

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 6, The Father is God 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 6, The Father is God, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's "The Father is God," session six of his Theology Proper lectures, systematically argues for the deity of God the Father. Drawing from scripture, Peterson presents evidence through divine titles ascribed to the Father, his unique relationship with the incarnate Christ, the attribution of divine qualities, the worship he receives, and the divine actions he performs. He emphasizes that while the Father's Godhood is often assumed, the scriptures explicitly reveal and confirm it through various angles. The lecture aims to solidify the understanding that the Father is not merely related to God, but is fully and truly God, a foundational element for comprehending the Trinity. Peterson uses biblical passages and theological reasoning to build an "irresistible conclusion" regarding the Father's divine nature.

2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 6 – 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 6, The Father is God

Briefing Document: "The Father is God" - Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper, Session 6

Executive Summary:

In Session 6 of his "Theology Proper" lectures, Dr. Robert A. Peterson focuses on establishing the biblical truth that "the Father is God." He argues that while this may seem self-evident and is often assumed, Scripture provides ample evidence to support this claim. Peterson systematically presents various lines of evidence, including divine titles ascribed to the Father, His unique relationship with the Son (particularly the incarnate Christ), the possession of divine attributes, the reception of worship, and the performance of divine deeds. The session emphasizes the importance of grounding theological understanding in scriptural exegesis and aims to move beyond mere assumptions to a robust, biblically informed understanding of the Father's deity within the context of the developing doctrine of the Trinity.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

1. The Father's Deity as a Foundation for Trinitarian Doctrine:

- Peterson outlines seven statements as a framework for building a doctrine of the Trinity from Scripture. The second statement is: "the Father is God."
- He emphasizes that this affirmation is crucial, building upon the first statement: "There is one God."
- The subsequent statements (the Holy Spirit is God, their inseparable yet distinct nature, their mutual indwelling, and their unity and equality) depend on establishing the individual deity of each person within the Trinity.
- Quote: "After having surveyed the historical theology of the Trinity, there is one God... Number two, the Father is God."

2. Scriptural Evidence for the Father's Deity:

- Peterson argues that the Father's deity is evident through multiple avenues in Scripture, which are often neglected due to being assumed.
- These avenues include:
- **Divine Titles:** The Scripture explicitly ascribes titles to the Father that belong only to God.
- Examples: "Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25), "Holy Father, Righteous Father" (John 17), "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3), "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glorious Father" (Ephesians 1:17), "one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:6), "our God and Father" (James 3:9, Philippians 4:20, Ephesians 5:20).
- Quote: "The Scripture truly ascribes to the Father divine titles. Therefore, the Father is God."
- **His Relation to Christ:** The unique relationship between the Father and the Son, particularly the incarnate Christ, demonstrates the Father's deity.
- The Father announces Jesus as His Son at the baptism (Matthew 3).
- The reciprocal, inherent, divine knowledge between the Father and the Son (Matthew 11).
- The Father sends the Son into the world for salvation (John 3:17).
- The Father gives the Son authority (John 17:2, Revelation 2:27), words (John 12:49-50), and work to do (John 17:4).
- The Son obeys the Father (John 5:30, 6:38, etc.) and prays to Him (John 14:16-17).
- Peterson clarifies that while the incarnate Son has a God (the Father), this does not negate the Son's own deity (as seen in Hebrews 1).
- Quote: "The Father's very relation to Christ shows the Father's true deity. The Father gives the Son authority. You cannot reverse that statement."
- **Divine Attributes:** The Father possesses attributes that are unique to God.
- Examples: Self-existence (John 5:26), infinite understanding (Psalm 147:5), omnipresence (Jeremiah 23:23-24), omniscience (Isaiah 40:28), eternality (Psalm

90:2), righteousness (John 17:25), sovereignty (Matthew 11:25), knowledge (Matthew 6:8), generosity (Matthew 5:45), mercy (Luke 6:36), faithfulness (James 1:17), love (John 3:16).

