

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 19, Effects of the Fall

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 19, Effects of the Fall, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture on Humanity and Sin, session 19, focuses on the theological concepts of original sin, immediate imputation, the effects of the fall, and human ability or inability in salvation. Peterson examines the doctrine of immediate imputation, arguing for its biblical support through figures like Adam and Christ as representative heads. He addresses objections to this view by referencing Deuteronomy and Ezekiel, differentiating between civil and divine justice. The lecture then investigates the Pauline perspective on the unsaved person's will and capacity for salvation, analyzing passages from 1 Corinthians, John, and 2 Corinthians. Peterson concludes that scripture suggests the inability of unsaved individuals to achieve salvation apart from God's grace and the Holy Spirit's work.

2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 19 – 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 19, Effects of the Fall

Briefing Document: Humanity and Sin - Session 19 Review

Subject: Review of Original Sin (Immediate Imputation), Effects of the Fall, and Ability/Inability of Unsaved Persons.

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 19 of his lectures on the Doctrines of Humanity and Sin. The session focuses on the doctrine of Original Sin, specifically the concept of Immediate Imputation, the effects of the Fall, and the theological implications regarding the ability or inability of unsaved individuals to respond to God.

I. Original Sin and Immediate Imputation:

Dr. Peterson continues the study of Original Sin, focusing on the concept of **Immediate Imputation**. This view posits that Adam's sin is directly and immediately imputed (credited) to the entire human race, making us guilty from birth.

Key Arguments for Immediate Imputation:

- **Adam as Representative Head:** The Bible presents Adam as both the natural and representative head of humanity. Just as Christ, the "last Adam," acted representatively for believers, so too did the first Adam act representatively for all humankind. As S. Lewis Johnson states, *"just as the act of the last Adam is a representative act, becoming a judicial ground of the justification of believers, it follows that the act of the first Adam is a representative act, becoming a judicial ground of the condemnation of those united to him."*
- **Implied in Our Estate:** We are born "spiritually dead" and "evidently under a curse" (referencing Ephesians 2:1-5, which describes individuals as "dead in the trespasses and sins" and "by nature children of wrath"). This state suggests a pre-existing condemnation due to Adam's sin. Peterson argues, *"Either human beings were tried in Adam and fell, or we were condemned without a trial. We're either under a curse for Adam's guilt... or we were under a curse for no guilt at all. Immediate Imputation explains most satisfactorily what is ultimately a mystery."*
- **Best Fits Romans 5:** Immediate Imputation aligns strongly with Paul's argument in Romans 5:12-21, which presents a parallel between Adam's sin bringing condemnation and death to all, and Christ's righteousness bringing justification

and life to believers. Peterson asserts, *"This view alone emphasizes what seems to have been the governing principle of the apostles' argument. Adam and Christ are representatives of their respective races."* He further notes, *"There's a definite parallel between the respective acts of the two Adams and the effects of those acts upon their people."* Christianity itself is described as a "representative religion."

- **Explains the Focus on Adam's First Sin:** Immediate Imputation clarifies why only Adam's initial sin, and not his subsequent transgressions or Eve's sin, is imputed to humanity.
- **Clarifies Romans 5:12-14:** The Greek word "gar" in Romans 5 indicates that verses 13 and 14 explain verse 12. Peterson, quoting Johnson, argues that if verse 12 means all are sinners through their own actions or inherent corruption, then verses 13 and 14 do not logically support it. However, if verse 12 asserts that all sinned representatively in Adam, then the subsequent verses become clear. *"If, however, verse 12 asserts all have sinned in a representative, then everything else is clear."*

Objections to Immediate Imputation and Peterson's Responses:

- **Deuteronomy 24:16 ("Fathers shall not be put to death for their children..."):** Peterson argues this verse pertains to civil government and justice, not God's spiritual theology and plan of salvation. Applying it to divine judgment could also be used to argue against Christ's representative atonement.
- **Ezekiel 18 (Individual Responsibility for Sin):** Peterson, quoting Johnson, states that this passage "has nothing to say about the reasons men are in sin, nor about original sin or the imputation of Adam's sin to men. It simply refers to the principles of divine government in the earth or divine justice." It focuses on individual accountability in earthly judgment, not the theological basis of original sin.
- **Hebrews 7:9-10 (Levi Paying Tithes Through Abraham):** Realists use this passage to support a "realistic imputation" where humanity was somehow seminally present in Adam. Peterson, quoting Johnson, counters that the relationship described in Hebrews 7 is "typical, not actual, not real," highlighting the unique and symbolic nature of Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood.

