

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 9, Rounding out the Trinity 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 9, Rounding out the Trinity, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's Theology Proper, Session 9, focuses on completing the doctrine of the Trinity. The lecture emphasizes that the **three divine persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are inseparable yet distinct**. Peterson highlights that **scripture reveals their mutual indwelling and their existence in unity and equality**. He supports these points by examining the **participation of all three persons in creation and redemption**, referencing various biblical passages. Ultimately, the session aims to underscore the **tri-unity of God**, a mystery that scripture reveals but human understanding cannot fully grasp.

**2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 9 – 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).**



**Peterson_TheoProp
er_Session09.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 9, Rounding out the Trinity

Briefing Document: Doctrine of the Trinity - Rounding Out

Overview: This document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented in Session 9 of Dr. Robert A. Peterson's "Theology Proper," focusing on "Rounding Out the Trinity." Peterson aims to elaborate on the doctrine of the Trinity beyond establishing the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by outlining three additional key principles: the inseparability yet distinctness of the divine persons, their mutual indwelling, and their existence in unity and equality.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Inseparability and Distinctness of the Divine Persons:

- **One God in Three Persons:** Peterson reiterates the foundational concept that there is one God who eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes that the New Testament reinforces the Old Testament teaching of one God (citing James 2 and 1 Timothy 2:5).
- **Inseparable in Being and Operation:** The three divine persons are inseparable because God is a tri-unity. This is demonstrated by their participation in creation and redemption.
- **Creation:** All three persons are involved in creation. The Father initiates (Genesis 1:1), the Son acts as the Father's agent (John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-16, Hebrews 1:2), and the Holy Spirit is also active (Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4, Psalm 104:30). Peterson stresses the "creator-creature distinction," emphasizing that angels and humans are creatures and do not participate in creation in the same way God does.
- **Redemption:** Similarly, all three persons participate in redemption (1 Peter 1:1-2, Ephesians 1:3-14). The Father foreknows and foreloves the elect, the Spirit sanctifies, and the Son's blood provides cleansing and atonement. Peterson clarifies that while they all participate in salvation, they have distinct roles.
- **Distinct in Roles, Not in Deity:** While inseparable, the three persons are distinct. "We never separate the persons, but we don't confuse the persons. We acknowledge their distinctness." Peterson provides examples of their distinct roles in redemption (Father's foreknowledge, Son's incarnation and atoning

death, Spirit's sanctification and sealing). He cautions against "confusing the persons" by attributing the actions of one to another (e.g., "sprinkling of the Spirit's blood").

- **Temporary Separation of Fellowship on the Cross:** Jesus' cry of abandonment ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") on the cross signifies a temporary separation of fellowship between the Father and the Son as the Son bore the world's sins, but not an "ontological separation" or separation of being. "It's a temporary separation of fellowship when the Son bore the world's sins." This act facilitated eternal redemption.

2. The Mutual Indwelling of the Divine Persons:

- **Persons Indwell One Another:** The Bible teaches that the divine persons indwell one another, meaning they are "in one another." Peterson notes that this concept contains "the seeds of the doctrine of the co-equal deity of the persons."
- **Jesus' Teaching in John's Gospel:** Jesus explicitly states the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son (John 14:10-11, John 17:22-23). Quotes include:
 - "Don't you believe, Philip, that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who lives in me does his works." (John 14:10)
 - "May they all be one as you, Father, are in me, and I am in you. May they also be one in us so that the world may believe what you sent me." (John 17:20-21)
- **Systematic Theology Extrapolation:** While John's Gospel primarily focuses on the Father-Son indwelling, Peterson argues that a systematic understanding of the Trinity necessitates extending this concept to include the Holy Spirit. "John doesn't say it, but even based upon all that he teaches about the Spirit, it would be a fair deduction from his teaching to say that the Father and Son are in the Spirit, and the Spirit is in the Son, and the Spirit is in the Father, like that."
- **Perichoresis/Co-inherence:** The mutual indwelling is a mystery described by theologians as *perichoresis* (Greek) or *co-inherence* (Latin). "The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit co-inhere in the divine essence and in one another. They mutually indwell one another."

