

The Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God

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Introduction	The Trinity	Old Testament References to God as Father
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Definition of Terms	
Divine Decree, The	<p>The Divine Decree of God refers to his eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose. God simultaneously comprehended all things that ever were or ever would be. He comprehended every event that would ever take place, along with its causes and interaction with other events, and he knew in eternity past every decision mankind would ever make.</p> <p>The Decree of God is His eternal and immutable will with regard to all future events, and the precise manner and order of their occurrence (Eph. 1:11: Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose Who works all things after the counsel of His will). The word 'Decree' refers to the eternal plan by which God has rendered all of the events of the universe as certain. This includes past, present and future angelic and human history. The Decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of God for all of His works. It is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained all that will ever come to pass.</p>
Eternity Past	<p><i>Time</i> is an invention of God, and we find ourselves within the concept of time. However, prior to God inventing time, there is, what we call, eternity past, a <i>time and place</i>, if you will, before <i>time and place</i> existed. It is here when God made the Divine Decree (above).</p>
Progressive Revelation	<p>Progressive revelation simply means that God reveals Himself progressively. As we read about God and His decree in the Bible, it is not revealed to us all at once. Although we find suggestions of the Trinity in Gen. 1, it is not until the New Testament that the concept of the Trinity is revealed well enough to more fully comprehend it. God's grace and judgment, and what He would do about sin, is first mentioned in Gen. 3; further elaborated on when God asked Abraham to sacrifice his firstborn (by Sarah); and fulfilled by the incarnation of Jesus Christ.</p>

Right man and right woman

This is the idea that God has provided the ideal woman for each man. This does not guarantee happiness. David and Bathsheba were RM/RW, but the beginning of their relationship was quite difficult and involved David being out of fellowship for a long time. Jeremiah was faced with a woman who was completely and totally given over the cultic behavior, which involved sexual union to celebrate her cultic ties. Although this broke Jeremiah's heart, the analogy was drawn between him and his right woman and God and His right woman, Judah, who also deserted God and was involved in cultic behavior.

Some of these definitions are taken from

<http://www.bigrick.org/pubs/terms.pdf>

http://www.gbible.org/_files/pdf/Doctrine_of_The_Divine_Decree.pdf

<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d&sf=rea&did=28>

<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics/chastisement.html>

Preface: For this doctrine, I looked at two resources (Chafer and ZPEB) and was surprised as to the brevity of the material, their agreement on certain issues, and the controversies which have been a part of this doctrine from very early on.

1. Introduction: one of the most overlooked doctrines in Christian literature is the Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. Although, superficially, this would appear to be a simple doctrine, there are some difficulties and even long-standing theological differences with relationship to what the Fatherhood of God means and how it is related to the Sonship of Jesus Christ.
2. The concept of fatherhood: *Fatherhood, in a basic sense, can be defined in several ways. A father is one that establishes or is head of a household; an originator or patron of a class, profession, or art; a producer or generator. He feeds his household, physically and spiritually. He loves and cares for this household because it is his. In the Greek language, Father literally means nourisher, protector or upholder. Holy Scripture presents the concept of fatherhood in several ways: (1) headship-generating and establishing a household; (2) feeding - nourishing or protecting his offspring; (3) maintenance - upholding that which he established.*¹
 - a. Headship: God creates Adam and the woman and provides all that is necessary for their blessed existence (Gen. 1:28-29).
 - b. God provided the food for man (Gen. 1:29). Related to this, God provides spiritual food and spiritual blessings for us.
 - c. God maintains us with every spiritual provision necessary.
3. The Trinity:
 - a. One of the most fascinating aspects of the Bible is the clear teaching of the Trinity in the New Testament, and then, armed with that knowledge, going back into the Old Testament and finding evidence of the Trinity there as well. Matt. 28:19 Gal. 4:6 Isa. 48:16-17a: *Come near to Me, hear this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning. From its being, I was there; and now the Lord Jehovah, and His Spirit, has sent Me. So says Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.*
 - b. God is One in essence—all 3 members of the Trinity are coequal and coeternal; one in essence and yet 3 in person. Chafer writes: *The Son has voluntarily elected to do the will of the Father and to do that will in dependence upon the Spirit. To the same end, the Holy Spirit has voluntarily chosen not to speak from Himself as the Author of what He says, but to speak whatsoever He hears [from the Father] it is unscriptural, shallow, and a dishonor to both the Son and the Spirit to assume that these voluntary subjections are due to inherent inferiority.*²
 - c. Each member of Trinity has a function with regards to the eternal decree of God.

