

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 7, Election Systematic Formulations II Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Salvation, Session 7, Systematic Formulations II, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's lecture on salvation, session seven, titled "Election Systematic Formulations, Number 2," examines the **biblical doctrine of election**, specifically focusing on its timing before creation and its basis in God's love and will. The lecture analyzes key scriptural passages, including **2 Timothy 1:9 and Revelation**, to establish the pre-temporal nature of election. It further explores **Deuteronomy's** account of Israel's choosing, as well as **Ephesians 1 and Romans 8 and 9**, to illustrate that God's selection is rooted in his sovereign purpose and love, not human merit. Peterson also addresses the complexities of **God's sovereignty and human responsibility**, particularly in the context of Israel's rejection of Christ and God's plan for both Jewish and Gentile believers, emphasizing the complementary nature of divine action and human accountability.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Salvation, Session 7 – 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 → Salvation).



**Peterson_Salvation_
Session07.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 7, Systematic Formulations II

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Election (Session 7)

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 7 of his teaching on salvation, focusing on the systematic formulations of the doctrine of election. The session primarily explores the timing and basis of God's election, utilizing key biblical passages from 2 Timothy, Revelation, Deuteronomy, Ephesians, Romans, and drawing on insights from historical and theological perspectives.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Election is Pre-Temporal (Before Creation):

- Dr. Peterson emphasizes that God's election of believers occurred before the creation of the world.
- He cites **2 Timothy 1:9**: "God saved us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." This verse indicates that saving grace was given to believers in eternity past, preceding any human action.
- References to the "Book of Life" in **Revelation 13:8** and **Revelation 17:8**, with names written "from the foundation of the world," further support this pre-temporal understanding of election. While acknowledging different interpretations of these passages, Peterson highlights the implication that both inclusion and exclusion from the Book of Life predate creation.
- The fact that God alone elects and does so before creation underscores that salvation is entirely God's work and not based on any foreseen human faith or deeds.

1. The Basis of Election is God's Love and Will:

- Scripture consistently attributes the basis of election to God's own character, specifically His love and will, rather than any merit or foreseen action in humanity.
- The Old Testament example of God choosing Israel in **Deuteronomy 7:6-8** illustrates this point. God chose Israel not because they were numerous but

"because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors." Peterson clarifies that God did not choose Israel based on foreseen faith or obedience, given their frequent characterization as "stiff-necked."

- In the New Testament, **Ephesians 1** is presented as a crucial passage demonstrating this. Verses 4-5 state that God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will."
- Peterson highlights the repetition of "purpose of his will" (prothesis) in **Ephesians 1:5** and **1:11**, emphasizing that election is according to God's sovereign plan, counsel, and love. He considers **Ephesians 1:11** ("In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will") as a particularly strong affirmation of God's sovereign will in election.
- He addresses the potential objection of unfairness by stating that God was under no obligation to choose any nation and that His ultimate plan in choosing Israel was to bring salvation to the world.

1. **Trinitarian Harmony in Election and Salvation (Ephesians 1):**

- Analyzing the extended sentence in **Ephesians 1:3-14**, Peterson highlights the Trinitarian involvement in salvation. He divides the passage into three sections based on the refrain "to the praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6) and "to the praise of his glory" (vv. 12, 14).
- He attributes specific works of salvation to each person of the Trinity:
- **Father:** Election/Predestination (vv. 4-6, 11)
- **Son:** Redemption through His blood (vv. 7-12)
- **Holy Spirit:** Sealing of believers (vv. 13-14) as the agent of the Father in securing their union in the Son.
- This framework underscores the harmonious work of the Father choosing, the Son redeeming, and the Spirit sealing the same group of people.

1. **Romans 8:28-30 and the "Golden Chain" of Salvation:**

- Peterson identifies **Romans 8:28-30** as the strongest biblical passage on God's preservation of the saints, which he will explore further in a later session.

However, in this session, he focuses on how these verses illustrate the outworking of God's election.

