

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christology, Session 17, Systematics: Humanity of Christ – Proofs Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Christology, Session 17, Systematics: Humanity of Christ – Proofs, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's Christology session 17 focuses on proving **Christ's humanity**, arguing that the **Incarnation itself** is the primary evidence. The lecture further explores **Jesus' human weaknesses and needs**, such as tiredness and thirst, as well as his **experience of human emotions** like anger and sorrow. Additionally, Peterson highlights **Jesus' human experiences** of birth, growth, and death, alongside his **human relationship with God the Father**, characterized by subordination, honor, and obedience. Ultimately, the session underscores that **Christ's genuine humanity** is as crucial to salvation as his deity.

**2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Christology, Session 17 – 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 17.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 17, Systematics: Humanity of Christ – Proofs

Briefing Document: The Humanity of Christ in Dr. Robert A. Peterson's Christology Session 17

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 17 of his Christology series, focusing specifically on the proofs of Jesus Christ's genuine humanity. Peterson argues that while the Incarnation itself (the second person of the Trinity taking on a genuine, sinless human nature) is the primary proof, other aspects of Jesus' life and ministry further demonstrate his humanness. These include his human weaknesses and needs, his display of human emotions, his human experiences, and his human relationship with God the Father. Peterson also touches upon the theological discussions surrounding Jesus being "made perfect" (Hebrews), the meaning of Jesus' statement "The Father is greater than I," and the debated possibility of Jesus sinning (peccability vs. impeccability).

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Incarnation as Foundational Proof:

- Peterson begins by stating that the Incarnation itself undeniably proves Christ's humanity.
- "The Incarnation means the second person of the Trinity took to Himself a genuine, sinless human nature."
- He emphasizes that the very point of the Incarnation was for the Son of God to become genuinely human.

1. Human Weaknesses and Needs:

- Jesus experienced common human limitations, demonstrating his true humanity.
- **Weariness:** Citing John 4:6, "So Jesus, wearied as He was from His journey, was sitting beside the well," Peterson notes Calvin's observation that Jesus' tiredness was genuine. He states, "God in heaven cannot get tired. That is true, but God on earth can get tired, and He did."

- **Thirst:** John 19:28, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now fulfilled, said to fulfill the scripture, I thirst," illustrates another basic human need experienced by Christ, even amidst his suffering on the cross. Peterson points out that he even refused a sedative drink to fully experience the pain.
- **Temptation:** Drawing from Matthew 4, Peterson highlights Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. He emphasizes that this temptation was real, comparing it to Adam's before the fall (without a sinful nature reaching within). He quotes Marguerite Schuster who stated that Jesus was "always on the knife edge of temptation" without the "relief that comes from giving in." Peterson stresses that Hebrews 4:15 confirms Jesus was "tempted as we are, yet without sin," clarifying that while the specific forms of temptation may differ across time, the essence of being drawn away from obedience was present. He emphasizes Jesus' consistent choice to say "no to sin and yes to the Father."
- **Avoiding Danger:** John 7:1 shows Jesus deliberately avoiding Judea because "the Jews were seeking to kill Him," demonstrating a natural human instinct for self-preservation, exercised in obedience to the Father's timing.

1. Human Emotions:

- Jesus displayed a range of human emotions, further evidencing his humanity.
- **Anger:** Mark 3:5 describes Jesus looking around "at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart" when the religious leaders opposed the healing of a man on the Sabbath. Peterson clarifies that righteous anger is not wrong and is exemplified by Jesus' cleansing of the temple in John 2:16 ("Do not make my father's house a house of trade").
- **Sorrow:** Matthew 26:37-38 recounts Jesus in Gethsemane being "sorrowful and troubled," saying, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death." Peterson highlights the immense sorrow Jesus experienced as he contemplated the cross and the spiritual judgment it entailed. John 11:35, "Jesus wept," at the death of Lazarus, demonstrates profound human grief and love.
- **Distress:** Referenced in connection to Mark 3:5, Jesus felt internal distress at the lack of compassion and the opposition he faced.

1. Human Experiences:

- Jesus underwent the typical stages of human life, demonstrating his full participation in humanity.

