

Loris First Baptist Church
“52 Vital Doctrines of The Bible”

Doctrine #6: God the Father

Note: Most information based on pages 45-51 of the book “Major Bible Themes” by Lewis Sperry Chaffer.

Opening Comments. The Father as the First Person:

1. In the revelation of the three persons who constitute the Holy Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – the First Person is designated as the Father.
2. As such, the Father is NOT the entire Trinity just as the Son is not the Trinity nor the Spirit is the Trinity. The Trinity includes all three persons.
3. Although the doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is presented in the Old Testament and these terms are given to the persons of the Trinity, the New Testament defines and reveals the full doctrine:
 - a. The Father is presented as electing, loving, and bestowing.
 - b. The Son is presented as suffering, redeeming, and upholding the universe.
 - c. The Holy Spirit is presented as regenerating, indwelling, baptizing, energizing, and sanctifying.
4. New Testament revelation centers in revealing Jesus Christ, but in presenting the Christ as the Son of God, the truth of God the Father is likewise revealed.
5. Because of the irreversible order of the Father sending and commissioning the Son, and the Son sending and commissioning the Holy Spirit, the Father is properly designated in theology as the First Person without lessening in any way the “ineffable” (i.e. “too overwhelming to be expressed in accurate words”) “deity” of either the Second Person or the Third Person.
6. In the revelation concerning the fatherhood of God, four distinct aspects may be observed:
 - a. God as the Father of all Creation
 - b. God the Father by Intimate Relationship
 - c. God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
 - d. God as the Father of all who Believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Four Distinct Aspects of the Fatherhood of God:

1. Although all three persons participated in the creation and upholding of the physical universe and creatures who exist in it, the First Person, or God the Father, in a special way is the Father of all CREATION:

Ephesians 3:14-15 *"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name."*

James 1:17 *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."*

1Corinthians 8:6 *"...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things ..."*

Hebrews 12:9 *"Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?"*

NOTE: Since the First Person of the Trinity is referred to as the "Father of spirits", this would seem to indicate that His Fatherhood includes all moral beings such as "angels" and "men".

Job 1:6 *"Now there was a day when the sons of God (i.e. "angels") came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them."*

Job 38:4, 7 *"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?...When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?"*

a. The Scriptures clearly present the First Person of the Trinity as the "father" over mankind:

Luke 3:37-38 *"...the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God."*

Malachi 2:10 *"Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us?..."*

Acts 17:27-28 *"God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. 'For in Him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'"*

b. On the basis of the above texts, there is sufficient ground to conclude that the First Person of the Trinity as the Creator is the Father of all creation and that all creatures, having physical life, owe their origin to Him. IN THIS PHYSICAL SENSE ONLY, it is proper to refer to the universal "fatherhood" of God. All creatures, through their physical creation "only", participate in the universal "brotherhood" of all creation.

- c. This does not justify, however, the misuse of this doctrine by liberal theologians to teach universal “salvation” or that every man has God as his Father in the “spiritual” sense.

John 8:42-44 *“Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on My own; but He sent Me. Why is My language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire...”*

John 1:11-13 *“He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”*

2. The First Person of the Trinity may be observed in Scriptures as God the Father by INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP:

- a. The concept and relationship of the father and son are used in the Old Testament in several instances to relate God to Israel:

Exodus 4:22 *“Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son...”*

Note: This was more than merely being their Creator and was less than saying that the entire nation of Israel was regenerated, for not all Israel had faith. However, it does affirm a special relationship of divine care and concern for Israel similar to that of a father to a beloved son.

