascribes attributes unique to God to Jesus Christ.
- **Jesus Performs the Works of God:** He further contends that Jesus engages in activities that are exclusively God's prerogative.
- **Hebrews 1 as a Key Text:** This passage is highlighted for containing five proofs of Christ's deity.
- **Interconnectedness of Scriptural Testimonies:** Peterson draws on various New Testament books to support his claims.
- **Refutation of Alternative Christologies:** The lecture implicitly and explicitly addresses views that deny the full deity of Christ, such as Arianism (echoed in Jehovah's Witness theology).
- **Importance of Understanding Christ's Deity for Salvation and Judgment:** The implications of Christ's divine nature for redemption and final judgment are emphasized.

Most Important Ideas and Facts:

1. Jesus Possesses Divine Attributes:

- **Immutability:** Hebrews 1:11-12 is cited to show Christ's unchanging nature, a divine attribute. Peterson quotes, referring to these verses, "We saw his immutability in Hebrews 1:11 and 12."

- **Grace, Truth, and Glory:** John 1:14 and 17 describe Jesus as being "full of grace and truth," a concept rooted in the Old Testament's "hesed v'emet" (covenantal loving-kindness and faithfulness) of God. Peterson notes, "Jesus was full of that as the God-man." He adds that John's statement implies the Old Testament appears merely legal in comparison to the abundance in Jesus.
- **Eternity:** Colossians 1:17 states that Jesus "is before all things," indicating his existence prior to creation. Revelation 1:17, where Jesus declares, "I am the first and the last," a title used for Yahweh in Isaiah (Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12), further supports his eternal nature. Peterson emphasizes, "There, Yahweh is the speaker, and here, the Son of God uses that same language of himself. I am the first, so there's none before me. I am the last so that there's none after me. I am the eternal God, is the meaning."
- **Power:** Philippians 3:20-21 describes Christ's power to transform believers' bodies into immortal, incorruptible, powerful, and glorious forms, fitting them for eternal life. Peterson states, "Philippians 3:21 ascribes that same fitting to the Son of God... [He] will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body... by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

2. Jesus Performs the Works of God:

- **Creation:** Hebrews 1:2 states that God created the world "through whom also he created the world." Verse 10 echoes this: "You, Lord... laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands," referencing Psalm 102:25-27 and Genesis 1:1. John 1:3 is also cited: "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything was made." Peterson stresses the comprehensive nature of this statement, refuting alternative interpretations. Colossians 1:16 ("For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through him and for him.") further reinforces Christ's role as creator. He clarifies that "firstborn of all creation" (Colossians 1:15) signifies preeminence, as seen in Psalm 89:27, not literal first creation, thus countering Arian views.

- **Providence (Preservation and Government):** Hebrews 1:3 describes the Son as "upholding the universe by the word of his power." Colossians 1:17 says, "in him all things hold together." Peterson connects this to God's providence, defined by the Westminster Shorter Catechism as "his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions." He emphasizes that the Son actively participates in both the preservation and governance of creation.
- **Redemption (Purification for Sins):** Hebrews 1:3 states that after "making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high." Peterson highlights this as a key redemptive act, elaborated further in Hebrews 7-10 regarding Jesus' high priesthood and atoning sacrifice. He emphasizes the finished and perfect nature of Christ's sacrifice, contrasting it with the repeated and ultimately insufficient sacrifices of the Old Testament. John 1:12 and Colossians 1:13-14 are also mentioned, highlighting forgiveness of sins, adoption as children of God, reconciliation, deliverance from darkness, and transfer to the kingdom of the Son as aspects of Christ's redemptive work. Regarding Colossians 1:20, Peterson notes, "through him, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things... making peace by the blood of his cross," and identifies a "Eucharistic reference to the blood and body of the Son of God."
- **Judgment:** While not in Hebrews 1, Matthew 25:31-46 depicts the Son of Man (Jesus) sitting on his glorious throne and judging all nations, assigning individuals to eternal life or eternal punishment. Peterson emphasizes the use of the same adjective "eternal" ("aionios") for both destinies, refuting annihilationist views. John 5:21-23 states that the Father has given "all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 portrays the Lord Jesus being revealed from heaven to inflict vengeance on those who do not know God and obey the gospel, resulting in "the punishment of eternal destruction." Peterson calls this Paul's "most powerful hell passage" and highlights the concept of "retributive judgment."
- **Consummation:** Hebrews 1:2 identifies the Son as the "heir of all things," implying that everything will ultimately come under his authority and be brought to its final state through him. Colossians 1:16, with its emphasis on "for him," also points to Christ as the ultimate purpose and end of creation. Peterson concludes, "He is the creator, the God of providence, the redeemer, the judge, and yes, he is also the consummator."

