

## **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 14, Justification III – Systematic Formulations & Adoption I Resources from NotebookLM**

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

### **1. Abstract of Peterson, Salvation, Session 14, Justification III -- Systematic Formulations & Adoption I, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This source presents **Dr. Robert Peterson's lecture on salvation**, specifically focusing on **justification and adoption**. Peterson examines justification by exploring its source in God's grace and its basis in Christ's saving work, particularly his death and resurrection, further explaining concepts like propitiation and the imputation of Christ's righteousness received through faith. He then introduces adoption as a related doctrine, highlighting humanity's need for it due to enslavement to sin, its source in God's love, and its basis in Christ's person and redemptive work. The lecture lays the groundwork for understanding these theological concepts within a systematic framework.

### **2. 29 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Salvation, 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 → Salvation).**



**Peterson\_Salvation\_  
Session14.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 14, Justification III -- Systematic Formulations & Adoption I

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Justification and Adoption (Session 14)

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas from Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture on Salvation, specifically Session 14, focusing on Justification (Number 3, Systematic Formulations and Adoption, Part 1).

#### I. Justification: Systematic Formulations (Continued)

##### A. Basis of Justification:

- **Source: God's Grace:** Peterson reiterates that the ultimate source of justification is God's unmerited favor.
- **Basis: Christ's Saving Work:** The foundation upon which justification rests is the comprehensive saving work of Jesus Christ. This encompasses a panoramic view from the Incarnation to the Second Coming, with the **core being his death and resurrection**. Peterson references his book, *Salvation Accomplished by the Son, the Work of Christ*, which details Christ's "nine saving events" and the "seven biblical pictures" used to interpret them (reconciliation, redemption, legal substitution, Christus Victor, second Adam/new creation, and sacrifice).
- The Apostle Paul consistently emphasizes both Christ's death and resurrection as central to the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) and the basis of justification (Romans 4:25: "Christ was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification").

##### B. Addressing the Tension Between God's Love and Condemnation of Sin:

- Peterson addresses the common perplexity of how a loving God can condemn sinners. He emphasizes that while "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16), Scripture also states that "God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him" (1 John 1:5).
- God is both **absolutely holy and absolutely loving**, and neither attribute can be compromised.
- The **complexity of Christ's cross** resolves this tension. It affects our standing before God both negatively (turning away God's wrath) and positively (procuring righteousness).

### C. Christ's Death as Propitiation:

- Scripture teaches four times that Christ's death is a **propitiation** (Romans 3:25-26, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 1 John 4:10).
- **Romans 3:25-26 is the key passage**, where Paul reveals God's righteousness after previously detailing His wrath against sinners.
- Through Christ's death as a propitiation ("whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith"), God demonstrates His righteousness. This addresses how God could have "passed over former sins" (Old Testament saints were forgiven based on the future atonement of Christ and their response to the Old Testament sacrificial system).
- Luther is quoted: "There was no remedy for guilt and wrath except for God's only son to step into our distress and himself become man, to take upon himself the load of awful and eternal wrath and make his own body and blood a sacrifice for sin."
- Propitiation satisfies God's justice, allowing Him to be "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

### D. Christ's Death Procuring Righteousness:

- Positively, Christ's death not only satisfies God's wrath but also **gains the righteousness needed for justification**.
- Paul's contrast between the **first Adam and the second Adam (Christ)** in Romans 5:18-19 illustrates this:
- Adam's trespass brought condemnation for everyone.
- Christ's righteous act (dying on the cross) brought "justification leading to life for everyone."
- Adam's disobedience made many sinners; Christ's obedience made many righteous.
- Peterson quotes Mu, emphasizing that being "righteous" in this context means being "judged, acquitted, cleared of all charges in the heavenly judgment," not merely being morally upright.

- Christ's saving accomplishment, both negatively (propitiation) and positively (securing righteousness), is the ground of our justification, not our own performance.

