

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 20, Works of God (Angels, Satan, Demons) 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 20, Works of God (Angels, Satan, Demons), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's Theology Proper, Session 20, focuses on God's works regarding angels, Satan, and demons. It posits that God created angels as good, but some, led by Satan, rebelled, a reality God providentially allows. While Scripture offers some truths about these beings, it doesn't provide a complete doctrine of angelology, Satanology, or demonology. Good angels serve God through worship, as messengers, in judgment, and by aiding believers. Satan and demons, however, actively oppose God and humanity through deception and affliction, though believers can resist them through God's power, ultimately facing eternal punishment.

**2. 25 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 20 – 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 20, Works of God (Angels, Satan, Demons)

Briefing Document: The Works of God, Angels, Satan, and Demons (Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Theology Proper, Session 20)

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the key theological points presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 20 of his Theology Proper course, focusing on God's works related to creation (specifically angels) and the subsequent rebellion leading to Satan and demons. Peterson emphasizes the limitations of Scripture in providing complete doctrines on these topics, urging caution against speculation and prioritizing biblical truths. He stresses that all discussions about angels, Satan, and demons must be understood in relation to God's sovereignty and ultimate purposes.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. God's Works and Creatures:

- The session focuses on God's works of creation concerning angels, distinguishing it from His works of creation and providence (already covered) and redemption and consummation (to be covered in other courses).
- **Creation of Angels:** God created all angels as good spiritual beings.
- Quote: "God creates all things, and that includes angels."
- **Rebellion of Some Angels:** Some angels rebelled against God, becoming evil angels, including Satan and his demons.
- Quote: "God creates them as good angels, but they rebel against Him and become evil angels."
- **God's Sovereignty and Providence:** While the reasons for the rebellion are not fully understood, God, in His sovereignty and providence, allowed it and mysteriously uses even evil for ultimate good.
- Quote: "Although we do not fully understand, God, in His providence, allows the rebellion. Sovereignly and mysteriously, He uses even evil for ultimate good."

2. Limitations of Scriptural Doctrine:

- Scripture does not provide a complete "angelology" (doctrine of angels), "Satanology" (doctrine of Satan), or "demonology" (doctrine of demons).
- Quote: "Scripture does not present a complete angelology, Doctrine of Angels. Scripture does not present a complete Satanology, Doctrine of Satan. And it does not present a complete demonology, Doctrine of Demons."
- Our understanding of these beings is based on the truths that Scripture does reveal, requiring careful interpretation and avoidance of speculation.
- Quote: "But we have some truths. We work with them and try not to speculate and let it say it when we make a move, when we make an inference, and so forth."
- It is crucial to understand these beings in relation to God.
- Quote: "Scripture does not give us a complete doctrine of angels, Satan or demons, but speaks of them all, this is very important, in relation to God."

3. Good Angels:

- **Purpose:** Created by God to worship and serve Him.
- Quote: "God creates angels to worship and serve Him."
- **Roles: Worship and Praise:** They appear before God, praise Him (Psalm 148:1-2, Isaiah 6:3), and worship Him, including Christ (Hebrews 1:6, Revelation 4:8).
- **Spiritual Beings:** Created as spiritual beings in large numbers (Psalm 148:1-5, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelation 5:11).
- **Organization:** They have some form of organization with leaders (archangels like Michael and Gabriel).
- **Characteristics:** They do not have physical bodies, do not marry or procreate, and do not die (Genesis 18:1-2, Matthew 22:30, Luke 20:36). They possess great intellectual prowess, though limited compared to God (Matthew 13:32). They are stronger than humans (Psalm 103:20, 2 Peter 2:11) but their power is limited by God.

