

Major Bible Themes

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CHAPTER V

GOD THE FATHER

Three Persons are indicated in the blessed Trinity -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- and these three are one God. The Father is not the Trinity, the Son is not the Trinity, nor is the Spirit the Trinity. Since the Old Testament reference to Deity is almost universally to the Triune God, there is comparatively little mention in that portion of the Scriptures of the three Persons in the Trinity. But when the processes of redemption are in progress, as recorded in the New Testament, the clearest distinctions are drawn as to the Person and work of each. The Father is presented as electing, loving, and bestowing; the Son is presented as suffering, redeeming, and upholding; while the Spirit is presented as regenerating, energizing, and sanctifying. This chapter is concerned with the person of the Father -- the first of the blessed Trinity -- who is set forth in the New Testament in two aspects:

I. THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

The relationship which exists between the first and second Persons of the Trinity is, in the Scriptures, likened to that relationship which exists between a father and a son. The relationship,

though nowhere clearly explained, is fundamental in the divine being and has always existed. He who was "the firstborn of every creature" was "the only begotten Son" from all eternity (John 17:5; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:5-10), and He who in the fullness of time that He might be incarnate was begotten by the overshadowing power of the Highest and born of a virgin (Luke 1:35), was with the Father and was coequal with Him from the beginning (John 1:1, 2). While the relationship between the first and the second Persons of the Trinity is actually that of a father to a son and a son to a father (2 Cor. 1:3; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 1:2), the fact of this relationship is an illustration of vital truth which accommodates itself to the mode of thought of a finite mind. The truth that the Father is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, though slightly mentioned in the Old Testament (Psa. 2:7; Isa. 7:14; 9:6, 7), is one of the most general teachings of the New Testament.

1. The Son of God is said to have been begotten of the Father (Psa. 2:7; John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9).
2. The Father acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ to be His Son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Luke 9:35).
3. The Father is acknowledged by the Son (Matt. 11:27; 26:63, 64; Luke 22:29; John 8:16-29, 33-44; 17:1).
4. The fact that God the Father is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is acknowledged by men (Matt. 16:16; Mark 15:39; John 1:34, 49; Acts 3:14).
5. The Son acknowledges the Father by being subject to Him (John 8:29, 49).
6. Even the demons recognize this relationship between the Father and the Son (Matt. 8:29).

II. THE FATHER OF ALL AMONG MEN WHO BELIEVE ON CHRIST

The student should be warned against the modernistic teaching which is now so general and which claims that God the Father is the Father of all mankind, and that there is therefore a universal brotherhood among men founded upon a supposed universal fatherhood of God. It is true that the human race at its beginning was "the offspring of God" (Acts 17:28, 29). But, when tracing the genealogy of Christ, Luke declared each and every generation until Adam to be the offspring of the preceding generation; Adam alone is called "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). On the other hand, the Scriptures teach that all who believe on Christ unto salvation are sons of God; not on the ground of their first or natural birth into the Adamic family, but on the ground of their second or spiritual birth into the family of God (John 1:12; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:19; 3:15; 5:1). By the regenerating work of the Spirit the believer is made a legitimate child of God. God being actually his Father he is impelled by the Spirit to say "Abba, Father." Being born of God, he is a partaker of the divine nature, and on the ground of that birth, he is heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ (John 1:12, 13; 3:3-6; Titus 3:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:16, 17). The impartation of the divine nature is an operation so deep that the nature thus imparted is never said to be removed for any cause whatsoever.

When the teachings of the Scriptures relative to the present power and authority of Satan are considered, added proof is given that all men are not children of God by their natural birth. In

this connection the most direct and faithful sayings of Christ are in evidence. Speaking of those who disbelieved He said: "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). Likewise, when describing the unregenerate He said, "The tares are the children of the wicked one" (Matt. 13:38). The Apostle Paul wrote of the unsaved as being "The children of disobedience," and "The children of wrath" (Eph. 2:2, 3).

Emphasis should be placed on the fact that it is not in the power of any one to make himself a child of God. God alone can undertake such a transformation, and He undertakes it only on the one condition which He Himself has imposed, that Christ shall be believed upon and received as Saviour (John 1:12).

The following passages give clear instruction regarding the Fatherhood of God: John 20:17; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 1:3; 2:18; 4:6; Colossians 1:12, 13, 19; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 1:3; 2:1, 22; 3:1.

QUESTIONS

1. Where does the emphasis fall in the Scriptures on God as One Person, and where on the separate Persons of the Trinity?
2. What ministries are exercised by the Father, by the Son, and by the Spirit?
3. What human relationship is used in the Scriptures to illustrate the relationship which exists between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity?
4. What Scriptures indicate that this relationship existed from all eternity?
5. What Old Testament passages teach the relationship of Father and Son in the Godhead?
6. Name six ways in which the divine Father and Son relationship is acknowledged and asserted in the New Testament.
7. To whom other than Christ is God said to be Father?
8. Is the doctrine of the Universal Fatherhood of God and the Universal Sonship of Man taught in the Scriptures?
9. How may man be said to be the offspring of God?
10. By what process does he become a child of God?
11. What is imparted through the new birth?
12. Do the Scriptures imply that the new nature could ever be removed?
13. Indicate some Bible passages which describe the relationships which the unsaved sustain to Satan and to God.
14. Who alone is sufficient to accomplish a regeneration of lost men?