

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 8, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit 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 8, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This excerpt from Dr. Peterson's "Theology Proper" session on the Trinity **affirms the deity of both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit**. It argues for Christ's divinity by highlighting his role in **saving believers through union with him**, his act of **bringing the age to come**, and the **religious devotion he rightly receives**. Similarly, the text establishes the Holy Spirit as God by detailing **divine qualities, performance of divine works**, and the **interchangeability of his name with God's**. Finally, it underscores the **distinctness yet equality of the Holy Spirit** within the Trinity, alongside the Father and the Son.

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 8 – 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 8, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God

Briefing Document: The Deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit

Overview: This document summarizes the main themes and arguments presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 8 of his "Theology Proper" lectures, focusing on the biblical affirmation of the Son (Jesus Christ) as God and the Holy Spirit as God. Peterson draws heavily on scripture to demonstrate their deity through their roles in salvation, their reception of divine honor, and the attribution of divine qualities and actions. He also briefly addresses historical denials of Christ's deity (Ebionism and Arianism) and establishes the Holy Spirit as a distinct divine person within the Trinity.

Key Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Deity of the Son (Jesus Christ):

- **Jesus Saves in Union with Himself:** Peterson argues that salvation is God's work carried out by the triune God. The Father plans, the Son accomplishes, and the Holy Spirit applies salvation. A key aspect of this application is **union with Christ**, a spiritual joining of believers to Christ and his saving acts through the Holy Spirit.
- "Salvation is God's work from beginning to end."
- "Union with Christ is the Holy Spirit's joining believers spiritually to Christ and his salvation."
- **Union with Christ as Evidence of Deity:** Peterson cites David Wells, stating that it would be "preposterous if that teacher were not divine" to speak of partaking in their capacities at an ontological and ethical level. Being spiritually joined to a mere creature (angelic or human) is considered senseless.
- "to speak of being in a teacher and of partaking at an ontological and ethical level in that teacher's capacities would be preposterous if that teacher were not divine" (quoting David Wells).
- "Christ's place in the saving union is the place occupied by God alone. Union with Christ, then, is a sweeping and powerful demonstration of our Lord's deity."
- **Jesus Brings the Age to Come:** The New Testament contrasts the present age with the age to come. Peterson asserts that the transition between these ages is the work of God alone, and yet Jesus Christ is presented as bringing both the "already" (fulfillment of prophecies in his coming) and the "not yet" (future

fulfillment). This act of ushering in God's eschatological work is seen as identifying Jesus with God.

- **Jesus Receives Devotion Due God Alone:** Peterson presents four ways the New Testament shows Jesus receiving divine devotion:
- **Worship:** Examples include the man born blind (John 9:38) and Thomas's exclamation, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). The Father commands angels to worship the Son (Hebrews 1:6), and Revelation depicts widespread worship of the Lamb.
- Regarding Thomas: "Specifically, John wrote, and Thomas said to him, my Lord and my God."
- "But Jesus is Lord, and he rightly accepts worship from human beings and angels."
- **Doxologies:** Liturgical statements of praise and worship are directed towards Jesus (2 Peter 3:18, Revelation 5:12).
- "Only God is the subject of doxologies. And in Hebrews 13:20 and 21 and 2 Peter 3:18, Jesus alone is praised."
- **Hymns:** Christian singing is done "to the Lord," which here refers to Christ (Ephesians 5:18-19).
- "Hymns are addressed to Christ, further underlining his deity."
- **Prayers:** Prayers are offered to Jesus, just as they are to the Father (John 14:13-14, Acts 7:59, Revelation 22:20).
- "Father and son alike are the objects of Christian prayer."
- **Jesus' Own Witness to His Deity:** Although not a separate category, Peterson notes that Jesus identifies himself with God by applying Old Testament passages to himself, claiming to perform God's works (judgment, raising the dead, assigning destinies), saving those in union with him, bringing the age to come, and receiving divine devotion.

2. Brief Mention of Historical Denials of Christ's Deity:

- **Ebionism:** A Jewish monotheistic view that Jesus was not God but had the "Christ" descend upon him at baptism and withdraw later.
- **Arianism:** A heresy emphasizing God's absolute uniqueness, claiming Christ (the Word/Son) was God's first and highest creature, created and thus not of the same essence as the Father.
- **Council of Nicaea (325 AD):** Rightly condemned Arianism, affirming Christ's full deity in the Nicene Creed, declaring him "true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father."