#### E. Justification by Faith:

- The **means of justification is faith**, not works. Faith is the instrument that connects us to God's grace and justification.
- Paul's purpose statement in Romans 1:16-17 highlights that the "righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" and "the righteous will live by faith."
- Romans 3:22 reiterates that the "righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."
- Even propitiation is "received by faith" (Romans 3:25), and God justifies "the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).
- Romans 3:27-31 further emphasizes justification by faith apart from works of the law.
- Faith and grace are inseparable (Romans 4:16, 11:6). Salvation is by grace through faith alone, antithetical to works.

#### F. Justification's Imputation: Christ's Righteousness:

- Justification involves the **imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers**. Imputation is defined as the act of crediting something to someone.
- Scripture teaches three imputations:
  1. Imputation of original sin (Adam's sin to humanity - Romans 5:18-19).
  2. Imputation of our sin to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21a: "He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us").
  3. Imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers (2 Corinthians 5:21b: "so that in him we might become the righteousness of God").
- The third imputation is supported by the combination of three key passages (as argued by Brian Vickers in *Jesus, Blood, and Righteousness*):
  1. Romans 4:3: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

2. Romans 5:19: "Just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."
3. 2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
  - Abraham's faith being "credited to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3-5) demonstrates justification by faith and the imputation of righteousness.
  - Schreiner's commentary on Romans is cited, emphasizing that God "graciously imputes Christ's righteousness to us," reversing the effects of Adam's sin.
  - Luther's description of 2 Corinthians 5:21 as a "**happy exchange**" is quoted: "Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, just as I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and have given to me what is yours."
  - Murray Harris notes the "double imputation" in 2 Corinthians 5:21: sin reckoned to Christ, and righteousness reckoned to believers.
  - Philippians 3:8-9, where Paul desires "to be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith," further illustrates this imputed righteousness.
  - Luther called this "**alien righteousness**," emphasizing that it is outside of us and cannot be attained by our works.
  - The imputation of Christ's righteousness explains why believers are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24) and why faith is credited as righteousness to the ungodly (Romans 4:5).
  - Justification is a foundational doctrine, the "article on which the church stands or falls" (Luther) and the "main hinge or principal axis on which Christianity turns" (Calvin).
  - Free justification ultimately glorifies God.

## II. Adoption: Systematic Formulations (Part 1)

### A. Introduction to Adoption:

- Adoption is described as Justification's "shy little sister," not as historically prominent but a "warm and winsome doctrine."

- The lecture will now shift to an overview of adoption, covering its biblical prelude, systematic formulations, our need for adoption, its source, basis, means, and its relation to union with Christ.

#### **B. Adoption: Biblical Prelude (Summary):**

- While not prominent, the Old Testament presents the Lord as the father of Israel, and the Davidic king as God's son.
- The New Testament reveals Jesus as God's true Son, and believers are adopted as children of God through his atoning work.
- Our sonship reveals God's amazing love and care, and believers are to live in a way that reflects their Father's character.
- The adoption of believers is an "**already but not yet**" reality, with the fullness to be consummated at the resurrection.

#### **C. Adoption: Systematic Formulations:**

- Building on the biblical foundation, Peterson will explore a systematic theology of adoption.
- Jim Packer is quoted emphasizing the importance of understanding oneself as God's child for grasping Christianity: "If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means he does not understand Christianity very well at all."
- The fatherhood of God is presented as central to Christ's teaching and the distinctiveness of the New Testament. "**Father is the Christian name for God.**"

#### **D. Adoption's Need: Bondage, Slavery to Sin:**

- The need for adoption is not merely being orphans, but a deeper issue: **bondage, slavery to sin.**
- Like other aspects of salvation, adoption is best understood against our need for it due to the Fall and our own sins.
- Before adoption, we were "in slavery under the elements of the world" (Galatians 4:3).
- After adoption, believers are "no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir" (Galatians 4:7).

