

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 2, Biblical Soundings Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 2, Biblical Soundings, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's "Theology Proper, Session 2, Biblical Soundings" explores the doctrine of God through a survey of key biblical passages. The lecture begins by framing God within the grand narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation, emphasizing God's role as author and central character. **Peterson examines Old Testament texts like Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Nehemiah, and Daniel to highlight God's attributes as creator, covenant Lord, redeemer, and one who is compassionate, just, and faithful.** The session also considers Jesus' model prayer in Matthew and Jude's exhortation, which together underscore God's holiness, love, provision, and triune nature. **This initial exploration lays the groundwork for a more systematic understanding of God, specifically moving towards the doctrine of the Trinity.**

2. 25 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 2 – 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 → Theology Proper: God).



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3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 2, Biblical Soundings

Briefing Document: Biblical Soundings on the Doctrine of God

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented in Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture, "Theology Proper, Session 2, Biblical Soundings." In this session, Dr. Peterson lays the groundwork for the doctrine of the Trinity by examining key biblical passages that reveal the nature and character of God. He emphasizes God's role in the grand narrative of Scripture (creation, fall, redemption, and new creation), his attributes as seen in selected Old and New Testament texts, and introduces the foundational concept of the Trinity as presented in Jude.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Theology Proper and God in the Biblical Story:

- "Theology proper is the doctrine of God himself." Dr. Peterson defines theology as the study of God and theology proper as specifically focusing on God's being and nature.
- The Bible is presented as "the grand story of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation, or consummation," with God as both the author and the main character.
- God's roles within this story are highlighted: Creator, Covenant Lord (offended by rebellion), Redeemer (in Jesus), and Victor (ensuring justice and new creation).
- God's creation is ex nihilo (from nothing), accomplished freely, graciously, and powerfully by his word (Genesis 1, Psalm 33:6, 9: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made... For he spoke, and it came to be").
- God not only creates but also preserves and governs his creation through his word (Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:3, emphasizing Christ's role in this). These two aspects are defined as **providence**: preservation (maintaining the world) and government (directing it towards his purposes - Ephesians 1:9-10).
- The creation of humanity in God's image is highlighted as the crown of creation, with the purpose of knowing, loving, and serving God and acting as stewards of creation.

- The fall of Adam and Eve disrupted these relationships and brought disorder, necessitating God's promise of redemption (Proto-Evangelion in Genesis 3:15).
- God alone is creator, sustainer, and savior, establishing covenants (with Abraham, leading to Israel) culminating in the sending of his Son, Jesus Christ, for redemption.
- The ultimate consummation will be God dwelling with his people in a new heaven and new earth, free from pain and death (Revelation 21:1-4).

1. **God in Selected Passages:**

- Dr. Peterson emphasizes the importance of examining biblical passages to gain a foundational understanding of God before systematizing theological doctrines.
- **Genesis 1:** Portrays God as the sovereign King who decrees and creates, unique and distinct from his creation, inherently good, personal, and active in his creation. This stands against naturalism, atheism, animism, pantheism, panentheism, and deism.
- Naturalism: "Naturalism is the view that all there is, is nature. Naturalism is thus anti-supernaturalistic."
- Pantheism: "Pantheism confuses God and his creation. Indeed, everything is God, and God is part of everything."
- Deism: "The view that God created and then abandoned the world, built into it principles to run on its own."
- Dualism: "Dualism is the view that there is indeed a God, but that good and evil are eternal principles."
- **Exodus 3:13-15 (The Burning Bush):** God reveals his name, "I am who I am" (Yahweh/LORD), signifying his sovereign freedom and covenant faithfulness. "This revelation to Moses... is weighty because with it, God proclaims his identity by his own word forever."
- **Exodus 19-20 (The Ten Commandments):** Reveals God's covenant faithfulness and love, his will for his people's lives reflecting his nature (holiness, goodness, generosity, truth, love). God calls Israel to be his "treasured possession," "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," highlighting his missionary heart.
- **Exodus 34:5-8 (God's Proclamation to Moses):** A foundational passage revealing God's character: "The Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger

and abounding in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin, but he will not leave the guilty unpunished..." This emphasizes God's mercy and grace, his patience, his holiness and justice, and his overflowing love and covenantal tenacity.