- Quote: "There are certain qualities that God alone possesses. Scripture ascribes those qualities to the God, the Father. Therefore, the Father is God."
- **Receiving Worship:** The Father is the recipient of worship that is due to God alone.
- Examples: Praise (James 3:9), glory (Philippians 4:20), thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:20), being the object of religious devotion (James 1:27), baptism performed in His name (Matthew 28:19), believers living for Him (1 Corinthians 8:6), fellowship with Him (1 John 1:3), and prayer addressed to Him (Ephesians 3:14-17).
- Quote: "The father receives worship that belongs only to God. His people give him praise..."
- **Divine Deeds:** The Father performs actions that only God can perform.
- Examples: Creation (1 Corinthians 8:6), sending His Son for salvation (1 John 4:14), sending the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), giving believers new birth (1 Peter 1:3), giving grace and peace (Romans 1:7, 2 John 3), commanding obedience (2 John 4), comforting in affliction (2 Corinthians 1:3), raising the dead (John 5:21), and judging impartially (1 Peter 1:17).
- Quote: "There are certain deeds only God does. The Father does those deeds. Therefore, the Father is God."

3. The Interplay Between Systematic Theology and Exegesis:

- Peterson highlights the reciprocal relationship between systematic theology and biblical exegesis.
- Sound systematic theology must be based on careful exegesis of Scripture.
- Conversely, understanding systematic theology can enhance exegesis by helping believers recognize themes and truths they might have previously overlooked.
- He uses the example of the "Christus Victor" theme in the doctrine of the atonement to illustrate how systematic understanding can illuminate biblical passages.

- Quote: "Not only should systematics be built upon exegesis, but it should stimulate exegetical understanding by helping people understand what is there as they understand the teachings of the Bible..."

4. Addressing Potential Misunderstandings:

- Peterson clarifies that the Father being God does not negate the deity of the Son or the Holy Spirit.
- He addresses the subordination of the Son during the incarnation, emphasizing that this is within the economic Trinity and does not imply a lesser divine nature.
- He also addresses the Father being the "God" of the incarnate Son, explaining this in the context of the Son's humanity and role.

5. The Importance of Deliberate Study:

- Peterson encourages believers to move beyond simply assuming the Father's deity and to actively examine the scriptural evidence.
- He suggests that by doing so, this truth will take a more prominent place in their thinking and prayers.
- Quote: "So right now, we're deliberately noticing that which we often neglect."

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson effectively argues from Scripture that the Father is indeed God. By presenting a multifaceted case based on divine titles, His relationship with Christ, divine attributes, the reception of worship, and divine deeds, he builds a compelling and "irresistible" conclusion. This session lays a crucial foundation for understanding the Trinity by firmly establishing the deity of the first person of the Godhead. The emphasis on the vital link between exegesis and systematic theology underscores the importance of grounding theological beliefs in the careful study of God's Word. The subsequent lecture will focus on demonstrating the deity of the Son.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 6, The Father is God

Study Guide: The Father is God

Key Concepts:

- **One God:** The foundational affirmation of Christian theology, drawn from scriptures like Deuteronomy 6:4.
- **Trinity:** The doctrine that there is one God eternally existing in three co-equal and distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- **Deity of the Father:** The specific focus of this study, demonstrating through scripture that the Father is fully God.
- **Divine Titles:** Names and designations used in Scripture that are uniquely applicable to God.
- **Relation to Christ:** The way Scripture portrays the Father's relationship with the Son (especially the incarnate Son) reveals the Father's divine nature.
- **Divine Attributes:** The inherent qualities and characteristics that belong to God alone, such as self-existence, omniscience, omnipresence, etc.
- **Receiving Worship:** The act of religious devotion, praise, and thanksgiving directed towards the Father.
- **Divine Deeds:** Actions and roles that are exclusively performed by God, such as creation, sending the Savior, giving new birth, etc.
- **Incarnation:** The act by which the Son of God took on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.
- **Economy (of God):** The distinct roles and activities undertaken by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in creation, redemption, and the ongoing governance of the world.
- **Syllogism:** A form of deductive reasoning consisting of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Peterson uses syllogisms to structure his arguments for the Father's deity.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of biblical texts.

- **Systematic Theology:** A discipline of Christian theology that formulates an orderly, rational, and coherent account of Christian beliefs.