- Adoption is God's gracious application of Christ's salvation, freeing slaves to sin and welcoming them into His family.
- John divides humanity into two observable groups: **children of God and children of the devil** (1 John 3:10), with doing right and loving one another as key indicators.
- Yarbrough notes that God's true children will ultimately reveal their divine parentage.
- Scripture also describes becoming God's children through **regeneration**, where the need is spiritual death, and the antidote is being born again (John 3:3, 7).
- Adoption (courtroom image) and regeneration (death-to-life image) both result in believers being the children of God.

#### **E. Adoption's Source: The Love of God:**

- While faith in Christ is the means of adoption, its **ultimate source is God's will and love**.
- Ephesians 1:4-5 highlights that "in love God 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 1:11 further emphasizes that believers received an inheritance through predestination according to God's will.
- John also traces our sonship to the Father's great love (1 John 3:1: "See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children").
- Yarbrough emphasizes that the greatness of God's love for adoption lies in its effects (making us "children of God") and its purpose (that we might enjoy His familial favor).

#### **F. Adoption's Basis: Christ's Person and Work:**

- The basis for God adopting slaves to sin as His children is **Christ's person and work**.
- God did not simply declare us His own; redemption from bondage was necessary, requiring the death of His Son.
- **Christ's Person:** Unlike believers who become sons by grace through faith, Christ has always been the **eternal Son of God by nature**. Scripture ascribes creation to

the Son (Colossians 1:13, 16; Hebrews 1:2), implying His eternal sonship. God sent His Son, who existed eternally as the Son, into the world at the Incarnation (Galatians 4:4).

- **Christ's Work:** The eternal Son of God died to deliver those enslaved to sin. The atonement motif corresponding to adoption is **redemption**, which involves:
  1. A state of bondage.
  2. The payment of a ransom price.
  3. The consequent state of freedom as sons of God.
- Galatians 4:4-5 states that God sent His Son "to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."
- Galatians 3:13 further explains redemption: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." He paid the penalty for our disobedience, allowing us to enjoy the freedom of God's children.
- Stott is quoted highlighting Galatians 3:13 as a plain statement on **substitution**: "The curse of the broken law rested on us. Christ redeemed us from it by becoming a curse in our place. The curse that lay on us was transferred to him."

### III. Next Steps:

- The subsequent lecture will continue the discussion on adoption, focusing on its **means, which is faith in Christ as Redeemer.**



## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 14, Justification III -- Systematic Formulations & Adoption I

### Study Guide: Justification and Adoption (Part 1)

#### Key Concepts:

- **Justification:** God's act of declaring sinners righteous in his sight.
- **Adoption:** God's act of welcoming believing sinners into his family as sons and daughters.
- **Grace:** God's unmerited favor, the source of justification.
- **Christ's Saving Work:** The entirety of Christ's actions from Incarnation to Second Coming, with his death and resurrection as the core.
- **Basis of Justification:** Christ's saving work, specifically his propitiatory death and his procurement of righteousness.
- **Propitiation:** Christ's death as the turning away of God's wrath.
- **Procurement of Righteousness:** Christ's death and obedience gaining righteousness for believers.
- **Legal Substitution:** Christ taking the place of sinners, bearing their punishment and providing his righteousness.
- **Means of Justification:** Faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Imputation:** The act of crediting something to someone. Includes the imputation of original sin, our sin to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to believers.
- **Alien Righteousness:** Christ's righteousness, which is external to believers and received by faith.
- **Forensic/Legal:** Relating to courts of law, describing justification as a legal declaration.
- **Regeneration:** Spiritual rebirth, being made alive in Christ.
- **Sanctification:** The process of becoming more like Christ.
- **Need for Adoption:** Bondage and slavery to sin.
- **Source of Adoption:** The love and will of God.

- **Basis of Adoption:** The person and work of Jesus Christ, specifically his eternal sonship and his redemptive death.
- **Redemption (in relation to adoption):** Christ's act of freeing those enslaved to sin through the payment of a ransom price.

