

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 20, Preservation and Perseverance IV, Apostasy, Eternal Life Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Salvation, Session 20, Preservation and Perseverance IV, Apostasy, Eternal Life, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's Session 20 on **Salvation** explores the interconnected doctrines of **preservation, perseverance, assurance, and apostasy**, emphasizing their systematic formulation within biblical teaching. The lecture highlights the nuanced purpose of warning passages in Scripture, particularly in distinguishing true and false believers and underscoring the need for saints to persevere. Furthermore, the session examines **eternal life** as both a present possession and a future hope, culminating in the believer's **glorification**, a process of being restored to and characterized by God's glory, conformed to Christ's image, and dwelling in a renewed creation. Ultimately, Peterson underscores God's grace as the foundation for both the initiation and completion of salvation, including the believer's perseverance.

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Salvation, Session 20 – 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_
Session20.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 20, Preservation and Perseverance IV, Apostasy, Eternal Life

Briefing Document: Key Themes and Ideas from Dr. Peterson's "Salvation, Session 20"

Overview:

This session (Session 20) of Dr. Peterson's teaching on Salvation focuses on the interconnected doctrines of God's preservation of the saints, the necessity of the saints' perseverance, the theological concepts of assurance and apostasy, and concludes with an introduction to eternal life and glorification as they relate to salvation. Peterson emphasizes the importance of understanding these doctrines in relation to each other and within the larger framework of God's sovereignty and human responsibility.

Key Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Interrelation of Preservation, Perseverance, Assurance, and Apostasy:

- **God's Preservation and the Saints' Perseverance:** Peterson establishes that God preserves His saints, which is complemented by the biblical teaching that saints must persevere in faith, love, and holiness. He highlights that God assures His people of final salvation as they trust His Word, experience the internal witness of the Spirit, and witness His work in their lives.
- **Apostasy as a Departure from Professed Faith:** Apostasy is defined as "a departure from a previously professed faith," specifically in the Christian context, "a departure from a previously professed faith in Christ." Scripture contains warnings against apostasy.
- **Multiple Functions of Warning Passages:** Peterson argues that warning passages in the New Testament serve various purposes beyond simply warning against apostasy. These include:
- **Differentiating true from false believers:** *"The major function of warning passages in the New Testament is to distinguish true from false believers."* (referencing Matthew 7:16-23, Luke 8:4-15, John 15:1-8, Acts 8:13 & 20-24, Romans 8:13).
- **Uncovering deficient faith:** (referencing John 2:23-25, 1 Timothy 1:3-7 & 18-20, 2 Timothy 2:11-13).

- **Warning against refusing the Gospel:** (referencing Matthew 10:33, 1 Timothy 4:1-5, 2 Timothy 2:17-19).
- **Unmasking unsaved persons who seem saved:** (referencing 1 Timothy 5:8 & 11-12, 2 Peter 2:20-22, 1 John 5:16-17, Revelation 22:18-19).
- **Showing God's hatred of sin:** (referencing Acts 5:5-10, James 5:19-20).
- **Warning of disqualification from office:** (referencing 1 Corinthians 9:27).
- **Warning of temporal judgments:** (referencing 1 Corinthians 11:32).
- **Emphasizing the need for perseverance:** (referencing Colossians 1:23, Hebrews 6:4-8, Hebrews 10:26-38).
- **Biblical Warnings of Apostasy:** Peterson cites passages that warn of the danger of apostasy for those claiming to know Christ (Matthew 24:9-10, 1 Timothy 4:1, Hebrews 3:12). He emphasizes the important passage of 1 John 2:19: *"They went out from us, but they did not belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us."* This verse correlates preservation and apostasy, suggesting that those who truly belong to Christ will persevere.