- He highlights the five past tense verbs attributed to God: "foreknew," "predestined," "called," "justified," and "glorified." He argues that while these terms have nuances, they all speak to God's work in salvation, with the same object – His people.
- He notes the literary device of "climax" (going back and forward between the verbs) which the Puritans called the "golden chain," demonstrating the continuity and certainty of God's saving work. Even "glorified," though future for the original recipients, is spoken of in the past tense due to its certainty based on God's plan.
- Peterson refutes the Arminian interpretation that "foreknew" refers to God foreseeing human faith. He argues that the semantic relationship is between God as the knower (or forelover) and His people as the known (or foreloved), drawing a parallel to Amos 3:2 where God says of Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," implying a relational knowing, not just intellectual awareness.

1. **Romans 9-11 as the Classical Text on Election and God's Unfailing Word to Israel:**

- Peterson introduces **Romans 9** as the "textus classicus" for the doctrine of election/predestination. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical context of Romans, particularly the tension between Jewish and Gentile believers in the Roman church.
- He explains that Paul addresses the question of whether God's promises to Israel have failed, given that many Jews did not believe in Jesus.
- Paul's three-fold answer in Romans 9-11:
- **Romans 9:** God sovereignly saved the Jews He chose.
- **Romans 10:** Unbelieving Israel justly received the consequences of their unbelief due to their rejection of Christ.
- **Romans 11:** God is not finished with ethnic Israel, as His gifts and calling are irrevocable, and a future salvation for many Israelites is expected ("all Israel will be saved," Romans 11:26, understood as ethnic Israelites with a present "already and not yet" fulfillment).

- Peterson stresses the theological compatibilism presented in these chapters: absolute divine sovereignty (Romans 9) and genuine human responsibility (Romans 10), held in tension as Scripture does.

1. **Sovereign Choice and the Divine Prerogative (Romans 9):**

- Analyzing **Romans 9:6ff**, Peterson highlights that not all physical descendants of Israel are the true Israel (children of the promise through Isaac). The promise of a son to Sarah was a "divine fiat," demonstrating God's sovereign action independent of human ability.
- The example of Jacob and Esau (**Romans 9:10-13**) further illustrates God's sovereign choice before they were born or had done anything good or bad, "in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls." The quote "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" emphasizes God's sovereign prerogative.
- Addressing the objection of injustice (**Romans 9:14ff**), Peterson cites **Exodus 33:19**: "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion," noting the singular pronouns, emphasizing God's individual sovereign action.
- **Romans 9:16** ("So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy") explicitly rules out human will and effort as the basis of salvation.
- The example of Pharaoh (**Romans 9:17-18**) shows God raising him up to display His power, illustrating God's sovereign will in hardening as well as showing mercy. Peterson cautions against becoming a hyper-Calvinist from this chapter, emphasizing the surrounding context of the gospel.
- The objection in **Romans 9:19** ("You will say to me then, 'Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?'") is seen as evidence of a correct understanding of Paul's teaching on God's sovereign will. Paul's response emphasizes God's prerogative as the Potter (**Romans 9:20-24**).

1. **Vessels of Wrath and Vessels of Mercy (Romans 9):**

- Peterson delves into the concept of "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" and "vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory." He emphasizes that this is not merely hypothetical, as verse 24 connects it to both Jewish and Gentile believers whom God has called.

- He affirms that God stands behind the fate of every human being, both those who go to heaven (vessels of mercy, prepared actively by God) and those who go to hell (vessels of wrath, prepared – passive voice). While both are ultimately under God's sovereignty, Peterson suggests a distinction in the manner of preparation based on the active and passive voice in the Greek.

1. **Immediate vs. Ultimate Explanations for Salvation and Condemnation:**

- Peterson concludes by offering different levels of explanation for why people are saved and lost, all biblically true but varying in their immediacy and ultimacy:
- **Salvation:** Immediate - belief in Jesus Christ; Intermediate - Holy Spirit opening hearts; Deeper - Christ's death and resurrection; Ultimate - being God's vessel of mercy prepared beforehand for glory.
- **Condemnation:** Immediate - their sins; Deeper - Adam's original sin; Ultimate - being vessels of wrath prepared for destruction by a sovereign potter (a passing over, not an active choosing for destruction in the same way as election).
- He underscores the mysterious nature of theology and the need for humility in understanding God's ways. He clarifies that God's proactive choice in election differs from His passing over in the case of the lost.