¹ From Mark J. Kelley <http://www.ewtn.com/library/SCRIPTUR/FATHERGD.TXT> accessed October 20, 2008. As an aside, Kelley takes these enumerated characteristics of a father and follows them out in greater detail in his work.

² Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. I, p. 311.

- d. The Father devised the plan (the divine decree); the Son is the Revealed Member of the Trinity, obedient to God's plan; and the Holy Spirit provides the power for God's plan, yet, in obedience to God the Father, drawing attention not to Himself, but to God the Father and God the Son.
 - e. God the Father reveals Who He is to us through His Son. **No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known** (John 1:18). **[Jesus Christ] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high** (Heb. 1:3).
4. The first Person of the Trinity is often referred to as *God the Father*, and sometimes as *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Both of these titles are found only in the New Testament. John 6:27 1Cor. 8:6 Gal. 1:1, 3 Eph. 5:20 6:23 Philip. 2:11 1Thess. 1:1 2Tim. 1:2 Titus 1:4 1Peter 1:2 2Peter 1:17 2John 1:3 Jude 1:1.
 5. Our Lord spoke of God the Father simply as *My Father* many times: Matt. 7:21 8:21 10:32–33 11:27 12:50 16:17 18:10, 19 20:23 24:36 25:34 26:29, 39, 42, 53 Luke 2:49 9:59 10:22 15:17–18 16:27 22:29 24:49 John 2:16 5:17, 43 6:32, 65 8:19, 28, 38, 49, 54 10:17–18, 25, 29, 32, 37 14:2, 7, 12, 20–21, 23, 28 15:1, 8, 10, 15, 23, 24 16:10 18:11 20:17, 21 Rev. 2:27 3:5, 21
 - a. It is interesting, and I do not know the significance of this, but Mark's gospel does not have this phrase; this could simply be because Peter, who provided the background for this gospel, was more of a man of action rather than one of talk.
 - b. Also, interestingly enough, Mark has this verse: **And He [Jesus] said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to You. Take away this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will."** (Mark 14:36). *Abba* is an intimate term, used both by very young children and older children of their father.
 - c. The Baker Evangelical Dictionary points out that Jesus and the Apostles use this analogy of God being the Father 165+ times, whereas it is only found 15 times in the Old Testament. Although I disagree with their numbers, the principle is accurate, that there is a greater emphasis upon the Fatherhood of God in the New Testament than the Old. However, the Trinity is revealed in more detail in the New Testament rather than the Old. This is the principle of progressive revelation. The Trinity was suggested in the Old Testament; but we became more fully aware of it in the New.
 - d. It is also interesting that the most concentrated set of these references comes from the Upper Room Discourse, which was one of the few places where our Lord taught Church Age to His disciples.
 6. God as Father, however, is also found in the Old Testament (there are only a few passages here):
 - a. **Do you thus give back to Jehovah, Oh foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?** (Deut. 32:6). This is the earliest reference to God as the Father, and, in this case, the Father of the people of Israel.
 - b. **I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men** (2Sam. 7:14). In the exegesis of this verse, it can be both applied to Solomon and to Jesus Christ (although, most English translations do not really allow for this).
 - c. The parallel verse: **I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. And I will not take My mercy away from him as I took it from him who was before you** (1Chron. 17:13).
 - d. David shares this promise with his son, Solomon: **And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of Jehovah my God. But the Word of Jehovah came to me, saying, You have shed much blood and have made great wars. You shall not build a house to My name because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. And I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for My name. And he shall be My son, and I will be his Father. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever. Now, my son, may Jehovah be with you and bless you, and build the house of Jehovah your God as He has said of you. Only may Jehovah give you wisdom and understanding, and direct you concerning Israel, so that you may keep the Law of Jehovah your God** (1Chron. 22:7–12).
 - e. **He will cry to Me, My Father, You are my [My] God, and the rock of my [My] salvation** (Psalm 89:26).

