

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 14, Original Sin – Rom. 5:12-21 Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 14, Original Sin – Rom. 5:12-21, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture, "Humanity and Sin, Session 14, Original Sin, Romans 5:12-19, in the Context of Romans 1:18-3:21," begins by briefly summarizing the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis, highlighting their disobedience and the consequences of spiritual and physical death. **Peterson notes that while Genesis records the fall, the doctrine of original sin is more fully developed by Paul in Romans 5.** He explains that this crucial passage on original sin is embedded within a larger section of Romans (1:18-5:21) focused on the doctrine of justification. **The lecture emphasizes that to understand justification, one must first grasp the universal problem of sin and God's wrath, thoroughly presented by Paul in the preceding chapters (1:18-3:20).** Peterson details how Paul argues that all humanity, both Gentiles and Jews, are condemned under God's judgment through various forms of revelation: creation, conscience, and the written law. Ultimately, the lecture sets the stage for an in-depth examination of original sin in Romans 5:12-19 by establishing the necessary context of humanity's universal sinfulness and the need for God's saving righteousness revealed in the gospel.

2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, 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 → Humanity and Sin).



Peterson_HumSin_Session 14.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 14, Original Sin – Rom. 5:12-21

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Original Sin in the Context of Romans

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 14 of his teaching on the doctrines of humanity and sin. This session focuses on Original Sin, specifically within the context of Romans 5:12-19, and how this passage relates to the preceding section of Romans 1:18-3:21, which deals with God's wrath and the universal problem of sin.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Introduction to Original Sin:

- The session marks a transition in the study of hamartiology (the doctrine of sin), moving from a general description of sin to the specific doctrine of original sin.
- A brief overview of the Fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 is provided as the foundational narrative for understanding original sin. Their sin is identified as "disobedience and unfaithfulness to their creator."
- The consequences of their sin were both immediate (spiritual death, being cut off from fellowship with God, hiding and blaming) and ultimate (physical death). God's exclusion from the Garden was seen as merciful to prevent eternal life in a sinful condition.
- While Genesis 3 narrates the Fall, "the doctrine of original sin is latent in the chapter... that sin came into the world through one man and death through sin. Romans 5:12 emerges in sharp focus only in the New Testament."
- The Apostle Paul is identified as the primary figure in formulating the doctrine of original sin in the New Testament, particularly in Romans 5:12-19.

1. Contextualizing Romans 5:12-19 within Romans 1:18-5:21:

- While Romans 5:12-19 is the "textus classicus" for original sin, it exists within a larger section of Romans (1:18-5:21) whose main topic is justification.
- Romans 1:18-3:20 demonstrates the universal need for justification by revealing God's wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.

- Romans 3:21-5:21 explains how God meets this need through the work of Christ, with Romans 4 focusing on faith.
- Romans 5:21, while primarily a justification passage, is considered the "classical text in the whole Bible on original sin" because it intimately relates justification and original sin.

1. **Romans 1:18-3:20: The Revelation of God's Wrath and Universal Sin:**

- Paul's theme in Romans 1:16-17 is the gospel as the power of God for salvation, revealing God's saving righteousness.
- However, in Romans 1:18, Paul surprisingly shifts to the revelation of God's wrath against sin. "for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."
- Peterson argues that understanding God's saving righteousness is impossible without the backdrop of His holy hatred of sin and sinners. "One cannot understand the righteousness of which the apostle will speak apart from its background of the holy hatred of God against sin and sinners."
- Romans 1:18-3:20 serves to demonstrate that "the whole world is condemned before God." This is shown through:
 - **Condemnation of all under the sun (1:18-1:32):** They suppress the truth revealed in creation (God's "eternal power and divine nature" are "clearly perceived...ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made") and engage in idolatry and sexual sin. They "knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened." Furthermore, "though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."
 - **Condemnation of those who judge others (2:1-16):** They possess God's law written on their hearts and a conscience, yet they hypocritically judge others while practicing the same sins. "Therefore, you have no excuse, O man, for every one of you who judges, for in passing judgment on another, you condemn yourself because you, the judge, practice the very things you condemn."
 - **Condemnation of the Jews (2:17-29):** Despite having the written Law of God, they also fail to keep it and dishonor God. "For it is written, the name of God is

blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." True Jewishness is inward, "circumcision is a matter of the heart by the spirit, not the letter."

- The purpose of highlighting sin is not to revel in "bad news" (kakangelion), but to establish the necessary background for understanding and believing the "good news" (euangelion) of justification.

