

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 15, Original Sin Continued 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 15, Original Sin Continued, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's session focuses on the theological concept of original sin, specifically analyzing Romans 5:12-19. He examines Paul's argument about how sin entered the world through Adam and death followed. Peterson explores various interpretations of the passage, including the complex idea of how "all sinned." The lecture considers different theological viewpoints on the imputation of sin before the Mosaic Law. Ultimately, Peterson aims to clarify the connection between Adam's sin, its consequences for humanity, and the subsequent need for Christ's righteousness for justification. The session sets the stage for a more detailed exegesis of the key verses concerning original sin.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, 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 → Humanity and Sin).**



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3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 15, Original Sin Continued

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert Peterson on Original Sin (Romans 5:12-19)

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and arguments presented by Dr. Robert Peterson in Session 15 of his lectures on Humanity and Sin, focusing on the doctrine of Original Sin as discussed in Romans 5:12-19. Dr. Peterson begins by contextualizing this passage within the broader argument of the Book of Romans, particularly Paul's discussion of justification by faith. He then delves into the complexities of Romans 5:12-14, examining various interpretations of this crucial text related to the imputation of Adam's sin and its consequences for humanity. While acknowledging the passage as the "Bible's only explicit treatment of the theology of original sin," Dr. Peterson also proposes that within its immediate context, it serves to highlight Christ's saving righteousness as the basis of justification.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

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

- **Gospel as Saving Righteousness:** Dr. Peterson emphasizes that the theme of Romans, announced in 1:16-17, is the gospel, the revelation of God's saving righteousness.
- **Wrath of God Precedes Justification:** Paul first discusses the revelation of God's wrath (1:18-3:20) before returning to the theme of saving righteousness in 3:21.
- **Justification by Faith Apart from Law:** This saving righteousness is "totally apart from human merit" and is "appropriated by all who put their faith in Christ." He quotes Romans 3:22: "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."
- **Romans 4 as the Faith Chapter:** Dr. Peterson highlights the importance of faith in Romans and notes that chapter 4 is dedicated to this theme.
- **Benefits of Justification (Romans 5:1-11):** Before reaching Romans 5:12, Paul outlines the benefits of justification, including "peace with God" (5:1, 11), "the hope of future glory" (5:2-5), and "eternal security" (5:6-10).

- **Christ's Saving Work as Righteousness:** Dr. Peterson proposes that in Romans 5:12-21, Paul presents "Christ's saving work as he did at the beginning of his presentation of the basis of justification" in Romans 3:24-26. While Romans 3 focuses on propitiation (turning away of wrath), Romans 5 emphasizes Christ's procurement of righteousness.

2. Romans 5:12: The Introduction of Original Sin:

- **"Therefore" (διὰ τοῦτο):** Dr. Peterson notes the debate over whether "therefore" refers back to the entirety of Romans 1:18 onwards or specifically to 5:1-11. He leans towards the latter, but acknowledges the former's influence.
- **Sin and Death Through One Man (Adam):** Verse 12 states, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, plainly Adam, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."
- **Incomplete Comparative Clause:** Paul begins a comparative clause ("just as...") in verse 12 but doesn't complete it until verses 18 and 19. The intended contrast is between Adam's act and Christ's act.
- **Chiastic Structure:** Dr. Peterson points out a chiastic structure within verse 12: A (sin), B (death), B' (universality of death), A' (sin among humankind).
- **"Because All Sinned":** This is the crucial and debated clause. Dr. Peterson highlights the division between Eastern and Western churches over its meaning.
- **Corporate Understanding:** Some argue that "all sinned" means humanity sinned corporately "in Adam."
- **Individual Sin:** Others maintain that it refers to the personal sin of each individual.
- **Verse 12 Does Not Answer the "How":** Dr. Peterson emphasizes that verse 12 introduces the problem of one man's sin leading to all men sinning and dying, but the explanation is found in the subsequent verses.