- f. For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O Jehovah, are our Father, our Redeemer; Your name is from everlasting (Isa. 63:16).
 - g. But now, O Jehovah, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our Former; and we all are the work of Your hand (Isa. 64:8). The Fatherhood of God is related to being the Creator of man.
 - h. As the Father of those in Israel: Will you not from this time cry to Me, My Father, "You are the guide of my youth?" (Jer. 3:4).
 - i. But I [God] said, How will I put you among the sons, and give you a pleasant land, a beautiful inheritance among the hosts of nations? And I said, "You will call Me, My Father, and will not turn away from Me." Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so you have dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, says Jehovah (Jer. 3:19–20). The context of the passage is Israel departing from God in idolatry, and God was warning Israel through Jeremiah.
 - j. Mal. 2:10: Is there not one Father to us all? Has not one God created us? Why do we act deceitfully, each man with his brother, to profane the covenant of our fathers.
7. This is different from drawing an analogy, where God has the characteristics of a *father*.
- a. In His holy dwelling God is the father of the fatherless, and the judge of the widows (Psalm 68:5).
 - b. As a father pities his children, Jehovah pities those who fear Him (Psalm 103:13).
 - c. For whom Jehovah loves He corrects, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights (Prov. 3:12).
 - d. Jesus Christ is given the title, the Everlasting Father in Isa. 9:6: For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, **The everlasting Father**, The Prince of Peace. Such a title is in relation to His creation as Creator and to believers and to Israel, as one who looks over and protects.
8. The most difficult concept is His fatherhood of the 2nd member of the Trinity, the Son.
- a. False concepts:
 - i. Sonship, in this case, does not indicate any sort of inferiority. God the Father and God the Son are coequal and coeternal. They have the exact same essence.
 - ii. Sonship does not indicate that God the Father bore or created God the Son. Both members of the Trinity are coeternal.
 - iii. Sonship was not the result of Jehovah Elohim becoming man in the incarnation. Fatherhood and Sonship are a relationship which is eternal and predates the creation of man and the universe.
 - (1) This is the opinion of L. S. Chafer (and others, of course).
 - (2) It is quite obvious that Jesus, as the Son of God, presented most clearly a Father/Son relationship between Himself and God.
 - (3) Although God as Father is so spoken of in the Old Testament, it is as a Father/son relationship between Himself and Israel or certain believers from the Age of Israel.
 - (4) A Father/Son relationship between the first two members of the Trinity is more difficult to establish as predating the incarnation.
 - (5) Cults in the ancient world presented God in several ways—there was the God of nature, the God of sex, a motherhood concept, and a fatherhood concept. The phallic cults of ancient days did have the fatherhood concept of one of their gods; but there was no historic nature to it. Christianity is built upon an historic relationship with God and His fatherhood is historic.
 - b. Fatherhood and Sonship represent an eternal relationship. This is much more difficult to prove from Scripture or from the inference of Scripture.
 - i. The sonship of Jesus Christ is reasonably applied to both His Deity and His humanity. In His humanity, it is quite clear that He is the Son of God; with regards to His Deity, His Sonship would have to be eternal.
 - ii. Chafer writes: *It is evident that the Father and Son relationship sets forth only the features of emanation and manifestation and does not include the usual conception of derivation, inferiority, or distinction as to the time of beginning.*³

³ Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. I, p. 314.