- b. In predicting God’s special favor on the house of David, God revealed to David that His relationship to Solomon would be like a father to a son. He said to David:

2Samuel 7:12-14 *“When your days are over (i.e. “David’s” days) and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he will be My son.”*

- c. In general, God declares that His intimate care and concern as a Father will be over all who trust in Him as their God:

Psalm 103:13 *“As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him...”*

3. The First Person of the Trinity may be observed in Scriptures as God the Father OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

- a. The most important and extensive revelation in regard to the fatherhood of God involves the relationship of the First Person to the Second Person of the Trinity.
- b. The most comprehensive theological revelation of the New Testament is that God the Father, the First Person, is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person:

Ephesians 1:3 *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."*

- c. The fact that Jesus Christ is referred to frequently in the New Testament as the Son of God and that the attributes and works of God are constantly assigned to Him constitutes at once the proof of the deity of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity as a whole, with Christ as the Second Person in relationship to the First Person as a "son" is related to a "father":

Hebrews 1:1-5 *"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are My Son; today I have become your Father'? Or again, 'I will be His Father, and He will be My Son'?"*

- 1) The "Son of God" is said to have been the ONLY "Begotten" (i.e. "physically born") of the Father:

John 1:14 *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

John 3:18 *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*

1John 4:9 *"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."*

Note (1): The word "begotten" (indicating "physical birth") is used in various places throughout Scripture of different father's having sons "physically" born to them:

Genesis 5:3-4 *"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters."*

Judges 8:30 *"And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten; for he had many wives."*

Note (2): It is critical to understand that “begotten” does not mean “created”. Just as the above verses concerning the “begotten” sons of Adam and Gideon could NOT possibly mean that Adam and Gideon “created” their children, it corresponds that the word “begotten” as it refers to the Son of God in reference to His Father does not mean that God, the Son, was “created” by God, the Father. This “heresy” (i.e. the false teaching that God “created” a being that He eventually called His Son!) was being taught by a popular priest named “Arius” in the fourth century. This produced such strong protests from amongst his fellow priests to the point that a special council meeting was held amongst the foremost Christian theologians and church leaders in that time. It was called the Nicene Council and it was held in 325 A.D. After careful review of all the Scriptures where “begotten” was used, and an explicit definition of “begotten” was consistently applied throughout, these bible scholars produced what is now known as the “NICENE CREED”, which included these words:

“...the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, NOT MADE, being of one substance with the Father...” (Nicene Creed; 325AD)

Note (3): After the Nicene Council, a very famous Christian martyr and priest named, Athanasia, introduced what is known as the “Athanasian Creed” which, in reference to the nature of the relationship between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity, includes these words:

“...The Son is of the Father alone; NOT MADE NOR CREATED, but begotten...generated from eternity from the substance of the Father.”

Note (4): The Jehovah Witnesses of today, who teach that Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, was “created” by God just before (and to be the ruler over) all other things that were created, are really just modern day proponents of Arius’s heresy which was predominately proclaimed to NOT BE SUPPORTED BY SOUND BIBLICAL THEOLOGY well over 1600 years ago!

2) The Father acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ to be His Son:

Matthew 3:17 *“And a voice from heaven said, This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.”*

Matthew 17:5 *“While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!”*

3) The Father is acknowledged by the Son:

Matthew 11:27 *“All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.”*

Matthew 26:63-64 *“The high priest said to him, I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.’ Yes, it is as you say,’ Jesus replied.”*

Luke 22:29 *"And I confer on you a kingdom, just as My Father conferred one on Me..."*

John 17:1 *"After Jesus said this, He looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You.'"*

4) The fact that God the Father is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is acknowledged by men:

Matthew 16:16-17 *"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.'"*

Mark 15:39 *"And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard His cry and saw how He died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'"*

John 1:34 *"I (i.e. John the Baptist) have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."*

5) Even the demons recognize this relationship between the Father and the Son:

Matthew 8:28-29 *"When He arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met Him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. 'What do You want with us, Son of God?' they shouted. 'Have You come here to torture us before the appointed time?'"*

d. Scriptures clearly point out that both the First and Second Person of the Trinity are "eternal" (i.e. "they have always existed from eternity past and will always exist into eternity future"). Therefore, the relationship of Father and Son relates to the "deity" and "unity" of the Holy Trinity from all eternity, in contrast to the Incarnation, in which the Father was related to the "humanity" of Christ which began in time:

Isaiah 9:6 *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a SON IS GIVEN."*

Colossians 1:15 *"He (i.e. "the Christ") is the image of the invisible God, the FIRSTBORN of every creature."*

Micah 5:2 *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, FROM EVERLASTING."*

Note: The above verses, when considered together, indicate that the Second Person was already existing as the Son of God "before" the creation of the world and "before" He was "physically" born into this world as a human (i.e. "the incarnation").