3. Romans 5:13-14: The Period Before the Law:

- **Explanatory Clause ("For"):** Verse 13 ("For sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.") provides an explanation for verse 12.
- **Law Refers to the Law of Moses:** Dr. Peterson clarifies that "law" here refers to the Mosaic Law.

- **Sin Existed Before the Law:** Even before the Mosaic Law, "sin, indeed, was in the world." Both "sin and death" were present.
- **Sin Not Counted Where No Law:** The statement "sin is not counted where there is no law" (5:13b) is identified as "very problematic" with "at least five views as to its meaning."
- **Five Views on Romans 5:13b:** Dr. Peterson briefly outlines five interpretations:
- **Social Diatribe View (Matthew Black):** Paul arguing with himself or an imaginary opponent.
- **Absolute Sense View (Herman Ridderbos):** Death before the law cannot be explained by personal sin, pointing to Adam's sin. The sanction of the law (death) did not yet fully apply.
- **There Was a Law Then View (John Murray, William Henderson):** Even before Moses, there was a law (God's law on the heart - Romans 2:14-15), and thus sin existed as transgression and was imputed. Death reigning proves sin was taken into account.
- **Relative or Comparative Sense View (Calvin, Cranfield):** God did impute sin before the law (e.g., the flood), but people often ignored their sin. "Not imputed" is comparative to the full awareness of sin under the law. Sin was not as "fully apparent, sharply defined" as after the law.
- **Distinguish Between Sin and Transgression View (C.H. Dodd, Moffat):** A distinction between broad "sin" (objective effects) and specific "transgression" (voluntary violation of a known command). Before the law, people sinned but didn't always transgress knowingly.
- **Death Reigning from Adam to Moses (5:14):** This verse demonstrates that the effects of sin (death) were present even before the Mosaic Law.
- **"Even Over Those Whose Sinning Was Not Like the Transgression of Adam":** This phrase is also subject to interpretation.
- **Little Children (Calvin - less preferred):** Infants who die due to original sin without actual transgression.
- **Those Without Special Revelation (John Murray):** Adults who sinned against the law of nature but not an expressly revealed command like Adam's.

- **Reign of Death as Evidence of Solidarity in Adam's Sin:** Dr. Peterson quotes John Murray's argument that the "universal reign" of death in the pre-Mosaic period points to "solidarity in the sin of Adam" as the only sufficient explanation. He states his agreement with this.

4. Adam as a Type of the One Who Was to Come (5:14b):

- Dr. Peterson notes that verse 14 concludes by stating that "Adam... was a type of the one who was to come," referring to Christ. He indicates that he will elaborate on this in the next session.

Key Quotes:

- "Apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, Paul catches himself lest he be misunderstood for speaking against the Bible." (Explaining Romans 3:21)
- "For all have sinned, past tense, and fall short, it could be a progressive, it's a present, could be a progressive idea of the glory of God." (Discussing the tenses in Romans 3:23)
- "Here is the miracle of the gospel. The problem is not what unsaved people imagine. How could a loving God punish anybody? That's an easy one to answer biblically... The biblical problem is how God can maintain his holy character and still save anyone." (Highlighting the central issue addressed by the gospel)
- "This is the passage in the Bible on the topic of original sin." (Regarding Romans 5:12-19)
- "Just as sin, A, came into the world through one man, and death, B, through sin, and so death, B prime, spread to all men because all sinned, A prime." (Illustrating the chiastic structure of Romans 5:12)
- "Sin and death are in the world as tyrants... who do not ask a man whether he will serve them, but rule automatically." (Quoting Anders Nygren on the power of sin and death)
- "By the way, there's a huge divide between the Eastern and Western churches over the meaning of that clause." (Referring to "because all sinned" in Romans 5:12)
- "Sin, indeed, was in the world even before Sinai's law was given, as is shown by the fact that death, sin's punishment, ruled supreme during the period from

Adam to Moses." (Quoting William Henderson on the existence of law before Moses)

