

STUDY STARTERS

Peters, Ted. *God — The World's Future*, 2nd edition.
(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

Preface, pages vii-xviii

1. How does Ted Peters define “faith” & “theology”?
2. What do the terms “ecumenical” and “ecumenic” mean here?
3. What does Peters say is the central theme of the book? What does he mean?
4. What characterizes the life of beatitude?
5. What is the primary context in which Peters situates his work? What question does he ask in this context?
6. What is the “gender complementarity principle”?
7. What is the one point on which Peters deviates from deconstructivist postmodernism? In your own words, describe briefly why.

PART ONE: THEOLOGY'S CONTEXT & METHOD

Introduction & Chapter One: Addressing the Postmodern Person, 6-33

8. What is the hermeneutical question?

9. What is the postmodern amendment to the hermeneutical question?

10. How are freedom and liberation understood according to the modern mind? What is the postmodern critique of such freedom?

11. What is the essence of modern critical consciousness and what three forms does it take?

12. What are Descartes' two legacies?

13. Distinguish objectivism and relativism (pluralism).

14. What is the positive principle to which doubt leads?

15. What are the two types of postmodernity? How would you briefly describe each of them?

16. Distinguish the archonic view from the epigenetic view of creative activity in the cosmos.
17. Define the concept of “emergent holism.”
18. What are the three stages along faith’s way?
19. What makes Luther’s commentary on the first commandment attractive to modern (especially neorthodox) theologians?
20. What is the difference between naive literalism and fundamentalism?
21. What role does hermeneutical philosopher Paul Ricouer’s wager play in postcritical reconstruction?
22. What are the two principles of postmodern thinking Peters wishes to employ for theology?

Chapter Two: Explicating the Christian Symbols, 34-82

23. What is the definition of Christian theology that opens Chapter two?
24. What is theological methodology? Distinguish it from theological method.

25. What are the four sources—sometimes called the *quadrilateral*—for theology stipulated by Richard Hooker and John Wesley? What for Peters is the primary source?
26. What does the prism analogy say about the concept of symbol?
27. Define “metaxy.”
28. What are the four levels of symbol?
29. What is the argument raised by feminist hermeneutics of suspicion?
30. What is Sallie McFague’s method of countering the oppressive trajectory of male images of God? Why does Peters not recommend it?
31. Why does Catherine LaCugna advocate retaining Father language for God?
32. What is Peters’ thesis regarding the definition of gospel?
33. What four elements consistently appear when the story of Jesus is told?
34. The significance of the story of Jesus can be spelled out in what three ways?

35. Are the Bible and the gospel identical?
36. If the gospel is the material norm, what is the formal norm for theology?
37. What are the two ways to understand tradition?
38. What makes the Bible canon for Christians? What does Peters believe the Bible is authoritative?
39. What was the normative theological principle Luther used to evaluate the different books within the New Testament?
40. Who objects to the canon-within-a-canon and why?
41. Distinguish *norma normans* and *norma normata*, and give an example of each.
42. Which comes first, revelation or faith? What position does Peters take?
43. What are the three dimensions of faith (not to be confused with the three stages of faith)?

44. What are the two functions and seven principles of theology understood as evangelical explication?
45. What are the four criteria that determine whether a theological scheme makes sense?
46. What is the power and value of religious symbols?

PART TWO: THE FOUNTAIN OF CREATION

Chapter Three: God the Trinity, 85-128

47. What is the specific question Christians ask in theology?
48. The word "God" is ambiguous. To what do "God" and "Godhead" refer?
49. What is the ontological question? What is the existential question?
50. What is the significance of *Emmanuel* for the religious quest for the divine in both its beyond and intimate dimensions?
51. What is the importance of knowing the name of something? Is Moses given the actual name of God in Exodus 3:13-15?
52. What are divine attributes? Give some examples.