2. The Mystery of God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility:

- Peterson argues that the correlation between God's preservation and the necessity of human perseverance cannot be perfectly systematized because it falls under the biblically revealed mystery of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. He draws a parallel to other essential tensions in Scripture like the Trinity and the two natures of Christ.
- He emphasizes that while God is sovereign and foreordains all things, humans are genuinely responsible for their beliefs and actions. *"It matters whether we believe in Christ or not. It matters as Christians whether we share the gospel or not. It matters whether we pray or not..."*
- He distinguishes God's sovereignty from fatalism, noting that God is a personal being with character, not an impersonal force. He also states that while human actions are significant, they cannot ultimately frustrate God's sovereign plan. *"So, the creature ultimately does not frustrate the creator's will."*
- Peterson concludes that God's preservation causes our perseverance, and perseverance is a fruit and evidence of God's keeping His people. *"Preservation causes perseverance... perseverance is the result of God's preservation."*

3. Scriptural Integration of the Doctrines:

- Peterson points out that the New Testament books often teach preservation, perseverance, and apostasy together, implying their intended interrelation. He provides examples from Luke, John, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, and 1 John.
- He emphasizes that the New Testament writers spoke of these doctrines without fear of contradiction, suggesting that they did not see the necessity of perseverance and warnings of apostasy as negating the truth of preservation, nor vice versa. *"They did not intend the necessity of perseverance and the warnings of apostasy to cancel the truth of preservation. They did not intend the truth of preservation to lessen the need for believers to persevere. They also did not intend their teaching of preservation to nullify the warnings of apostasy."*

4. Detailed Analysis of Hebrews 6:1-20:

- Peterson highlights Hebrews 6:1-20 as a key passage that ties together perseverance, apostasy, assurance, and preservation.
- He breaks down the passage:
- **Exhortation to persevere (6:1-3).**
- **Strong warning of apostasy (6:4-6).** *"For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who experience great spiritual blessings... and who have fallen away."*
- **Assurance for the majority of readers (6:7-10).** *"Even though we're speaking this way, dearly loved friends, in your case, we are confident of things that are better and that pertain to salvation."*
- **Exhortation to persevere to strengthen assurance (6:11-12).**
- **Strong assurance of preservation (6:13-20).** This section emphasizes God's promise, oath, unchangeable resolve, veracity, the anchor of the soul, and Christ as our forerunner in heaven.
- Peterson concludes that putting preservation last and treating it extensively in Hebrews underscores that genuine believers cannot fall away, and that exhortations to persevere and warnings of apostasy are compatible with God's preservation.

5. The Role of Grace in Preservation and Perseverance:

- Peterson concludes the section by emphasizing that God's grace is the beginning, middle, and end of our salvation. *"God's grace begins it, and God's grace will complete it."*
- He quotes Charles Haddon Spurgeon: *"We will persevere in holiness because God perseveres in grace... between here and heaven, every minute that the Christian lives will be a minute of grace."*
- He highlights how God's grace provides boldness, fosters repentance and holiness, enables service, and fortifies in weakness, citing Titus 2:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 15:11.

6. Introduction to Eternal Life and Glorification:

- Peterson notes that the session moves beyond the application of salvation to discuss eternal life and glorification.
- **Eternal Life:** While the Old Testament primarily refers to physical life and blessing, the New Testament, particularly Johannine writings, emphasizes that believers enjoy eternal life *now*, even before its full consummation at the resurrection.
- **Glorification:** This is primarily a future blessing when Christ returns, though 2 Corinthians 3:18 indicates a present aspect of progressing from glory to glory. Glorification is guaranteed for those who are foreknown, predestined, called, and justified, and its ultimate purpose is God's eternal praise.

7. Systematic Formulations of Eternal Life and Glorification:

Peterson provides a brief outline of key aspects:

- **Restored to glory:** Humanity was created for God's glory but fell short. Salvation restores us as image bearers to participate in and reflect God's glory (Romans 1:18-31, 3:23, 8:28-30, 9:23, 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- **Characterized by glory (past, present, and future):** Believers have been given glory (John 17:22), are being transformed into glory (2 Corinthians 3:18), and await future glory (Romans 5:2, Titus 2:13, 1 Peter 4:13, Romans 8:19-23, 2 Peter 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).
- **Conformed to Christ's image:** The tarnished image of God in humanity is gradually restored in Christ (Colossians 3:9-10, Ephesians 2:22-24) and will be perfected at Christ's return (Philippians 3:21, Colossians 3:4).