3. The Deity of the Holy Spirit:

- **The Holy Spirit is a Person, Not a Mere Force:** Peterson first establishes the personality of the Holy Spirit by highlighting:
- **Personal Traits:** Intelligence (1 Corinthians 2:11), volition (1 Corinthians 12:11), and emotion (Ephesians 4:30).
- **Personal Ministries:** Acting as a counselor (John 14:16), perpetuating Jesus' teaching (John 16:14), testifying about Jesus (John 15:26), glorifying Jesus (John 16:14), convicting of sin (John 16:18), interceding (Romans 8:26), assuring believers (Romans 8:16), and giving life (2 Corinthians 3:6).
- **Being Affected as a Person:** Can be blasphemed (Mark 3:29), lied to (Acts 5:3), tested (Acts 5:9), resisted (Acts 7:51), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19), and insulted (Hebrews 10:29).
- "In sum, the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force, but a person whom believers know as Jesus foretells..."
- **The Holy Spirit is God:** Despite less prominent treatment in scripture compared to the Father and Son (explained by his role in enabling belief in Christ rather than being the object of saving faith himself), the Spirit's deity is evident in:
- **Divine Qualities:** Truth (John 14:17), holiness (implied in "Holy Spirit"), power (Romans 15:19), knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:10), and eternity (Hebrews 9:14).

- **Divine Works:** Participation in creation (Genesis 1:1-2), inspiration of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21), raising Jesus from the dead (Romans 1:4), applying salvation (uniting to Christ, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, justification, resurrection - Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:13, etc.), and indwelling believers (John 14:16-18, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 3:16, etc.).
- **Name Interchangeable with God's Name:** Lying to the Holy Spirit is equated with lying to God (Acts 5:3-4), and believers are called both God's temple and the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19).
- **The Holy Spirit is a Person of the Trinity:** The Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son but equal to them. This is shown in:
 - **Distinctness:** Evident in accounts like Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16-17), the risen Christ breathing the Spirit on disciples (John 20:21-22), Paul's writings (2 Corinthians 1:21-22), and John's salutation in Revelation (Revelation 1:4-5).
 - **Equality through Association:** The Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son in ways fitting for God alone, such as in the Great Commission's baptismal formula ("in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," Matthew 28:19), Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-6), and his benediction (2 Corinthians 13:13).

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson concludes that Scripture plainly teaches the deity of both the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus' role in salvation, his reception of divine honor, and his claims align with divine identity. Similarly, the Holy Spirit's personal nature, divine attributes, actions, and interchangeable name with God establish his deity as a distinct person within the triune Godhead. This understanding is crucial for proper theology and contrasts with historical heresies that denied Christ's full divinity.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 8, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God

Study Guide: The Deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit

Quiz:

1. Explain the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the process of salvation as described in the text.
2. What does the concept of "union with Christ" signify, and what are some of the benefits believers receive through this union?
3. According to David Wells, why does the idea of believers being "in" and partaking in a teacher's capacities point to Christ's deity?
4. Describe the New Testament understanding of the "present age" and the "age to come," and how does Jesus Christ relate to both?
5. Provide three examples from the New Testament that demonstrate Jesus receiving devotion that is due to God alone.
6. Briefly describe the key tenets of Ebionism and Arianism regarding the deity of Christ.
7. What is the primary reason, according to the text, that the New Testament provides less extensive material on the deity of the Holy Spirit compared to the Father and the Son?
8. List three personal characteristics attributed to the Holy Spirit in Scripture that demonstrate the Spirit is not merely an impersonal force.
9. Identify two divine qualities and two divine works ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the provided text.
10. Explain how the interchangeability of the Holy Spirit's name with God's name, as illustrated in Acts 5, supports the Spirit's deity.

Answer Key:

1. The Father plans salvation before creation, the Son accomplishes salvation through his death and resurrection, and the Holy Spirit applies salvation by opening hearts to the gospel and enabling belief. The triune God will consummate salvation at the resurrection.