Systematic and Pastoral Implications of Original Sin:

- **Worship of God:** The doctrine calls for worship due to God's dealings with humanity, the principle of representation, and his grace in Christ.
- **Guards God's Character:** It affirms that God did not create humanity as sinners; the Fall was Adam's doing as our representative.
- **Realistic Assessment of Fallen Humanity:** It explains the real, objective guilt of humanity (both Adam's and our own) and the pervasive pollution of sin, necessitating a Savior.
- **Establishes Culpability:** Original sin does not remove responsibility for our own sins but rather provides the foundational reason for our inherent sinfulness and need for salvation. This underscores the imperative of evangelism.
- **Appreciation for Christ's Righteousness:** Understanding original sin leads to a fuller appreciation of the saving righteousness of Jesus Christ, the "second and last Adam," whose obedience is imputed to believers.
- **Salvation by Another's Efforts:** Our salvation "totally depends upon the efforts of another, even Jesus, on our behalf." We rejoice in "alien righteousness," even though we acknowledge the reality of "alien guilt."

II. Effects of the Fall and Ability or Inability:

Dr. Peterson then shifts to examining the effects of the Fall and the Pauline doctrine regarding the ability or inability of unsaved persons to achieve salvation on their own. He focuses on three key questions:

1. How does Paul describe the will of an unsaved person? Is it morally free or bound?
2. What can an unsaved person do to be saved? Specifically, can they believe in Christ?
3. Are the Arminian or Calvinist views of prevenient grace correct?

Peterson analyzes several key biblical passages to address these questions:

- **1 Corinthians 2:14-16:** This passage contrasts the "natural person" (psychikos), who lacks the Spirit of God and is thus unsaved, with the "spiritual person" (pneumatikos), who has the Spirit and is saved.

- **Key Findings:** The "things of the Spirit of God" (the gospel message and its entailments) are not accepted by the natural person. They are considered "folly" and cannot be understood because they are "spiritually discerned." The unsaved lack the Holy Spirit, hindering their ability to comprehend spiritual truth.
- **Implications:** While the passage doesn't explicitly address the freedom of the will, it implies a bondage as the unsaved "do not accept" and "cannot understand" spiritual things due to their lack of the Spirit. Regarding salvation, the passage suggests an unsaved person "cannot do anything to be saved" because they cannot understand the gospel. The ability to believe is attributed to the work of the Spirit. Peterson leans towards a Calvinistic understanding of prevenient grace in this passage, arguing it doesn't teach a universal enabling grace but distinguishes between those with and without the Spirit.
- **John 6:44 and 65:** Jesus states, *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him"* (v. 44) and *"This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it has been granted him by the Father"* (v. 65).
- **Key Findings:** These verses indicate that belief in Jesus is not possible unless the Father "draws" or "grants" it. This "drawing" is likened to Paul's concept of effectual calling. "Coming to Jesus" is parallel to "believing in Jesus." The Father gives people to the Son (election), draws them, and they come and believe. The Son keeps and will raise those given to him.
- **Implications:** Peterson argues that this is not a hypothetical inability (as in some Arminian views) but a real inability of unbelieving hearers. The Father does not draw all individuals; if he did, universal salvation would follow. Unsaved persons are unable to trust Jesus unless the Father specifically draws them.
- **2 Corinthians 4:1-6:** This passage discusses the glory of the new covenant ministry and why some do not believe the clear gospel message.
- **Key Findings:** The reason some do not see the glory of the gospel is that *"the God of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ."* This blinding is a powerful force preventing saving illumination. However, *"The God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* Saving illumination is a creative act of God.

- **Implications:** This passage emphasizes Satan's active role in hindering belief. Unsaved individuals are "bound or blinded" until God intervenes. They "can do nothing to be saved" on their own, as they are blinded and in need of divine illumination. This passage does not teach a general illumination but a specific and efficacious enlightenment by God that leads to salvation.

Overall Conclusion on Ability/Inability:

Based on the analysis of these passages, Dr. Peterson concludes that Scripture "seems to teach the inability of unsaved people to be saved." Therefore, salvation is entirely reliant on the Holy Spirit and the grace of God.