**Quiz:**

1. What are the source and basis of justification according to the provided text? Explain each briefly in a sentence.
2. Describe the two main ways in which scripture presents Christ's cross as the basis of justification. Use one sentence for each way.
3. What does the term "propitiation" mean in the context of Christ's death? Identify one key scripture passage where this is discussed.
4. Explain Paul's comparison between the first Adam and the second Adam (Christ) in relation to justification. What did each accomplish for their respective people?
5. According to the text, what is the means by which believers receive God's grace and justification? Support your answer with a brief reference to scripture.
6. Define "imputation" as it is used in the context of justification. What are the three imputations discussed in the text?
7. Explain the concept of "alien righteousness" as described by Luther. Why is this concept important for understanding justification?
8. What is presented as the primary need for adoption, and how does adoption address this need?
9. What are identified as the ultimate source and the fundamental basis of God's act of adoption?
10. How does the concept of "redemption" relate to the doctrine of adoption, according to the text?

**Answer Key:**

1. The source of justification is God's grace, highlighting his unmerited favor. The basis of justification is Christ's saving work, particularly his death and resurrection.

2. Negatively, Christ's death is a propitiation that turns away God's wrath against sinners (Romans 3:25-26). Positively, his death procures righteousness, which is credited to those who believe (Romans 5:18-19).
3. Propitiation means that Christ's death satisfies God's wrath against sin, making atonement. Romans 3:25-26 is a key passage where Paul presents Christ as a propitiation through his blood.
4. Just as Adam's one act of disobedience brought condemnation to all, Christ's one righteous act (his obedient death) brings justification leading to life for all who are in him. Adam made many sinners, while Christ's obedience makes many righteous in God's sight.
5. The means by which believers receive God's grace and justification is faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 3:22 states that the righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.
6. Imputation is the act of crediting something to someone. The three imputations discussed are the imputation of original sin, the imputation of our sin to Christ, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers.
7. Alien righteousness refers to the righteousness of Christ, which is external to believers and not earned by their own works. This is crucial because it emphasizes that justification is based solely on Christ's work, received by faith, not on human merit.
8. The primary need for adoption is bondage and slavery to sin, reflecting a deeper issue than merely being orphaned from God. Adoption addresses this need by freeing believers from this slavery and welcoming them into God's family as sons and daughters.
9. The ultimate source of adoption is the love and will of God, as seen in Ephesians 1:4-5. The fundamental basis of adoption is the person and work of Jesus Christ, including his eternal sonship and his redemptive death.
10. In relation to adoption, redemption is the act by which Christ paid the ransom price to deliver those enslaved to sin, enabling them to receive adoption as sons and daughters of God, as highlighted in Galatians 4:4-5.

## Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the relationship between God's holiness, justice, and love in the context of justifying ungodly sinners. How does the concept of propitiation address this complex issue?
2. Analyze the significance of the imputation of Christ's righteousness for the doctrine of justification. How does this concept differentiate Protestant theology from other understandings of salvation?
3. Compare and contrast the doctrines of justification and adoption as presented in the text. While distinct, how are these two aspects of salvation interconnected in the believer's experience?
4. Explore the biblical basis for understanding humanity's need for adoption beyond simply being "orphans." How does the concept of slavery to sin illuminate the significance of being adopted into God's family?
5. Evaluate the claim that Christ's death and resurrection are the "core, the heart, and the soul" of his saving work. How do other aspects of his saving work (Incarnation, Ascension, etc.) relate to this central truth in the context of justification and adoption?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Adoption:** God's gracious act whereby he brings believing sinners into his spiritual family, granting them the status, rights, and privileges of sons and daughters.
- **Alien Righteousness:** The righteousness of Christ, which is external to believers and is imputed to them by God through faith, forming the basis of their justification.
- **Basis of Justification:** The objective ground on which God declares sinners righteous, which is the perfect life, substitutionary death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Grace:** God's unmerited favor and love freely given to humanity, entirely apart from any human merit or effort; the ultimate source of salvation.
- **Imputation:** The act of God crediting or reckoning something to someone's account. In salvation, this includes the imputation of Adam's sin to humanity, humanity's sin to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to believers.
- **Justification:** The judicial act of God whereby he declares believing sinners righteous in his sight, not based on their own works, but on the righteousness of Christ imputed to them and received by faith alone.
- **Means of Justification:** The instrument through which believers receive the benefits of Christ's saving work and are united to him, which is faith alone.
- **Propitiation:** The act of appeasing or satisfying God's righteous wrath against sin through the sacrificial death of Christ.
- **Redemption:** Christ's act of purchasing or buying back sinners from the bondage of sin and the curse of the law through the payment of his own blood as a ransom.
- **Regeneration:** The work of the Holy Spirit whereby a spiritually dead person is made alive in Christ, receiving a new nature and the ability to believe.
- **Sanctification:** The ongoing process by which believers, through the power of the Holy Spirit, are progressively conformed to the image of Christ in their thoughts, desires, and actions.
- **Substitution:** The act of Christ taking the place of sinners, bearing the penalty for their sins on the cross, and fulfilling the demands of God's law on their behalf.