2. "Union with Christ" refers to the Holy Spirit's spiritual joining of believers to Christ and his saving work. Through this union, believers receive regeneration, justification, adoption, perseverance, resurrection, and glorification.
3. Wells argues that it would be absurd for believers to ontologically and ethically partake in the capacities of a mere human or angel. Such a profound union and participation at a fundamental level is only fitting if the teacher, in this case Christ, is divine.
4. The present age is characterized by evil, spiritual blindness, and death, while the age to come is marked by resurrection, eternal life, and God's grace. Jesus Christ brings both the "already" (fulfillment of prophecies) and the "not yet" (future fulfillment) of these ages.
5. Examples include Thomas's exclamation "My Lord and my God" and his worship of the risen Christ (John 20:28), the Father directing angels to worship the Son (Hebrews 1:6), and the worship of the Lamb in Revelation (Revelation 5).
6. Ebionism was a Jewish monotheistic heresy that denied Christ's deity, claiming the "Christ" descended upon Jesus at baptism and left before his death. Arianism, arising within the church, denied Christ's full deity, considering him God's first and highest creature but distinct in essence and having a beginning.
7. The text suggests that the deity of the Holy Spirit is less emphasized because the Son is the Savior in whom believers trust for salvation. The Holy Spirit enables belief in Christ and performs other vital functions but is not the direct object of saving faith.
8. The Holy Spirit is ascribed intelligence (knows God's thoughts, teaches, guides), volition (distributes gifts as he wills), and emotion (can be grieved). These personal traits demonstrate that the Spirit is more than an impersonal force.
9. Divine qualities include truth, holiness, power, knowledge, and eternity. Divine works include participation in creation, the production of Scripture, raising Jesus from the dead, applying salvation (uniting to Christ, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, justification), and indwelling believers.
10. In Acts 5, Peter states that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying not to men but to God. This equation of lying to the Spirit with lying to God indicates that the Holy Spirit possesses the same divine status and authority as God.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the significance of "union with Christ" as a theological concept in understanding the application of salvation and its implications for the deity of Christ.
2. Discuss how the New Testament's presentation of Jesus bringing both the present age and the age to come serves as a powerful argument for his divine nature.
3. Examine the various ways in which the New Testament portrays Jesus receiving "devotion due God alone," and explain why this practice is significant in affirming his deity within a monotheistic framework.
4. Compare and contrast the historical denials of Christ's deity in Ebionism and Arianism, highlighting the key theological distinctions and the Church's response as reflected in the Nicene Creed.
5. Evaluate the biblical evidence presented for the deity of the Holy Spirit, considering why this doctrine might receive less explicit attention compared to the deity of the Father and the Son, while still being a crucial aspect of Christian theology.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Deity:** The state or quality of being God; divine nature.
- **Triune God:** The Christian doctrine that there is one God who exists in three co-equal and co-eternal persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit.
- **Salvation:** God's saving action in rescuing humanity from sin and its consequences, ultimately leading to eternal life in union with Him.
- **Union with Christ:** The spiritual bond and incorporation of believers into Christ through the Holy Spirit, resulting in their participation in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension.
- **Regeneration:** The spiritual rebirth or renewal of a person's heart by the Holy Spirit, leading to a new life in Christ.
- **Justification:** God's act of declaring a sinner righteous in his sight through faith in Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice.

- **Adoption:** God's gracious act of bringing believers into his family as his children.
- **Perseverance:** The doctrine that believers, once genuinely saved, will continue in their faith until the end, sustained by God's grace.
- **Glorification:** The ultimate transformation of believers into the likeness of Christ in his resurrected and glorified state.
- **Present Age:** In New Testament theology, the current period between Christ's first and second comings, characterized by both good and evil.
- **Age to Come (Eschaton):** The future period of God's fully realized kingdom, marked by resurrection, eternal life, and the absence of sin and death.
- **Already and Not Yet:** The tension in New Testament theology between the inaugurated blessings of God's kingdom in Christ's first coming ("already") and their future consummation at his second coming ("not yet").
- **Doxology:** A liturgical expression of praise and glory to God.
- **Ebionism:** An early Christian heresy that viewed Jesus as a human Messiah, denying his pre-existence and full deity.
- **Arianism:** A 4th-century heresy that denied the full deity of Jesus Christ, teaching that he was a created being subordinate to the Father.
- **Nicene Creed:** A foundational statement of Christian belief formulated at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, which affirms the full deity of Jesus Christ as being "consubstantial" with the Father.
- **Consubstantial:** Of the same substance or essence; used in the Nicene Creed to describe the relationship between the Son and the Father.
- **Person (of the Trinity):** A distinct center of consciousness, will, and action within the one being of God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
- **Divine Attributes:** The perfect qualities or characteristics that belong uniquely to God, such as truth, holiness, power, knowledge, and eternity.
- **Divine Works:** Actions that only God can perform, such as creation, the inspiration of Scripture, and the application of salvation.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 8, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: The Deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit

1. How does the concept of "union with Christ" demonstrate Jesus' deity? The idea of believers being in union with Christ, as taught by Paul, signifies a deep, spiritual joining to Christ and his saving acts (death, resurrection, ascension, session, and second coming). This union is comprehensive, bringing regeneration, justification, adoption, perseverance, resurrection, and glorification. For believers to ontologically and ethically partake in the capacities of someone who was merely a human or angelic being would be preposterous. Only God possesses the divine nature and power for such a profound and transformative union with humanity. Therefore, Christ's central role in this saving union is a powerful indication of his deity.