1. **The Universality of Sin (Romans 3:9-20):**

- Paul concludes that "all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin," citing Old Testament passages to demonstrate the universal sinfulness of humanity. "None is righteous. No, not one."
- This section emphasizes the pervasive nature of sin, affecting all aspects of human existence ("Their throat is an open grave...Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness...Their feet are swift to shed blood").
- The Law's purpose is not to justify but to reveal sin and hold the whole world accountable to God. "For by the works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin."

1. **Transition to God's Righteousness (Romans 3:21):**

- Romans 3:21 marks a turning point, returning to the theme of God's saving righteousness revealed in the gospel. "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law..."
- The preceding chapters on sin and wrath serve as the "deep purple or black jeweler's cloth" that highlights the "beauty and brilliance" of God's justification.

Implications for Understanding Original Sin (to be further explored in subsequent lectures):

- The profound and universal nature of sin, as established in Romans 1-3, creates the necessary context for understanding how sin entered the human race through Adam (Romans 5:12ff.).
- The revelation of God's wrath underscores the seriousness of sin and the desperate need for God's intervention through justification.
- The contrasting themes of God's wrath and His saving righteousness highlight the transformative power of the gospel in addressing the problem of sin, including its origin in original sin.

Quote Highlights:

- "the doctrine of original sin is latent in the chapter, Genesis three, that sin came into the world through one man and death through sin. Romans 5:12 emerges in sharp focus only in the New Testament." - Derek Kidner
- "for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth." - Romans 1:18
- "One cannot understand the righteousness of which the apostle will speak apart from its background of the holy hatred of God against sin and sinners." - Dr. Robert A. Peterson
- "though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them." - Romans 1:32
- "Therefore, you have no excuse, O man, for every one of you who judges, for in passing judgment on another, you condemn yourself because you, the judge, practice the very things you condemn." - Romans 2:1
- "For it is written, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." - Romans 2:24 (quoting Isaiah 52:5)
- "None is righteous. No, not one." - Romans 3:10
- "For by the works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin." - Romans 3:20
- "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law..." - Romans 3:21

Next Steps: The subsequent parts of this session will likely delve into a detailed exegesis of Romans 5:12-19, explore different theological views of original sin (Pelagianism, Arminianism, Calvinism), and evaluate these views before discussing the systematic and pastoral implications of the doctrine.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 14, Original Sin – Rom. 5:12-21

Study Guide: Original Sin in the Context of Romans

I. Key Themes and Concepts

- **Hamartiology:** The theological study of sin.
- **The Fall:** The event in Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command, resulting in sin and death entering the world.
- **Original Sin:** The doctrine that humanity has inherited a corrupted nature and a proclivity to sin as a consequence of Adam's transgression.
- **Justification:** God's act of declaring sinners righteous in his sight through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Revelation of God's Wrath:** Paul's argument in Romans 1:18-3:20 demonstrating God's holy anger against human sin and unrighteousness.
- **Revelation of God's Righteousness:** Paul's explanation in Romans 3:21-5:21 of how God's saving righteousness is revealed through the gospel and received by faith.
- **General Revelation:** God's self-disclosure through creation and the inherent moral understanding in humanity.
- **Special Revelation:** God's self-disclosure through the Scriptures, particularly the law given to Israel.
- **The Law's Role:** To reveal sin and demonstrate humanity's inability to achieve righteousness through obedience.
- **Universal Sinfulness:** Paul's assertion that all humanity, both Jews and Gentiles, are under the power of sin.
- **Condemnation:** The state of being judged guilty and deserving of punishment by God due to sin.
- **Sensus Divinitatis:** Calvin's concept of an innate awareness of God's existence within humanity.

II. Quiz

1. Briefly describe the events of the Fall as presented in Genesis and summarized in the lecture. What were the immediate consequences of Adam and Eve's sin?
2. According to the lecture, what is "original sin," and where in the New Testament does the Apostle Paul primarily address this doctrine?
3. Explain why the section of Romans 1:18-3:20 is crucial for understanding the doctrine of justification presented later in the book. What is the main point Paul is making in this section?
4. What are the two primary ways God reveals himself to humanity, according to the lecture's discussion of Romans 1? Give a brief example of each.
5. How does the lecture explain Paul's seemingly negative portrayal of the law in Romans 2 and 3? What is the intended purpose of the law according to this passage?
6. Explain the significance of Paul's statement in Romans 3:21: "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law." How does this connect to the preceding chapters?
7. What was Luther's initial misunderstanding of "the righteousness of God" in Romans, and how did his understanding eventually change? What was the significance of this shift for him?
8. According to the lecture, how are both Gentiles and Jews shown to be under God's wrath in Romans 1-3? What are the different bases for their condemnation?
9. What is the "sensus divinitatis," and how does it relate to Paul's argument in Romans 1 about humanity's knowledge of God?
10. How does the lecture connect the concept of using bodily members for sin in Romans 3 to a similar idea that will be discussed later in the letter (referencing the provided text)?