4. The First Person of the Trinity may be observed in Scriptures as God the Father OF ALL WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LORD:

- a. In contrast to the concept of God the Father as the Creator which extends to all creatures is the truth that God is the Father in a special sense of those who believe in Christ and have received eternal life. The fact that God is the Father of all creation does not assure the salvation of all men or give them eternal life.
- b. Scripture is clear that there is salvation only for those who have received Christ by faith as their Savior. The claim that God the Father is the Father of all mankind and that there is a “universal brotherhood” among men does not mean that all are saved and will go to heaven.
- c. Scripture teaches over and over again that only those who believe in Christ unto salvation are the sons of God in a “spiritual” sense. This is not on the ground of their natural birth into the human race, nor on the ground that God is their Creator, but rather based upon their “second birth” (i.e. “spiritual birth”) into the family of God:

John 1:12 *“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God...”*

Galatians 3:26 *“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus...”*

Ephesians 2:18-19 *“For through Him (i.e. Jesus Christ) we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are NO LONGER foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household...”*

- d. By the regenerating work of the Spirit the believer is made a legitimate child of God:

John 3:3-6 *“In reply Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’ ‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.’”*

Romans 8:15-16 *“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”*

- e. It is clear in Scripture that “unbelievers” in Jesus Christ are not considered His children:

John 8:44-45 *“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me!”*

Matthew 13:37-38 *“He answered, ‘The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the*

world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one...”

Summary of what the Scriptures Reveal about God the Father in reference to mankind:

1. The fatherhood of God is an important doctrine of the New Testament:

1Corinthians 15:24 “*Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.*”

Ephesians 2:18 “*For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*”

Ephesians 4:4-6 “*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*”

1John 2:1 “*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense...*”

1John 3:1 “*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.*”

2. The relationship between the First Person and Second Person of the Trinity is revealed as being “a Father” to “a Son”:

Ephesians 1:3 “*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...*”

Colossians 1:12-13 “*...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves...*”

1Peter 1:3 “*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!*”

1John 1:3 “*We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*”

3. Scripture seems to reveal that there is a “difference” in the relationship of Jesus with “His Father”, as compared to the relationship of “believers” amongst mankind in their relationship with God as “their Father”:

Matthew 6:6 “*But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*”

John 20:17 “*Jesus said, ‘Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to My brothers and tell them, I am returning to My Father and Your Father, to My God and Your God.’*”

Note: Nowhere in Scripture will you find Jesus referring to “OUR” Father referring to both His Father and mankind’s Father. This does not mean His Father is a different “deity” than Our Father; rather, there is a distinct relationship that Jesus has as God, the begotten Son of the Father, as compared to mankind that has a relationship with the Father through a “born again” experience produced by faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior!

4. Emphasis should be placed on the fact that it is not in the power of anyone to MAKE HIMSELF a child of God. God alone can undertake such a transformation, and He undertakes it only on the condition which He Himself has imposed, that Christ shall be believed upon and received as Savior:

John 1:12 “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God...”

Galatians 3:26 “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus...”

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Study Guide for “Doctrine #6: God the Father”

1. Read Pages 1-9 from the Doctrine#6 Study Guide by next Wednesday.
2. Answer the following Questions about “God the Father” as you read:

a. The Father as the First Person:

- 1) True or False. God the Father is also called the Main Person of the Trinity.
(page 1, top)

- 2) Within the doctrine of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures “present” the Father (First Person of the Trinity) as what three primary things? (page 1; middle)

- 3) What does the word “ineffable” mean when dealing with subjects like the Trinity?
(page 1; middle-bottom)

- 4) In the revelation of the “fatherhood” of God, what four distinct aspects may be observed?
(page 1; bottom)

b. Four Distinct Aspects of the Fatherhood of God:

- 1) True or False. Although all three persons of the Trinity participated in the creation of the universe, the First Person, or God the Father, in a special way is the “Father” of all creation:
(page 2; top)

- 2) The First Person of the Trinity is referred to as the “Father of spirits” in Hebrews 12:9. What does this seem to indicate about the “Fatherhood” of God? (page 2; middle)

- 3) Read Job 1:6. Who were the “sons of God” that presented themselves before the Lord in heaven?
(page 2; middle)

- 4) Read Luke 3:37-38. Seth is revealed as the “son of Adam”. Who is Adam the “son” of?