- "Not imputed, not reckoned, must be understood in a relative sense, only in comparison with what takes place when the law is present." (Quoting Cranfield on the meaning of "sin is not counted")
- "...even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression..." (Romans 5:14, highlighting the difference between Adam's sin and subsequent sin)
- "...the only explanation of the universal reign is solidarity in the sin of Adam." (Quoting John Murray, with Dr. Peterson's agreement)

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's lecture provides a detailed examination of Romans 5:12-14, highlighting its significance for the doctrine of Original Sin while also emphasizing its immediate context within Paul's argument for justification by faith through Christ's righteousness. He navigates the complexities of the text, presenting various scholarly interpretations, particularly concerning the meaning of "because all sinned" and "sin is not counted where there is no law." Ultimately, Dr. Peterson aligns with the view that the universal reign of death before the Mosaic Law points to a solidarity in Adam's sin as the most coherent explanation. He sets the stage for further discussion on the typology of Adam and Christ in the subsequent session.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 15, Original Sin Continued

Study Guide: Original Sin in Romans 5:12-19

Key Concepts:

- **Justification:** The act by which God declares sinners righteous in his sight.
- **Saving Righteousness:** The righteousness of God manifested in Christ, which is received by faith and is apart from human merit.
- **Faith:** Trust in Jesus Christ as the means of receiving God's saving righteousness.
- **Atonement:** Christ's work on the cross, encompassing redemption and propitiation, that addresses sin and God's wrath.
- **Redemption:** The act of buying back or setting free, referring to Christ's liberation of humanity from sin and its consequences.
- **Propitiation:** The act of appeasing or satisfying God's wrath through sacrifice, which Christ accomplished on the cross.
- **Original Sin:** The state of sinfulness and guilt inherited from Adam as a result of his disobedience.
- **Textus Classicus:** The classic text on a particular doctrine, in this case, Romans 5:12-19 for original sin.
- **Protasis and Apodosis:** Grammatical terms for the "if-clause" and "then-clause" of a conditional sentence.
- **Corporate Understanding of Sin:** The idea that humanity sinned collectively in Adam.
- **Personal Sin:** Individual acts of disobedience against God's law.
- **Law (in Romans):** Can refer to the Mosaic Law, but also to a more general principle of God's will known through creation and conscience.
- **Transgression:** A violation of a known command or law.
- **Imputation:** The act of crediting or reckoning something to someone, such as God imputing righteousness or sin.

- **Realism (regarding original sin):** The view that humanity was physically present in Adam and thus directly participated in his sin.
- **Representative View (regarding original sin):** The view that Adam acted as the representative head of humanity, and his sin brought consequences for all.
- **Type:** A person or event in the Old Testament that foreshadows a person or event in the New Testament (e.g., Adam as a type of Christ).

Quiz:

1. According to Peterson, what is the main theme Paul announces in Romans 1:16-17, and how does this relate to the discussion in Romans 5?
2. Explain the concepts of redemption and propitiation as presented in the initial discussion of Romans 3. How do these concepts relate to the idea of God being both just and the justifier?
3. What are some of the benefits of justification that Paul outlines in Romans chapter 5 before introducing the passage on original sin (5:12-21)? Provide at least two examples.
4. According to Peterson, what is Paul primarily presenting in Romans 5:12-21 in the immediate context of his argument about justification?
5. While Peterson argues the primary focus of Romans 5:12-21 is not original sin, he acknowledges that these verses do teach something about it. What is that teaching?
6. Describe the incomplete comparative structure Paul uses in Romans 5:12. How does the lack of a completed "then-clause" affect the interpretation of this verse?
7. Explain the difficulty in interpreting the phrase "because all sinned" at the end of Romans 5:12. What are the two main perspectives on this clause discussed in the excerpt?
8. What is the significance of the parenthetical discussion in Romans 5:13-14 about sin before the law? What point is Paul trying to make about the reign of death during this period?
9. Briefly explain two of the five views presented regarding the meaning of "sin is not counted where there is no law" in Romans 5:13b.

10. How does the concept of Adam being a "type of the one who was to come" (Romans 5:14) foreshadow the work of Christ in relation to sin and righteousness?