III. Quiz Answer Key

1. The Fall involved the serpent tempting Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, contrary to God's command. Adam also ate the fruit. The immediate consequences were spiritual death (separation from God) and the beginning of physical death.

2. Original sin is the inherited corrupted nature and inclination to sin that affects all humanity due to Adam's sin. The Apostle Paul primarily addresses this doctrine in Romans 5:12-19, within the broader context of Romans 1-5.
3. Romans 1:18-3:20 establishes the universal problem of sin and God's righteous wrath against it, demonstrating humanity's utter inability to achieve righteousness on its own. This creates the necessary backdrop for understanding the good news of justification by grace through faith in Christ.
4. The two primary ways are general revelation through creation (God's power and divine nature evident in the created world) and special revelation (the law given to Israel). An example of general revelation is observing the complexity of the universe, while an example of special revelation is the Ten Commandments.
5. Paul's portrayal of the law in Romans 2 and 3 highlights its inability to save or justify. Instead, the law's purpose is to reveal sin, make humanity aware of its transgressions, and demonstrate the need for a righteousness that comes from God, not human effort.
6. Romans 3:21 marks a turning point, announcing that God's righteousness is now revealed not through adherence to the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. This directly addresses the problem of universal sinfulness established in the preceding chapters, offering God's solution.
7. Luther initially understood "the righteousness of God" as God's condemning justice against sinners, which caused him great distress. His understanding shifted to recognize it as God's saving righteousness offered freely through faith in Christ, leading to a sense of liberation and salvation.
8. Gentiles are condemned for suppressing the truth revealed through creation and their own conscience, engaging in idolatry and unrighteousness. Jews are condemned because, despite having God's written law, they also fail to keep it and thus break the very law they boast in.
9. The "sensus divinitatis" is an inherent, intuitive awareness of God's existence implanted in humanity. It relates to Romans 1 by supporting Paul's argument that all people have a basic knowledge of God through creation and are therefore without excuse for their ungodliness.
10. The lecture notes that just as bodily members are used as instruments for sin in Romans 3, Paul will later discuss using them as instruments for righteousness

(referencing Romans 6:13). This illustrates the comprehensive impact of both sin and salvation on the whole person.

IV. Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the structure of Romans 1:18-5:21, explaining how Paul builds his argument regarding humanity's sinfulness and the necessity of justification by faith.
2. Discuss the significance of the Fall in Genesis 3 for the doctrine of original sin as presented in Romans 5:12-19. How does Paul connect Adam's transgression to the condition of humanity?
3. Evaluate the role and purpose of the law in Romans 1-3. Is the law presented as entirely negative, or does it serve a necessary function in God's plan?
4. Compare and contrast the concepts of general and special revelation as discussed in the lecture. How do these two forms of revelation contribute to Paul's argument about human accountability before God?
5. Explore the implications of the doctrine of original sin for understanding human nature and the human condition, based on the material presented in the lecture.

V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Hamartiology:** The branch of Christian theology concerned with the study of sin, its origin, nature, consequences, and remedy.
- **Original Sin:** The theological doctrine that asserts that humanity inherited a corrupted nature and a tendency to sin from Adam's first act of disobedience.
- **The Fall:** The biblical account in Genesis 3 describing Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's command, resulting in sin entering the world and affecting all creation.
- **Justification:** God's gracious act of declaring a sinner righteous in his sight, not based on their own works, but through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- **Revelation (General):** God's self-disclosure to humanity through the created order, accessible to all people and revealing his power and divine nature.
- **Revelation (Special):** God's specific self-disclosure through particular means, such as the Holy Scriptures, divine communication, and ultimately through Jesus Christ.
- **Wrath of God:** God's holy and righteous anger and displeasure against sin and unrighteousness. It is not vindictive but a just response to moral rebellion.
- **Righteousness of God:** In the context of Romans, this refers to God's own perfect moral standard and also his act of imputing or crediting righteousness to those who believe in Jesus Christ.
- **Law (in Romans):** Primarily refers to the Mosaic Law given to Israel, which reveals God's standards and demonstrates humanity's inability to perfectly obey them, thus highlighting the need for grace.
- **Sensus Divinitatis:** A Latin phrase coined by John Calvin referring to an innate, intuitive sense or awareness of God's existence that is present in all human beings.
- **Condemnation:** The act of being judged guilty and sentenced to punishment by God for one's sins.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 14, Original Sin – Rom. 5:12-21, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Humanity, Sin, and Romans 1-3