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's lecture strongly argues for the deity of Christ based on scriptural evidence. He meticulously presents how Jesus possesses attributes unique to God and performs works that only God can perform, using key passages like Hebrews 1, Colossians 1, and John's Gospel. He emphasizes the significance of these truths for understanding salvation, judgment, and the ultimate consummation of all things in Christ. The lecture also implicitly counters alternative Christologies that diminish Jesus' divine status.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 14, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Attributes, Works]

Christology: The Deity of Christ

Study Guide

I. Introduction

- Session 14 of Dr. Peterson's Christology series focuses on demonstrating the deity of Jesus Christ through systematic theology, analysis of Hebrews 1, examination of five historic proofs, and exploration of other relevant biblical texts concerning Christ's attributes and works.
- The lecture builds upon previous sessions by further exploring the person and work of Christ.

II. Jesus Possesses the Attributes of God

- **Immutability:** Hebrews 1:11-12 presents Jesus as unchanging, a characteristic of God.
- **Grace and Truth:** John 1:14 and 17 describe Jesus as being full of grace and truth, echoing the Old Testament concept of God's *hesed v'emet* (covenantal loving-kindness and faithfulness) found in passages like Psalm 117 and Exodus 34. John emphasizes the surpassing abundance of these attributes in Jesus compared to the law given through Moses.
- **Glory:** John 1:14 records that John and others witnessed Jesus' divine glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father.
- **Eternity:** Colossians 1:17 states that Jesus is "before all things," indicating his existence prior to creation. Revelation 1:17 quotes the resurrected Christ saying, "I am the first and the last," language used of Yahweh in Isaiah (e.g., Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, 48:12), signifying eternal existence.
- **Power:** Philippians 3:20-21 ascribes the power to transform believers' mortal bodies into immortal, glorious bodies like Christ's to the Lord Jesus Christ. This power is the same sovereign power of God that raises believers.
- The argument presented is a syllogism: Only God possesses certain attributes; Scripture ascribes these attributes to Jesus; therefore, Jesus Christ is God incarnate.

III. Jesus Performs the Works of God

- The most powerful proof of Jesus' deity is that he performs works that only God performs: creation, providence, redemption, judgment, and consummation. Four of these are evident in Hebrews 1.
- **Creation:** Hebrews 1:2 states that God created the world *through* his Son.
- Hebrews 1:10 quotes Psalm 102:25-27, applying it to the Lord Jesus as the one who laid the foundation of the earth and created the heavens, echoing Genesis 1:1.
- John 1:3 emphatically declares that "all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made," refuting interpretations that suggest Jesus created only "other" things.
- Colossians 1:16 elaborates, stating that "by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through him and for him." The term "firstborn of all creation" in Colossians 1:15 signifies preeminence, as seen in Psalm 89:27, not literal first creation as Arianism (and Jehovah's Witnesses) teaches.
- **Providence:** Providence is defined as God's holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing of all his creatures and their actions (Westminster Shorter Catechism). It includes preservation and government.
- Hebrews 1:3 describes the Son as upholding the universe by the word of his power.
- Colossians 1:17 states, "in him all things hold together," indicating Christ's ongoing sustenance of creation.
- **Redemption:** Hebrews 1:3 states that after making purification for sins, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, signifying the completion and acceptance of his atoning work (explained further in Hebrews 7-10). The lack of furniture in the Old Testament tabernacle for priests to sit emphasized the continuous nature of their sacrifices, contrasting with Christ's finished work.
- John 1:12-13 highlights that believing in Jesus' name (person and work) gives the right to become children of God through regeneration.