- **Participation in Christ's glory:** Resurrected saints will see Christ's glory, be transformed by it, and partake in it (Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17, John 17:24, Philippians 3:21, 1 John 3:2, 1 Peter 5:2, Romans 9:23, Hebrews 2:10).
- **Alive with glorified bodies:** Glorification involves the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23) with continuity and discontinuity with our present bodies, becoming imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual (1 Corinthians 15:42-54).
- **Dwelling in a renewed creation:** Believers are a microcosm of the final redemption of the cosmos, which will be set free from corruption (Romans 8:21, Revelation 22:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Peter 3:13).

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson emphasizes the crucial interplay between God's preservation and the believer's perseverance, acknowledging the mystery inherent in the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. He highlights the multifaceted nature of biblical warning passages and underscores the assurance of salvation rooted in God's grace. The session concludes by introducing the future aspects of salvation in eternal life and glorification, emphasizing the transformative power of God's glory in the lives of believers and the cosmos.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 20, Preservation and Perseverance IV, Apostasy, Eternal Life

Study Guide: Preservation, Perseverance, Apostasy, Eternal Life, and Glory

Key Concepts and Definitions

Preservation: God's act of keeping believers secure in their salvation so that they do not totally and finally fall away from the faith.

Perseverance: The believer's ongoing commitment and endurance in faith, love, and holiness until the end of their lives. This is understood as a result of God's preservation.

Assurance: The believer's confidence, grounded in God's promises, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, and the observation of God's work in their lives, that they possess final salvation.

Apostasy: A departure from a previously professed faith in Christ. The New Testament warns against this, and those who ultimately apostatize demonstrate they were never genuinely saved.

Eternal Life: In the New Testament, this term refers both to the present possession of a qualitatively new life in relationship with God through Christ and to the future enjoyment of unending life with God in glory after the resurrection. John emphasizes the present aspect, while other New Testament writers often focus on the eschatological dimension.

Glory: In the context of salvation, glory refers to the splendor and beauty that believers will fully possess in the future when Christ returns. This includes being restored to God's image, conformed to Christ's likeness with glorified bodies, and participating in Christ's own glory in a renewed creation. While primarily future, believers experience a foretaste of this glory in the present through the Holy Spirit.

Systematic Formulation: The process of organizing and interrelating biblical doctrines in a coherent and logical manner. While the Bible does not provide a complete systematic theology, it partially systematizes certain doctrines like preservation and apostasy.

Divine Sovereignty: God's ultimate authority, control, and power over all things, including salvation. He foreordains and accomplishes his will.

Human Responsibility: The accountability of human beings for their choices and actions, including their response to the Gospel and their living out their faith.

Fatalism: The belief that all events are predetermined and inevitable, leaving no room for genuine human choice or God's personal involvement. This is contrasted with biblical sovereignty, which recognizes God as a personal being who works through providence.

Eschaton: The final period of history, often referring to the end times, the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the establishment of God's eternal kingdom.

Short-Answer Quiz

1. Define apostasy in the Christian context and explain the significance of warnings against it in Scripture.
2. According to the source, what is the primary function of warning passages in the New Testament? Provide one biblical example used to support this function.
3. Explain the relationship between God's preservation and the believer's perseverance as presented in the text. Which is the cause and which is the result?
4. What is the tension or mystery discussed in relation to preservation and perseverance? How does the source suggest we navigate this tension?
5. Describe the New Testament understanding of eternal life, highlighting the difference in emphasis between John's writings and other New Testament books.
6. According to the text, is glorification primarily a present reality or a future hope for believers? Provide a biblical reference that supports your answer.
7. Explain how the concept of being created in God's image relates to the doctrine of glorification. What was lost and what is being restored?
8. What are some of the characteristics of the glorified bodies that believers will possess according to 1 Corinthians 15:42-54?
9. How does the redemption of believers relate to the future renewal of creation, according to Romans 8:21?
10. How does Hebrews 6:1-20 illustrate the correlation between perseverance, apostasy, assurance, and preservation?

