

God The Father

God the Father is revealed in the Bible as the first person of the Trinity, three persons in one Being - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The relation of the Father to the Trinity is one of equality in essence but supremacy in role. There is an irreversible order of relationship within the Trinity as the Father sending and commissioning the Son (John 20:21) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16), just as the Son sends and commissions the Holy Spirit. It is this role as the initiator that brings the Father to be properly designated the first person of the Trinity.

In addition, the interaction of Jesus with the Father is different than Christ's interaction with the Holy Spirit. Christ clearly saw Himself as being submissive to the Father (Luke 22:42). The Father is preeminent in relation to the Son and the Spirit, yet is united in being and equal in person.

The Father of creation

All three persons of the Trinity participated in the creation, yet God the Father is in a special way the father of all. Ephesians 3:14-15 shows that every created being in heaven and earth make up a family with the Father as the head. Malachi 2:10, 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Hebrews 12:9 seem to echo this view of God as the Father of all beings, angels and mankind.

Christians are often regarded as the sons of God in the Scripture, but non-Christians are also in a sense the offspring of God. Paul describes those he is seeking to convert to Christ as the offspring of God along with him in Acts 17:29. Job 38:7 refers to angels as the sons of God (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1).

This universal fatherhood of God is derived specifically from the First Person of the Trinity being the Creator with all beings owing the origin and existence to Him. All in this strict sense share a brotherhood. Yet this truth rests alongside the sharp differentiation between the saved and the lost.

The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ

The description of relationship of the Jesus Christ to the First Person of the Trinity as Father and Son is extensive in the New Testament (e.g. John 17:1; Ephesians 1:3). It was the term that Jesus used to address God (e.g. John 17:25) and Christ meant this in more than an example for people for He often used in personal sense, "My Father" (e.g. Matthew 10:33; 26:39).

The title "Father" communicates much about the relationship between Christ and God, but as with any analogy, it has its limitations. While the term "Father" clarifies the subordinate role of the Son, it cannot be taken in a chronological sense, for the Son co-existed with the Father from the beginning (cf. John 1:1).

The Father of Israel

The Old Testament uses the concept of father and son to describe Israel's relationship to God. Exodus 4:22 find God declaring Israel to be "My son, My firstborn." This was beyond God's role as Creator of all in that He gives His people a special relationship to Him. Yet this fatherhood of God is less than saying Israel was regenerate because not all of Israel has spiritual life (Romans 9:6-8).

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God's role as the Father of Israel is represented in His commitment to Solomon as the King of Israel as the heir to the house of David (2 Samuel 7:14).

The Father of believers in Christ

The Fatherhood of God over His people is a New Testament emphasis. The term "Father" is used of God 245 times in the New Testament, as opposed to only 15 in the Old Testament. This is part of the development of New Testament revelation regarding God's relationship with man.

Those who have believed in Jesus Christ have become children of God (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-2) and those who are not children of God are "sons of disobedience" "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:2-3; 5:6; cf. John 8:42-44). The Scripture emphasizes that believers become the sons of God through faith (Galatians 3:23-26).

This status of being sons of God comes through adoption. We have been adopted as sons through Jesus Christ (Romans 8:15). This adoption is not only a present thing, but in a sense is a future thing. We long for our complete deliverance and the full benefits of adoption with the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23).

Adoption as sons by God the Father is the result of justification and regeneration. While God could give a person eternal life without including him as His son if He so chose, as with the angels, God has elected before the foundation of the world to bring us into His family. Adoption speaks of our relationship with God, not just our avoidance of eternal punishment. Not only are we no longer slaves to sin, we are sons of God and heirs (Galatians 4:4-7). This is how God shows His goodness to us (Matthew 6:32).

Because God is our Father in heaven (Matthew 6:9), we must truly appreciate the love He has given us through adoption (1 John 3:1). Our adoption results in blessing upon blessing from God.