

# Dr. Robert A. Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 2, The Holy Spirit is God

## Resources from NotebookLM

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

### 1. Abstract of Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 2, The Holy Spirit is God, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Robert Peterson's** lecture, "The Holy Spirit Is God," the second session in a series on the Holy Spirit and union with Christ, **lays a theological groundwork by establishing the deity of the Holy Spirit.** Peterson argues that the Spirit is not merely a force but a divine person, supporting this claim with biblical evidence. **He highlights the Spirit's divine attributes**, such as truthfulness, holiness, power, and knowledge, and **cites divine works ascribed to the Spirit**, including involvement in creation, the inspiration of Scripture, and participation in Christ's resurrection. **Furthermore, Peterson points to the interchangeability of the Spirit's name with God's** and the Spirit's unique association with the Father and the Son in foundational Christian practices and blessings as further proof of His divinity.

**2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 2 – 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 → Holy Spirit and Union with Christ).**



**Peterson\_HolySpirit  
\_Session02.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 2, The Holy Spirit is God**

#### **Briefing Document: The Holy Spirit Is God**

##### **Overview:**

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and key arguments presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 2 of his teaching on "The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ." This session focuses specifically on establishing the theological foundation for understanding the Holy Spirit as God. Dr. Peterson argues that while the Holy Spirit may seem to have a "supporting actor" role in the "divine drama" compared to God the Father (Director/Producer) and God the Son (Star/Christ), there is sufficient biblical evidence to demonstrate the Spirit's full deity. He supports this claim by examining the Spirit's divine qualities, divine works, the interchangeability of the Spirit's name with God's, and the Spirit's unique association with the Father and the Son.

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

#### **1. Importance of Establishing the Spirit's Deity:**

- Dr. Peterson emphasizes the necessity of understanding the Holy Spirit as God before exploring his works, particularly his central role in "union with Christ."
- He states, "We're working with the person of the Holy Spirit before we talk about his works, and his main work in salvation is union with Christ. That's where we're headed, but it is important to lay the theological foundation by thinking about the person of the Spirit."

#### **2. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person:**

- Building on the previous session which established the Spirit's personality (intellect, emotion, and will), this session focuses on his divinity.
- Peterson asserts, "He is not a mere force but a person with intellect, emotion, and will. And he is not only a person but a divine person."

### 3. Proofs of the Spirit's Deity:

Dr. Peterson outlines four main categories of evidence for the Holy Spirit's deity:

- **Divine Qualities:**
- **Spirit of Truth:** John's Gospel repeatedly refers to the Spirit as the "Spirit of Truth" (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13). This signifies his role in revealing God and Jesus, and potentially in inspiring the New Testament through the Apostles.
- "When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He's the Spirit of Truth because he does God's work of revealing Jesus."
- **Holy Spirit:** The very name "Holy Spirit" connects him intrinsically to God's holiness. The full designation appears in Ephesians 4:30: "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God."
- "The Holy Spirit, his name, connects him to God's holiness in a way only fitting for God."
- **Divine Power:** Paul's ministry was conducted "by the power of the Spirit of God" (Romans 15:19).
- "Paul doesn't minister merely in human power but divine. The Holy Spirit has a divine quality of the power of God."
- **Divine Knowledge:** The Spirit "searches everything, even the deep things, the depths of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10), indicating a knowledge that only God possesses.
- "No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."
- **Eternity:** Hebrews 9:14 ascribes "eternal Spirit" to the Holy Spirit, referencing Christ's offering of himself to God. While Philip Edgecombe Hughes interpreted this differently, Peterson aligns with the consensus view that it speaks to the Spirit's eternal nature.
- "...the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God..."
- **Divine Works:**
- **Creation:** The Spirit's "hovering over the face of the waters" in Genesis 1:2 demonstrates his involvement in creation.

- "The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. That is, the Spirit performs and has a part in the work of creation."
- **Inspiration of Scripture:** 2 Peter 1:20-21 states that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit," highlighting the Spirit's role in producing Scripture.
- "The Holy Spirit played a role in the production of Holy Scripture."
- **Raising Jesus from the Dead:** While the Father is usually credited with this, Romans 1:4 indicates the Son was "declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead."
- "...declared to be the Son of God, that is, a divine human being, in power according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead..."
- **Applying Salvation:** The Spirit is crucial in applying all aspects of salvation, including joining believers to Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), enabling them to call God "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15), regeneration (Titus 3:5, John 3:8), sanctification (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Corinthians 6:11), and justification (1 Corinthians 6:11, Romans 8:9).
- "The Spirit's main job in salvation is joining us to the Son of God and all of his saving benefits."
- "...you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."
- "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."
- **Indwelling Believers:** Jesus promised the Spirit would indwell believers (John 14:16-17). Scripture refers to believers' bodies and the church corporately as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19, 3:16). God alone indwells his people, therefore the Spirit is God.
- "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you have from God?"
- **Interchangeability with God's Name:**
- The account in Acts 5:3-4, where lying to the Holy Spirit is equated with lying to God, directly demonstrates this interchangeability.
- "Ananias, you lied to the Holy Spirit... You have not lied to man but to God."