Answer Key:

1. Paul announces the theme of the gospel as the revelation of the saving righteousness of God. This theme is central to the entire letter, and Romans 5 builds upon the foundation of justification by faith established earlier, contrasting Adam's sin with Christ's righteousness.
2. Redemption is the act of being bought back from sin, and propitiation is the appeasement of God's wrath through Christ's sacrifice. These concepts show how God can maintain his justice by punishing sin in Christ while also righteously justifying those who believe in him.
3. Two benefits of justification mentioned are peace with God and the hope of future glory. Believers have peace with God through Christ and rejoice in the hope of sharing in God's glory.
4. Peterson proposes that in Romans 5:12-21, Paul is primarily presenting Christ's saving work as the procurement of righteousness, which serves as the positive side of justification, complementing the negative side of the removal of wrath discussed earlier.
5. These verses teach that Adam's sin had a profound and universal effect on the human race, bringing sin and death into the world. This sets up the contrast with Christ's work, which offers righteousness and life to those who believe.
6. Paul begins with a "just as" clause (protasis) describing how sin and death entered the world through Adam but does not immediately complete it with a "so also" clause (apodosis) regarding Christ. This incompleteness highlights the devastating impact of Adam's sin before contrasting it with Christ's work later in the passage.
7. The difficulty lies in understanding whether "all sinned" refers to individual acts of sin committed by each person or a corporate reality in which all humanity sinned in Adam. Some argue for individual sin, while others suggest a corporate participation in Adam's transgression.
8. The discussion about sin before the Mosaic Law highlights that sin and its consequence, death, were present even when specific commands were not

explicitly given. The reign of death during this period demonstrates the pervasive effect of sin originating from Adam, even on those whose sin was not a direct transgression of a revealed law like Adam's.

9. One view is the **absolute sense view**, which suggests that before the law, while sin existed, the sanction of death did not fully apply in the same way. Another is the **relative or comparative sense view**, which argues that sin was indeed imputed by God (as seen in punishments like the flood), but it was not as clearly defined or fully understood as it became after the giving of the law.
10. Adam, as the first man through whom sin and death entered the world, serves as a negative type. Christ, the "one who was to come," is the positive counterpart through whom righteousness and life are offered to humanity, reversing the effects of Adam's sin for those who are in him by faith.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the structure of Paul's argument in Romans chapters 1-5, explaining how the discussion of God's wrath, justification by faith, and the benefits of justification sets the stage for the passage on original sin in Romans 5:12-19.
2. Discuss the significance of the incomplete comparative clause in Romans 5:12 ("Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man...") in understanding Paul's theology of original sin and its connection to the work of Christ.
3. Compare and contrast the different interpretations of the phrase "because all sinned" in Romans 5:12, considering the implications of both individual and corporate understandings of sin for the doctrine of original sin.
4. Examine the purpose of Paul's digression in Romans 5:13-14 regarding the presence and imputation of sin before the giving of the Mosaic Law. How does this parenthetical discussion contribute to his overall argument in the passage?
5. Evaluate Peterson's argument that while Romans 5:12-21 is often considered the "Textus Classicus" for original sin, its primary focus within the immediate context of Romans is on the saving righteousness of Christ. Provide textual evidence to support or refute this claim.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Justification:** A legal declaration by God that a sinner is righteous in his sight, based on the imputed righteousness of Christ received through faith.
- **Saving Righteousness:** The righteousness that comes from God and brings salvation; manifested in Jesus Christ and received by faith, apart from human works or merit.
- **Faith:** A confident trust or reliance on God and his promises, particularly in Jesus Christ for salvation.
- **Atonement:** The work Christ did in his life and death to reconcile humanity to God by dealing with the problem of sin. It includes both the turning away of God's wrath and the securing of righteousness.
- **Redemption:** The act of buying back or securing release from bondage, specifically from sin and its consequences through Christ's death.
- **Propitiation:** The act of appeasing or satisfying God's righteous anger against sin through the sacrifice of Christ.
- **Original Sin:** The fallen state of human nature, including inherent sinfulness and guilt, inherited from Adam as a result of his rebellion against God.
- **Textus Classicus:** A scriptural passage that is considered the primary or classic text for a particular theological doctrine.
- **Protasis:** The subordinate clause in a conditional sentence, typically introduced by "if" (the "if-clause").
- **Apodosis:** The main clause in a conditional sentence, expressing the consequence of the condition stated in the protasis (the "then-clause," though "then" may be implied).
- **Corporate Understanding of Sin:** The theological view that humanity, in some sense, acted as a collective entity in Adam's sin and therefore shares in its guilt and consequences.
- **Personal Sin:** Individual acts of disobedience, whether in thought, word, or deed, that violate God's law.