- **Servants of God:** They do God's will (Psalm 103:20-21) and perform key functions: adoring and praising God, serving as His messengers (Daniel 9:21-22, Luke 1:19, Acts 10:22, Revelation 1:1), bringing God's judgment (2 Kings 19:35, Acts 12:23, Revelation 9:15), and serving God's people, especially by preserving them (Hebrews 1:14, Acts 5:19, Matthew 2:13, Acts 5:17-21).
- **Relation to Christ:** The eternal Son of God created the angels as the Father's agent (Acts 1:16, John 1:3). Good angels played various roles in Christ's life (predicting and announcing his birth, serving him after temptation, in Gethsemane, announcing his resurrection, witnessing his ascension) and will accompany him at his return (Matthew 16:27, 25:31, 2 Thessalonians 1:7).
- **Not to be Worshipped:** Angels are creatures and are not divine and therefore not to be worshipped (Revelation 19:10, 22:8-9).

4. Satan and Demons:

- **Origin:** Created as holy angels but rebelled against God, led by Satan. The exact nature and timing of this rebellion are not fully clear in Scripture, with interpretations of prophetic passages (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28) as symbolic of Satan's fall being considered controversial by Peterson.
- Quote: "God creates the angels holy, but many of them join Satan and rebel against God. We cannot fully comprehend why, and yet it's true."
- **Satan's Titles and Characteristics:** Referred to as Satan, the great dragon, the ancient serpent, or the devil (Revelation 12:9). He is the leader of the unholy angels or demons (Matthew 12:26), a liar and murderer (John 8:44), an accuser (Revelation 12:10), and a deceiver (Revelation 12:9).
- **Demons:** Identified as rebellious, unclean spirits (Mark 8:38, Matthew 10:1, Mark 3:11), spiritual forces of evil in the heavens (Ephesians 6:12). They carry out Satan's evil plans by promoting idolatry (Deuteronomy 32:16-17, Psalm 106:36-38, 1 Corinthians 10:19-20) and false teaching ("doctrines of demons," 1 Timothy 4:1). They also possess and afflict people (Matthew 8:28, 17:15, 18).
- **Believers and Demonic Influence:** Peterson believes believers cannot be possessed by the devil but can be afflicted by him. He acknowledges a lack of practical knowledge in this area.
- **Enmity Towards God and His People:** Satan and his demons hate God and His people and seek to destroy them (1 Peter 5:8).

- **Deceptive Tactics:** The devil disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14-15), blinds unbelievers' minds (2 Corinthians 4:4), and tempts believers to various sins (materialism, pride, immorality, lying, anger, unforgiveness, divisiveness).
- **Ultimate Fate:** Satan and demons' rebellion seals their fate: eternal punishment in hell (Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:10).
- **God's Ultimate Sovereignty:** Despite the rebellion, Satan and demons are subject to the rule of God (Job 1:9-12, Luke 22:31). Believers can resist the devil through God's strength (James 4:7).

5. The Uniqueness of God:

- Peterson concludes by reiterating the absolute uniqueness and sovereignty of God as the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
- God alone possesses all attributes of deity, performs the works of creation and providence, created all things (including angels), and will ultimately save His people and triumph over all enemies.
- Quote: "I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and no one is like me. Isaiah 46:9. God the Trinity alone is God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's lecture provides a foundational overview of the biblical understanding of angels, Satan, and demons within the broader context of God's works. He emphasizes the importance of adhering to scriptural revelation, acknowledging its limitations, and consistently viewing these spiritual beings in light of God's supreme power and ultimate plan. The lecture serves as a cautionary note against speculative doctrines and encourages a focus on the truths Scripture definitively presents.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 20, Works of God (Angels, Satan, Demons)