III. Diagram of the Effects of the Fall:

Dr. Peterson presents a diagram (acknowledging Anthony Hoekema) to summarize the effects of the Fall:

- **Original Sin (Adam's sin imputed):** Leads to both:
 - **Legal Repercussion:** Guilt/Condemnation
 - **Moral Repercussion:** Pollution/Corruption
- **Pollution/Corruption:** Results in:
 - **Depravity (Total):** Every part of human beings is affected by sin, especially the mind ("noetic effects of sin").
- **Inability:** Unsaved persons are unable to save themselves apart from God's grace and the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration.

Final Thoughts:

The session concludes with a prayer thanking God for His Word, the understanding of humanity's creation and fallen state, the acknowledgment of our inability to save ourselves, and rejoicing in Jesus Christ as the Savior.

This session provides a detailed theological argument for the doctrine of Immediate Imputation of Original Sin and the consequent inability of unsaved persons to respond to the gospel apart from the sovereign grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 19, Effects of the Fall

Study Guide: Humanity and Sin - Original Sin, Imputation, Effects of the Fall, and Ability/Inability

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the provided excerpts from Dr. Peterson's lecture.

1. According to Dr. Peterson, what two roles did the Bible present Adam as having?
2. Explain the concept of Immediate Imputation as presented in the lecture.
3. How does Dr. Peterson address the objection to Immediate Imputation based on Deuteronomy 24:16?
4. What is the main point Dr. Peterson draws from the passage in 1 Corinthians 2:14 regarding unsaved individuals and the "things of the spirit of God"?
5. According to Dr. Peterson's interpretation of John 6:44 and 65, what is necessary for someone to "come to" Jesus?
6. How does Dr. Peterson interpret Jesus' statement in John 12:32 about drawing "all men"?
7. What is the primary reason Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 for why some people do not see the glory of the gospel?
8. In 2 Corinthians 4:6, what does Dr. Peterson suggest is the source of spiritual light that enables belief in the gospel?
9. Briefly describe the two main repercussions of original sin according to the diagram mentioned by Dr. Peterson.
10. What does Dr. Peterson clarify that "total depravity" does *not* mean?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Bible presents Adam as both the natural head of the human race, meaning he is the progenitor of all humanity, and the representative head, meaning his actions had consequences for all those he represented.

2. Immediate Imputation is the theological view that Adam's sin is directly and immediately imputed (credited or reckoned) to all of his descendants, making them judicially guilty from birth. This view suggests we were condemned in Adam's sin.
3. Dr. Peterson argues that Deuteronomy 24:16, which states individuals should die for their own sin, pertains to civil government and earthly justice, not to God's divine ways of salvation and spiritual theology. Applying it to the latter could even undermine the representative nature of Christ's atoning death.
4. Dr. Peterson states that 1 Corinthians 2:14 teaches that the "natural person" (the unsaved individual) does not accept, considers foolishness, and is unable to understand the things of the Spirit of God because they lack the Holy Spirit and spiritual discernment.
5. According to Dr. Peterson's interpretation of John 6:44 and 65, it is necessary for the Father to draw or grant the ability for someone to come to Jesus. This indicates a divine initiative in salvation, suggesting individuals are unable to believe on their own.
6. Dr. Peterson interprets Jesus' statement in John 12:32 about drawing "all men" not as every single individual without exception, but as all kinds of people without distinction, including both Gentiles and Jews, to himself through his crucifixion and subsequent salvation.
7. The primary reason Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 for why some people do not see the glory of the gospel is that "the god of this world" (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, preventing them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.
8. In 2 Corinthians 4:6, Dr. Peterson suggests that the source of spiritual light that enables belief in the gospel is the creator God, who shines the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ into the hearts of believers. He implies this is a work of recreation.
9. The two main repercussions of original sin are legal guilt or condemnation, meaning humanity is held accountable for Adam's sin, and moral pollution or corruption, meaning sin has damaged and ruined human nature in every part.
10. Dr. Peterson clarifies that "total depravity" does not mean that human beings are as bad as they possibly could be; if that were the case, he suggests, life on earth

would not be possible. Instead, it means that every aspect of human beings is affected by sin.