- **God is Not Solitary:** The doctrine of mutual indwelling refutes the idea that God was lonely before creation. "From all eternity before creation, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit loved each other, communicated with each other, fellowshiped with each other, and shared divine life and joy. God is not lonely. God is three in one."

3. The Unity and Equality of the Divine Persons (Brief Introduction):

- Peterson mentions that the next session will focus on the unity and equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, further "rounding out" the doctrine of the Trinity. He states that scripture points towards "God eternally existing as one God in three persons."

Implications and Significance:

- **Understanding God's Nature:** The doctrine of the Trinity, particularly the concepts of inseparability, distinctness, and mutual indwelling, provides a deeper understanding of God's eternal being and relational nature.
- **Basis for Salvation:** The participation of all three persons in creation and redemption underscores the unified divine initiative in saving humanity.
- **Worship and Praise:** Proper understanding of the Trinity should lead to greater praise and glory being given to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for their respective roles in God's work. "So, if we have our theology perfect, which none of us do, but even if we did, and it didn't lead us to give praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, our theology would not be so perfect, and we wouldn't be living and applying the purpose of doctrine."
- **Critique of Alternative Views:** Peterson implicitly critiques non-Trinitarian monotheism (Judaism and Islam) for assuming a solitary God before creation.

Conclusion:

Session 9 of Dr. Peterson's "Theology Proper" builds upon the foundational understanding of the deity of each person of the Trinity by exploring their inseparability yet distinctness and their profound mutual indwelling. These concepts, particularly the mystery of perichoresis, highlight the complex yet unified nature of the one God in three persons and have significant implications for understanding God's being and work. The upcoming session will further explore the unity and equality within the Trinity, providing a comprehensive overview of this central Christian doctrine.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 9, Rounding out the Trinity

Study Guide: Rounding Out the Doctrine of the Trinity

Key Concepts:

- **One God:** The Bible consistently affirms the existence of only one God.
- **Deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:** Scripture demonstrates that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.
- **Inseparability:** The three divine persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) are inseparable in their being and their operations because God is a tri-unity.
- **Distinctness:** While inseparable, the three divine persons are distinct; we do not separate them, nor do we confuse them with one another. They have separate roles in God's work.
- **Mutual Indwelling (Perichoresis/Co-inherence):** The divine persons indwell one another; they are in one another. This signifies their deep unity and co-equality.
- **Unity and Equality:** Scripture teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist in unity and equality as the one living God.
- **Participation in Creation:** All three persons of the Godhead participate in the work of creation. The Father is the initiator, the Son is the agent through whom all things were created, and the Holy Spirit is also active in creation.
- **Participation in Redemption:** All three persons of the Godhead participate in the work of redemption. The Father foreknows and foreloves, the Son redeems through his incarnation, death, and resurrection, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies and seals believers.
- **Distinct Roles in Redemption:** While all three are involved in salvation, they have distinct roles: the Father elects and predestines, the Son redeems through his blood, and the Spirit seals believers.
- **Temporary Separation of Fellowship:** Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross signifies a temporary separation of fellowship between the Father and the Son as the Son bore the world's sins, not an ontological separation.

Quiz:

1. Explain in your own words the concept of the Trinity as one God in three persons, emphasizing both their unity and distinctness.
2. Provide two scriptural examples demonstrating the Son's participation in creation, briefly explaining the significance of each passage.
3. Describe the distinct roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the work of redemption as presented in 1 Peter 1:1-2.
4. What does the term "foreknowledge" signify in the context of God's saving work, according to the source material?
5. Explain the concept of the "sealing" of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1:13-14 and what it signifies for believers.
6. How does the source material address the apparent separation between the Father and the Son during Jesus' crucifixion?
7. Define and explain the significance of the theological term "perichoresis" (or co-inherence) in understanding the Trinity.
8. According to the source, why is it important to distinguish but not confuse the persons of the Trinity?
9. How does the doctrine of the Trinity challenge the idea that God was lonely before creation?
10. Briefly summarize the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the salvation of believers as outlined in Ephesians 1:3-14.