The Works of God and His Creatures: Angels, Satan, and Demons

Quiz

1. According to the lecture, what are the two main categories of God's works that have already been covered in this Theology Proper course? What categories of God's works are outside the scope of this particular session?
2. How does the lecture describe God's creation of angels, including Satan and demons? What theological tension is mentioned regarding God's allowance of their rebellion?
3. What are three key truths the lecture states about angels in relation to God, and how do angels differ from the Trinity in their roles? Provide a specific example of a function performed by good angels.
4. Describe two characteristics of angels based on the lecture, such as their nature, abilities, or limitations. Provide a scriptural reference for one of these characteristics.
5. What are the four main functions of good angels as outlined in the lecture? Provide one specific scriptural example associated with one of these functions.
6. How does the lecture describe the origin and identity of Satan and demons in relation to God and the other angels? What is one of the names or titles attributed to Satan in Revelation?
7. According to the lecture, what is the presumed state of the unfallen or elect angels? What is the lecture's tentative identification of the rebellious angels?
8. What are two ways in which the lecture states that Satan and demons carry out their evil plans? Provide a scriptural reference for one of these methods.
9. According to the lecture, can believers be possessed by the devil? What is suggested as a potential impact of Satan and demons on believers?
10. What is the ultimate fate of Satan and demons according to the lecture and what theological truth does this reinforce about God?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The two main categories of God's works already covered are creation and providence. The works of redemption and consummation are outside the scope of this session and belong to other courses.
2. God creates all angels, including those who became Satan and demons, as good angels. The theological tension lies in understanding how God, in His providence, allows their rebellion while still being sovereign and using even evil for ultimate good.
3. Angels are created by God to worship and serve Him, and they are spoken of in Scripture in relation to God. Unlike the Trinity, angels play no part in creation or redemption. Good angels serve as God's messengers, as seen with Gabriel delivering messages in Luke 1.
4. Angels are spiritual beings (Hebrews 1:14) and are created in large numbers (Hebrews 12:22). While they have great intellectual prowess, their knowledge is limited compared to God (Matthew 24:36).
5. The four main functions of good angels are to adore and praise God (Psalm 148:2), serve as God's messengers (Luke 1:19), bring God's judgment on rebellious human beings (Acts 12:23), and serve God's people, especially by preserving them (Hebrews 1:14).
6. Satan and demons originated as good angels created by God, but they joined Satan in rebellion against Him. Revelation 12:9 refers to Satan as "the great dragon, the ancient serpent, or the devil."
7. The unfallen or elect angels are presumed to still be holy (1 Timothy 5:21). The lecture tentatively identifies the rebellious angels with unclean spirits (Mark 3:11).
8. Satan and demons carry out their evil plans by promoting idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:19-20) and false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1). They also possess and afflict people (Matthew 8:28).
9. According to the lecture, believers cannot be possessed by the devil, but they can apparently be afflicted by him. The effects of affliction might not be significantly different from possession in some cases.

10. The rebellion of Satan and demons against God seals their fate of eternal punishment in hell (Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:10). This reinforces the theological truth that God alone is sovereign and will ultimately triumph over all His enemies.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the limitations of our understanding regarding angels, Satan, and demons based on Scripture, as presented in the lecture. How should these limitations influence our approach to these theological topics?
2. Compare and contrast the roles of good angels and the Trinity in God's work, according to the lecture. What does this distinction reveal about the unique nature and actions of God?
3. Analyze the functions of good angels as described in the lecture. Which of these functions do you find most significant and why, providing scriptural support for your reasoning?
4. Explore the origin and activities of Satan and demons as presented in the lecture. What are the implications of their rebellion for humanity and God's creation?
5. Considering the lecture, how should believers understand and respond to the reality of spiritual forces of evil? What safeguards and strengths do believers possess in the face of such opposition?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Theology Proper:** The branch of systematic theology that specifically focuses on the study of God the Father, His being, attributes, and works.
- **Works of Creation:** God's actions in bringing the universe and everything in it into existence.
- **Works of Providence:** God's ongoing activity in sustaining, governing, and directing all things according to His will.
- **Works of Redemption:** God's saving actions through Jesus Christ to reconcile humanity to Himself. (Outside the scope of this session)