Essay Format Questions

1. Compare and contrast the concept of Adam as the natural head and the representative head of humanity as presented in the lecture. Discuss the significance of this distinction for the doctrine of original sin and imputation.
2. Critically evaluate Dr. Peterson's arguments in favor of Immediate Imputation, considering the biblical support he offers and the objections he addresses.
3. Analyze Dr. Peterson's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:14, John 6:44-65, and 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 regarding the ability or inability of unsaved individuals to respond to the gospel. Discuss the implications of his conclusions for evangelism and the role of the Holy Spirit.
4. Explore the relationship between original sin, its legal and moral repercussions (guilt and pollution), and the resulting depravity and inability as outlined in the lecture and the mentioned diagram.
5. Discuss the pastoral and theological implications of the doctrine of original sin as highlighted by Dr. Peterson, including its impact on worship, understanding God's character, and appreciating the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Original Sin:** The state of sinfulness into which all human beings are born as a consequence of Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden. It includes both inherited guilt and inherent corruption.
- **Immediate Imputation:** The theological view that Adam's sin is directly and immediately credited or reckoned to all of his descendants from the moment of their conception, making them legally guilty before God.
- **Representative Head:** The concept that Adam acted not only for himself but as the federal head and representative of the entire human race, such that his actions had judicial consequences for all humanity.
- **Effects of the Fall:** The consequences of Adam and Eve's sin, which include legal condemnation (guilt), moral corruption (pollution), depravity affecting all aspects of human nature, and an inability for unsaved individuals to save themselves.
- **Prevenient Grace:** The theological concept (particularly associated with Arminianism) of a prior or preceding grace from God that is extended to all people, enabling them to respond to the gospel and exercise their free will in choosing salvation.
- **Total Depravity:** The theological doctrine that sin has affected every part of human beings – mind, will, emotions, and body – such that there is no part that remains wholly unaffected by sin. It does not mean humans are as evil as they could possibly be.
- **Spiritual Discernment:** The ability to understand and judge spiritual truths, which the lecture suggests is lacking in the "natural person" who does not possess the Holy Spirit.
- **Effectual Calling:** The work of the Holy Spirit by which God sovereignly and irresistibly calls His elect to salvation, resulting in their willing and believing response to the gospel.
- **Saving Illumination:** The work of the Holy Spirit in opening the minds and hearts of individuals to understand and embrace the truth of the gospel for their salvation.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 19, Effects of the Fall, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Original Sin and Human Inability

1. What is "Immediate Imputation" of Original Sin, and what biblical support is there for this view?

Immediate Imputation is the theological view that Adam's first sin is directly and immediately imputed (credited or reckoned) to the entire human race, making all people guilty and subject to condemnation from the moment of their conception. This view finds support in several biblical passages. Romans 5:12-21 draws a parallel between Adam as the representative head of humanity, whose sin brought condemnation and death to all, and Christ as the representative head of believers, whose righteousness brings justification and life. Ephesians 2:1-5 describes believers as having been "dead in trespasses and sins" and "by nature children of wrath," implying a state of condemnation inherited at birth due to Adam's sin. Psalm 51:5, where David says, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me," is also cited as indicative of inherent sinfulness stemming from the Fall. The concept of Adam as the representative head, where promises and threats to him applied to the entire race, further underpins this view.

2. How does the doctrine of Immediate Imputation address the question of divine justice in relation to inherited sin?

Immediate Imputation posits that humanity was, in essence, "tried in Adam" and fell with him, through his representative action. Therefore, the condemnation that follows is not viewed as a punishment without trial or guilt, but rather as a consequence of being united to Adam, the representative head of the human race, in his transgression. This view attempts to resolve the tension of inherited guilt by emphasizing the representative nature of Adam's sin, suggesting that just as believers are judicially accounted righteous through their union with Christ's representative act, so too humanity is judicially accounted guilty through their union with Adam's representative act. The alternative, it is argued, would be that humanity is condemned without any judicial basis related to an initial transgression.

3. What are some objections raised against Immediate Imputation, and how are these objections addressed?

One objection often raised against Immediate Imputation comes from Deuteronomy 24:16, which states that individuals should be put to death for their own sins, not for the sins of their parents. This objection is addressed by distinguishing between the role of civil government, which this verse concerns, and the ways of divine judgment and salvation. It is argued that applying this verse directly to God's spiritual judgments could also be used to argue against Christ's representative atonement. Another objection stems from Ezekiel 18, which emphasizes individual accountability. However, it is argued that this passage addresses the principles of divine government and justice in the earthly realm and does not negate the concept of original sin or the imputation of Adam's sin as the reason for humanity's fallen condition. A third objection, drawing from Hebrews 7:9-10 regarding Levi paying tithes through Abraham, is often used to support a "realistic" view of imputation (where humanity was seminally present in Adam). This is countered by suggesting that the relationship described in Hebrews is typical and not meant to establish a literal, physical participation in Adam's sin.