Quiz Answer Key:

1. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that there is only one God, but this one God eternally exists as three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are united in their divine essence and inseparable in their being and actions, yet they are distinct individuals with unique roles and relationships.
2. John 1:3 states, "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made," indicating the Son as the agent of creation. Colossians 1:16 similarly declares that "by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible," further emphasizing the Son's comprehensive role in creation.

3. In 1 Peter 1:1-2, the Father is presented as the one who foreknows (foreloves) the elect exiles, the Spirit is the one who sanctifies them, and the Son is the one whose blood sprinkles and cleanses believers. This demonstrates their distinct but cooperative roles in initiating and accomplishing salvation.
4. In the context of God's saving work, foreknowledge is not merely God's foresight of events but rather His covenantal love set upon His people beforehand. It signifies God's loving selection and marking out of those who will be saved, as seen in Paul's writings.
5. The sealing of the Holy Spirit, as described in Ephesians 1:13-14, is God's act of guaranteeing and preserving believers' salvation and their union with Christ. The Spirit acts as a seal, signifying ownership and ensuring their security until the day of redemption.
6. The source explains that Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross (Matthew 27:46) represents a temporary separation of fellowship between the Father and the Son as the Son bore the burden of the world's sins. It was not an ontological separation, as the tri-unity of God remains intact.
7. Perichoresis (Greek) or co-inherence (Latin) describes the mutual indwelling of the three persons of the Trinity. It signifies that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in one another, interpenetrating and sharing fully in the divine essence, highlighting their profound unity and co-equality.
8. It is crucial to distinguish the persons of the Trinity because the Bible presents them with distinct roles and actions, particularly in creation and redemption (e.g., the Son became incarnate, not the Father or Spirit). However, it is equally important not to confuse them, as they are all fully God and inseparable in their being and work.
9. The doctrine of the Trinity reveals that God has eternally existed as a communion of three persons who loved, communicated, and fellowshiped with one another before creation. This negates the idea that God might have been lonely or had a need for creation to experience relationship.
10. Ephesians 1:3-14 outlines the Father's role in election and predestination of believers before creation, the Son's role in providing redemption through his blood, and the Holy Spirit's role as the seal and guarantee of their inheritance, all working together for the praise of God's glory.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the inseparability and distinctness of the three persons of the Trinity, providing scriptural support and explaining why both aspects are essential to a proper understanding of God.
2. Analyze the participation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in either the work of creation or redemption, highlighting their unique roles and the unity of their actions.
3. Explain the theological significance of the concept of mutual indwelling (perichoresis) for understanding the inner life and unity of the Trinity, and discuss its implications for believers.
4. Examine the biblical evidence for the deity of each person of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and discuss how these affirmations contribute to the doctrine of one God in three persons.
5. Consider the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for Christian life and worship. How should understanding God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit shape our relationship with Him and with one another?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that there is one God who exists eternally as three distinct persons: Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit.
- **Theology Proper:** The branch of systematic theology that deals specifically with the doctrine of God, including His attributes and being.
- **Tri-unity:** A term used to describe the nature of God as being one (unity) and three (Trinity).
- **Inseparable:** Unable to be divided or separated; referring to the unified being and operations of the three persons of the Trinity.
- **Distinct:** Recognizably different in nature or quality; referring to the individual personhood and roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within the Trinity.
- **Indwelling:** The concept that God (in the person of the Holy Spirit, and by extension, the Trinity) resides within believers. In the context of the Trinity itself, it refers to the mutual presence of the three persons in one another.