- iii. Some passages, when taken together, seem to imply an eternal Father/Son relationship. John 8:58: **Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am [I existed eternally]."** John 17:5: **"And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."** John 17:24: **"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world."**
- iv. Our Lord's eternal existence: John 1:1: **In the beginning was the Word [Jesus Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** Rev. 22:13: **"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."** Col. 1:15–17 is one of the few passages which tie our Lord's Sonship to His eternal nature: **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.**
- v. Heb. 1:2–4 reads: **In these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed the heir of all things, through Whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.** This appointment, as God's Son, as a part of the divine decree, predates our Lord's incarnation, as Chafer reasons, therefore His Sonship predates His incarnation.⁴
- vi. The Fatherhood and Sonship titles are probably anthropomorphic. This relationship is presented to us to help us comprehend the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.
- vii. The Father sends the Son, He delivers up the Son, He gives His Son, He prepares a body for His Son, and the Son obeys the Father in all things.⁵ John 3:16–17 Rom. 8:32 Psalm 40:6–8 Heb. 10:5–7 Philip. 2:8
- viii. God the Son does the bidding of God the Father. This is the result of a free will choice and this also predates the incarnation. That is, even though the humanity of Jesus Christ made Himself obedient to the plan of God, even unto death, this obedience and choice to obey the Father's plan is, if not eternal, a part of the divine decree, which occurs outside of time. Such a thing is more difficult for us to comprehend, as we are time-oriented. I know there is a past, present and future. Prior to the creation of the universe, the earth and time, there was no time. God did not have a beginning because there was no time during which He came to be. However, the divine decree, which sets into motion all that we see and all that we don't see, inherent in God's decree was the function of the members of the Godhead, which included God the Son doing the will of God the Father. Matt. 7:21 26:39, 42 Mark 14:36 Luke 22:42 John 5:30 6:39
- c. God the Father's Fatherhood of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament:
 - i. This is taught prophetically in 2Sam. 7:14: **I will be his Father, and He will be My son. If He is twisted [or distorted], I will render a just decision with reference to Him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men.** There are several ways this verse can be translated, and this is one of those ways. I should add that, it is not unusual that a verse can be both applied to man (in this case, Solomon) and to Jesus as well; and that, if there are any difficulties with the interpretation, there are often alternate ways of translating the verse which brings everything together for either interpretation. To be specific, in this verse, it can be translated in such a way as to clearly apply to Solomon, but it is also legitimate to translate it as you see here, where it clearly applies to Jesus Christ. See my exegesis of **2Sam. 7:14** for more detail.
 - ii. Jesus the Son will say to God the Father: **He will cry to Me, My Father, You are My God, and the rock of My salvation** (Psalm 89:26).

⁴ A restatement of Chafer's reasoning. Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. I, p. 315.

⁵ This is a restatement of Dr. John Miley from his book *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 239 (but found in Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. I, p. 316).

- d. The Fatherhood/Sonship relation between the 1st and 2nd members of the Trinity is different and distinguished from God's Fatherhood to believers or to Israel. Jesus speaks of *My Father* and *your Father* (in relation to believers), but He does not use the term *our Father*, indicating a dramatically different Fatherhood between Himself and God as opposed to the believer and God.
 - i. The Lord's prayer, when Jesus taught His disciples to pray, *Our Father, who is in heaven,...* was a prayer that the disciples were to pray, and not a prayer which Jesus Christ Himself prayed.
- e. God's Fatherhood to Jesus Christ is related to the Word of God: Jesus proclaimed to the religious crowd, "I and the Father are one!" Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from My Father; for which of these do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "We do not stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy, and because you, being a man, make yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, I said, You are gods? If He called those gods with whom the Word of God was, and the Scripture cannot be broken, do you say of Him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, You blaspheme, because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:30–36). Jesus is the Son of God by virtue of being the Living Word of God.
- 9. God as the Father of believers in the Church Age.
 - a. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26).
 - b. We (believers in the Church Age) are sons through adoption: But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, coming into being out of a woman, having come under Law, that He might redeem those under Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, also an heir of God through Christ. But then, indeed, not knowing God, you served as slaves to those not by nature being gods (Gal. 4:3–8). The one doing the adoption in the ancient world may or may not have had sons. Often, a nobleman looked at his own sons, saw that they were incompetent, and did not want to leave his dynasty, his home, or his riches to such a sorry excuse for a human being. So he would look around to find someone else, a young man—often a slave—who appeared to have great potential, and he would adopt him as a son. The purpose of adoption was to be able to pass along whatever family wealth or power that one had to someone who was deserving. This is quite pertinent, particularly in the 1st century A.D. God looks down at His son, Israel, and they are religiously degenerate. They do not have faith in Him. So God adopts those Gentiles who have faith in Him (obviously, this is not a perfect analogy, as God also adopts Jews who have faith in Him; however, in the Church Age, there is no Jew or Gentile—Gal. 3:28). See also Eph. 1:5
 - c. We are fellow heirs, which means we receive that which is given a son. Rom. 8:17 and Eph. 3:6 both tell us that we are heirs of God.
 - d. Being in Christ, we share all that He has and all that He is, which includes sonship.
 - e. A proof of our sonship is that God disciplines us. Heb. 12:5–8: And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and He scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards and not sons.
 - f. When we begin to grow spiritually, there is proof in our lives of our sonship to God. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father! (Rom. 8:14–15).
 - g. Having an inheritance set aside and protected for us, is an indication of our sonship to God. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and unfading, reserved in Heaven for you (1Peter 1:4–5).
 - h. Even at this time, the full ramifications of our sonship is not completely known. Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet

been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when He shall be revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1John 3:1–2).

10. God as the Father of believers in the Age of Israel.
 - a. God said, “Israel is My son, even My firstborn.” (Ex. 4:22).
 - b. Moses calls God the Father of those whom He redeemed in Deut. 32:6.
 - c. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him (Psalm 103:13). The key phrase here is, *those who fear Him*, which indicates believing in Jehovah Elohim.
 - d. Isaiah said, “For You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O Jehovah, are our Father, our Redeemer; Your name is from everlasting.” (Isa. 63:16). The reference to Israel is the Northern Kingdom, who had fallen away from the faith.
 - e. Isa. 64:8: But now, O Jehovah, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our Former; and we all are the work of Your hand.
 - f. In the end, there will be believers from Israel who turn to God: “They will be Mine,” says the LORD of Hosts, “a special possession on the day I am preparing. I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son who serves him (Mal. 3:17).
11. God as the Father of Israel.
 - a. God identified Israel as His firstborn to Pharaoh of Egypt: And you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord: Israel is My son, My first-born. And I say to you, Let My son go, that he may serve Me. And if you refuse to let him go, behold, I am going to kill your son, your first-born (Ex. 4:22–23).
 - b. God protected, guided and carried Israel in the desert: Jehovah your God who goes before you shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness where you have seen how Jehovah your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came into this place (Deut. 1:30–31).
 - c. God disciplined the people of Israel as a father would: And you have known with your heart, that, as a man chastens his son, so Jehovah your God chastens you (Deut. 8:5).
 - d. God sets boundaries for the people of Israel as His sons: You are the sons of Jehovah your God. You shall not cut yourselves nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead (Deut. 14:1).
 - e. As the Father of those in Israel: Will you not from this time cry to Me, My Father, “You are the guide of my youth?” (Jer. 3:4). This was after discipline which was promised to the nation Israel.
 - f. But I [God] said, How will I put you among the sons, and give you a pleasant land, a beautiful inheritance among the hosts of nations? And I said, “You will call Me, My Father, and will not turn away from Me.” Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so you have dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, says Jehovah. A voice was heard on the high places weeping, cryings of the sons of Israel; for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten Jehovah their God. Return, O backsliding sons, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come to You; for You are Jehovah our God (Jer. 3:19–22). The context of the passage is Israel departing from God in idolatry, and God was warning Israel through Jeremiah.
 - g. Jer. 31:9: They will come with weeping, and with prayers I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way; they will not stumble in it, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.
 - h. Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful child? For as often as I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still. Therefore My heart is troubled for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says Jehovah (Jer. 31:20). *Ephraim* is one name used of the Northern Kingdom. God still held out hope that Ephraim would return to Him as a wayward son (this is an anthropathism).
 - i. Both Jeremiah and Hosea used the analogy of God being the husband of Israel. However, they also spoke of God as the Father of Israel. Hosea 11:1–4: When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called My son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them. They sacrifice to the Baals, and burn incense to graven images. I also taught Ephraim to go; He took them on His arm. But they did not know that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as those who take off the yoke on their jaws, and I gently give food to him.
 - j. Israel showed no respect to God as their father: A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My fear? says Jehovah of

Hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. And you say, In what way have we despised Your name? (Mal. 1:6).

