

# Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 15, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Worship], Extra- Calvinisticum

## Resources from NotebookLM

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

### 1. Abstract of Peterson, Christology, Session 15, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Worship], Extra-Calvinisticum, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This text presents a lecture on Christology, specifically focusing on the **deity of Christ** as evidenced in Scripture, particularly Hebrews 1. The discussion highlights **Jesus receiving worship** as a key proof of his divinity, contrasting this with the refusal of worship by godly humans and angels. The lecture then explores the historical theological concept of the **extra Calvinisticum**, which posits that while Christ fully incarnated, the second person of the Trinity also remained fully outside of the incarnation. Finally, it examines **kenoticism**, the idea that Christ emptied himself of some divine attributes during the incarnation, tracing its origins and various interpretations within post-Reformation theology.

### 2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Christology, 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).



Peterson\_Christology\_Session15.mp3

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 15, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Worship], Extra-Calvinisticum

**Briefing Document: Christology - Deity of Christ, Worship, Extra Calvinisticum, and Kenoticism**

#### **Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:**

This session of Dr. Peterson's Christology course delves into several crucial aspects related to the deity of Jesus Christ. The lecture covers the fifth historical proof for Christ's divinity (his reception of worship), introduces and explains the Extra Calvinisticum, and provides an overview of Kenotic Christologies, tracing their historical roots and key proponents.

#### **1. The Fifth Proof for the Deity of Christ: Reception of Worship**

Dr. Peterson continues his presentation of five historical proofs for the deity of Christ, focusing in this session on the fact that Jesus receives worship. He argues that this distinguishes him from even the most righteous humans and angels in biblical accounts.

- **Good Men Refuse Worship:** Peterson highlights the examples of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14, who vehemently rejected the worship offered to them by the people of Lystra after a miracle. They tore their garments and declared, "**Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like nature with you.**" (Acts 14:15, quoted indirectly). This refusal underscores the understanding within biblical faith that worship is due to God alone.
- **Good Angels Refuse Worship:** Similarly, Peterson points to two instances in Revelation (19:10 and 22:8-9) where the Apostle John attempts to worship an angel, but is firmly rebuked. The angel in Revelation 19:10 says, "**You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.**" (Rev. 19:10, quoted indirectly). This reinforces the idea that worship is reserved for God.
- **Christ Receives Worship:** In stark contrast, Jesus Christ receives worship in the Scriptures. Peterson cites Hebrews 1:6: "**And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, Let all God's angels worship him.**" He clarifies that "the world" here refers to the heavenly realm upon Christ's ascension.

- **Examples of Christ Receiving Worship: The Blind Man in John 9:** After Jesus heals him and reveals himself as the Son of Man, the man says, "**Lord, I believe,**" and **he worshipped him.** (John 9:38). Peterson emphasizes that Jesus does not correct this act of worship, but rather blesses the man.
- **Thomas' Confession in John 20:** Thomas, after seeing the resurrected Christ, declares, "**My Lord and my God!**" (John 20:28). Jesus responds by pronouncing a blessing on those who believe without seeing, implicitly accepting Thomas' worshipful declaration.
- **Philippians 2:10-11:** Peterson references this passage, stating that at the name of Jesus, "**every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**" While acknowledging that not all bowing will be out of willing worship (some will be a compelled acknowledgment), it underscores Christ's ultimate lordship and the fittingness of worship directed towards him.

## 2. The Extra Calvinisticum

Dr. Peterson introduces the Extra Calvinisticum, a historical theological concept often criticized by Lutherans.

- **Definition:** The Extra Calvinisticum (Latin for "the Calvinistic outside of/without") posits that while the second person of the Trinity (the Son) fully became incarnate in Jesus Christ, he also remained fully outside of or apart from that incarnation, retaining his full divine being and activity.
- **Historical Context:** This doctrine arose in post-Reformation debates between Lutherans and Reformed theologians. Lutherans viewed it as implying that the Reformed did not believe in a fully incarnate Jesus. However, Peterson argues this is an unfair assessment.
- **Biblical Justification (Implicit):** Peterson suggests that the ongoing work of providence attributed to Christ (Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3) implies the Extra Calvinisticum. If the incarnate Son ceased his providential work or only performed it through his localized body, it would raise questions about his full deity. The Trinity as a whole performs the work of providence, even the Father's actions in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19) and Christ's self-offering through the Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).
- **Purpose:** The Extra Calvinisticum aims to safeguard both the full deity of the Son and the doctrine of the Trinity, preventing the idea that the Trinity was diminished

or altered by the incarnation. It also avoids Kenotic interpretations that might diminish Christ's divine attributes.