- 5) In what sense “only” is God the “Father” over all of creation (including all of mankind)?
(page 2; bottom)

- 6) According to Jesus, in the “spiritual sense”, who is the “father” of non-believers? (page 3; top)

- 7) Read John 1:11-13. Explain how a person becomes a true “child of God” in the spiritual sense.

- 8) True or False. When God called Israel His “firstborn son”, this was affirming His special relationship with and His divine care of the nation of Israel because they had been all regenerated by Him. (page 3; middle)

- 9) Read Psalm 103:13. Who does the Lord have a special “compassion” on like a father has compassion on his own children?

- 10) What is the most important and extensive revelation in regard to the “fatherhood” of God?
(page 4, top)

- 11) What is the most comprehensive theological revelation of the New Testament? (pg 4; top)

- 12) True or False. Because verses like Ephesians 1:3 reveal that God is the “Father” of our Lord Jesus Christ, this support claims that God the Father is superior to God the Son!

- 14) Read Hebrews 1:1-5. How is “The Son” of God (in reference to the Second Person of the Trinity) described?

- 15) What does the word “begotten” mean in reference to the “Son of God”? (page 4; middle)

- 16) True or False. In John 3:16, when we read the words “*He gave His only BEGOTTEN SON*”, this means that Jesus Christ was the first and most important “created Son” of God the Father.

- 17) Read Genesis 5:3-4. Give a reason why it is wrong to define “begotten” as if it means “created”. (page 4; bottom and page 5, top)

- 18) Briefly describe what the popular priest, named “Arius”, was teaching in the fourth century that caused major controversies and protests in the early Christian church? (page 5; top)

- 19) What was the name of the very first “Church Council” that brought together the foremost Christian theologians and bible scholars of the fourth century to review the Scriptures and discuss what the proper definition of “begotten” really means when it refers to Jesus Christ?
(page 5; top)

- 20) What is the name of a very popular Christian “creed” which includes these words: “...*The Son is of the Father alone; NOT MADE NOR CREATED, but begotten...generated from eternity from the substance of the Father*”? (page 5; middle)

- 21) What modern day “cult” are really just misguided proponents of Arius’ proven heresy?
(page 5; middle)

- 22) True or False. While the Son of God lived as a “human” on this earth, He regularly referred to God as His “Father”. (page 5, bottom – page 6, top)
- 23) True or False. The Second Person of the Trinity became the Son of God at the moment of His birth on earth (i.e. His Incarnation). (page 6, bottom; see also Psalm 2:7)
- 24) According to verses like Isaiah 9:6, Colossians 1:15, and Micah 5:2, the Second Person of the Trinity was already existing as the Son of God “before” what? (page 7; top)
- 25) True or False. Because God is the “Father” over all creation, then all mankind are “brothers”, and therefore all mankind will be eventually saved. (page 7; top-middle)
- 26) According to Galatians 3:26 you can become a “son of God” how?
- 27) Which member of the Trinity does the “regeneration” work necessary to make a person a “legitimate” child of God? (page 7, bottom)
- 28) According to Romans 8:15-16, The Spirit (Third Person of the Trinity) testifies with a true “believer’s” spirit that we are what?
- 29) True or False. It is very clear in Scripture that “unbelievers” in Jesus Christ are not to be considered His “children” in a salvation sense.
(page 8, top; see also John 8:44-45 and Matthew 13:37-38)
- 31) True or False. When Jesus calls God “His Father”, He is proclaiming an entirely different relationship between Him and the First Person of the Trinity than when man calls God our “Father”. (page 9, middle; see also Matthew 6:6)