- k. More often, the analogy of husband and wife (right man and right woman) is used to illustrate the relationship between God and Israel.
12. God as the Father of all mankind.
- The concept here is one simply of *fatherhood based upon creation*. Luke traces back the line of Christ to Adam, whom he calls *a son of God* (Luke 3:38). Mal. 2:10 reads: **Do we not all have one Father; did not one God create us?** Paul speaks of man as the **offspring of God** in Acts 17:29.
 - We find similar sentiments expressed in Isa. 64:8: **But now, O Jehovah, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our Former; and we all are the work of Your hand.**
 - God created all mankind, and, in that sense, is the Father of all mankind. Paul writes: **For us there is one God, the Father, from Whom are all things and for Whom we exist** (1Cor. 8:6a).
 - What appears to be the case is, God breathes life into every person as they are born. Although that which is in the womb is clearly alive, man's complete soul life is activated as he exits the womb.
 - In this sense, God as the Creator of all, there is a universal fatherhood and a universal brotherhood. However, this does not limit the importance of regeneration, which will give us eternal life and fellowship with the Father.
 - God's universal fatherhood, in the sense that He created all mankind, may help to explain, in some small way, God's love for and benevolence toward us, and the sending of His Son to die for our sins (John 3:16).
 - However, the devil is also spoken of as being the father of unregenerate man (John 8:44).
13. God as the Father of angelic creation. He is called the Father of spirits in Heb. 12:9, which would take in all angelic creation and mankind as well. He is called the Father of lights in James 1:17, which seems to have the same general connotation. Angels are called sons of God in Gen. 6:4 Job 1:6 2:1 38:7.
14. Not everyone, by virtue of creation alone, can speak of God as their Father. Jesus told some that they were of their father the devil in John 8:44.
15. As an interesting addendum to this doctrine, Robert Stein, in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary, writes: *The description of God as "father" is under attack today in certain circles. It is charged by some that this leads to a false view that God is a male. This criticism should be taken seriously in that God is not a "man" (Num 23:19). He is a Spirit (John 4:24) without sexual parts. When God is referred as a father, this is simply the use of a metaphor in which he is likened to a kind and loving father. Elsewhere God's love and care can be compared to that of a concerned and caring mother (Isa 49:14-16; Luke 13:34). Yet to avoid the metaphor of father as a description and designation for God is to lose sight of the fact that Jesus chose this as his metaphor to address God and that he taught this as the metaphor by which his disciples should address God. It also loses sight of the continuity established by the use of this metaphor with those who have called God "Father" over the centuries. These include the disciples; the earliest congregations (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6); the earliest church councils ("I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth ."); and Christian churches all over the globe who over the centuries have prayed together "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name."*⁶ The people who become overly concerned about such things do all that they can to undermine Biblical authority. When such allegations are made, such people do not point out that there is no *motherhood* of God revealed in Scripture. Furthermore, there are specific male/female roles and assignments given in the Bible, which is often what such people are attempting to obscure or change.

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⁶ From <http://bible.crosswalk.com/Dictionaries/BakersEvangelicalDictionary/bed.cgi?number=T254> accessed October 20, 2008.

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- least helpful of these references).
5. <http://bible.crosswalk.com/Dictionaries/BakersEvangelicalDictionary/bed.cgi?number=T254> accessed October 20, 2008.

Go [here](#) for doctrine of the complete **Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God**.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Fatherhood of God