- **Psalms 139:** Expresses God's omniscience, omnipresence, and his personal and intimate knowledge of and involvement with his people from conception. "God wondrously, wonderfully makes us and plans each of our days before birth." It highlights the personal nature of God's attributes – he is not just all-knowing, but knows *us*.
- **Psalms 145:** A psalm of praise extolling God's greatness, righteousness, compassion, power, faithfulness, and loving-kindness. It echoes Exodus 34:6-7 ("The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and great in faithful love") and emphasizes God's goodness and generosity to all creation, while also showing his different response to the godly and the ungodly.
- **Nehemiah 9:** A prayer of confession and worship summarizing redemptive history, highlighting both God's compassionate deeds and his people's repeated rebellion. It reiterates God's attributes of righteousness, faithfulness, forgiveness, grace, compassion, slowness to anger, and abundant faithful love, echoing Exodus 34. The people enter into a "binding agreement in writing... and make a vow of faithfulness, quote, to the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God who keeps his gracious covenant."
- **Daniel 9:** Daniel's prayer of confession acknowledging Israel's sins and appealing to God's faithfulness, righteousness, compassion, and forgiveness, even in the face of their obstinacy. The appeal is based on God's character and his name being associated with his people and city.
- **Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord's Prayer):** Jesus teaches about God as "our Father who is in heaven," highlighting his personal and authoritative relationship with his people. The prayer touches on God's holiness, kingdom, will, provision, forgiveness, and deliverance from evil, revealing aspects of his love and how we can honor him.
- **Jude 20-21:** Concludes the survey by introducing the Trinity. Jude exhorts believers to "pray in the Holy Spirit, to remain in the love of God the Father, and to wait... expectantly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." This passage teaches the deity of the Father, Son, and Spirit by ascribing to each roles that only God can fulfill.

1. Introduction to the Trinity:

- The lecture concludes by setting the stage for the doctrine of the Trinity, identifying Jude 20-21 as a key passage demonstrating the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Each person of the Trinity is presented in a context of divine action and expectation, indicating their shared divine nature.

Key Quotes:

- "Theology proper is the doctrine of God himself."
- "The Bible is the grand story of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation, or consummation."
- "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made. And by the breath of his mouth, all their host." (Psalm 33:6)
- "He upholds all things by his powerful word or by the word of his power." (Hebrews 1:3)
- "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Revelation 4:11)
- "I am who I am... This is my name forever." (Exodus 3:14-15)
- "The Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth..." (Exodus 34:6)
- "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:17)
- "...pray in the Holy Spirit, to remain in the love of God the Father, and to wait... expectantly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Jude 20-21)

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's "Biblical Soundings" session provides a crucial foundation for understanding the doctrine of God. By surveying key passages from both the Old and New Testaments, he highlights God's multifaceted nature as Creator, Covenant Lord, Redeemer, and King. He emphasizes God's attributes of power, wisdom, goodness, holiness, justice, love, grace, and faithfulness, demonstrating their consistent portrayal throughout Scripture. The session concludes by introducing the Trinity as the next topic of study, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of the triune nature of God.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 2, Biblical Soundings

Theology Proper: Biblical Soundings Study Guide

Key Concepts and Themes

- **Theology Proper:** The doctrine specifically concerning God himself, distinct from other theological topics.
- **Biblical Story:** The overarching narrative of Scripture: creation, fall, redemption, and new creation/consummation, with God as the author and main character.
- **God as Creator:** God's unique and powerful act of bringing the universe into existence *ex nihilo* (without pre-existing materials) through his word.
- **Providence:** God's ongoing activity in the world, encompassing both preservation (sustaining creation) and government (directing it towards his purposes).
- **Image of God:** Humanity's unique creation in God's likeness, enabling them to know, love, and serve him and to steward his creation.
- **Fall:** Adam and Eve's rebellion against God, resulting in broken relationships and disorder in creation.
- **Redemption:** God's merciful plan to save humanity from sin and its consequences, culminating in Jesus Christ.
- **Covenant:** God's binding agreements with humanity (e.g., Abraham, Mosaic), demonstrating his faithfulness and love.
- **The "I Am":** God's self-revelation to Moses in Exodus 3:14, signifying his eternal existence, sovereign freedom, and covenant faithfulness (Yahweh).
- **God's Character:** The attributes of God revealed in Scripture, such as compassion, grace, slowness to anger, faithfulness, love, justice, holiness, and power.
- **God's Names:** Reflecting his character and identity (e.g., Yahweh, Lord).
- **Personal God:** The biblical portrayal of God as actively involved in his creation and in relationship with his people.
- **Transcendence and Immanence:** God's being above and beyond his creation (transcendence) while also being present and active within it (immanence).

- **Opposition to False Doctrines:** The biblical understanding of God stands in contrast to naturalism, atheism, animism, pantheism, panentheism, deism, and dualism.
- **The Trinity (Introduction):** The foundational understanding that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each being God.