- **Birth:** Matthew 1:18 and Luke 2:1-4 detail Jesus' birth. Peterson emphasizes that while the baby Jesus was fully God (Colossians 2:9), this did not negate his genuine human birth. He mentions the term "Theotokos" (God-bearer) for Mary, clarifying it speaks to the divine nature of the child she bore through God's grace, not to her special veneration.
- **Growth:** Luke 2:52 states, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." Peterson underscores the significance of this verse, explaining that Jesus experienced normal human development – intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially. He emphasizes that Jesus grew in wisdom, implying intellectual development, and in favor with God, indicating spiritual maturation over time. He also notes the development of social skills.
- **Crucifixion and Death:** John 19:18, 30, and 33 describe Jesus' crucifixion and death. Peterson addresses the apparent paradox of God dying, stating, "God in heaven can't die. But Hebrews 2.14... He himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death, he might destroy the devil and deliver his people... the one who died was God." He highlights the separation of Jesus' spirit and body ("Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit") as a hallmark of human death.

1. **Human Relationship with God the Father:**

- Jesus maintained a distinct and subordinate human relationship with his Father while on earth, alongside his eternal divine relationship.
- **Subordination:** John 14:28 ("the Father is greater than I") is presented as a temporal statement concerning Jesus' role as the incarnate God-man, not an eternal statement of essential inequality within the Trinity. Peterson emphasizes this is an "economic or functional subordination, not an essential subordination." He cites other verses like John 5:26, John 17:2, and John 14:31 to illustrate the Father granting authority and giving commands to the Son in the context of his earthly ministry. These relationships are not reversible (e.g., the Son did not send the Father).
- **Honor and Obedience:** Jesus consistently honored and obeyed the Father's commands (John 15:10, John 12:49, John 10:18). Peterson notes that Jesus' teachings originated from the Father (John 15:16). He underscores that Jesus' obedience, even to the point of the cross, was a demonstration of his love for the Father (John 14:31).

Further Discussion (Brief Mentions):

- **Being Made Perfect (Hebrews):** Peterson indicates that the next session will delve into the meaning of Hebrews stating that Jesus was "made perfect," likely connecting it to his sinlessness and fulfillment of his redemptive purpose.
- **Possibility of Sin (Peccability vs. Impeccability):** While not extensively discussed in this excerpt, Peterson identifies this as a "debatable matter among Christians." He notes the consensus that Jesus did not sin and cannot sin in his state of exaltation, but raises the question of whether it was possible for him to sin during his earthly life.
- **Systematic Theology:** Peterson acknowledges that focusing on the humanity of Christ in isolation can be a strength for detailed understanding but also a weakness if it leads to a one-sided or myopic view, separate from his deity and the broader context of Christology.

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's Session 17 provides a comprehensive overview of the biblical evidence for the humanity of Jesus Christ. He meticulously examines various aspects of Jesus' life, from his physical limitations and emotional responses to his filial relationship with the Father, arguing that these unequivocally demonstrate his genuine human nature. This emphasis on Christ's humanity is crucial, according to Peterson, because it was essential for his atoning sacrifice and our salvation. The session lays the groundwork for further exploration of related complex theological topics.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 17, Systematics: Humanity of Christ – Proofs

Christology: The Humanity of Christ

Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you review Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture on the humanity of Christ. It focuses on the proofs Peterson presents to demonstrate Jesus' genuine human nature.

Key Areas of Focus:

- **The Incarnation as Proof:** Understand how the Incarnation itself inherently demonstrates Christ's humanity.
- **Human Weaknesses and Needs:** Identify the examples Peterson uses (tiredness, thirst, temptation, avoiding danger) and the significance of these examples.
- **Human Emotions:** Recognize the human emotions displayed by Jesus (anger, sorrow, distress, love) and the scriptural references provided. Understand why these emotions are significant for demonstrating his humanity.
- **Human Experiences:** List the key human experiences of Jesus discussed (birth, growth, crucifixion, death) and the theological implications of these experiences, particularly concerning the Trinity and the "extra-Calvinisticum."
- **Human Relationship with God the Father:** Analyze the evidence of Jesus' subordinate relationship with the Father during his earthly ministry (prayer, obedience, acknowledging the Father's greater authority). Differentiate between economic/functional subordination and essential subordination.
- **The Possibility of Sin (Peccability vs. Impeccability):** Understand the differing viewpoints on whether Jesus could have sinned, even though he did not.

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. How does the Incarnation itself serve as a primary proof of Jesus' humanity, according to Peterson?
2. Provide two examples of human weaknesses or needs that Jesus experienced during his earthly ministry, and briefly explain why these demonstrate his humanity.