1. The Trinity:
 - a. One of the most fascinating aspects of the Bible is the clear teaching of the Trinity in the New Testament, and then, armed with that knowledge, going back into the Old Testament and finding evidence of the Trinity there as well. Matt. 28:19 Gal. 4:6 Isa. 48:16–17a: [Come near to Me, hear this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning. From its being, I was there; and now the Lord Jehovah, and His Spirit, have sent Me. So says Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.](#)
 - b. God is One in essence—all 3 members of the Trinity are coequal and coeternal; one in essence and yet 3 in person. Chafer writes: *The Son has voluntarily elected to do the will of the Father and to do that will in dependence upon the Spirit. To the same end, the Holy Spirit has voluntarily chosen not to speak from Himself as the Author of what He says, but to speak whatsoever He hears [from the Father] it is unscriptural, shallow, and a dishonor to both the Son and there Spirit to assume that these voluntary subjections are due to inherent inferiority.*¹
 - c. Each member of Trinity has a function with regards to the eternal decree of God. The Father devised the plan (the divine decree); the Son is the Revealed Member of the Trinity, obedient to God's plan; and the Holy Spirit provides the power for God's plan, yet, in obedience to God the Father, drawing attention not to Himself, but to God the Father and God the Son.
2. The first Person of the Trinity is often referred to as *God the Father*, and sometimes as *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Both of these titles are found only in the New Testament. John 6:27 1Cor. 8:6 Gal. 1:1, 3 Eph. 5:20 6:23 Philip. 2:11 1Thess. 1:1 2Tim. 1:2 Titus 1:4 1Peter 1:2 2Peter 1:17 2John 1:3 Jude 1:1.
3. Our Lord spoke of God the Father simply as *My Father* many times: Matt. 7:21 8:21 10:32–33 11:27 Luke 2:49 9:59 10:22 John 2:16 5:17, 43 6:32, 65 8:19, 28, 38, 49, 54 Rev. 2:27 3:5, 21
 - a. The Baker Evangelical Dictionary points out that Jesus and the Apostles use this analogy of God being the Father 165+ times, whereas it is only found 15 times in the Old Testament. Although I disagree with their numbers, the principle is accurate, that there is a greater emphasis upon the Fatherhood of God in the New Testament than the Old. However, the Trinity is revealed in more detail in the New Testament rather than the Old. This is the principle of progressive revelation. The Trinity was suggested in the Old Testament; but we became more fully aware of it in the New.
4. The most difficult concept is His fatherhood of the 2nd member of the Trinity, the Son.
 - a. False concepts:
 - i. Sonship, in this case, does not indicate any sort of inferiority. God the Father and God the Son are coequal and coeternal. They have the exact same essence.
 - ii. Sonship does not indicate that God the Father bore or created God the Son. Both members of the Trinity are coeternal.
 - iii. Sonship was not the result of Jehovah Elohim becoming man in the incarnation. Fatherhood and Sonship are a relationship which is eternal and predates the creation of man and the universe.
 - (1) This final concept is the opinion of L. S. Chafer (and others, of course).
 - (2) It is quite obvious that Jesus, as the Son of God, presented most clearly a Father/Son relationship between Himself and God.

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- (3) A Father/Son relationship between the first two members of the Trinity is more difficult to establish as predating the incarnation.
- b. Fatherhood and Sonship represent an eternal relationship. This is more difficult to prove from Scripture or from the inference of Scripture.
- i. The sonship of Jesus Christ is reasonably applied to both His Deity and His humanity. In His humanity, it is quite clear that He is the Son of God; with regards to His Deity, His Sonship would have to be eternal. Chafer writes: *It is evident that the Father and Son relationship sets forth only the features of emanation and manifestation and does not include the usual conception of derivation, inferiority, or distinction as to the time of beginning.*²
 - ii. Some passages, when taken together, seem to imply an eternal Father/Son relationship. John 8:58: **Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am [I existed eternally]."** John 17:5: **"And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."** John 17:24: **"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world."**
 - iii. Heb. 1:2–4 reads: **In these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed the heir of all things, through Whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.** This appointment, as God's Son, as a part of the divine decree, predates our Lord's incarnation, as Chafer reasons, therefore His Sonship predates His incarnation.³
 - iv. The Fatherhood and Sonship titles are probably anthropomorphic. This relationship is presented to us to help us comprehend the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.
 - v. The Father sends the Son, He delivers up the Son, He gives His Son, He prepares a body for His Son, and the Son obeys the Father in all things.⁴ John 3:16–17 Rom. 8:32 Psalm 40:6–8 Heb. 10:5–7 Philip. 2:8
 - vi. God the Son does the bidding of God the Father. This is the result of a free will choice and this also predates the incarnation. That is, even though the humanity of Jesus Christ made Himself obedient to the plan of God, even unto death, this obedience and choice to obey the Father's plan is, if not eternal, a part of the divine decree, which occurs outside of time. Such a thing is more difficult for us to comprehend, as we are time-oriented. I know there is a past, present and future. Prior to the creation of the universe, the earth and time, there was no time. God did not have a beginning because there was no time during which He came to be. However, the divine decree, which sets into motion all that we see and all that we don't see, inherent in God's decree was the function of the members of the Godhead, which included God the Son doing the will of God the Father. Matt. 7:21 26:39, 42 Mark 14:36 Luke 22:42 John 5:30 6:39
- c. God the Father's Fatherhood of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament:
- i. This is taught prophetically in 2Sam. 7:14: **I will be his Father, and He will be My son. If He is twisted [or distorted], I will render a just decision with reference to Him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men.** There are several ways this verse can be translated, and this is one of those ways. I should add that, it is not unusual that a verse can be both applied to man (in this case, Solomon) and to Jesus as well; and that, if there are any difficulties with the interpretation, there are often alternate ways of translating the verse which brings everything together for either interpretation. To be specific, in this verse, it can be translated in such a way as to clearly apply to Solomon, but it is also legitimate to translate it as you see here, where it clearly applies to Jesus Christ. See my exegesis of **2Sam. 7:14** for more detail.