- The parallel use of "God's temple" and "temple of the Holy Spirit" in 1 Corinthians further supports this.
- **Unique Association with the Father and the Son:**
- **The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19):** Baptizing "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" places the Spirit on equal footing with the other two persons of the Trinity.
- "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..."
- **Spiritual Gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-6):** Paul attributes the variety of gifts to the same Spirit, the various types of service to the same Lord (Jesus), and the varieties of activities to the same God (the Father), showing their interconnected and divine roles.
- "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... there are various types of service, but they are all the same: Lord Jesus... there are varieties of activities, but it's the same God who empowers everyone."
- **Pauline Benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14):** The blessing invoking "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" again places the Spirit in a divine context of grace and love.
- "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."
- **Jesus' Breathing the Spirit (John 20:21-22):** This act is presented as an anticipation of Pentecost, where Jesus, having been sent by the Father, sends the disciples and breathes the Holy Spirit upon them, connecting the Spirit with divine empowerment and the forgiveness of sins.
- "He breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit."
- **Revelation's Salutation (Revelation 1:4-5):** John's greeting includes "from him who is and who was and who is to come" (the Father), "from the seven spirits that are before his throne" (the Holy Spirit), and "from Jesus Christ," associating the Spirit with the divine and the glorified Son.
- "...from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits that are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ..."

#### **4. The Spirit's Role as a "Supporting Actor":**

- Dr. Peterson uses the analogy of a divine drama to explain why biblical proofs of the Son's deity might appear more numerous and clearer than those for the Spirit. He describes the Father as the "director and their producer," the Son as the "star," believers as "co-stars," and the Spirit as a "supporting actor."
- He clarifies that this analogy is meant to illustrate the Spirit's role in working behind the scenes, not to diminish his deity. "Oh, he is God. But I'm saying this to show, for example, that the biblical proofs of the deity of the Son are much more numerous and even clearer than the proofs of the deity of the Spirit. It's because of his role as a supporting actor. He's not in the limelight as the Son is..."

#### **5. Anticipation of Future Sessions:**

- Dr. Peterson indicates that subsequent sessions will delve deeper into the Spirit's work, including his role in giving Scripture, his activities in the Old and New Testaments (especially in the life of Jesus), and ultimately his central ministry of union with Christ.

#### **Conclusion:**

Session 2 of Dr. Peterson's teaching provides a comprehensive argument for the deity of the Holy Spirit. Through an examination of his divine qualities, the divine works attributed to him, the interchangeability of his name with God's, and his unique association with the Father and the Son, Peterson firmly establishes the theological foundation for understanding the Spirit not merely as a divine force, but as God himself, albeit in a distinct and vital role within the Trinity. This understanding is crucial for comprehending his primary work of uniting believers with Christ, which will be explored in later sessions.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 2, The Holy Spirit is God

### The Holy Spirit Is God: A Study Guide

#### Key Concepts:

- **Deity of the Holy Spirit:** The central theme, arguing that the Holy Spirit is not merely a force but is fully God.
- **Divine Qualities:** Attributes possessed by the Holy Spirit that are unique to God, such as truthfulness, holiness, power, knowledge, and eternity.
- **Divine Works:** Actions performed by the Holy Spirit that only God can perform, including creation, the inspiration of Scripture, the resurrection of Jesus, and the application of salvation.
- **Interchangeability of Name:** The Holy Spirit's name is used interchangeably with God's name in Scripture.
- **Unique Association with the Father and the Son:** The Holy Spirit is consistently associated with the Father and the Son in ways appropriate only for God.
- **Supporting Actor:** An analogy used to explain why there may seem to be fewer explicit proofs of the Spirit's deity compared to the Son, due to the Spirit's role in working behind the scenes.
- **Spirit of Truth:** A title of the Holy Spirit, particularly in John's Gospel, highlighting his role as the revealer of God.
- **Holy Spirit:** The full name of the third person of the Trinity, emphasizing his connection to God's holiness.
- **Indwelling:** The doctrine that God, specifically the Holy Spirit, resides within believers and the church corporately.
- **Application of Salvation:** The primary role of the Holy Spirit in making the saving work of Christ effective in the lives of individuals, including union with Christ, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and justification.