Key Quotes:

- "God saved us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." (2 Timothy 1:9)
- "All those who live on the earth will worship the beast. Everyone whose name was not written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life of the lamb who was slaughtered." (Revelation 13:8)
- "The Lord your God has chosen you to be his own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors." (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)
- "He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace." (Ephesians 1:5-6)

- "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will." (Ephesians 1:11)
- "For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined, he also called. Those whom he called, he also justified. Those whom he justified, he also glorified." (Romans 8:29-30)
- "It is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel..." (Romans 9:6)
- "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy." (Romans 9:16)
- "He has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills." (Romans 9:18)
- "...vessels of wrath prepared for destruction... vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from among the Gentiles." (Romans 9:22-24)

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's Session 7 provides a detailed exploration of the doctrine of election, emphasizing its pre-temporal nature, its foundation in God's sovereign love and will, and the harmonious involvement of the Trinity in salvation. Through careful exegesis of key biblical passages, particularly from Ephesians and Romans, Peterson defends a Calvinistic understanding of election while acknowledging the complexities and mysteries involved. He stresses the importance of holding divine sovereignty and human responsibility together, as presented in Scripture. The session sets the stage for further systematic development of the doctrine of election in subsequent lectures.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 7, Systematic Formulations II

Study Guide: Peterson on Election

Key Concepts:

- **Election:** God's sovereign choice before creation to save a specific group of people.
- **Pre-temporal Election:** The belief that God's election occurred before the beginning of time.
- **Basis of Election:** The grounds upon which God chooses, identified as His love and will, not foreseen human actions.
- **Book of Life:** A metaphorical book containing the names of those chosen by God for salvation from the foundation of the world.
- **Divine Initiative:** The concept that salvation originates with God's actions and purposes.
- **Trinitarian Harmony in Salvation:** The coordinated work of the Father (election), Son (redemption), and Holy Spirit (sealing) in the salvation of believers.
- **God's Purpose (Prothesis):** God's preordained plan and intention in salvation.
- **Preservation of the Saints:** The doctrine that God will ensure that those He has chosen and saved will persevere to the end.
- **The Golden Chain (Climax):** The interconnected sequence of God's saving acts described in Romans 8:29-30 (foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified), highlighting the certainty and continuity of salvation.
- **Foreknowledge (in the context of election):** Not merely intellectual awareness, but God's loving, covenantal knowing or foreloving of His people.
- **Textus Classicus:** A classical or foundational text for a particular doctrine, in this case, Romans 9 for the doctrine of election.
- **Compatibilism:** The theological view that God's absolute sovereignty and genuine human responsibility are both true and can coexist.
- **Irrevocable Gifts and Calling of God:** The idea in Romans 11 that God's promises and calling to Israel are permanent.

- **Vessels of Wrath and Vessels of Mercy:** Metaphors in Romans 9 describing those whom God has ordained for destruction (passive preparation) and salvation (active preparation), respectively, to display His wrath and glory.
- **Divine Prerogative:** God's sovereign right and freedom to act according to His own will.
- **Human Responsibility:** The accountability of individuals for their choices and actions, particularly in rejecting or receiving the gospel.

Quiz:

1. According to Dr. Peterson, when did God's election of believers take place? What scriptural support does he provide for this timing?
2. What does it mean for a person's name to be written in the "Book of Life from the foundation of the world," and what is the implication if a name is not found there?
3. What does Scripture consistently identify as the basis or grounds for God's election, and what does this imply about the role of human actions or foreseen faith?
4. Explain the Trinitarian framework of salvation as presented in Ephesians 1:3-14. What specific work is attributed to each member of the Trinity in this passage?
5. Describe the "golden chain" in Romans 8:29-30. Why is the inclusion of "glorified" in the past tense significant for the doctrine of preservation?
6. How does Dr. Peterson interpret the term "foreknew" in Romans 8:29 in the context of God's election? How does he distinguish it from mere intellectual awareness?
7. What was the primary issue or context that Paul was addressing in the book of Romans, particularly as it relates to the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers?
8. According to Dr. Peterson, how do Romans 9, 10, and 11 answer the question of whether God's promises to Israel have failed? Briefly summarize the main point of each chapter in response to this question.
9. Explain the significance of the "potter and the clay" analogy in Romans 9. How does it illustrate God's sovereignty in election and reprobation?