Answer Key for Quiz

1. Apostasy in the Christian context is a departure from a previously professed faith in Christ. Warnings against apostasy in Scripture serve multiple functions, a major one being to differentiate true from false believers, revealing those who were never genuinely saved.

2. The major function of warning passages in the New Testament is to distinguish true from false believers. An example provided is Matthew 7:16-23, where Jesus says you will recognize false prophets by their fruit.
3. God's preservation is the ultimate cause of the believer's perseverance. Perseverance is understood as the fruit, result, and sometimes the evidence of God's keeping his people saved.
4. The tension lies in correlating God's sovereignty in preserving his people and the human responsibility to persevere in faith. The source suggests we acknowledge this as a mystery, similar to the Trinity, holding both truths in tension and avoiding errors on either side (fatalism vs. absolute human power).
5. In the New Testament, eternal life refers to both a present reality – a new quality of life enjoyed now through faith in Christ (emphasized by John) – and a future hope of unending life with God in glory after the eschaton (emphasized in other writings).
6. While 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks of a present progression "from glory to glory," glorification in the New Testament is primarily a future blessing awaiting believers at Christ's return, as promised in passages like Titus 2:13 and 1 Peter 4:13.
7. Humans were created in God's image to reflect his glory, but this was tarnished in the fall. Through salvation and union with Christ, believers are being restored as full image bearers, ultimately participating in and reflecting the glory they were originally intended for.
8. According to 1 Corinthians 15:42-54, resurrected bodies will be imperishable, glorious, powerful, immortal, physical (but ruled by the Spirit), in contrast to the perishable, inglorious, weak, and mortal nature of our current bodies.
9. Believers are seen as a microcosm of the final redemption of the cosmos. Just as believers will be set free and perfected, the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of God's children (Romans 8:21), fulfilling God's purpose for it.
10. Hebrews 6:1-20 presents an exhortation to persevere, a strong warning of apostasy, assurance for the majority of believers, and strong assurance of God's preservation. It illustrates how these doctrines are intertwined in pastoral care, with warnings and encouragement serving to both test and strengthen genuine faith within the context of God's preserving grace.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in the context of salvation, particularly as it relates to the doctrines of preservation and perseverance. How does the source address the potential tensions between these two truths?
2. Analyze the various functions of warning passages in the New Testament, as outlined in the source material. How do these warnings relate to the assurance of believers and the reality of apostasy?
3. Compare and contrast the New Testament perspectives on eternal life, focusing on the present and future dimensions as presented by different authors and passages.
4. Explore the concept of glorification as presented in the source, detailing its past, present, and future aspects. How does glorification relate to the restoration of humanity to God's image and their participation in Christ's glory?
5. Examine how the author of Hebrews integrates the doctrines of preservation, perseverance, assurance, and apostasy in Hebrews 6:1-20. What pastoral purposes might this integrated approach serve within a church community?

Glossary of Key Terms

Apostolic Urging: Strong encouragement or exhortation given by the apostles in the New Testament.

Consummator: One who brings something to completion or perfection. In the context of salvation, God is the one who will ultimately complete the work he began.

Discreetly: Separately or individually. The lecture dealt with different doctrines of salvation individually before correlating them.

Eschatological: Relating to the end times or the final events of history.

Exegesis: The critical interpretation and explanation of a text, especially of sacred scripture.

Fatalism: The belief that all events are predetermined by fate and cannot be changed.

Foreknown: To be known by God beforehand, often referring to God's selection of those who will be saved.

Johannine Writings: The books of the New Testament attributed to the Apostle John: the Gospel of John, the three Epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation.

Minister (verb): To give help or service. In a theological context, it often refers to caring for the spiritual needs of others.