53. Distinguish kataphatic and apophatic statements about God.
54. What are the two ways God exercises power according to classical theism?
55. What is the essence of the challenge made by some process philosophers to the concept of God's omnipotence? Does Peters think it is fair? Why or why not.
56. What position do the modalists and subordinationists take?
57. What was the struggle between Arius and Athanasius?
58. What sort of relationship was attributed to God by the Nicene Creed authors?
59. Distinguish the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. What is Rahner's Rule? Why is Rahner's Rule important to Peter's understanding of the Trinity?
60. What role does eschatology play in the immanent Trinity/economic Trinity relationship? How does Peters understand eternity?
61. What is the feminist argument regarding the relation between divine father symbolism and human hierarchy? Distinguish revolutionary from reformist feminism.

62. Describe the various approaches of Sallie McFague, Rosemary Ruether, Elizabeth Johnson, and Catherine LaCugna.

Chapter Four: God and the Continuing Creation, 129-146

63. Distinguish atheism, agnosticism, polytheism, panentheism, deism, theism (monotheism), prolepticism, and eschatological panentheism.
64. Describe the two schools of thought in Old Testament scholarship that attempt to describe the tie between creation and redemption.
65. What three things do we affirm when we affirm *creatio ex nihilo*?
66. What four contemporary scientific concepts are relevant for theological discussions of creation? Give a brief description of each.
67. What does Philip Hefner mean by “created co-creator”?
68. According to Peters’ proleptic concept of creation as stated in *GWF*, God creates from the future, not the past. What does this mean? What needs to be added to *creatio ex nihilo* and *creation continua*? Contrast this with the bowling ball theory of creation.
69. What are the archonic and atomic fallacies, and why does *GWF* want to avoid them?

70. What does it mean to say that Jesus Christ is God's proleptic intention for the whole of creation?

Chapter Five: Becoming Human & Unbecoming Evil, 147-178

71. What are the two foci of Christian anthropology?
72. What is the metaxy between soil and spirit?
73. What is the source of the modern concept of human dignity?
74. What is Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation? What is Peter's theory of precapitulation?
75. How does eschatological resurrection belong to anthropology?
76. Is there any compatibility between the Eastern Orthodox notion of divinization (*theosis*) with the concept of the fulfillment of the *imago dei* in us?
77. Explain Johnson's "multipolar anthropology."
78. Why is evil described as unbecoming?
79. Distinguish sin and evil.

80. What are the seven steps down the path toward radical evil?
81. What is the experience, according to Ricoeur, upon which the doctrine of original sin is constructed?

PART THREE: THE FORETASTE OF NEW CREATION

Chapter Six: The Person & Work of Jesus Christ, 182-210

82. What is the difference and the connection between Christology and Soteriology?
83. What is the *triplex munus*?
84. What do the words “Messiah” and “Christ” mean?
85. What is added in Peters’ *quadriplex munus*?
86. What in Jesus’ ministry or identity puts him in need of divine confirmation?
87. Contextually, why was the cross such a disappointment?
88. What, according to the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg, are the five things that Jesus’ resurrection signify?

89. In what way can we say the resurrection of Jesus was historical?
90. What did Chalcedon in 451 AD decide regarding the two natures of Christ? What two qualities does Christology hold together in tension?
91. What are the alternative Christologies of the Nestorians? The Monophysites?
92. What is the *communicatio idiomatum*? How does it put Lutherans on the brink of heterodoxy? Distinguish theopassianism and patripassianism.
93. Peters writes that in the heat of battle, Lutherans accused the Reformed churches of Nestoriansim and the Reformed theologians accused the Lutherans of monopysitism. Why?
94. What is the *extra Calvinisticum*?

Chapter Seven: The Work & Person of Jesus Christ, 211-233

95. What is the main concern of soteriology?
96. What is the atonement symbol?
97. Identify the various theories of atonement.

98. What is Anselm's theory of atonement?
99. What is the feminist critique of Anselm's theory?
100. Why does *GWF* examine the doctrine of justification within soteriology?
101. Why refer to Emmanuel as prolepsis? What does the concept of retroactive ontology imply about the nature of being?

PART FOUR: THE LIFE OF THE NEW CREATION

Chapter Eight: The Holy Spirit, 238-266

102. What is pneumatology? From what does it receive its name?
103. How does the Spirit work through "collapsing time"?
104. How is the resurrection of Jesus an eschatological act of the Holy Spirit?
105. How does the Spirit relate to the future?
106. What kind of unity does the Spirit engender? Does it include difference?
107. What are the theological virtues?