- **Law (in Romans context):** Can refer specifically to the Mosaic Law given to Israel, but can also encompass a broader understanding of God's standards and commands known through creation, conscience, and revelation.
- **Transgression:** A violation or breaking of a specific command or law.
- **Imputation:** The act of attributing or crediting something to someone. In theology, it often refers to God imputing Adam's sin to humanity and Christ's righteousness to believers.
- **Realism (in relation to original sin):** A theological view asserting that all humanity was seminally present in Adam and thus directly participated in his act of sin.
- **Representative View (in relation to original sin):** A theological view holding that Adam acted as the federal head or representative of humanity, and his sin brought guilt and corruption upon all he represented.
- **Type (Typology):** A person, event, or institution in the Old Testament that foreshadows or points to a greater reality in the New Testament, particularly in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 15, Original Sin Continued, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Original Sin and Justification Based on Peterson's Analysis of Romans

- 1. What is the main theme of the Book of Romans according to the passage?** The main theme announced in Romans 1:16-17 is the gospel, which reveals the saving righteousness of God. This righteousness is apart from human merit and is received through faith.
- 2. How does Paul initially discuss God's righteousness in Romans?** Before elaborating on saving righteousness (from 3:21 onwards), Paul first discusses the revelation of God's wrath in Romans 1:18-3:20, highlighting humanity's sinfulness and need for salvation.
- 3. What is the role of faith in achieving God's saving righteousness?** Faith is crucial. The saving righteousness of God is appropriated by all who put their faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 4 is specifically highlighted as the "great faith chapter," emphasizing that salvation is through faith for all believers without distinction.
- 4. How does justification relate to Christ's atoning work?** Justification, being declared righteous by God, is a free gift by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The basis of this justification is Christ's atoning death, presented as both a redemption (verse 24) and chiefly as a propitiation (verses 25-26), satisfying God's righteous demands and demonstrating His justice.
- 5. What are the benefits of justification discussed in the passage?** The benefits of being justified by faith include objective peace with God (Romans 5:1, 11), the hope of future glory (Romans 5:2-5), and eternal security (Romans 5:6-10), demonstrating God's love and commitment to those He has declared righteous.
- 6. According to Peterson, what is the primary focus of Romans 5:12-21?** While acknowledging that Romans 5:12-21 does teach about the impact of Adam's sin, Peterson proposes that its primary focus within the context of Romans is to present Christ's saving work as the basis of justification, specifically His procurement of righteousness for believers, paralleling the earlier discussion of propitiation in Romans 3.

7. How does the passage explain the concept of original sin in Romans 5:12? Romans 5:12 states that sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, leading to death spreading to all because all sinned. Peterson highlights the ongoing debate regarding whether "all sinned" refers to a corporate participation in Adam's sin or individual acts of sin. He notes the difficulty in interpreting this verse and that the following verses aim to clarify this issue.

8. What is the significance of the period between Adam and Moses (Romans 5:13-14) in the context of original sin? This period is significant because sin was present in the world before the Mosaic Law was given, and death reigned even over those whose sinning was not a direct transgression of an explicit command like Adam's. This observation leads to questions about how sin was accounted for without the fully articulated law, with various interpretations including the existence of a natural law or the imputation of Adam's sin. Peterson suggests that the universal reign of death during this period points to a solidarity in Adam's sin as the most comprehensive explanation.