- **Mystery:** Peterson acknowledges the mysterious nature of this doctrine, stating, "Do I understand fully what I just said? No, no." He emphasizes its connection to the core mysteries of Trinitarianism and Christology (one person with two natures).
- **Differences with Lutheran Theology:** Peterson highlights the contrasting approaches of Luther and Calvin. Luther embraced paradoxes and mysteries more readily (*Deus absconditus/revelatus, simul justus et peccator*), while Calvin preferred a more systematic and less paradoxical presentation, though he also acknowledged mysteries. The Lutheran disagreement stemmed partly from their belief that "the finite has capacity for the infinite," unlike the Reformed view.

### 3. Kenoticism (Kenosis Christologies)

Dr. Peterson provides an overview of Kenoticism, a theological approach to understanding the incarnation based on Philippians 2:7, which speaks of Christ "emptying himself" (Greek: *kenoo*).

- **Historical Origins:** Kenoticism's roots lie in post-Reformation Lutheran and Calvinist debates, particularly concerning the "communication of attributes" (the sharing of divine and human characteristics in Christ).
- **Lutheran Background:** While Luther himself did not develop a kenosis doctrine, his emphasis on Christ's ubiquity in the Lord's Supper and the "communication of attributes" laid some groundwork. He believed Christ's divine attributes were shared with his human nature in the resurrection, allowing his body to be omnipresent for the Eucharist.
- **Development Among Lutherans:** Later Lutheran theologians (Brentzians and Chemnitzians) debated the extent of this communication. Brentz argued for a more complete fusion of natures and the extension of divine "relative attributes" (omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence) to Christ's humanity from the incarnation. Chemnitz took a more moderate view, emphasizing the divine use of the human nature beyond normal limitations, with the transfer of qualities being more intermittent.
- **Revival in 19th Century Great Britain:** Kenotic thought experienced a resurgence in Britain, with theologians like Gottfried Thomasius, Charles Gore, H. R. Macintosh, A. M. Fairbairn, and P. T. Forsythe offering various interpretations.

- **Core Idea:** Generally, Kenotic theories propose that in order to become incarnate and experience human limitations, the divine Logos "abandoned somewhat, at least, what he was before he became incarnate." This "denuding process" often involved the supposed temporary (or in some views, permanent) relinquishing of the "relative attributes" of divinity.
- **Forsythe's Version:** P. T. Forsythe suggested that the attributes of the divine Word contracted from being "actual" to being "potential" during the incarnation, with Christ's full "Godness" emerging in the cross and resurrection. He emphasized the meeting of the human and divine in "saving action" rather than simply in a person.
- **Praiseworthy Features of Kenotic Theories (according to David Wells, cited by Peterson):** They start with a pre-existent divine Word.
- They aim to give full reality to the historical Jesus.
- They emphasize the moral content of divine love in Christ's self-emptying.
- **Troubling Dimensions (to be discussed in the next lecture):** Peterson notes that there are problematic aspects of Kenotic theories, which will be addressed in the subsequent session.

#### Quotes:

- **Paul and Barnabas in Lystra:** "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like nature with you." (Indirect quotation of Acts 14:15).
- **Angel in Revelation:** "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." (Indirect quotation of Revelation 19:10 and 22:9).
- **Hebrews 1:6:** "And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, Let all God's angels worship him."
- **Blind Man in John 9:** "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him. (John 9:38).
- **Thomas in John 20:** "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).
- **Philippians 2:10-11 (partial):** "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..."
- **Dr. Peterson on Extra Calvinisticum:** "Do I understand fully what I just said? No, no."

- **General view of Kenoticists: "...that the divine logos, in order to take our nature upon him and submit in reality to its earthly conditions and limitations, abandoned somewhat, at least, what he was before he became incarnate."**  
(Quoting the general consensus among Kenoticists as described by David Wells).

**Conclusion:**

Session 15 provides a comprehensive overview of key concepts related to the deity of Christ. Dr. Peterson argues persuasively for Christ's divinity based on his reception of worship, contrasting it with the refusal of worship by righteous humans and angels. He introduces the complex doctrine of the Extra Calvinisticum as a safeguard for Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy. Finally, he outlines the historical development and core tenets of Kenotic Christologies, setting the stage for a critical evaluation in the next session. The session highlights the ongoing theological reflection and debate surrounding the profound mystery of the incarnation.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 15, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Worship], Extra-Calvinisticum