## 5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 14, Justification III -- Systematic Formulations & Adoption I, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on Justification and Adoption

**1. What is the foundational source and basis of justification according to the provided text?** The source of justification is God's grace, stemming from his immense love for humanity. The basis, however, is Christ's saving work, fundamentally his death and resurrection. These two events are the core of his accomplishment, satisfying God's justice and procuring righteousness for believers.

**2. How does the concept of propitiation relate to God's justice and love in the justification of sinners?** Scripture teaches that Christ's death is a propitiation, meaning it turns away God's wrath against sinners (Romans 3:25-26). This act demonstrates God's holiness and justice, as sin cannot be overlooked. Simultaneously, because God himself provided this propitiation through Christ's sacrifice, his love is also fully expressed in providing a way for sinners to be declared righteous while maintaining his moral integrity.

**3. What is the significance of the "imputation" of righteousness in the doctrine of justification?** The imputation of Christ's righteousness is the act by which God credits Christ's perfect righteousness to believers. This is distinct from any inherent moral improvement in the believer. Just as Adam's sin was imputed to humanity and our sin was imputed to Christ, Christ's righteousness is imputed to those who believe. This alien righteousness, external to ourselves, becomes the basis upon which God declares us just.

**4. What is the role of faith in the process of justification?** Faith is the means or instrument by which individuals receive God's grace and the benefits of Christ's saving work, including justification. We are not justified by works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ who atoned for our sins. Faith connects us to Christ, and through this union, we receive the imputation of his righteousness.

**5. How does the text distinguish justification from regeneration and progressive sanctification?**

Justification is a legal or forensic declaration by God, where he pronounces believers righteous based on Christ's imputed righteousness. Regeneration is the spiritual rebirth or being made alive in Christ, and progressive sanctification is the lifelong process of moral growth and becoming more like Christ. While justification does not involve moral transformation as its basis, it is never alone; those who are justified are also being transformed by God's grace through regeneration and sanctification. However, confusing these categories, especially defining justification in terms of transformation, is seen as problematic.

**6. What is the primary need that adoption addresses in the lives of believers?** The primary need for adoption is not merely being orphaned from God, but the bondage and slavery to sin that results from the fall. Through adoption, God graciously frees believers from this slavery and welcomes them into his family as sons and daughters, making them heirs.

**7. What is the ultimate source and the basis for the adoption of believers into God's family?** The ultimate source of adoption is God's love and the purpose of his will. Out of his great love, God predestined believers for adoption. The basis for this adoption is the person and work of Jesus Christ. As the eternal Son of God, Christ's death served as the redemption price necessary to free those enslaved to sin, allowing them to receive adoption as sons and daughters.

**8. How does the New Testament portray the reality of believers as children of God through adoption?** The New Testament emphasizes the wonder and glory of being God's child through adoption, highlighting God's amazing love and care. Believers are called to live in a way that reflects the character of their Father. This adoption is presented as an "already but not yet" reality; believers are presently adopted, but the fullness of this adoption will be realized with the resurrection and the granting of new bodies on the last day. The knowledge of God as Father is presented as central to Christian understanding and life.