Quiz:

1. According to Peterson, what is the first of the seven statements used to build a doctrine of the Trinity from Scripture, and what are the key scriptural references for this statement?
2. What are the five main categories of evidence Peterson uses to demonstrate the deity of God the Father in Scripture? Provide one example of evidence within two of these categories.
3. Explain why Jesus addressing God as "Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25) is considered a divine title for the Father.
4. In what way does the Father giving authority to the Son (e.g., John 17:2) demonstrate the Father's deity, and why is the reverse of this statement incorrect?
5. Give two examples of divine attributes that Scripture ascribes to the Father, along with their corresponding scriptural references.
6. Explain how the act of believers giving praise and thanksgiving to the Father demonstrates his deity, referencing at least one relevant Scripture.
7. According to 1 Corinthians 8:6, how is the Father identified as God, and what is the significance of believers existing "for whom" in relation to the Father?
8. Summarize Peterson's argument for why prayer being directed to the Father (Ephesians 3:14) is evidence of his deity.
9. Provide two examples of divine deeds that the Father performs, as highlighted by Peterson, and briefly explain why these actions are indicative of God's nature.
10. Explain Peterson's reasoning for concluding that the Father is God based on the scriptural evidence presented.

Answer Key:

1. The first statement is "There is one God," drawn from Deuteronomy 6:4-5, James 2:19, and 1 Timothy 2:5-6. This foundational truth establishes the monotheistic basis for understanding the Trinity.

2. The five categories are divine titles, his relation to Christ, divine attributes, his receiving worship, and divine deeds. An example of a divine title is "Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25). An example of a divine attribute ascribed to the Father is self-existence (John 5:26).
3. Calling God "Lord of heaven and earth" is a divine title because this designation implies supreme authority and ownership over all creation, a characteristic unique to God. Only God could rightly be addressed in this manner.
4. The Father giving authority to the Son demonstrates the Father's deity because the authority to delegate such power belongs only to God. The reverse is incorrect because Scripture consistently shows the Father as the source of authority in this relationship within the economy of salvation.
5. Two examples are: self-existence (John 5:26), stating the Father has life in himself and is uncaused; and infinite understanding (Psalm 147:5), indicating the Father's boundless comprehension.
6. The fact that believers offer praise, glory, and thanksgiving to the Father (e.g., James 3:9, Philippians 4:20, Ephesians 5:20) demonstrates his deity because worship and religious devotion are due to God alone. These acts acknowledge his supreme worth and divine nature.
7. In 1 Corinthians 8:6, the Father is identified as "one God, the Father, from whom all things are and for whom we exist." The phrase "for whom we exist" signifies that God the Father is the ultimate purpose and end of our lives, a position that only God can rightfully hold.
8. Prayer is directed to God the Father (Ephesians 3:14) because he is God. The act of bowing in prayer and addressing the Father acknowledges his divine authority, power, and willingness to hear and respond, fitting the nature of God.
9. Two examples are: being the creator of all things (1 Corinthians 8:6, "from him are all things") and sending his Son to be the Savior (1 John 4:14). These actions are divine deeds as they involve ultimate power, initiative in salvation, and roles exclusive to God's plan for humanity.
10. Peterson concludes that the Father is God because Scripture consistently ascribes to him divine titles, portrays his unique and authoritative relationship with the Son, attributes to him divine qualities, directs worship towards him, and shows him performing deeds that only God can do. This cumulative evidence leads to an "irresistible conclusion" of the Father's deity.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of divine titles ascribed to the Father in Scripture as evidence for his deity. Provide specific examples from the source material to support your argument.
2. Analyze the relationship between the Father and the incarnate Son as presented in the text, and explain how this relationship demonstrates the Father's divine nature without diminishing the Son's deity.
3. Evaluate the importance of ascribing divine attributes to the Father in establishing his Godhood. Which attributes does Peterson emphasize, and why are they significant?
4. Explain how the practices of worship and prayer directed towards the Father, as discussed in the provided excerpts, serve as compelling evidence for his deity.
5. Critically examine Peterson's argument that the Father performing specific divine deeds necessitates the conclusion that the Father is God. Provide examples of these deeds from the text and consider any potential counterarguments.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Consubstantiality:** The doctrine that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of the same divine substance or essence.
- **Perichoresis:** A theological term referring to the mutual indwelling or interpenetration of the three persons of the Trinity.
- **Economy (of God):** The way God reveals himself and acts in the world, particularly the distinct roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in creation and redemption.
- **Theonomy:** A visible manifestation of God to humanity.
- **Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which something is called by the name of something that is closely associated with it.
- **Divine Passive:** A grammatical construction in which the actor of the verb is God, though not explicitly stated.
- **Regeneration:** The spiritual rebirth or renewal of a person's heart by the Holy Spirit, leading to new life in Christ.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 6, The Father is God, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: The Father is God