4. According to the provided text, what are the effects of the Fall, both legally and morally, on humanity?

The Fall, resulting from Adam's sin, has both legal and moral repercussions for humanity. The legal repercussion is **guilt or condemnation** before God, as Adam's sin is imputed to the entire human race. The moral repercussion is **pollution or corruption**, meaning that sin has fundamentally damaged and ruined human nature. This pollution further manifests in **total depravity**, which signifies that every aspect of a human being (mind, will, emotions, etc.) is affected by sin, although it does not necessarily mean that every individual is as evil as they possibly could be. This pollution also leads to **inability**, specifically the inability of unsaved persons to save themselves or even truly understand and accept spiritual truths apart from God's intervention.

5. How does the Apostle Paul describe the will and ability of an unsaved person to respond to the gospel, based on 1 Corinthians 2:14 and other passages discussed?

According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." This suggests that the will of the unsaved person is morally bound by their lack of the Holy Spirit and their adherence to worldly wisdom. They do not willingly receive the gospel because it appears foolish to them, and they lack the spiritual discernment necessary to comprehend its truth. Passages like John

6:44 and 65, where Jesus states that "no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" and "no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father," further emphasize this inability. These verses indicate that the ability to believe in Christ is not inherent in unsaved individuals but requires the Father's drawing and enabling. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 adds that Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers, preventing them from seeing the light of the gospel, reinforcing the idea of an external and internal constraint on their ability to believe.

6. What role does the Holy Spirit play in enabling a person to understand and believe the gospel, according to the text's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 2:14 and related verses?

The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in enabling understanding and belief in the gospel. 1 Corinthians 2:10-13 states that God has revealed spiritual truths through the Spirit to the apostles, and they, in turn, communicate these truths in words taught by the Spirit. Verse 14 then contrasts the "natural person" who lacks the Spirit and cannot understand these truths with the "spiritual person" who possesses the Spirit and can discern them. This implies that the Spirit is necessary for both the revelation and the reception of spiritual truth. The text suggests that the Spirit not only reveals the gospel but also dynamically enables sinners to apprehend it savingly. This is seen as a work of "saving illumination" where the Spirit overcomes the natural person's inability to accept and understand the things of God. The distinction between those who have the Spirit (saved) and those who do not (unsaved) is presented as the fundamental reason for their respective responses to the gospel.

7. How does the text interpret John 6:44 and 65 regarding the Father "drawing" people to Jesus, and what does this imply about human ability to come to Christ?

The text interprets John 6:44 ("No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him") and 6:65 ("No one can come to me unless it has been granted him by the Father") as teaching that unsaved persons are actually unable to believe in Jesus Christ unless the Father specifically draws them and enables them to do so. This is not seen as a hypothetical inability (as in some Arminian views) but a real, present inability faced by unbelieving hearers. The Father's drawing is likened to Paul's concept of effectual calling—an inward, supernatural, and efficacious summoning through the outward gospel call. This drawing is not considered to be universal for all people, as that would necessitate universal salvation, a view rejected by both Calvinists and Arminians discussed in the text. Instead, the Father draws those whom he has chosen and given to the Son, and these are the ones who will believe, be kept by the Son, and be raised for

final salvation. This understanding strongly emphasizes God's sovereign initiative in salvation and the dependence of human faith on divine enabling.

8. According to 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, what is a key reason why some people do not believe the gospel, and what is necessary for them to believe?

According to 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, a key reason why some people do not believe the gospel is that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." This highlights the active, spiritual opposition of Satan in hindering people from embracing the truth. The gospel itself is presented as glorious and clear, but its light is veiled to those who are perishing due to Satan's work. For them to believe, something more powerful than Satan's blinding influence is necessary, which is the saving illumination by the Creator God. As stated in 2 Corinthians 4:6, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This divine illumination is seen as a work of recreation, akin to God's initial creation of light, and is a particular and efficacious act of God that leads to salvation. Therefore, overcoming Satan's blinding and experiencing God's saving illumination are necessary for unbelievers to embrace the gospel.