Quiz

1. Describe the scope of "Theology Proper" as defined in the source material. How does it relate to the broader field of theology?
2. Explain the two key aspects of God's providence. Provide a brief example of each from the biblical narrative.
3. What does it mean for humanity to be created in the "image of God"? What were some of the initial purposes given to humanity?
4. Summarize the significance of God's revelation of his name as "I Am" to Moses in Exodus 3:13-15. What does this name reveal about God's nature?
5. According to the text, how does God's desire to bless his people relate to his justice and his response to sin, as seen in Exodus and other Old Testament passages?
6. Explain the difference between pantheism and deism in their understanding of God's relationship with the world. How does the biblical view contrast with both?
7. How does Psalm 139 illustrate both the universal attributes of God and his personal relationship with individuals? Provide one example of each.
8. What does Exodus 34:6-7 reveal about the core characteristics of God's nature? Why is this passage considered foundational?
9. Summarize the main themes of Jesus' model prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 and what these petitions reveal about God as Father and King.
10. How does the passage from Jude (verses 20-21) offer an initial glimpse into the doctrine of the Trinity? What roles are attributed to each person?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Theology Proper is the specific doctrine of God himself, focusing on his being, attributes, and nature. It forms the foundation of all other theological studies because all theology ultimately concerns God and our relationship with him.

2. The two aspects of providence are preservation and government. Preservation is God's ongoing sustenance of his creation, ensuring it continues to exist (Colossians 1:17). Government is God's active direction of the world and its events according to his will and purposes (Ephesians 1:9-10).
3. Being created in the "image of God" means humanity uniquely reflects God's nature, possessing capacities for relationship, knowledge, righteousness, and dominion. Initially, humans were created to know, love, and serve God, and to exercise stewardship over the rest of creation.
4. God's revelation as "I Am" (Yahweh) signifies his eternal and self-existent being, independent of creation. It also conveys his sovereign freedom and his unwavering covenant faithfulness to his people, as demonstrated through his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
5. While God is just and must punish sin (as seen in his judgment in the Old Testament), his desire is ultimately to bless his people and show them faithful love, often extending for many generations to those who love him and keep his commandments (Exodus 20:6). Judgment is presented as his "strange work."
6. Pantheism wrongly identifies God with his creation, asserting that everything is God. Deism, on the other hand, posits that God created the world but then abandoned it to run on its own principles. The biblical view affirms both God's distinctness from creation and his active presence and involvement within it through creation and providence.
7. Psalm 139 illustrates God's universal attributes by declaring him all-knowing (omniscient) and everywhere present (omnipresent). It demonstrates his personal relationship by David's intimate reflections on God's knowledge of him and his constant presence in David's life.
8. Exodus 34:6-7 reveals foundational characteristics of God's nature: he is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love and truth, and forgiving of iniquity, rebellion, and sin. It is foundational because it is a self-proclamation by God of his core identity and has significant influence on the rest of the Old Testament's portrayal of him.
9. The main themes of Jesus' prayer include hallowing God's name, the coming of his kingdom, the doing of his will on earth, the provision of daily needs, forgiveness, and deliverance from evil. These petitions reveal God as a holy Father

in heaven, a sovereign King with a coming kingdom, a provider, a forgiver, and a protector.

10. Jude 20-21 implies the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by ascribing to each a role that only God can fulfill: praying in the Holy Spirit, remaining in the love of God the Father, and expectantly waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the biblical narrative (creation, fall, redemption, new creation) for understanding the character and actions of God. How does God's role in each stage reveal different facets of his nature?
2. Analyze the concept of covenant in the Old Testament and its importance in revealing God's relationship with humanity. How do specific covenants (e.g., Abrahamic, Mosaic) demonstrate God's faithfulness and purposes?
3. Compare and contrast the biblical understanding of God with two other worldviews or philosophical positions discussed in the text (e.g., pantheism and deism). What are the key points of divergence, and why does the biblical perspective matter?
4. Explore how the Psalms, particularly Psalms 139 and 145, portray the multifaceted nature of God. How do these songs of praise balance God's transcendence and immanence, his power and his compassion?
5. Examine the self-revelation of God in Exodus 3 and 34. What are the key aspects of God's character and identity revealed in these passages, and why are they considered central to understanding the doctrine of God?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Atheism:** The disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God or gods.
- **Animism:** The belief that natural objects, natural phenomena, and the universe itself possess souls or spirits.
- **Covenant:** A solemn agreement between two or more parties, often involving mutual obligations and promises. In theology, it often refers to God's binding agreements with humanity.