Nullify: To make legally void or ineffective; to cancel out.

Proximate Causes: Immediate or near causes, as opposed to ultimate causes.

Typologically: Interpreting Old Testament events, persons, or institutions as prefiguring or foreshadowing New Testament realities.

Veracity: Conformity to facts; truthfulness.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 20, Preservation and Perseverance IV, Apostasy, Eternal Life, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Preservation, Perseverance, Apostasy, Eternal Life, and Glory

1. How are God's preservation of believers and the believers' perseverance related?

God's preservation and believers' perseverance are intrinsically linked. God's preservation is the ultimate cause of a believer's perseverance in faith, love, and holiness. Conversely, a believer's perseverance is seen as a fruit, a result, and sometimes evidence of God's preserving grace in their life. This relationship is causal; God's act of keeping His people secure in salvation leads to their ongoing faithfulness.

2. What is apostasy in a Christian context, and what does the New Testament say about it?

Apostasy is defined as a departure from a previously professed faith in Christ. The New Testament contains warnings about apostasy, indicating that some who outwardly claim to be believers will fall away. Passages like Matthew 24:9-10, 1 Timothy 4:1, and Hebrews 3:12 caution against this. However, it's important to note that those who genuinely belong to Christ will ultimately persevere and not apostatize, as highlighted in 1 John 2:19.

3. What are the primary functions of warning passages in the New Testament?

Warning passages in the New Testament serve multiple crucial functions beyond simply cautioning against apostasy. A major function is to differentiate between true and false believers. They also serve to uncover deficient faith, warn against refusing the Gospel, unmask unsaved individuals who appear to be saved, show God's hatred of sin, warn against disqualification from church office, warn of temporal judgments, and emphasize the necessity of perseverance.

4. How do the doctrines of preservation and the warnings against apostasy coexist in Scripture?

The coexistence of God's preservation of believers and the warnings against apostasy highlights the mystery of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Scripture teaches both that God sovereignly keeps His people from ultimate falling away and that believers are responsible to persevere in faith. The warnings act as a means by which God

preserves His people, distinguishing the genuine from the false and urging true believers toward continued faithfulness. These two truths are held in tension, much like other biblical mysteries.

5. What is the biblical understanding of eternal life, and when do believers possess it?

In the Old Testament, "life" primarily referred to physical life and blessing, with eternal life foreshadowed. In the New Testament, outside of John's writings, eternal life often looks forward to the eschaton, the age to come. However, John emphasizes that believers possess eternal life in the present age as a present reality and anticipation of the future consummation at the resurrection. This life is given to those who trust and follow Jesus Christ.

6. What is glorification, according to the New Testament, and what does it entail for believers?

Glorification in the New Testament is primarily a future blessing when Christ returns, although 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks of a present aspect of being transformed from glory to glory. Future glorification involves believers receiving their full glory, being conformed to Christ's image with resurrected and glorified bodies, and dwelling in a renewed creation. This glory is guaranteed for those whom God has called and is ultimately for God's praise.

7. How are believers currently characterized by glory, and what is the future aspect of this glory?

Believers are characterized by glory in the past (given Christ's glory), present (being transformed from glory to glory), and future (awaiting the fullness of glory at Christ's return and the renewal of the cosmos). John 17:22 indicates that Christ has given believers the glory the Father gave Him. 2 Corinthians 3:18 describes the ongoing transformation into Christ's image. Romans 5:2 and Titus 2:13 speak of the future hope of glory at Christ's appearing.

8. In what ways will believers participate in Christ's glory in the future?

In the future, glorification means resurrected saints will see Christ's glory and be transformed by it, thus partaking in His glory. Passages like 2 Corinthians 4:17 and John 17:24 indicate that God will produce an incomparable eternal weight of glory for believers, and they will behold Christ's glory. This vision will transform them, as Philippians 3:21 and 1 John 3:2 suggest, allowing them to share in His glory (1 Peter 5:2).