

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 15, Communicable Attributes, Part 2, Holy... 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 15, Communicable Attributes, Part 2, Holy..., Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This text is a transcription of a theological lecture by Dr. Robert Peterson, the fifteenth session in a series on Theology Proper, focusing on the communicable attributes of God. Specifically, Peterson examines **God's holiness** as both unique otherness and moral purity, illustrating it with biblical examples and its impact on humanity. He then explores **God's righteousness** as the foundation of moral order and just governance, showing how it manifests in both judgment and salvation. Finally, the lecture discusses **God's love** as his active desire for the good of others, emphasizing its extent, undeserved nature, and Trinitarian dimension, concluding with the responsibilities and privileges it brings to believers.

2. 25 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 15 – 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
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3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 15, Communicable Attributes, Part 2, Holy...

Briefing Document: The Communicable Attributes of God - Holiness, Righteousness, and Love

Overview: This document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 15 of his Theology Proper lectures, focusing on the communicable attributes of God: holiness, righteousness (or justice), and love. Peterson explores the meaning of these attributes, their manifestations in Scripture, their implications for humanity, and their presence in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Key Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Holiness of God:

- **Definition:** God's holiness encompasses two primary aspects:
- **Uniqueness and Otherness:** God is distinct, incomparable, and majestically separate from all creation. Peterson quotes Exodus 15:11, where Moses asks, **"Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"** Hannah's exaltation in 1 Samuel 2:2 reinforces this: **"There's no one holy like the Lord. There's no one besides you. And there is no rock like our God."**
- **Moral Purity:** God is absolutely pure, sinless, and separate from all moral impurity. Isaiah 1:4 describes the people as a **"sinful nation... They have forsaken the Lord. They have despised the holy one of Israel."** James 1:13 notes that God **"is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn't tempt anyone."**
- **Biblical Images of God's Holiness:** Peterson highlights several images that illustrate God's holiness, including Lawgiver (Exodus 20), Consuming Fire (Exodus 24:17), Judge (Amos 9:7-10), and Light (1 John 1:5).
- **Impact of God's Holiness on Humanity:** Contact with God's holiness exposes human sinfulness, leading to judgment (Joshua 24:19, 1 Samuel 6:20) and conviction (Isaiah 6:5: **"Woe is me, for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips..."**). However, God's holiness is also accompanied by mercy and faithfulness, leading to forgiveness and calling (Isaiah 6:6-8).

- **Holiness of Christ and the Holy Spirit:** Scripture ascribes holiness to Jesus Christ, calling him "the Holy One" (Mark 1:24, John 6:69, Acts 3:14, Revelation 3:7) and describing him as "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). The Holy Spirit is also characterized by and identified with holiness.
- **Call to Human Holiness:** Both the Old and New Testaments command believers to be holy because God is holy (Leviticus 11:44, 1 Peter 1:14-16: **"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct. For it is written, be holy, because I am holy."**). This involves sanctification and abstaining from impurity (1 Thessalonians 4:2-8).

2. Righteousness (or Justice) of God:

- **Definition:** God's righteousness means that He has established a moral order, governs the world morally, and treats all creatures justly. Scripture states, **"The Lord is righteous"** (Psalm 11:7). Abraham's question in Genesis 18:25 emphasizes this: **"Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just?"**
- **Foundation of God's Throne:** Righteousness and justice are foundational to God's rule (Psalm 97:2: **"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne."**).
- **Biblical Images of God's Righteousness:** Peterson lists images such as a warrior (Exodus 15:3), a farmer (Isaiah 5:1-7), a bear and a lion (Lamentations 3:10-11), and a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:25-29).
- **God as the Just Judge:** Because God is righteous, He is a just judge, both presently (Psalm 9:7-8: **"He has established his throne for justice and he judges the world with righteousness."**) and in the future (Psalm 96:13: **"He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with his faithfulness."**, Acts 17:31). Jesus Christ also serves as the righteous judge (Matthew 25).
- **God's Concern for the Poor and Downtrodden:** God's righteousness extends to caring for the vulnerable (Deuteronomy 15:11, Amos 4:1, James 1:27, 1 John 3:17).
- **Righteousness Brings Both Judgment and Salvation:** While seemingly contradictory, God's righteousness demands judgment against sin (Daniel 9:7-14) but also provides a means of salvation (Isaiah 46:13: **"I bring near my righteousness. It is not far off, and my salvation will not delay."**, Romans 3:21-26) through faith in Jesus Christ.

