

A Study of God – God the Father

Various Texts

June 12-13, 2010

- Doctrinal Statement = We believe in God, the Father...

Introduction

- Open your Bibles to Ephesians 4:4-6
 - 4 *There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called—*
 - 5 *one Lord, one faith, one baptism;*
 - 6 *one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*
- Doctrinal Statement = “*We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.*”

Exegesis

➤ The Father

- **His relationship to the Son**

- Eternal Generation

- John 5:26

26 *For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.*

- The Father is the eternal Generator of the Son – His sharing of the divine essence without division with the Son
- This allows for the undivided essence to be shared by more than one person
- It is an eternal act and does not imply creation of the Son

- John 3:16

16 *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

- The nature of “one and only” or “only Begotten” (John 1:18; 3:18; 1 John 4:9) convey this same truth

- The eternal Son has a unique relationship with the Father in being eternally begotten, or eternally generated, from the Father
- **His relationship to the Holy Spirit**
 - Eternal Procession
 - John 15:26
 - 26 *When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.*
 - The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father but in an eternal procession without division of the divine essence
 - John 20:22
 - 22 *And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*
 - The Church of the West holds that the Spirit also proceeds from the Son (while the Church in the East does not)
 - The eternal Holy Spirit has a unique relationship with the Father in eternally proceeding from the Father
- **His relationship to the Universe**
 - Creator and Sustainer
 - Malachi 2:10
 - 10 *Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?*
 - There is a truth that the Father is Father to all creation
 - 1 Corinthians 8:6
 - 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 came and through whom we live.*
 - He is the Father from which all comes forth into existence
 - The universe has a unique relationship to the Father as He is the Father to all creation
- **His relationship to Israel**
 - He is a Father to people of Israel
 - Exodus 4:22

- 22 *Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son,*
- The children and lineage of Israel (Jacob) are the children of the Lord
- Jeremiah 3:19
- 19 *I myself said, "How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation." I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me.*
- Even if they do not treat or respond to them as their Father, He intends to be their Father
- The people of Israel have a unique relationship with the Father in being His children (chosen people among peoples of the earth)
- **His relationship to Christians**
 - He is a Father to those who accept Christ through faith
 - John 1:12-13

12 *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—*

13 *children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

 - Those who believe, true Christians, are His children and He is their Father
 - Romans 8:15-16

15 *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."*

16 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

 - He is not a Father in name only but a Father in care and compassion for Christians
 - Christians have a unique relationship with the Father in that He is their Father by faith (and adoption)
 - ❖ **God the Father is in a unique relationship with the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Universe, Israel and Christians**

➤ **Personal Spirit**

- **His Nature**

- Divine Person existing as spirit

- John 4:24

24 *God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.*

- God is incorporeal – meaning that He does not have a body
- He exists as spirit
- This is a fundamental truth that obviously must be accepted by faith since by its very nature it cannot be proven – but it can be evidenced or demonstrated

- 1 Timothy 1:17

17 *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

- He is invisible – unable to be seen except for His manifestations or the result of His actions

- He is spirit in nature which takes nothing away from His being a person – just different than most people we know and experience

- **His Presence**

- He is everywhere present but manifests Himself in Heaven

- Matthew 6:9

9 *This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

- While it is true that God is omnipresent, He manifests a visible presence in Heaven

- Revelation 4:2-3

2 *At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.*

3 *And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.*

- The difficult description of Revelation 4 (as in other passages) rests in relating the manifestation of God, who is invisible, in a visible presence but without a recognizable form (human)
- Cp. God's manifestation in the Old Testament with the Ark of the Covenant

- God's manifestation in Heaven does not change or detract from His omnipresence – it simply allows those of His creation the opportunity to better think of, interact, and worship Him

❖ God the Father's nature allows our personal relationship with Him

➤ He Concerns Himself

• His Decree

➤ What He has determined – His plan or purpose

➤ Isaiah 14:24

24 *The LORD Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.*

➤ Ephesians 1:11

11 *In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,*

➤ The Father's concern for the affairs of men is found in His inclusion of men in His divine decree – in fact, there are no affairs of men without His decree

• His Providence

➤ His directing everything to its appointed goal

➤ Job 38-39

33 *Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth?*

34 *"Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water?*

35 *Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, 'Here we are'?*

➤ Jeremiah 1:5

5 *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.*

➤ His concern for the affairs of men is seen in His providence – in working through the details and events of the universe to bring all things to be according to His decree

• His Creation

➤ His work in bringing all things into existence

➤ Ephesians 4:6

6 *one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

- Acts 17:28
 - 28 *'For in him we live and move and have our being.'* As some of your own poets have said, *'We are his offspring.'*
- He concerns Himself in the affairs of men by creating mankind, in His image (to be looked at further in a couple of weeks), and the universe to sustain and bless him
- **His Salvation**
 - His delivering sinners from sin and its results
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
 - 13 *But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth*
 - 14 *He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - It's not just that God called us from the beginning but that He is involved in our calling through the gospel – as it was preached and accepted by us
 - Romans 8:28-29
 - 28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*
 - 29 *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*
 - He works in our lives to lead to our salvation and the blessings of that salvation
 - He concerns Himself in the affairs of men, particularly in bringing salvation, and its blessings, to those that would be His children
- ❖ **God the Father is not distant or detached but concerns Himself with the affairs of men**

Response

- **As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are to know about our Heavenly Father that we could better know our Heavenly Father.**
 - Observers = Come by faith to your Heavenly Father
 - Disciples = Know your Heavenly Father