3. Describe one instance where Jesus displayed a human emotion, referencing the specific emotion and the scriptural event. Why is it important that Jesus exhibited human emotions?
4. Explain why the fact that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature is significant for understanding his humanity, addressing any potential theological complexities.
5. According to Peterson, how does Jesus' death on the cross definitively demonstrate his genuine humanity? What specific aspect of death highlights this?
6. What does Peterson mean when he states that Jesus had a "human relationship" with God the Father? Provide one scriptural example to support this.
7. Explain the difference between "economic" (or functional) and "essential" subordination in the context of the relationship between the Father and the Son during Jesus' earthly ministry.
8. How was Jesus' temptation in the wilderness both similar to and different from the temptation experienced by Adam and by other human beings?
9. What is the theological significance of Mary being called the "Theotokos"? Does this title imply any special veneration or status for Mary, according to Peterson?
10. Briefly summarize Peterson's argument regarding Jesus being our example, providing both an affirmation and a caution.

Answer Key

1. The Incarnation proves Jesus' humanity because it signifies that the second person of the Trinity took on a genuine, sinless human nature. This act of "taking to Himself" a human nature demonstrates a fundamental aspect of his being as both God and man.
2. Jesus experienced tiredness (John 4:6) after his journey, demonstrating the physical limitations inherent in human nature. He also expressed thirst on the cross (John 19:28), highlighting a basic human need for sustenance. These weaknesses show he wasn't merely appearing human but genuinely experienced the limitations of a human body.
3. In Mark 3:5, Jesus looked around at the religious leaders with anger, grieved by their hardness of heart regarding the man with the withered hand. This display of righteous anger demonstrates that Jesus experienced the full spectrum of human emotions, showing his participation in human experience.

4. Jesus' growth in wisdom (intellectually), stature (physically), and favor with God and man (spiritually and socially, Luke 2:52) indicates a normal human developmental process. While he was always God, as the God-man, he genuinely matured and learned as a human being does, apart from sin.
5. Jesus' crucifixion and death, involving the separation of his body and spirit (John 19:30), are definitive human experiences. Since God in his divine nature cannot die, Jesus' death underscores that he truly possessed a human nature capable of experiencing mortality.
6. Jesus' human relationship with God the Father is evidenced by his subordination, obedience, and honor towards the Father during his earthly ministry. For example, in John 14:28, Jesus states, "the Father is greater than I," indicating a hierarchical relationship in his role as the incarnate Son.
7. Economic or functional subordination refers to the Son willingly taking a subordinate role to the Father in the work of redemption during his earthly ministry. Essential subordination, which Peterson rejects, would imply that the Son is eternally inferior to the Father in his divine nature.
8. Like Adam before the fall, Jesus was tempted without a pre-existing sinful nature, meaning the temptation came from the outside. Unlike Adam and other humans after the fall, Jesus never gave in to temptation, and his temptations were arguably keener because he never experienced the "relief" of yielding to sin.
9. "Theotokos" means "God-bearer" and signifies that Mary gave birth to the Son of God in his human nature. Peterson emphasizes that this is solely due to God's grace and does not grant Mary any special status deserving of veneration or prayer.
10. Jesus serves as an example for Christian living (1 John 2:6), and asking "What would Jesus do?" can be helpful for guiding behavior. However, Peterson cautions against thinking that imitating Jesus is the way to salvation, as salvation is achieved through faith in him.