2. In what ways does Jesus bringing the "age to come" point to his divine nature? The New Testament contrasts the present age, marked by evil and spiritual darkness, with the age to come, characterized by resurrection and eternal life. The transition between these ages is understood as the work of God alone. Yet, the New Testament clearly portrays Jesus Christ as the one who inaugurates both the "already" (the present fulfillment of prophecies in his coming) and the "not yet" (the future consummation of the kingdom). By bringing both the present and future aspects of God's kingdom through his preaching, miracles, and future reign, Jesus demonstrates a power and authority that belongs to God alone, thus revealing his deity.

3. What are the key ways the New Testament shows Jesus receiving devotion due to God alone? The New Testament presents Jesus receiving religious devotion in several ways that were traditionally reserved for God in the Old Testament. This includes:

- **Worship:** Individuals like the healed blind man and Thomas offer direct worship to Jesus. Even angels are commanded by God the Father to worship the Son (Hebrews 1:6). Revelation depicts heavenly scenes where the Lamb (Jesus) is the object of profound worship and praise.
- **Doxologies:** These are liturgical statements of praise and worship. Passages in 2 Peter and Hebrews ascribe glory and praise directly to Jesus, which is consistent with the honor due only to God.

- **Hymns:** Early Christian practice, as mentioned in Ephesians, involved singing hymns and spiritual songs to the Lord, with the context indicating Christ as the recipient.
- **Prayer:** The New Testament records instances of prayer being offered directly to Jesus, such as Stephen's dying words and John's final prayer in Revelation. Jesus himself encourages asking in his name, implying his accessibility as an object of prayer.

4. Why is the deity of the Holy Spirit considered less prominent in Scripture compared to that of the Father and the Son? While the deity of the Holy Spirit is affirmed, it is presented less prevalently in Scripture compared to the Father and the Son. This is partly because the Son is the central figure in salvation; believers have faith *in him* for salvation. The Holy Spirit's role is primarily to enable belief in Christ, apply salvation, and perform other vital functions, but he is not the object of saving faith in the same way. In the narrative of salvation, God the Father is the planner, the Son is the accomplisher (the "star"), and the Holy Spirit is the one who empowers and applies (a "supporting actor"), though all three are equally God.

5. What scriptural evidence establishes that the Holy Spirit is a person and not merely an impersonal force? Scripture portrays the Holy Spirit with personal attributes, ministries, and the capacity to be affected as a person:

- **Personal Traits:** The Spirit possesses intelligence (teaching, reminding, guiding into truth, knowing the thoughts of God), volition (distributing spiritual gifts as he wills), and emotion (can be grieved).
- **Personal Ministries:** The Spirit performs actions that only persons can do, such as being a "Counselor" (Parakletos), perpetuating Jesus' teaching, testifying about Jesus, glorifying Jesus, convicting people of sin, righteousness, and judgment, interceding for believers, assuring them of their sonship, and giving life.
- **Being Affected as a Person:** The Spirit can be blasphemed, lied to, tested, resisted, grieved, quenched, and insulted, all of which are actions directed towards a person.

6. What divine qualities and works are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in Scripture that demonstrate his deity? The Holy Spirit exhibits several divine qualities and performs works that only God can do:

- **Divine Qualities:** These include truth ("Spirit of truth"), holiness ("Holy Spirit"), power (working miracles), knowledge (searching the depths of God), and eternity (linked to Christ's eternal sacrifice).
- **Divine Works:** The Spirit participated in creation, inspired the writing of Holy Scripture, and crucially, plays a vital role in salvation. This includes raising Jesus from the dead, applying salvation (uniting believers to Christ, adoption, regeneration, sanctification, justification), and indwelling believers, a characteristic of God's presence.

7. How does the interchangeability of the Holy Spirit's name with God's name in Scripture argue for his deity? In Acts 5, Peter confronts Ananias and Sapphira, stating that lying to the Holy Spirit is not lying to men but to God. Similarly, Paul refers to Christians as both God's temple and a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19). These instances demonstrate that the Holy Spirit's name and presence are equated with God's, indicating his divine nature and authority.

8. How does the Holy Spirit's association with the Father and the Son in various biblical contexts underscore his equality within the Trinity? The Holy Spirit is consistently associated with the Father and the Son in ways that imply his equal deity:

- **Jesus' Baptism:** All three persons of the Trinity are present: the Father speaks, the Son is baptized, and the Spirit descends like a dove.
- **The Great Commission:** Jesus commands believers to be baptized in the name (singular, indicating unity) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). This equal placement in the context of initiation into the Christian faith highlights their shared divine authority.
- **Paul's Benediction:** In 2 Corinthians 13:13, Paul invokes the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, presenting all three as sources of divine blessing for believers.
- **Spiritual Gifts:** 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 attributes the variety of spiritual gifts to the same Spirit, different types of service to the same Lord, and different activities to the same God, demonstrating the unified yet diverse work of the Trinity in the church.