10. How does Dr. Peterson address the apparent tension between God's sovereignty in election and human responsibility for sin and unbelief? What term does he use to describe this relationship?

Answer Key:

1. Dr. Peterson states that God's election of believers took place before creation. He supports this with 2 Timothy 1:9, which speaks of grace given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, and Revelation 13:8 and 17:8, which mention names written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world.
2. To have one's name in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world means to be enrolled in the city of God from the time of creation, indicating God's pre-temporal choice for salvation. Conversely, to have one's name omitted means not to be enrolled and therefore not chosen for salvation.
3. Scripture consistently locates the basis of election in God's love and will, not in anything inherent in humanity. This implies that God's choice is entirely His initiative and not dependent on foreseen human faith, works, or any other human merit.
4. In Ephesians 1:3-14, God the Father's work is highlighted in election or predestination (choosing a people). The Son's work is redemption through His blood. The Holy Spirit is the Father's agent in sealing believers, guaranteeing their union in Christ.
5. The "golden chain" in Romans 8:29-30 is the sequence of God's actions: foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified. The past tense of "glorified" signifies the certainty of the believer's future glorification in God's plan, underscoring the doctrine of preservation.
6. Dr. Peterson interprets "foreknew" in Romans 8:29 not as mere intellectual foresight of who would believe, but as God's pre-temporal, loving, and covenantal setting of His affection on His chosen people. He contrasts this with simply knowing all people intellectually.
7. The primary issue Paul was addressing in Romans was the tension and lack of harmony between Jewish and Gentile believers in the Roman church. This included disagreements over Jewish customs and a need for mutual respect and acceptance.

8. In Romans 9, God's word has not failed because God sovereignly saved those Jews (and Gentiles) He chose. In Romans 10, God's word has not failed because unbelieving Israel justly received the consequences of rejecting Christ. In Romans 11, God's word has not failed because God is not yet finished with ethnic Israel, and His gifts and calling are irrevocable, implying a future salvation for many.
9. The "potter and the clay" analogy in Romans 9 illustrates God's absolute sovereignty and prerogative as the creator to fashion different vessels for different purposes—some for honor (mercy) and some for dishonor (wrath)—according to His will.
10. Dr. Peterson addresses the tension by affirming theological compatibilism, stating that both God's absolute divine sovereignty (as seen in election) and genuine human responsibility for their faith or unbelief are true and held in tension in Scripture, with God being first and human responsibility second.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of the timing of election (before creation) in shaping our understanding of salvation. How does this pre-temporal aspect emphasize God's initiative and sovereignty?
2. Analyze the basis of God's election as presented by Dr. Peterson, drawing on both Old and New Testament examples. How does the emphasis on God's love and will challenge alternative views of election?
3. Examine the interconnectedness of God's saving acts as described in Romans 8:29-30 (the "golden chain"). How does this passage contribute to the doctrine of the preservation of the saints?
4. Explore the complexities of God's relationship with ethnic Israel as presented in Romans 9-11. How does Paul reconcile God's past promises, Israel's current unbelief, and the potential for future salvation?
5. Critically evaluate the concept of God as the "divine potter" in Romans 9. How does this metaphor illustrate both God's sovereignty and the challenging aspects of divine election and reprobation, and how does Dr. Peterson navigate these challenges?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Election:** God's sovereign, gracious choice before the foundation of the world to save a specific number of individuals for Himself.
- **Predestination:** God's foreordination of all things that come to pass, including His eternal plan for the salvation of the elect. Often used interchangeably with election in this context.
- **Sovereignty (of God):** God's absolute authority and power over all creation and history, working all things according to His perfect will and purpose.
- **Grace:** God's unmerited favor and love freely bestowed upon humanity, particularly in the context of salvation.
- **Redemption:** The act by which Christ paid the penalty for sin through His death on the cross, securing the forgiveness and liberation of those who believe in Him.
- **Justification:** God's legal declaration that a sinner is righteous in His sight, not based on their own works but on the imputed righteousness of Christ received through faith.
- **Sanctification:** The ongoing process by which believers are made holy and conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Glorification:** The ultimate and final aspect of salvation, in which believers will receive resurrected and transformed bodies and live in God's perfect presence.
- **Atonement:** Christ's work on the cross by which He reconciled God and humanity, satisfying divine justice and providing forgiveness for sins.
- **Covenant:** A binding agreement or relationship between God and humanity, often involving promises and obligations.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 7, Systematic Formulations II, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Doctrine of Election