### Christology Study Guide: Deity of Christ

#### Key Concepts and Themes

- **Five Historic Proofs of Christ's Deity:** Titles, attributes, works, worship, and the nature of God.
- **Worship of Christ:** The significance of Christ receiving worship as a proof of his deity, contrasted with the refusal of worship by godly humans and angels (Acts 14, Revelation 19 & 22).
- **Hebrews 1:** Its importance as a chapter containing multiple proofs of Christ's deity, including the Father commanding angels to worship him.
- **John 9:38:** The blind man's worship of Jesus as an act of faith and Jesus' acceptance of it.
- **Philippians 2:10-11:** The future universal bowing and confession of Jesus as Lord, and the distinction between obligatory submission and willing worship.
- **Extra Calvinisticum:** The Reformed theological doctrine asserting that while the Son fully incarnated in Jesus, he also remained fully God and outside of the incarnation. Its purpose is to safeguard the Trinity and the full deity of Christ.
- **Kenoticism (Kenosis Christologies):** Theories, originating in post-Reformation Lutheranism and Calvinism debates, based on Philippians 2:7 ("emptied himself"), proposing that Christ relinquished some divine attributes during the incarnation.
- **Word-Flesh vs. Word-Man Christology:** Lutheranism's emphasis on the Logos taking on a human body (potentially without fully acting from a human soul) versus Reformed theology's emphasis on the Logos taking on a complete human nature (body and soul), with Jesus acting from his human soul.
- **Communication of Attributes (Communicatio Idiomatum):** The concept, particularly emphasized in Lutheran theology, that the divine and human natures of Christ share attributes. Lutherans believed this allowed Christ's human body to become ubiquitous, especially for the Lord's Supper.

- **Luther's View of the Lord's Supper:** Rejection of the Catholic Mass as a sacrifice and transubstantiation, emphasizing it as a gift from God where Christ is present "in, with, and under" the elements.
- **Developments in Lutheran Kenoticism:** The emergence of different views (Brentzians vs. Chemnitzians) regarding the extent and permanence of the transfer of divine attributes to Christ's humanity.
- **British Kenoticism:** Late 19th-century revival of kenotic ideas in Great Britain, suggesting a contraction of divine attributes from actual to potential during the incarnation.

### Quiz

1. According to Dr. Peterson, what is the fifth historic proof for the deity of Christ? Provide a biblical example of this proof in action.
2. Contrast the reactions of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14 and the angel in Revelation 19 & 22 to being offered worship. What does this contrast highlight regarding Christ?
3. Explain the significance of Hebrews 1:6 in the context of proving Christ's deity. What specific event does Peterson clarify this verse is referring to?
4. Describe the encounter in John 9:35-38. Why does Peterson consider the blind man's response in verse 38 to be an act of worship?
5. Explain the main point of Philippians 2:10-11 regarding the confession of Jesus as Lord. What important distinction does Peterson make about the nature of this future event?
6. Define the "extra calvinisticum." What is the core assertion of this doctrine and what theological concerns does it aim to address?
7. What is the fundamental idea behind kenotic Christologies, and what biblical passage is often used to support them?
8. Briefly explain the difference between a "word-flesh" and a "word-man" Christology. Which theological traditions are typically associated with each?
9. Summarize Martin Luther's view of the Lord's Supper and his reasons for rejecting the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.



10. Briefly describe the disagreement between the Brentzians and the Chemnitzians within Lutheran theology regarding the communication of attributes.

### Answer Key

1. The fifth historic proof for the deity of Christ is that Jesus receives the worship of God. A biblical example is found in John 9:38, where the formerly blind man, after Jesus reveals himself, says "Lord, I believe," and worships him, which Jesus accepts.
2. Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14 tore their garments and vehemently refused the worship offered to them by the people of Lystra, asserting they were merely men. Similarly, the angel in Revelation 19 and 22 commanded John not to worship him, stating he was a fellow servant and that only God should be worshipped. This contrast highlights that Christ's reception of worship indicates his divine nature, as godly creatures refuse it.
3. Hebrews 1:6 states, "And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, let all God's angels worship him." This is significant because it shows God the Father commanding heavenly beings to worship Jesus, indicating his divine status. Peterson clarifies that "the world" in this context refers to the heavenly world at Jesus' ascension and session at the right hand of the Father, not his birth in Bethlehem.
4. In John 9:35-38, Jesus finds the man he healed who had been cast out by the Jewish leaders and asks if he believes in the Son of Man. The man asks who he is, and Jesus reveals himself. The man then declares, "Lord, I believe," and worships Jesus. Peterson considers this an act of worship because the man recognizes Jesus' true identity and offers him reverence appropriate for God, which Jesus accepts without correction.
5. Philippians 2:10-11 states that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The main point is the universal acknowledgment of Jesus' lordship in the future. Peterson distinguishes between this universal bowing, which will include both the redeemed and the lost (as a constraint to acknowledge his worthiness), and true worship, which is offered willingly by the redeemed.
6. The "extra calvinisticum" is a Reformed theological doctrine that asserts that while the second person of the Trinity (the Son) fully became incarnate in Jesus Christ, he simultaneously remained fully God and existed outside or apart from

the incarnation. This doctrine aims to protect the integrity of the Trinity, ensuring it did not become diminished by the incarnation, and to uphold the full deity of the Son even during his earthly existence.