- **Works of Consummation:** God's future actions in bringing His plan for creation and redemption to its final completion. (Outside the scope of this session)
- **Angelology:** The theological doctrine concerning angels.
- **Satanology:** The theological doctrine concerning Satan.
- **Demonology:** The theological doctrine concerning demons.
- **Archangel:** An angel of high rank or leadership within the angelic hierarchy.
- **Seraphim:** Celestial beings described in Isaiah 6, often associated with worship and purity.
- **Ministering Spirits:** Angels who serve God and His people (Hebrews 1:14).
- **Satan:** The primary adversary of God and humanity, also known as the Devil.
- **Demons:** Fallen angels who follow Satan and carry out his evil purposes.
- **Elect Angels:** Angels chosen by God, presumably those who did not rebel.
- **Unclean Spirits:** Another term often used to refer to demons in the Gospels.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of false gods or idols.
- **Incarnation:** The doctrine that God the Son took on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Theology Proper: God, Session 20, Works of God (Angels, Satan, Demons), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Angels, Satan, and Demons

1. What is the origin of angels, Satan, and demons according to this theological perspective?

God created all things, including the angels, as good and holy beings. However, a significant number of angels, led by Satan, rebelled against God before the creation of humankind. These fallen angels are what we now know as Satan and demons. While the exact reasons and details of this rebellion are not fully understood, Scripture indicates that God, in his sovereignty and providence, allowed it and even uses evil for his ultimate good.

2. What are the primary roles and characteristics of good angels? Good angels are created as spiritual beings who worship and serve God. They exist in vast numbers and have some form of organization, including archangels like Michael and Gabriel. While they can appear in human form, they do not possess physical bodies, do not marry or procreate, and are immortal. They are more powerful and intelligent than humans, but their knowledge and power are limited compared to God's. Their main functions include adoring and praising God, serving as his messengers, executing his judgment on rebellious humans, and ministering to and preserving God's people.

3. How do angels relate to God and to humanity? Angels are fundamentally creatures created by God and are subordinate to him. Unlike the Trinity, they played no part in creation or redemption. They appear before God, praise and worship him, and act as agents to carry out his will. In relation to humanity, good angels serve as messengers, deliverers of judgment, and protectors of God's people, ministering to those who will inherit salvation. They are not to be worshipped, as they themselves worship God.

4. What does Scripture reveal about Satan and his nature? Scripture presents Satan as a created angel who rebelled against God and became the leader of the fallen angels or demons. He is referred to by various names such as the great dragon, the ancient serpent, and the devil. His nature is characterized by being a liar and the father of lies, a murderer, an accuser (particularly of believers), and a deceiver. He actively opposes God and seeks to thwart God's work, as seen in his temptation of Christ.

5. What are demons, and what is their relationship to Satan? Demons are understood to be the unholy or fallen angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God. They are described as spiritual forces of evil that operate in the heavenly realms and carry out Satan's evil plans. Their activities include promoting idolatry and false teaching ("doctrines of demons") and possessing and afflicting people. While the exact nature of their relationship to unclean spirits is not definitively stated, they are often identified together.

6. What are the limitations and activities of Satan and demons? Although Satan and demons are powerful spiritual beings who hate God and his people and seek to destroy them, their power is ultimately limited by God's sovereignty. They are subject to God's rule, and believers can resist the devil through God's strength. Satan attempts to blind unbelievers to the gospel, tempt believers to sin (such as materialism, pride, immorality, lying, anger, lack of forgiveness, and divisiveness), and promote false teaching.

7. Can believers be possessed by the devil or demons? According to this theological perspective, believers in Christ cannot be possessed by the devil or demons. However, it is believed that they can be afflicted by them, and the outward manifestations of affliction might sometimes resemble possession. The text acknowledges a degree of ignorance regarding the practical aspects of such afflictions but notes that missionaries have encountered individuals who appear to be possessed or greatly afflicted.

8. What is the ultimate fate of Satan and his demons? The rebellion of Satan and his demons against God has sealed their fate. They are destined for eternal punishment in hell, a reality affirmed in Scripture. God, as the Trinity, is the only true God, and in the end, he will triumph over all his enemies, including Satan and his demonic forces, bringing ultimate salvation and glory to himself.