1. What is the doctrine of election as presented in these sources? The doctrine of election, as discussed by Dr. Peterson, centers on God's sovereign choice of individuals for salvation before the creation of the world. This choice is not based on any foreseen actions or faith on the part of humanity but solely on God's own purpose, will, and love. Scripture indicates that God gave saving grace to those he chose in eternity past, highlighting that this pre-temporal election precedes and enables human faith, rather than being contingent upon it.

2. What biblical evidence supports the idea that election occurs before creation? Several scriptural passages are cited to support the pre-temporal nature of election. 2 Timothy 1:9 states that God saved us according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 speak of individuals whose names were written in the Book of Life "from the foundation of the world," implying that this enrollment, signifying inclusion in God's city, occurred before creation. These verses suggest that God's electing work predates any human action or even the existence of the world.

3. What is the basis of God's election? Is it based on foreseen human faith or good deeds? According to the sources, the basis of God's election is found entirely in God himself, specifically in his love and will. Deuteronomy 7:7-8 illustrates this with God's choice of Israel, which was not due to their size or strength but because the Lord loved them and kept his oath. Similarly, the New Testament, particularly Ephesians 1, emphasizes that God chose us "in love" and predestined us "according to the purpose of his will." Romans 9 further underscores that election "depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy," explicitly ruling out human initiative as the determining factor.

4. How do passages like Romans 9 relate to the doctrine of election and human responsibility? Romans 9 is considered a classical text for the doctrine of election, emphasizing God's absolute sovereignty in choosing whom he will have mercy on and whom he will harden. This raises questions about human responsibility. Dr. Peterson highlights that while God sovereignly chooses, as seen in his dealings with Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Esau, and Pharaoh, Romans 10 simultaneously affirms genuine human responsibility and accountability for unbelief. Unbelieving Israel, for example, received

what it deserved for rejecting Christ. This tension illustrates theological compatibilism, where divine sovereignty and human responsibility are both held as true, with God's sovereignty being primary.

5. What is the significance of the "golden chain" or climax in Romans 8:29-30? Romans 8:29-30 presents a sequence of God's actions: foreknowing, predestining, calling, justifying, and glorifying. This sequence, referred to as a "golden chain" or a "climax," demonstrates the continuity and certainty of God's saving work. The fact that all these verbs are in the past tense in Greek, even "glorified" which is future for believers, underscores God's guaranteed preservation of those he has chosen. It illustrates that salvation, from God's initial knowing to final glorification, is a connected and certain process initiated and completed by God.

6. How does the doctrine of election relate to God's will and purpose? The sources consistently link election to God's will and purpose. 2 Timothy 1:9 states salvation is "according to his own purpose." Ephesians 1 reiterates this by saying God predestined us "according to the purpose of his will" (verse 5) and that believers received an inheritance "having been predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will" (verse 11). These references emphasize that God's elective actions are not arbitrary but are part of his preordained plan and determined by his sovereign will.

7. Does God's election of some imply that he is unjust or unfair to those not chosen? The question of God's justice in election is addressed in Romans 9, where Paul anticipates the objection, "Is there injustice with God?" The response is "By no means," asserting God's divine prerogative as the potter who has the right to make different vessels for different purposes. Dr. Peterson explains that God was under no obligation to choose anyone for salvation. Furthermore, God's ultimate plan in choosing some, as seen with Israel, was to bring salvation to the world. While the concept of God passing over some is inscrutable, it is presented as consistent with his holiness and justice, and it does not negate human responsibility for sin.

8. How does the doctrine of election impact our understanding of salvation and faith? The doctrine of election highlights that salvation is ultimately God's work, rooted in his pre-creation choice. While individuals are saved through faith in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, these are understood as being enabled by God's prior election. Election does not make human faith a fiction but rather provides the foundational context for it. Recognizing God's sovereign role in salvation emphasizes grace and underscores that our salvation is ultimately "all of him," not based on our own merits or abilities.