- **Communicability of Righteousness:** Believers are expected to reflect God's righteousness, hungering and thirsting for it (Matthew 5:6), and practicing internal righteousness (Matthew 5:17-20, Matthew 6:1-18).

3. Love of God:

- **Definition:** God's love is characterized by a genuine desire for the good of others and a willingness to give of Himself to bring about that good.
- **Greatness of God's Love:** God's love is demonstrated in His commitment to humanity, as revealed to Moses (Exodus 34:6-7: "**The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness...**"). Its extent reaches to the heavens (Psalm 36:5: "**Lord, your faithful love... reaches to heaven.**"). Despite Israel's rebellion, God declares, "**I have loved you with an everlasting love**" (Jeremiah 31:3).
- **Undeserved Nature of God's Love:** God's love is not earned but freely given, even to a world that hates Him (John 3:16: "**For God so loved the world that he gave his only son...**", Romans 5:8: "**While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**"). The allegory of Hosea and Gomer illustrates God's faithful love for His unfaithful people.
- **Trinitarian Love:** Love is inherent within the Trinity, with the Father loving the Son and believers as He loves the Son (John 17:23). The Father sent the Son out of love (1 John 4:10), and the Son loves believers (John 15:9). The Holy Spirit pours God's love into our hearts (Romans 5:5).
- **Responsibility of Received Love:** God's love demands a response from believers, including loving one another (1 John 4:10-11, John 13:34). Love is the first fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and an indication of true faith (1 John 4:7-8: "**Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.**").
- **Privileges of God's Love:** God's love brings incredible privileges, including being welcomed into His family (1 John 3:1: "**See what great love the Father has given us, that we should be called God's children!**"), being corrected as children (Revelation 3:19), and having fear of final judgment removed (1 John 4:17, Romans 8:39: "**Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.**").

4. God's Wrath in Relation to Holiness and Righteousness:

- **Not Inherently Wrathful:** While God is inherently holy and just, His wrath is not an inherent attribute but rather His response to sin and rebellion.
- **Extension of Holiness and Justice:** God's wrath is His personal, active, and settled anger toward and opposition to sin. It is the manifestation of His holiness and justice against transgression.
- **Occasioned by Sin:** God's wrath is seen throughout Scripture as a response to human sin, from the Garden of Eden to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- **Grace Amidst Wrath:** Even in displays of wrath, God's grace relentlessly shines through, exemplified by the promise of redemption after the fall (Genesis 3:15) and His description as "slow to anger and abounding in faithful love" (Exodus 34:6-7), with mercy triumphing over judgment (James 2:13).
- **Christ as Propitiation:** Jesus voluntarily bore God's wrath on the cross, serving as an atoning sacrifice (Romans 3:25: "**God presented Him as an atoning sacrifice in His blood to demonstrate His righteousness.**"). This act satisfies God's justice and reconciles sinners to Him while demonstrating both God's love and holiness.
- **Present and Future Wrath:** God's wrath is currently revealed against ungodliness (Romans 1:18), but the full demonstration of His wrath is future (Romans 2:5-8, Revelation 14:9-11), representing God's ultimate victory over evil and ensuring justice prevails.

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's lecture emphasizes that God's holiness, righteousness, and love are essential aspects of His character. These attributes are not only distinct but also interconnected. God's holiness demands a response to sin, His righteousness ensures just judgment and provides a path to salvation, and His love motivates His gracious actions towards humanity, culminating in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, these communicable attributes call believers to lives of holiness, righteousness, and love, reflecting the character of the God they serve.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 15, Communicable Attributes, Part 2, Holy...

Study Guide: The Communicable Attributes of God - Holiness, Righteousness, and Love

Review of Key Concepts:

This study guide is designed to help you review the communicable attributes of God discussed in Session 15: holiness, righteousness, and love. Focus on understanding the definition of each attribute, the ways they are manifested in God, scriptural support for each, the relationship between them (especially holiness and righteousness in relation to wrath), and how these attributes relate to humanity. Pay close attention to the distinctions within each attribute (e.g., the two aspects of God's holiness) and the interconnectedness between them (e.g., how God's righteousness leads to both judgment and salvation). Consider the Trinitarian aspect of these attributes, noting how they are ascribed to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Finally, reflect on how these attributes are meant to be reflected in the lives of believers.