- **Deism:** The belief that God created the universe but has since remained indifferent to it, allowing it to operate according to natural laws without divine intervention.
- **Dualism:** In theology, the belief in two eternally opposing principles or powers, often good and evil, that govern the universe.
- **Ex Nihilo:** Latin for "out of nothing," referring to the theological doctrine that God created the universe without pre-existing materials.
- **Immanence (of God):** The theological doctrine that God is present and actively involved within his creation.
- **Naturalism:** A philosophical viewpoint according to which everything arises from natural properties and causes, and supernatural or spiritual explanations are excluded or discounted.
- **Omnipresence (of God):** The attribute of God being present everywhere simultaneously.
- **Omniscience (of God):** The attribute of God having unlimited knowledge; knowing everything.
- **Panentheism:** The belief that God encompasses and interpenetrates the universe, so that every part of the universe is in God, but God is more than the universe.
- **Pantheism:** The belief that God is identical with the universe; everything is part of God.
- **Providence (of God):** God's foreknowledge, active involvement, and supreme governance over all things in the universe, including preservation and government.
- **Redemptive History:** The narrative of God's saving acts in history, culminating in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- **Theology Proper:** The branch of systematic theology that specifically focuses on the doctrine of God, his nature, attributes, and works (excluding creation).
- **Transcendence (of God):** The theological doctrine that God is infinitely above and beyond his creation, distinct from it and not limited by it.
- **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that there is one God who exists eternally as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 2, Biblical Soundings, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Exploring the Nature and Actions of God in Scripture

1. What is "Theology Proper" as discussed in this session?

Theology Proper refers to the specific study and doctrine of God himself, in contrast to the broader field of theology which encompasses all aspects of the study of God and his relationship with creation. This session focuses on understanding God's identity and character as revealed in the biblical narrative and through specific scriptural passages.

2. How is God presented within the overarching narrative of the Bible?

The Bible presents God as the central figure and author of the grand story of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. He is the planner of this story from eternity past, the primary character whose actions and relationships with humanity drive the narrative, and ultimately the victor who will bring about the consummation of his purposes and a new creation.

3. What does the Bible reveal about God as the Creator?

The Bible consistently portrays God as the sole Creator of everything that exists, bringing the universe into being freely, graciously, and powerfully through his word, without relying on any pre-existing materials. He is distinct from his creation, sovereign over it, and his creative work is declared to be good. Furthermore, God not only creates but also preserves and governs his creation through his powerful word (often associated with Christ in the New Testament).

4. What are the key attributes of God highlighted in the selected biblical passages?

The passages explored reveal numerous attributes of God, including his sovereign freedom and faithfulness ("I Am"), his loving, just, and jealous nature as a lawgiver, his immeasurable greatness, his glorious and gracious name (Yahweh, the covenant Lord), his omniscience and omnipresence (especially for his people), his role as the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps covenant, his patience and abundance in love, his role as a forgiving yet firm Father, his compassion and grace, his holiness, his truthfulness, his generosity, his righteousness, and his role as Redeemer.

5. How does God relate to humanity according to these biblical soundings?

God creates humanity in his image, intending for them to know, love, and serve him and to steward his creation. Despite human rebellion, God initiates redemption, promising a savior. He enters into covenant relationships with individuals like Abraham and the nation of Israel, demonstrating his commitment to be their God and for them to be his people. He delivers, guides, provides for, and disciplines his people, revealing a deep personal involvement in their lives.

6. How does the Old Testament concept of God's covenant faithfulness (especially in Exodus and Nehemiah) inform our understanding of his character?

Passages like Exodus 3 and 34, as well as Nehemiah 9, emphasize God's covenant faithfulness despite human unfaithfulness. He reveals himself as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in faithful love and truth. While he justly punishes sin, his desire is to bless and forgive. His covenant relationship with his people is a testament to his steadfast love and commitment to his promises across generations.

7. What does the New Testament, particularly the teachings of Jesus and the Epistle of Jude, add to our understanding of God?

Jesus' model prayer in Matthew 6 reveals God as our personal and loving Father, who is both transcendent and immanent, holy yet relational, a king with a kingdom, sovereign, good, gracious, and our deliverer from evil. Jude 20-21 uniquely highlights the Trinity, teaching that the Father, Son (Jesus Christ our Lord), and Holy Spirit are each God, as believers are to pray in the Holy Spirit, remain in the love of God the Father, and wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life.

8. How do these biblical soundings caution against specific misunderstandings of God's nature?

These passages actively counter various non-biblical views of God. They refute naturalism and atheism by establishing God as the sole creator. They distinguish God from his creation, opposing animism and pantheism. They assert God's infinitude against panentheism. They emphasize God's personal involvement and activity in the world, contradicting deism. Finally, they affirm God's ultimate goodness against dualistic notions of co-eternal good and evil.