7. Kenotic Christologies, based on Philippians 2:7 ("but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant"), propose that in order to become incarnate and live as a human being, the divine Logos voluntarily relinquished or limited the exercise of some of his divine attributes, such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence.
8. A "word-flesh" Christology, often associated with Lutheranism and some early church fathers like Athanasius, emphasizes that the divine Logos took on a human body, but the extent to which Jesus fully acted from a human soul is debated. A "word-man" Christology, favored by Reformed theology, asserts that the Logos assumed a complete human nature, including both body and soul, and that Jesus acted fully from his human nature.
9. Martin Luther viewed the Lord's Supper not as a sacrifice offered to God (like the Catholic Mass) but as a gift from God to believers. He rejected transubstantiation, the idea that the substance of bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ while the outward forms remain, considering it a human attempt to explain a divine mystery. Instead, Luther believed Christ was present "in, with, and under" the elements in a miraculous, inexplicable way.
10. Within Lutheran theology, the Brentzians and Chemnitzians disagreed on the communication of attributes. The Brentzians argued that Christ's divine and human natures were so united that divine attributes, including various forms of omnipresence, were constantly and fully transferred to his humanity from the moment of incarnation. The Chemnitzians held a more moderate view, suggesting that the transfer of attributes meant the divine nature used the human nature in ways exceeding normal human limitations, and this exchange was more intermittent rather than a constant state.

## Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the significance of Christ receiving worship in the New Testament as a theological argument for his deity. Compare and contrast instances where worship is offered to humans or angels and is refused with instances where worship is offered to Jesus and accepted.
2. Discuss the doctrine of the extra calvinisticum. Explain its origins, core tenets, and the theological concerns it attempts to address. Evaluate its strengths and potential weaknesses in understanding the incarnation.
3. Compare and contrast word-flesh and word-man Christologies. Trace their historical development and discuss the implications of each model for understanding the person and work of Christ.
4. Examine the development of kenotic Christologies from the post-Reformation period through their revival in Great Britain. What were the motivations behind these theories, and what are some of the theological challenges they present?
5. Explore Martin Luther's understanding of the Lord's Supper in the context of his Christology. How did his views on Christ's presence in the Eucharist relate to the concept of the communication of attributes, and how did his perspective differ from that of Roman Catholicism and other Reformers like Zwingli?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Deity of Christ:** The theological doctrine that Jesus Christ is God, possessing the full nature and attributes of God.
- **Incarnation:** The theological doctrine that the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, became human in the person of Jesus Christ, taking on a physical body and human nature while remaining fully God.
- **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that God is one being in three co-equal, co-eternal persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit.
- **Atonement:** The work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation by dealing with the problem of sin and reconciling humanity to God.
- **Providence:** God's active involvement in and governance of the created world.

- **Ubiquity:** The state of being everywhere present at the same time; omnipresence.
- **Kenosis:** The self-emptying of Christ in his incarnation, as described in Philippians 2:7. Kenotic theologies explore the nature and extent of this "emptying."
- **Logos:** A Greek term used in philosophy and theology, often referring to the divine Word or Reason of God. In John's Gospel, it is used to identify the pre-incarnate Christ (John 1:1).
- **Communicatio Idiomatum:** A Latin phrase meaning "communication of properties" or "exchange of attributes," referring to the theological concept that the divine and human natures of Christ share their properties due to the personal union of the two natures in one person.
- **Transubstantiation:** The Roman Catholic doctrine that during the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine is miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Christ, while the outward appearance remains the same.
- **Consubstantiation:** A theological doctrine, particularly associated with Lutheranism, that in the Lord's Supper, the body and blood of Christ are truly present "in, with, and under" the bread and wine.
- **Hypostatic Union:** The theological term used to describe the union of the full deity and full humanity in the single person of Jesus Christ. This union is without confusion, change, division, or separation.
- **Patristic:** Relating to the early Christian theologians and their writings, typically from the 1st to the 8th centuries AD.
- **Eschaton:** The final period in history, often associated with the second coming of Christ and the end times.
- **Sanhedrin:** The highest Jewish council and tribunal in ancient Israel during the time of Jesus.
- **Pharisee:** A Jewish religious and social movement during the Second Temple period, known for their strict adherence to the Law and traditions.
- **Eucharist:** The Christian sacrament commemorating the Last Supper, also known as Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper.