Short-Answer Quiz:

1. Define God's holiness in two parts, providing a brief explanation for each.
2. Explain how God's holiness interacts with human sinfulness, citing a relevant biblical example.
3. What does it mean for God to be righteous or just, according to the lecture? Provide one scriptural reference to support this definition.
4. Describe how God's righteousness is demonstrated in both judgment and salvation, providing one biblical example for each.
5. Explain the relationship between God's holiness and justice on one hand, and His wrath on the other. Is God inherently wrathful?
6. How does the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross relate to God's wrath and His righteousness?
7. Define God's love as presented in the lecture, and mention at least two biblical images used to describe this attribute.
8. According to the lecture, is God's love deserved by humanity? Provide a scriptural reference to support your answer.

9. Explain the Trinitarian nature of God's love, referencing at least one passage that highlights this.
10. How are believers expected to respond to and reflect God's holiness, righteousness, and love in their lives?

Answer Key for Quiz:

1. God's holiness means two things: (1) He is unique and other, incomparable to anything else. This aspect emphasizes His transcendent nature and distinct being. (2) He is morally pure and separate from all sin, indicating His perfect ethical standard.
2. When God's holiness comes into contact with human sinfulness, the result is judgment or a demonstration of His intolerance for sin, as seen when the Philistines faced judgment for taking the Ark (1 Samuel 5-6) or when God struck down the men of Beth Shemesh for disrespecting it (1 Samuel 6).
3. To be righteous or just means that God has established a moral order, governs the world according to this order, and treats all of His creation fairly and equitably. Psalm 11:7 states, "For the Lord is righteous; he loves justice; the upright shall behold his face."
4. God's righteousness is demonstrated in judgment, as seen in the account of the flood in Genesis 6, where God judged the widespread wickedness of humanity. It is also demonstrated in salvation, as Isaiah 46:13 proclaims, "I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory," showing that God's righteous actions bring about salvation.
5. God is not inherently wrathful; rather, His wrath is His response to sin and rebellion. It is an extension of His holiness and justice, representing His personal, active, and settled opposition to all that is unholy and unjust.
6. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross served as a propitiation, satisfying God's righteous demands for justice and atoning for the sins of humanity. By bearing God's wrath on our behalf, Christ's death allows God to be both just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus (Romans 3:26).
7. God's love means that He genuinely desires the good of others and actively gives of Himself to bring about that good. Biblical images used to describe His love

include a bird sheltering its young under its wings (Psalm 36:7) and a shepherd caring for his sheep (Psalm 23).

8. According to the lecture, God's love is undeserved by humanity. Romans 5:8 states, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us," highlighting that His love is extended even to those who do not merit it.
9. God's love is Trinitarian, meaning it is shared and expressed by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. John 17:23 illustrates this as Jesus prays to the Father, "that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you... that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."
10. Believers are called to consecrate themselves and be holy because God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16, based on Leviticus 11:44). They are also expected to hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6) and to love one another as Christ has loved them (John 13:34), reflecting God's character in their conduct and relationships.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Explore the interconnectedness of God's holiness and righteousness, analyzing how these attributes are distinct yet inseparable in His character and actions, particularly in the context of dealing with sin.
2. Discuss the significance of the doctrine of propitiation in understanding God's love and justice as revealed in the cross of Jesus Christ. How does this concept address the apparent tension between God's wrath and His love?
3. Analyze the communicable nature of God's holiness, righteousness, and love. In what ways can humanity reflect these divine attributes, and what are the inherent limitations and differences between God's perfections and human reflection?
4. Examine the scriptural evidence presented in the lecture for the Trinitarian expression of God's love. How do the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each demonstrate and participate in God's loving disposition towards humanity?
5. Consider the implications of understanding God as holy, righteous, and loving for Christian living and discipleship. How should these attributes shape a believer's worship, ethics, and relationships with others?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Communicable Attributes:** Qualities of God that have some semblance in His creation, particularly in humanity, in a derived and limited way.
- **Holiness:** God's attribute signifying His unique otherness, separateness from all creation, and absolute moral purity, devoid of any sin.
- **Righteousness (Justice):** God's attribute indicating that He has established a moral order, governs the world according to this order, and always acts in accordance with what is right and fair.
- **Wrath:** God's personal, active, and settled anger and opposition to sin and rebellion, which is an extension of His holiness and justice.
- **Propitiation:** Christ's loving, atoning sacrifice that satisfies God's wrath against sin and reconciles believers to God.
- **Atonement:** The work of Christ in counteracting the alienation between God and humanity caused by sin, bringing about reconciliation.
- **Love:** God's attribute characterized by His genuine desire for the good of others and His active giving of Himself to bring about that good.
- **Trinitarian:** Relating to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which teaches that God is one being existing in three co-equal and co-eternal persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit.
- **Sanctification:** The process by which believers are progressively made holy and conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 15, Communicable Attributes, Part 2, Holy..., Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: God's Holiness, Righteousness, and Love