#### Short-Answer Quiz:

1. According to Peterson, what are the four main categories of proof for the Holy Spirit's deity?

2. Explain the analogy of the "supporting actor" that Peterson uses in relation to the Holy Spirit. Why does he use this analogy?
3. What does the title "Spirit of Truth" reveal about the Holy Spirit's role, especially as highlighted in John's Gospel?
4. Provide two examples of divine qualities attributed to the Holy Spirit and briefly explain why these indicate deity.
5. Describe one divine work performed by the Holy Spirit in creation, according to the lecture.
6. Explain the Holy Spirit's role in the inspiration of Scripture, as presented by Peterson.
7. What is the Holy Spirit's primary role in the application of salvation? Give one specific example.
8. Explain the significance of the interchangeability of the Holy Spirit's name with God's name, using an example from Acts 5.
9. Describe one way the Holy Spirit is uniquely associated with the Father and the Son, as seen in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).
10. According to Romans 8:9, what is the consequence of not having the Spirit of Christ? What does this imply about the Spirit's role in salvation?

**Answer Key:**

1. The four main categories of proof for the Holy Spirit's deity are: He has qualities that only God possesses, He does works that only God performs, His name is interchanged with God's name, and He is associated with the Father and the Son in ways only appropriate to God himself.
2. Peterson uses the analogy of the "supporting actor" to illustrate that while the Holy Spirit is fully God, his role in the "divine drama" is often behind the scenes, supporting the "star," Jesus Christ, and the "co-stars," the people of God. This explains why biblical proofs of the Son's deity might appear more numerous or clearer.
3. The title "Spirit of Truth" reveals the Holy Spirit's role as the revealer of God, taking Jesus' place after his ascension. He guides believers into all truth, inspires the preaching and writing of the Apostles (leading to the New Testament), and continues Jesus' ministry of revealing God.



4. Two examples of divine qualities are: (1) **Holiness**: The very name "Holy Spirit" connects him intrinsically to God's holiness, which is a unique attribute of God. (2) **Eternity**: Hebrews 9:14 ascribes eternity to the Spirit, indicating a timeless existence that belongs only to God.
5. In Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God is described as "hovering over the face of the waters" during creation. This avian imagery suggests the Spirit's active participation and role in the work of bringing forth the created order alongside God.
6. The Holy Spirit played a crucial role in the production of Holy Scripture by "carrying along" human authors (2 Peter 1:20-21). God superintended their writing, using their individual styles, to produce his flawless word in human language, a process Peterson considers a subset of the doctrine of grace.
7. The Holy Spirit's primary role in the application of salvation is joining believers to Jesus Christ and making his saving benefits effective in their lives. One specific example is regeneration (Titus 3:5), where the Spirit renews and causes people to be born again, a work that only God can perform.
8. The interchangeability of the Holy Spirit's name with God's name, as seen in Acts 5:3-4 where lying to the Holy Spirit is equated with lying to God, implies that the Spirit possesses the same divine nature and authority as God himself. It indicates they are one in essence.
9. In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), Jesus commands believers to be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This places the Spirit's name alongside the Father's and the Son's, in a context of divine authority and initiation into the Christian faith, a level of association appropriate only for those who are equally God.
10. According to Romans 8:9, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him, indicating that the presence of the Holy Spirit is essential for salvation and union with Christ. This highlights the Spirit's indispensable role in connecting believers to Christ and securing their belonging to him.

## Essay Format Questions:

1. Dr. Peterson argues that the Holy Spirit is God. Analyze the evidence he presents, focusing on at least two of the following categories: divine qualities, divine works, interchangeability of name, and unique association with the Father and the Son. How persuasive do you find his arguments?
2. Peterson uses the analogy of the Holy Spirit as a "supporting actor" in the "divine drama." Discuss the strengths and limitations of this analogy in understanding the Spirit's role in relation to the Father and the Son. How does this analogy help explain the biblical presentation of the Spirit?
3. Explore the significance of the Holy Spirit's role in the application of salvation, as outlined by Peterson. Discuss at least three specific aspects of this work (e.g., regeneration, sanctification, justification) and explain why these demonstrate the Spirit's divine nature.
4. Consider the various ways in which the Holy Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son in the New Testament, as highlighted in the lecture (e.g., baptism, spiritual gifts, benedictions). What does this consistent triadic association reveal about the nature and identity of the Holy Spirit?
5. Peterson emphasizes the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers and the church. Discuss the implications of this doctrine for Christian life and understanding the nature of God. How does the Spirit's indwelling further support the claim that the Spirit is divine?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Divine Attributes:** Characteristics or qualities that belong uniquely to God, such as omnipotence (all-powerful), omniscience (all-knowing), omnipresence (present everywhere), holiness, truthfulness, and eternity.
- **Divine Works:** Actions or activities that only God can perform, such as creation, the inspiration of Scripture, and the application of salvation.
- **Soteriology:** The theological study of salvation.
- **Union with Christ:** The spiritual bond and vital connection that believers have with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, encompassing sharing in his life, death, and resurrection.
- **Regeneration:** The act of God, through the Holy Spirit, of giving new spiritual life to someone who is spiritually dead; being born again.
- **Sanctification:** The process by which believers are progressively made holy, set apart for God, and conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Justification:** The act of God by which he declares sinners righteous in his sight, not based on their own works, but through faith in Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice.
- **Inspiration of Scripture:** The doctrine that the Holy Spirit superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they wrote God's own Word, authoritative and without error in the original manuscripts.
- **Indwelling:** The doctrine that God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, lives within believers and the church as a whole.
- **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that God is one being existing eternally in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- **Atonement:** Christ's work of reconciliation between God and humanity through his sacrificial death on the cross.
- **Benediction:** A concluding blessing, often found at the end of religious services or writings.
- **Pentecost:** The Christian festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ after his ascension (Acts 2).