- **Perichoresis:** A Greek theological term (also known as co-inherence in Latin) that describes the mutual interpenetration and indwelling of the three persons of the Trinity.
- **Co-inherence:** A Latin theological term synonymous with perichoresis, emphasizing the mutual indwelling and interconnectedness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- **Redemption:** The act by which God saves humanity from sin and its consequences through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- **Sanctification:** The process by which believers are made holy and conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Election:** God's sovereign choice before creation to save a particular people.
- **Predestination:** God's foreordained plan for all things, including the salvation of the elect.
- **Incarnation:** The act by which the Son of God took on human flesh and became Jesus Christ.
- **Atonement:** The work of Christ in his life and death by which he reconciled humanity to God and made propitiation for sin.
- **Seal (of the Holy Spirit):** The Holy Spirit's work in marking believers as belonging to God and guaranteeing their future inheritance.
- **Ontological:** Relating to being or existence. In the context of the Trinity, it refers to the fundamental nature and being of God.
- **Metaphysical:** Relating to the fundamental nature of reality and being. Similar to ontological in this context.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 9, Rounding out the Trinity, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Doctrine of the Trinity

1. How does the Bible demonstrate that there is one God?

The Old Testament consistently affirms that there is only one God. This foundational truth is never contradicted in the New Testament, but rather reinforced. Passages like James 2 and 1 Timothy 2:5 reiterate the oneness of God. This serves as the initial and unwavering premise upon which the doctrine of the Trinity is built.

2. What scriptural evidence supports the deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

The Bible explicitly identifies the Father as God. Similarly, the deity of the Son, Jesus Christ, is demonstrated through numerous proofs, including his role as the Father's agent in creation (John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-16, Hebrews 1:2) and his possession of divine attributes. The Holy Spirit is also shown to be God through his participation in creation (Genesis 1:2, Job 33:4, Psalm 104:30) and redemption (1 Peter 1:2).

3. In what ways are the three divine persons of the Trinity inseparable?

The three persons of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – are inseparable in their being and their operations because God is a tri-unity, one God in three persons. This inseparability is evident in their unified participation in divine works such as creation (all three were involved, with the Father initiating, the Son as agent, and the Spirit as the active power) and redemption (the Father foreknows and foreloves, the Son redeems through his sacrifice, and the Spirit sanctifies). Because there is only one God, these three persons always act in concert, never independently in matters of divine action.

4. How are the three divine persons of the Trinity distinct from one another?

While inseparable, the three persons of the Trinity are also distinct. We do not confuse them or their roles. For example, the Father is the first person, who initiates creation through the Son. The Son is the only person who became incarnate, shed his blood, and died for the redemption of humanity. The Holy Spirit is the one who applies salvation by sanctifying believers. Scripture consistently presents these distinct roles without implying any separation in their divine being.

5. What does it mean that the divine persons of the Trinity indwell one another?

The Bible teaches that the divine persons mutually indwell one another, meaning they are in one another. Jesus states that the Father is in him and he is in the Father (John 14:10). While the Gospel of John primarily emphasizes the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, systematic theology extends this concept (perichoresis or co-inherence) to include the Holy Spirit. This mutual indwelling underscores the co-equal deity of the persons and their profound unity.

6. How does the Trinity's involvement in redemption illustrate their distinct roles?

The work of redemption clearly showcases the distinct roles of each person of the Trinity. The Father foreknows and sets his love upon his elect (1 Peter 1:2, Romans 8:29-30). The Son accomplishes redemption through his incarnation, life, death, and resurrection, shedding his blood as the ultimate sacrifice (Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:2). The Holy Spirit applies this redemption by sanctifying believers, setting them apart for obedience and faith (1 Peter 1:2, Ephesians 1:13-14). While all three are involved in salvation, they fulfill unique and essential roles.

7. How does the cry of Jesus on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?", relate to the Trinity?

Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross (Matthew 27:46) signifies a temporary separation of fellowship between the Father and the Son as the Son bore the sin of the world. However, this was not an ontological or metaphysical separation in their divine being. The Trinity remains a tri-unity. This agonizing cry highlights the immense cost of redemption, where the Son experienced the equivalent of divine wrath, while still remaining one in essence with the Father and the Spirit.

8. Why is understanding the Trinity important for believers?

Understanding the doctrine of the Trinity is crucial because it reveals the very nature of God. God eternally exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, sharing divine life, love, and glory. This understanding corrects any notion of a solitary or lonely God before creation. Furthermore, recognizing the distinct roles of each person in salvation leads to a deeper appreciation of God's work and moves believers to give proper praise and glory to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. Accurate theology of the Trinity should ultimately lead to greater worship and a richer understanding of God's relationship with humanity.