- Colossians 1:13-14 states that the Father has delivered believers from the domain of darkness and transferred them to the kingdom of his beloved Son, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."
- Colossians 1:19-22 describes God reconciling all things to himself through Christ's death on the cross, emphasizing the peace made by the blood of his cross.
- **Judgment:** Matthew 25:31-46 portrays the Son of Man sitting on his glorious throne, gathering all nations before him, and separating them for eternal destinies (eternal punishment vs. eternal life). The consistent use of "eternal" for both destinies (aionios) underscores their unending nature.
- John 5:21-23 indicates that the Father has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. While some passages ascribe judgment to the Father, John's hyperbole emphasizes the Son's crucial role. Believers' "judgment" of angels (1 Corinthians 6) is understood as affirming God's righteous judgment.
- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 describes the Lord Jesus being revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel, resulting in eternal destruction. This passage emphasizes retributive justice.
- **Consummation:** Hebrews 1:2 states that God appointed his Son as the "heir of all things," implying that everything will ultimately come under his authority and be perfected in him. This goes beyond the idea of believers being joint heirs with Christ.
- Colossians 1:16, with the phrase "for him," reinforces that all things were created for Christ's ultimate purposes and glory, aligning with the concept of him being the heir.

IV. Conclusion

- The overwhelming evidence from Scripture, particularly the ascription of divine attributes and the performance of uniquely divine works, firmly establishes the deity of Jesus Christ.
- The next session will explore the fifth historic proof: that divine worship belongs to Jesus.

Quiz: The Deity of Christ

1. According to Dr. Peterson, what Old Testament concept is echoed in John's description of Jesus being full of grace and truth (John 1:14, 17)? Briefly explain this concept.
2. Hebrews 1:11-12 and Colossians 1:17 are used to demonstrate which attributes of Christ? Explain how these verses support these attributes.
3. What is the central argument presented in the lecture for proving Jesus' deity, and what are the five categories of evidence used to support this argument?
4. Explain the significance of Hebrews 1:2 and 1:10 in demonstrating Jesus' role in creation. How do these verses relate to Old Testament passages?
5. Define God's providence according to the lecture, and provide two New Testament examples discussed that illustrate Christ's involvement in providence.
6. How does Hebrews 1:3 describe Jesus' role in redemption? What does the act of Jesus "sitting down" signify in Hebrews 10?
7. According to Matthew 25:31-46, who performs the work of judgment, and what is significant about the adjective used to describe the eternal destinies?
8. Explain how Colossians 1:15's description of Christ as the "firstborn of all creation" is understood in the lecture, contrasting it with Arian interpretations.
9. What does it mean that Jesus is the "heir of all things" according to Hebrews 1:2 and Colossians 1:16? How does this relate to the consummation?
10. According to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, what role does the Lord Jesus Christ play in judgment, and what is the nature of the punishment described?

Answer Key for Quiz

1. The Old Testament concept is *hesed v'emet*, which means God's covenantal loving-kindness and faithfulness. John uses this idea to show that Jesus, as the God-man, perfectly embodies these divine characteristics in an even greater abundance than seen in the Old Testament law.
2. Hebrews 1:11-12 demonstrates Christ's **immutability** by stating that while the heavens and earth will perish and wear out, Jesus remains the same. Colossians 1:17 demonstrates Christ's **eternity** by saying he is "before all things," signifying his existence prior to creation.