Essay Format Questions

1. Dr. Peterson presents several categories as proofs of Christ's humanity. Choose three of these categories (e.g., human weaknesses and needs, human emotions, human experiences) and discuss how the scriptural examples provided within each category effectively demonstrate the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ.
2. Explain the theological significance of the Incarnation for understanding both the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ. How does the concept of the Trinity intersect with the idea of Jesus being fully God and fully human?
3. Discuss the implications of Jesus having a "human relationship" with God the Father during his earthly ministry. How does this relationship demonstrate his humanity, and how does Peterson differentiate this from an essential subordination within the Trinity?
4. Analyze the debate surrounding the peccability or impeccability of Christ. What are the arguments for each side, and how does Peterson's understanding of Jesus' humanity inform this discussion?
5. Evaluate the importance of recognizing the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ for Christian faith and practice. According to Peterson, why is his humanity as essential as his deity for our salvation?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Incarnation:** The theological doctrine that the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, became fully human in the person of Jesus Christ, taking on a genuine human nature while remaining fully divine.
- **Humanity of Christ:** The theological concept emphasizing that Jesus Christ possessed a complete and genuine human nature, including physical, emotional, intellectual, and relational aspects.
- **Deity of Christ:** The theological concept affirming that Jesus Christ is fully God, possessing all the attributes and perfections of God.
- **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that God is one being in three co-equal and co-eternal persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit.
- **Subordinationism:** A heretical doctrine that views the Son and/or the Holy Spirit as subordinate in being or nature to the Father. Peterson distinguishes between essential subordination (rejected) and economic/functional subordination (accepted for the incarnate Christ).
- **Peccability:** The theological view that Christ, during his earthly life, had the possibility of sinning, even though he did not.
- **Impeccability:** The theological view that Christ, due to his divine nature, was incapable of sinning during his earthly life.
- **Theotokos:** A Greek term meaning "God-bearer," traditionally used to refer to Mary, the mother of Jesus, emphasizing that she gave birth to God incarnate.
- **Logos asarchos:** A Greek term meaning "the Word without flesh," used to describe the eternal Son of God prior to and distinct from his incarnation.
- **Economic Trinity:** The understanding of the Trinity based on the distinct roles and activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in salvation history.
- **Essential Trinity:** The understanding of the Trinity based on the inherent divine nature and relationships between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within the Godhead.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 17, Systematics: Humanity of Christ – Proofs, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: The Humanity of Jesus Christ

1. How does the Incarnation demonstrate Jesus' humanity? The Incarnation, the act by which the second person of the Trinity took on a genuine, sinless human nature, fundamentally proves Jesus' humanity. This wasn't merely God appearing as a human; the Son of God truly became a human being, uniting divine and human natures in one person. The very point of the Incarnation was for the divine Son to embrace humanity.

2. What human weaknesses and needs did Jesus experience during his earthly life?

The Gospels reveal that Jesus experienced common human limitations. He became tired from his journey (John 4:6), felt thirsty (John 19:28), and was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4). These instances, among others, demonstrate that Jesus was not simply play-acting at being human but genuinely experienced the physical and emotional realities of human existence.

3. How did Jesus display human emotions? The biblical accounts show Jesus expressing a range of human emotions. He felt anger at the hardness of heart of religious leaders (Mark 3:5) and at the misuse of the temple (John 2:16). He experienced deep sorrow and trouble in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:38) and wept at the grief of Mary and the death of Lazarus (John 11:35). These emotional responses highlight his genuine participation in human feelings.

4. In what ways did Jesus have human experiences? Jesus' life was marked by typical human experiences. He was born (Matthew 1:18ff, Luke 2:1ff) and underwent the stages of human growth, increasing in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). He also experienced the ultimate human reality of death, being crucified and giving up his spirit (John 19:30). These fundamental human experiences underscore the completeness of his humanity.

5. What does it mean that Jesus had a human relationship with God the Father? How did this manifest? While Jesus maintained his divine relationship with the Father, he also exhibited a distinct human relationship characterized by subordination, honor, and obedience. He acknowledged the Father as greater than himself (John 14:28), sought the Father's glory (John 7:18), and consistently obeyed the Father's commands (John 10:18, John 12:49, John 14:31, John 15:10). This filial submission demonstrates the reality of his human nature within the God-man.

6. What is the significance of Jesus being tempted, and how was his temptation unique? Jesus' temptation (Matthew 4) was a genuine experience, highlighting his humanity. Unlike our temptations, which often appeal to our pre-existing sinful nature, Jesus, being sinless like Adam before the fall, faced temptation without any internal sinful propensity. Furthermore, his resistance to temptation was complete and unwavering, never yielding to sin, thus making his temptations arguably keener than ours as he never experienced the "relief" of giving in.

7. The text mentions Jesus was "made perfect" (Hebrews). What does this refer to in the context of his humanity? The perfection of Jesus, as referenced in Hebrews, does not imply a prior state of imperfection. Rather, it signifies his complete sinlessness and his full qualification as the perfect High Priest and Savior. Through his obedient life and suffering, he was fully equipped to fulfill his redemptive purpose. This perfection underscores the purity of his human nature, untainted by sin.

8. What is the relationship between Jesus' deity and his humanity? Why are both essential? Jesus Christ is one person with two natures: divine and human. His deity is essential because only God can provide eternal life and atone for the sins of humanity. His humanity is equally essential because only a human being, one with our nature, could die in our place and represent humanity as the second Adam. The union of these two natures in the one person of Christ is crucial for our salvation; God in heaven could not die, and a mere human could not accomplish divine redemption.