108. What does *simul justus et peccator* mean?
109. What does Peters say “justification by faith” is **not**? What does Peters say it is?
110. Distinguish talents, gifts, and fruits of the Spirit.
111. What is sanctification, and what steps in transformation does it include?
112. Describe John Wesley’s concept of Christian perfection.
113. What is the *filoque* controversy?
114. What is the argument of Photius that Peters supports?

Chapter Nine: The Church, 267-317

115. The church is an arc between what two terminals?
116. How does Peters identify the presence of the church?
117. What are the five metaphorical symbols for the church Peters discusses?

118. Roman Catholic theologian Karl Rahner agrees with Reformers Luther and Calvin that what two items constitute the church?

119. What is the definition of church found in Article 7 of the Augsburg Confession and Calvin's *Institutes*?

120. Does Peter think of the church as an institution or as an event?

121. How does the church anticipate the future? Can we equate the church with the Kingdom of God?

122. What are the two ways the church does its preparatory works as a community "called out"?

123. How did the distinction between the visible and invisible church begin? What is the danger in distinguishing sharply between them?

124. From where do we get our word "worship"?

125. Why are both law and gospel necessary to Christian preaching?

126. What is the first use of the law? What is the second use? What is its relationship to the gospel?

127. How did Augustine define a sacrament? Philip Melanchthon?

128. What clusters of images and concepts inform the symbol of baptism and lead to an eschatological meaning?

129. What does the Latin phrase *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* mean?

130. Does Peters think that non-baptized believers in Christ should be considered Christian? Why/why not?

131. How do we both remember and anticipate Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper?

132. Why are Reformation Protestants opposed to the language and concept of Eucharistic sacrifice?

133. Granted that Christians assume Christ is present in the Eucharist, describe the different ways in which Christ's presence can be conceived. What was the disputed point regarding Jesus' body between Zwingli, Calvin, and Luther? Why does Peters describe the Lutheran position as incarnationalist? The Calvinist position as parallelist? What is the weakness of each?

134. What are the marks of the church? Say a few words about each.

135. What are the five forms of ministry to which the whole church is called?
136. What is the central concern of the church?

Chapter Ten: Eschatology, 318-344

137. What items are included within the locus of eschatology?
138. In discussing time and the future, what do *futurum*, *adventus*, and *venturum* mean?
139. How does Peters suggest we might interpret God's act of casting out Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden?
140. Is salvation via soulechtsomy?
141. How does Paul describe resurrection?
142. What is the relationship between human and cosmic destiny?
143. In what way should Christians understand the concept of final judgment?
144. What is the purpose of final judgment? What is it explicitly **not**?

145. What are the symbols for heaven?
146. What are the two concepts of hell? In what two ways was the doctrine of hell used as threat discourse?
147. What is the aspect of Calvin's doctrine of predestination to which theologians such as Arminius, Wesley, and Barth object? What is Peters' objection to the traditional doctrine of predestination?

Chapter Eleven: Ecumenic Pluralism, 348-371

148. Distinguish between ecumenic and radical pluralism.
149. What is Peters' concern with the social analysis of liberation theology?
150. Define confessional universalism, confessional exclusivism, and supraconfessional universalism. Which does Peters advocate and why?
151. In contrast to other religions, of what does the Christian understanding of salvation consist?
152. What are the three different positions on salvation supported by New Testament passages?
153. What are Peters' two complementary hypotheses regarding salvation?

154. What is the doctrine of *apokatastasis*?

Chapter Twelve: Proleptic Ethics, 372-393

155. How does Peters describe his postmodern ethics for the Christian life?

156. What is the new relationship to the law that an ethic based on liberated love establishes?

157. What is the tie between eschatological justice and temporal politics?

158. Is a provolutionary and eschatological approach to ethics escapist?

159. Explain Carl Braaten's concept of eschatopraxis.

160. What are the seven middle axioms for action with which *GWF* concludes?