3. The central argument is that Jesus possesses attributes and performs works that only God possesses and performs. The five categories of evidence are: Jesus has the attributes of God, Jesus performs the work of creation, Jesus performs the work of providence, Jesus performs the work of redemption, and Jesus performs the work of judgment (with consummation as a related aspect).
4. Hebrews 1:2 states that God created the world *through* his Son, establishing Jesus as the Father's agent in creation. Hebrews 1:10 applies Psalm 102:25-27 to Jesus, identifying him as the Lord who laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, directly linking him to the creation account in Genesis 1:1.
5. God's providence is his holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing of all his creatures and their actions. Two New Testament examples are: Hebrews 1:3, which says the Son upholds the universe by the word of his power, and Colossians 1:17, which states that in Christ all things hold together.
6. Hebrews 1:3 states that Jesus made purification for sins, highlighting his atoning work. In Hebrews 10, Jesus "sitting down" at the right hand of God signifies that his sacrificial work is finished and accepted, contrasting with the continuous standing of Old Testament priests performing ongoing sacrifices.
7. The Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, performs the work of judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. The adjective used to describe both the punishment of the goats and the life of the sheep is "eternal" (*aionios*), indicating that both destinies are unending.
8. The lecture explains that "firstborn of all creation" in Colossians 1:15 signifies Christ's preeminence and supreme status over all creation, as seen in Psalm 89:27, where "firstborn" refers to the highest king. This contrasts with the Arian view that Jesus was the first created being and then used to create other things.
9. That Jesus is the "heir of all things" means that ultimately everything will come under his possession, authority, and be perfected in him. This is a grander and more ultimate inheritance than believers' joint heirship. It relates to the consummation in that he will bring all things to their intended end and be glorified in that final state.
10. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven as the judge who inflicts vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel. The punishment is described as eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might, emphasizing retributive justice.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of ascribing Old Testament divine titles and attributes (such as immutability and eternity) to Jesus Christ in establishing his deity, referencing specific biblical texts from the provided source material.
2. Analyze the argument that Jesus performs works that only God can perform as a key proof of his deity. Choose two of the following works (creation, providence, redemption, judgment, consummation) and explain how the provided source material demonstrates Christ's involvement in these works as evidence of his divine nature.
3. Compare and contrast the presentation of Christ's role in creation in Hebrews 1 and Colossians 1, paying attention to the language and emphasis of each passage. How do these passages refute alternative views regarding Christ's relationship to creation?
4. Explore the concept of redemption as presented in the lecture, drawing connections between Hebrews 1:3, John 1:12-13, and Colossians 1:13-14. How do these passages collectively illustrate the divine nature of Christ's redemptive work?
5. Discuss the implications of Jesus Christ being the ultimate judge, as presented in Matthew 25 and 2 Thessalonians 1, for understanding his divine authority and the final destinies of humanity.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Immutability:** The attribute of God (and Christ) of being unchangeable in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises.
- **Hesed v'emet:** Hebrew terms referring to God's covenantal loving-kindness and faithfulness, respectively.
- **Incarnation:** The theological doctrine that the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, became fully human in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.
- **Providence:** God's active involvement in and governance of the created world, directing it toward his purposes.
- **Redemption:** The act by which Christ paid the penalty for sin through his death, setting believers free from its bondage and consequences.
- **Atonement:** The work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation by satisfying the justice of God.
- **Retributive Justice:** A theory of justice that holds that the proper response to wrongdoing is punishment proportionate to the offense.
- **Consummation:** The final realization of God's plan for creation, when all things will be brought to their intended end and Christ will be fully glorified.
- **Arianism:** A heretical theological teaching (fourth century) that asserted that Jesus Christ was a created being, distinct from and subordinate to God the Father.
- **Extra Calvinisticum:** A concept in Reformed theology that affirms that the divine nature of Christ was never fully confined to his human nature during the incarnation; the Logos remained active and operative outside of the incarnate Christ.
- **Kenosis:** The theological concept describing Christ's self-emptying or self-limitation in taking on human form.
- **Kenotic Theories:** Various theological explanations of the kenosis, detailing what aspects of his divine nature Christ relinquished or veiled during his earthly life.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 14, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Attributes, Works], Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

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

1. What is the primary argument presented for the deity of Christ in Hebrews 1 and other texts discussed?

Dr. Peterson argues that the deity of Christ is powerfully demonstrated through the fact that Jesus possesses attributes that belong only to God and performs works that only God can perform. This is supported by examining passages like Hebrews 1, Colossians 1, and Revelation 1, which ascribe divine characteristics such as eternity, immutability, power, grace, truth, and glory to Jesus. Furthermore, the scriptures show Jesus actively involved in creation, providence (sustaining and governing all things), redemption, judgment, and the final consummation of all things, all of which are uniquely divine actions.

2. How does Hebrews 1 specifically contribute to the understanding of Christ's deity?

Hebrews 1 is a particularly rich passage containing multiple proofs of Christ's deity. It portrays Jesus as the one through whom God created the world (verse 2) and the one who upholds the universe by the word of his power (verse 3), indicating his role in both creation and providence. The passage also states that he made purification for sins (verse 3), highlighting his redemptive work. Additionally, it quotes Old Testament scriptures (like Psalm 102) and applies them to Jesus (verse 10), equating him with the Lord (Yahweh) who laid the foundation of the earth, emphasizing his divine identity and eternality (verses 11-12). The Father also commands angels to worship him (verse 6), a form of devotion due only to God.