## 5. FAQs on Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, The Holy Spirit and Union with Christ, Session 2, The Holy Spirit is God, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions: The Holy Spirit Is God

- **What is the primary focus of this session regarding the Holy Spirit?** This session focuses on establishing the theological foundation for understanding the Holy Spirit as a divine person, before discussing his works, particularly his central role in salvation, which is union with Christ. It aims to demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is not merely a force but is indeed God.
- **What are the main categories of evidence presented to support the Holy Spirit's deity?** The session presents four main lines of evidence to demonstrate the Holy Spirit's deity: (1) He possesses qualities that only God possesses (divine qualities), such as being the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, possessing divine power, knowledge, and eternity. (2) He performs works that only God performs (divine works), including involvement in creation, the production of Scripture, the raising of Jesus from the dead, and the application of salvation (union, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, justification). (3) His name is used interchangeably with God's name in Scripture, as seen in the account of Ananias lying to the Holy Spirit and being told he lied to God, and in references to both God's temple and the temple of the Holy Spirit. (4) He is uniquely associated with the Father and the Son in ways appropriate only for God, such as in the baptismal formula, the distribution of spiritual gifts, Pauline benedictions, Jesus' breathing the Spirit on the disciples, and the salutation in Revelation.
- **How does the session address the idea that the biblical proofs for the deity of the Son are clearer than those for the Spirit?** The speaker acknowledges that the biblical proofs for the deity of the Son are more numerous and clearer than those for the Spirit. He explains this by suggesting that the Holy Spirit has a "supporting actor" role in God's divine drama, in contrast to the Son being the "star." The Spirit often operates in the shadows, not seeking the limelight, but this does not diminish his divine nature. The session then proceeds to provide sufficient biblical evidence to firmly establish the Spirit's deity.

- **What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of Truth," and what are the implications of this title?** The Holy Spirit is called the "Spirit of Truth" in several passages in John's Gospel. This title signifies that the Spirit takes Jesus' place as the revealer of God after Jesus' ascension. As the Spirit of Truth, he guides believers into all truth, inspires the preaching of the apostles as direct revelation from God, and inspires the writing of Scripture, making it the very Word of God in human words. He performs God's work of revealing Jesus to humanity.
- **How is the Holy Spirit involved in the application of salvation?** The Holy Spirit plays a crucial and multifaceted role in applying salvation to believers. This includes: joining believers to Jesus in union with Christ, enabling them to cry out "Abba, Father," signifying their adoption into God's family, causing regeneration or the new birth, progressively and finally sanctifying believers (setting them apart for God), and being active in their justification (the act by which God declares them righteous). The Spirit is so essential to salvation that Romans 8:9 states that anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.
- **What is the significance of the Holy Spirit indwelling believers and the Church?** The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is presented as a divine work, as God alone indwells his people. Jesus promised that the Spirit would dwell with and in believers. Scripture refers to individual believers' bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19) and the Church corporately as God's temple indwelt by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). This indwelling signifies God's presence and confirms the believer's relationship with Him, acting as a guarantee of future promises.
- **How does the association of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son in various biblical contexts demonstrate his deity?** The Holy Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son in ways that demonstrate his deity because these associations place him on an equal footing with the other two persons of the Trinity. Examples include being named together in the command to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19), the triune pattern observed in the distribution of spiritual gifts, ministries, and activities (1 Corinthians 12:4-6), and the Pauline benediction invoking the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14). These are contexts where only divine persons would be appropriately grouped together.

- **Beyond these associations, what other divine works are attributed to the Holy Spirit in the provided text?** Beyond applying salvation and indwelling believers, the Holy Spirit is credited with participating in the work of creation (Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4), inspiring and producing Holy Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21), and being involved in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Romans 1:4, Hebrews 9:14). These are all acts that Scripture typically ascribes to God, further demonstrating the Holy Spirit's divine nature and power.