1. What is the primary assertion being made about the Father in this discussion?

The primary assertion is that the Father is indeed God. This point, while seemingly obvious to many, is explicitly supported through scriptural evidence, arguing that the Father possesses divine titles, has a unique and revealing relationship with Christ, exhibits divine attributes, receives worship due only to God, and performs divine deeds.

2. What are some of the divine titles ascribed to the Father in Scripture that demonstrate His deity?

Scripture ascribes several divine titles to the Father, including "Lord of heaven and earth" (Matthew 11:25), "Holy Father," and "Righteous Father" (John 17), "God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3), and "Glorious Father" and "God of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:17). These titles are argued to be applicable only to God, thus proving the Father's divine nature.

3. How does the Father's relationship with Jesus Christ, particularly the incarnate Son, point to the Father's deity?

The Father's relationship with Christ reveals His deity through several key aspects. The Father sends the Son into the world (John 3:17), announces Jesus as His beloved Son (Matthew 3), gives the Son authority over all flesh (John 17:2), gives the Son words to speak (John 12:49-50), and gives the Son work to do (John 17:4). This unidirectional giving and sending, where the Son does not send the Father, establishes a divine order that underscores the Father's Godhood, especially in the context of the incarnate Son being subordinate in His earthly role.

4. What divine attributes are specifically highlighted as belonging to the Father, further confirming His deity?

Several divine attributes are ascribed to the Father, including self-existence (having life in Himself, John 5:26), infinite understanding (Psalm 147:5), omnipresence (Jeremiah 23:23-24), omniscience (Isaiah 40:28), eternality (Psalm 90:2), righteousness (John 17:25), sovereignty (Matthew 11:25), knowledge (Matthew 6:8), generosity (Matthew 5:45), mercy (Luke 6:36), faithfulness (James 1:17), and love (John 3:16). The possession of these attributes, which are unique to God, demonstrates that the Father is indeed God.

5. How does the reception of worship by the Father affirm His divine status?

The fact that the Father receives worship, praise, glory, thanksgiving, and is the object of religious devotion from believers (James 3:9, Philippians 4:20, Ephesians 5:20, James 1:27) underscores His deity. Worship of this nature is due only to God, and Scripture portrays believers directing their worship towards the Father.

6. What divine deeds are attributed to the Father that solidify His claim as God?

The Father is credited with several divine deeds, including being the creator of all things (1 Corinthians 8:6), sending His Son to be the Savior (1 John 4:14), sending the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), giving believers new birth (1 Peter 1:3), giving grace and peace (Romans 1:7, 2 John 1:3), commanding obedience (2 John 1:4), comforting believers in affliction (2 Corinthians 1:3), raising the dead (John 5:21), and judging impartially (1 Peter 1:17). These are actions that only God can perform, thus affirming the Father's deity.

7. How does the understanding of the Trinity, even without being fully developed in the New Testament, support the idea that the Father is God?

While the New Testament doesn't present a fully systematized doctrine of the Trinity, the foundational ideas of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each being God, yet distinct and inseparable, imply the Father's deity. The concept of consubstantiality (sharing the same divine essence) and perichoresis (indwelling each other) within the Trinity means that when the Son and Spirit are shown to be God, it inherently includes the Father as part of that divine unity. The economic Trinity, where each person has distinct roles, still operates within the framework of one God.

8. Why is it important to explicitly demonstrate from Scripture that the Father is God, even if it seems obvious?

While the deity of the Father might seem self-evident, it is crucial to demonstrate it explicitly from Scripture for several reasons. Firstly, it ensures that our theological understanding is rooted in and supported by the Bible. Secondly, it helps to avoid simply assuming theological truths and encourages a deeper examination of God's nature as revealed in His Word. Finally, in the context of building a doctrine of the Trinity, establishing the deity of each person individually is a necessary step towards understanding their unified Godhood. It also helps to counteract any potential neglect of the Father's role and attributes within Trinitarian theology.