3. What divine attributes does Dr. Peterson highlight as belonging to Jesus Christ?

Dr. Peterson points to several attributes of God that are ascribed to Jesus in Scripture. These include:

- **Eternity:** Evidenced in Colossians 1:17 ("He is before all things") and Revelation 1:17 ("I am the first and the last").
- **Immutability:** Seen in Hebrews 1:11-12, indicating that Jesus, unlike creation, does not change.

- **Grace, Truth, and Glory:** Declared in John 1:14 and 17, mirroring the Old Testament concepts of God's covenantal love and faithfulness.
- **Power:** Demonstrated in Philippians 3:21, where Christ is said to have the power to transform our lowly bodies into glorious ones.

4. What are the five works that Dr. Peterson argues are performed by Jesus and are indicative of his deity?

Dr. Peterson identifies five works that Scripture ascribes to Jesus, which are traditionally understood as being performed solely by God:

- **Creation:** As seen in Hebrews 1:2, John 1:3, and Colossians 1:16, stating that God created the world through his Son.
- **Providence:** Described in Hebrews 1:3 (upholding the universe) and Colossians 1:17 (in him all things hold together), indicating Christ's ongoing sustenance and governance of creation.
- **Redemption:** Highlighted in Hebrews 1:3 (making purification for sins), as well as the broader narrative of Jesus' atoning sacrifice that secures forgiveness and reconciliation.
- **Judgment:** Evidenced in Matthew 25 (the Son of Man judging the nations), John 5:22 (the Father has given all judgment to the Son), and 2 Thessalonians 1 (the Lord Jesus being revealed from heaven to inflict vengeance).
- **Consummation:** Implied in Hebrews 1:2 (appointed the heir of all things) and Colossians 1:16 (all things were created for him), suggesting that all things will ultimately come under his authority and for his glory.

5. How does Dr. Peterson address potential misunderstandings of passages like Colossians 1:15 regarding Christ being the "firstborn of all creation"?

Dr. Peterson clarifies that the term "firstborn of all creation" in Colossians 1:15 does not imply that Jesus was the first being created, as Arianism and Jehovah's Witnesses theology wrongly teach. Instead, he argues, based on passages like Psalm 89:27, that "firstborn" signifies preeminence and highest rank. Jesus is the preeminent one over all creation because all things were created by him and for him (Colossians 1:16), emphasizing his role as the Father's agent in creation and his ultimate authority over it.

6. What is the significance of Jesus sitting at the right hand of God after making purification for sins, according to Hebrews 1:3 and 10:11-14?

Dr. Peterson explains that Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, as mentioned in Hebrews 1:3, signifies that his work of atonement is finished and accepted by the Father. This is contrasted with the Old Testament priests who stood daily offering sacrifices that could never truly take away sins (Hebrews 10:11). Jesus, however, offered a single, perfect sacrifice for sins and then sat down (Hebrews 10:12-14), indicating the completion and efficacy of his redemptive work.

7. How does the concept of judgment reinforce the deity of Christ in the passages discussed?

The passages on judgment, particularly Matthew 25, John 5, and 2 Thessalonians 1, attribute the act of final judgment to Jesus Christ. Dr. Peterson emphasizes that judging all nations and assigning eternal destinies is a prerogative of God alone. By presenting Jesus as the one who will return in glory to judge both the righteous and the wicked, these texts strongly support the claim that Jesus possesses divine authority and is indeed divine himself.

8. What does it mean that Jesus is the "heir of all things" as mentioned in Hebrews 1:2 and Colossians 1:16?

Dr. Peterson explains that when Scripture calls Jesus the "heir of all things," it signifies his ultimate authority, ownership, and inheritance of everything in creation. This is a grander and more ultimate sense of heirship than that ascribed to human believers. Because all things were created through him and for him, Jesus, as the divine Son who became the Son of Man, will ultimately possess and govern all things, culminating in the consummation of God's purposes. This role as the ultimate heir further underscores his divine nature and his central place in God's plan for the universe.