## 5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 15, Systematics: Deity of Christ, 5 Proofs [Worship], Extra-Calvinisticum, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on the Deity of Christ and Related Concepts

**1. What is the fifth historic proof for the deity of Christ discussed in the session?** The fifth historic proof presented for the deity of Christ is the fact that Jesus receives worship. The argument is that good men and angels refuse worship when offered to them, as seen in the examples of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14 and the angel in Revelation 19 and 22. Since Christ accepts and even elicits worship (as seen in John 9:38 and Hebrews 1:6), this indicates his divine nature.

**2. How does the session differentiate between acceptable worship of Jesus and other instances of people bowing before him in the Gospels?** The session distinguishes between genuine Christian worship and instances where desperate individuals prostrate themselves before Jesus seeking help for themselves or others. The key example of true worship is the former blind man in John 9:38 who, after Jesus reveals himself, says "Lord, I believe" and worships him, without Jesus correcting this act. Other instances are seen as pleas for help rather than acts of religious adoration acknowledging his divinity.

**3. What is the "extra Calvinisticum" and what theological issue does it attempt to address?** The "extra Calvinisticum" is a theological concept, originating as a Lutheran critique of post-Reformation Calvinistic orthodoxy, which asserts that while the second person of the Trinity (the Son) became fully incarnate in Jesus Christ, he also remained fully outside of the incarnation, meaning he did not cease to be fully God and active in the universe beyond his human form. This doctrine attempts to safeguard the fullness of the Trinity and the undiminished deity of Christ during the incarnation, preventing the idea that the Trinity was somehow reduced or that Christ's divine attributes were lessened.

**4. What biblical support is offered for the concept of the "extra Calvinisticum"?** While the exact term isn't in the Bible, the session points to passages like Colossians 1:17 ("in him all things hold together") and Hebrews 1:3 ("upholds all things by his powerful word") ascribing the work of providence to the Son, even the incarnate Son. The argument is that since the incarnate Son's physical body was localized, his ongoing providential work suggests that his divine nature and power extended beyond his incarnate form, aligning with the idea that he remained fully God "outside" the incarnation. Additionally, the shared work of the Trinity (2 Corinthians 5:19, Hebrews 9:14) implies that even Christ's incarnate actions were undergirded by the full Godhead.

**5. What is "Kenoticism" and what is its basis in Scripture?** Kenoticism is a Christological theory that interprets Philippians 2:7, where it says Christ "emptied himself" (Greek: *kenoo*), as meaning that in the incarnation, the divine Logos voluntarily relinquished some of his divine attributes, such as omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, in order to truly take on human nature with its limitations.

**6. What were the historical origins and motivations behind the development of Kenoticism?** Kenoticism's historical origins are largely found in post-Reformation Lutheran debates, influenced by Martin Luther's emphasis on the communication of attributes between Christ's divine and human natures and his doctrine of Christ's bodily ubiquity in the Lord's Supper. Later Lutheran theologians grappled with how Christ could be fully God and fully human with limitations. Kenotic theories arose as attempts to explain how the divine Logos could genuinely experience human limitations and suffering. In the 19th century, it saw a revival in Great Britain as theologians sought to reconcile the full reality of Jesus' humanity with his divinity.

**7. What are some of the key features and goals of Kenotic theories?** Key features of Kenotic theories include starting with the pre-existent divine Word, seeking to affirm the full reality of the historical Jesus and his human experience, and emphasizing the moral dimension of divine love in Christ's self-emptying. The primary goal was to provide an explanation for how the incarnate Christ could truly be human, subject to earthly conditions and limitations, without compromising his essential deity.

**8. What are some of the potential theological challenges or criticisms associated with Kenoticism, as hinted at in the session?** The session briefly mentions that Kenotic theories have "troubling dimensions" which will be discussed in a later lecture. Based on the context, potential challenges could include concerns about whether the relinquishing of divine attributes, even temporarily, implies a change or diminution in God's being, which would contradict traditional understandings of divine immutability. There might also be questions about the extent of this "emptying" and how it affects the unity of Christ's divine and human natures. Additionally, the session highlights the historical split within Lutheranism regarding the communication of attributes, suggesting inherent difficulties in these types of Christological formulations.