1. What does it mean that God is holy? God's holiness encompasses two primary aspects: His uniqueness and His moral purity. As unique, God is other, incomparable, and profoundly distinct from all creation. As morally pure, God is completely separate from sin, totally pure, and sinless. Images like Lawgiver, Consuming Fire, Judge, and Light illustrate different facets of His holiness.

2. How does God's holiness impact humanity? Encountering God's holiness exposes human sinfulness and impurity, often leading to a sense of distress and recognition of our flawed nature, as seen in Isaiah's experience. Because God is separate from sin, His holiness demands a response and can result in judgment when confronted with unrepentant sin. However, God's holiness is also coupled with mercy and faithfulness, leading to forgiveness and the possibility of service, as demonstrated in Isaiah's calling. Furthermore, God calls His people to be holy as He is holy.

3. What does it mean that God is righteous or just? God's righteousness signifies that He has established a moral order, governs the world in accordance with this order, and treats all of His creation with justice. Scripture frequently affirms that "the Lord is righteous," and associates righteousness and justice as the foundation of His rule. As a righteous judge, God will ultimately evaluate all people with fairness and uprightness.

4. How does God's righteousness manifest in His actions? God's righteousness is seen in both His judgment against sin and His provision of salvation. He justly condemns wrongdoing, as illustrated by the consequences of sin throughout history. Simultaneously, His righteousness is demonstrated in His saving acts, offering redemption to those who believe. This seemingly paradoxical nature is reconciled through Christ's atoning sacrifice, which satisfies God's righteous demands and allows Him to declare believers righteous. God's concern for the poor and downtrodden also reflects His righteousness.

5. What is the relationship between God's wrath and His holiness and righteousness?

God's wrath is not an inherent attribute like His holiness and righteousness but rather His personal, active, and settled opposition to sin and rebellion. It is an extension of His holiness and justice in response to human transgression. While God's wrath is displayed throughout history as a consequence of sin, His grace consistently shines through, offering redemption even amidst judgment.

6. How does God deal with His wrath, and what is the significance of Christ's sacrifice in this context?

God, in His grace, deals with His own wrath toward sin by providing a way for sinners to be rescued. Jesus Christ voluntarily bore God's wrath on the cross as an atoning sacrifice (propitiation). This act satisfies God's holy demands for justice and reconciles believers to Him. Christ's sacrifice demonstrates both God's love and His perfect justice, maintaining His moral integrity while offering salvation.

7. What does it mean that God is loving? God's love is characterized by His genuine desire for the good of others and His active giving of Himself to bring about that good. His love is profound in its commitment, vast in its extent (loving even a world that hates Him), and entirely undeserved. Images like a bird sheltering its young, a shepherd caring for his sheep, a faithful husband, and a loving parent illustrate the nature of God's love.

8. How is God's love demonstrated, and what are the implications for believers? God's love is supremely demonstrated in the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ, for the salvation of humanity. This love is Trinitarian, with the Father loving the Son and believers as He loves the Son, the Son loving believers as the Father loved Him, and the Holy Spirit pouring God's love into our hearts. Receiving God's love brings the responsibility to love one another as Christ loved us, and it is an indication of true faith. Furthermore, God's love welcomes us into His family, moves Him to correct us, removes our fear of judgment, and assures us of an unbreakable bond with Him.