1. What is the main focus of Romans 1:18-3:20 according to the source, and why is this important for understanding the gospel? This section of Romans primarily reveals the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. This is crucial because it establishes humanity's universal sinfulness and our consequent need for justification. The "bad news" of God's wrath provides the necessary backdrop against which the "good news" of God's saving righteousness in Christ can be truly understood and appreciated. Just as jewels are displayed against a dark cloth to highlight their brilliance, our need for justification underscores the beauty of God's solution in the gospel.

2. How does the source explain God's revelation to humanity outside of the written scriptures? The source details two primary ways God reveals himself generally: through creation (natural revelation) and through the moral law written on the human heart (conscience). Creation constantly displays God's eternal power and divine nature, making humanity without excuse for not acknowledging Him. Similarly, God has built a sense of right and wrong into human nature, evidenced by our consciences, which act as an internal moral barometer, revealing God's holiness and justice by accusing us when we transgress.

3. According to the source, how are different groups of people shown to be condemned under God's wrath in Romans 1-3? Paul demonstrates the universal reach of God's wrath by addressing several groups. First, all people are condemned for suppressing the truth revealed in creation and engaging in idolatry and various sins (Romans 1:18-32). Second, those who morally judge others while practicing the same sins are self-condemned (Romans 2:1-16). Finally, the Jews, despite having God's written law, are also condemned because they fail to live up to its standards, making them hypocritical and causing God's name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles (Romans 2:17-29). Thus, the revelation in creation, the law on the heart, and the written law all serve to condemn humanity.

4. What is the significance of Paul shifting from the theme of God's saving righteousness in Romans 1:16-17 to the revelation of God's wrath in 1:18-3:20? This shift is deliberate and crucial to Paul's argument. By first establishing the reality and extent of God's wrath against sin, Paul highlights humanity's desperate situation and our utter inability to save ourselves. This context makes the subsequent revelation of God's

saving righteousness in Christ (beginning in Romans 3:21) all the more meaningful and necessary. Understanding the problem of sin and divine wrath is essential for appreciating and believing the solution offered in the gospel.

5. How does the source address the idea of people "knowing God" in Romans 1:21, and why do they still face God's wrath? The source clarifies that when Romans 1:21 says people "knew God," it refers to their perception of His attributes (eternal power and divine nature) through creation, not necessarily a saving knowledge of Him. Despite this general revelation, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, leading to futile thinking, darkened hearts, idolatry, and other sins. Their failure to respond rightly to the knowledge they had through creation incurs God's wrath.

6. What role does the law (both natural and Mosaic) play in Romans 1-3, according to the source? The law, in its various forms (natural law revealed in creation, the law written on the heart/conscience, and the Mosaic Law), does not justify but rather reveals and condemns sin. Natural law and conscience provide an inherent understanding of right and wrong, exposing our transgressions. The Mosaic Law, while holy, righteous, and good, also serves to highlight sin by providing a clear standard that humanity fails to meet. Ultimately, the law functions to bring the whole world under God's judgment and demonstrates the need for a righteousness that comes apart from the law.

7. How does the source explain the concept of the "knowledge of sin" through the law in Romans 3:20? The law, according to the source, does not provide the power to overcome sin or make one righteous. Instead, its primary function is to make us aware of what sin is. By defining God's standards, the law reveals where we fall short and exposes the depth and breadth of our sinfulness. This knowledge of sin, brought about by the law, underscores our need for a different means of justification.

8. What is the significance of Romans 3:21 ("But now the righteousness of God has been manifested") in relation to the preceding chapters, as explained in the source? Romans 3:21 marks a crucial turning point in Paul's argument. After spending the initial chapters demonstrating the universal sinfulness of humanity and the revelation of God's wrath, Paul pivots back to the theme of God's saving righteousness introduced in Romans 1:16-17. The "but now" signifies a new reality and a divinely provided solution to the problem of sin. This righteousness of God, manifested apart from the law, is the central message of the gospel and fulfills the need established in the preceding chapters.