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- ii. Jesus the Son will say to God the Father: **He will cry to Me, My Father, You are My God, and the rock of My salvation** (Psalm 89:26).
 - d. God's Fatherhood to Jesus Christ is related to the Word of God: Jesus proclaimed to the religious crowd, **"I and the Father are one!" Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from My Father; for which of these do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "We do not stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy, and because you, being a man, make yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, I said, You are gods? If He called those gods with whom the Word of God was, and the Scripture cannot be broken, do you say of Him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, You blaspheme, because I said, I am the Son of God?"** (John 10:30–36). Jesus is the Son of God by virtue of being the Living Word of God.
5. God as the Father of believers in the Church Age.
- a. **For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus** (Gal. 3:26).
 - b. We (believers in the Church Age) are sons through adoption (Gal. 4:3–8). The one doing the adoption in the ancient world may or may not have had sons. Often, a nobleman looked at his own sons, saw that they were incompetent, and did not want to leave his dynasty, his home, or his riches to such a sorry excuse for a human being. So he would look around to find someone else, a young man—often a slave—who appeared to have great potential, and he would adopt him as a son. The purpose of adoption was to be able to pass along whatever family wealth or power that one had to someone who was deserving. This is quite pertinent, particularly in the 1st century A.D. God looks down at His son, Israel, and they are religiously degenerate. They do not have faith in Him. So God adopts those Gentiles who have faith in Him (obviously, this is not a perfect analogy, as God also adopts Jews who have faith in Him; however, in the Church Age, there is no Jew or Gentile—Gal. 3:28). See also Eph. 1:5
 - c. We are fellow heirs, which means we receive that which is given a son. Rom. 8:17 and Eph. 3:6 both tell us that we are heirs of God.
 - d. Being in Christ, we share all that He has and all that He is, which includes sonship.
 - e. A proof of our sonship is that God disciplines us (Heb. 12:5–8); we grow spiritually (Rom. 8:14–15); and God has set an inheritance aside for us (1Peter 1:4–5).
6. God as the Father of believers in the Age of Israel.
- a. Israel is God's firstborn whom He redeemed (Ex. 4:22 Deut. 32:6 Isa. 63:16).
 - b. **As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him** (Psalm 103:13). The key phrase here is, *those who fear Him*, which indicates believing in Jehovah Elohim.
7. God as the Father of Israel.
- a. God disciplined the people of Israel as a father would (Deut. 8:5).
 - b. God sets boundaries for the people of Israel as His sons (Deut. 14:1).
 - c. God calls Himself the Father of those in Israel: **Will you not from this time cry to Me, My Father, "You are the guide of my youth?"** (Jer. 3:4). This was after discipline which was promised to the nation Israel.
8. God as the Father of all mankind.
- a. He is called our father based upon creating us and sustaining us (Mal. 2:10 Isa. 64:8 1Cor. 8:6a).
 - b. Adam is called the son of God (Luke 3:38).
 - c. God's universal fatherhood, in the sense that He created all mankind, may help to explain, in some small way, God's love for and benevolence toward us, and the sending of His Son to die for our sins (John 3:16).
 - d. However, the devil is also spoken of as being the father of unregenerate man (John 8:44).
9. God as the Father of angelic creation. He is called the Father of spirits in Heb. 12:9, which would take in all angelic creation and mankind as well. He is called the Father of lights in James 1:17, which seems to have the same general connotation. Angels are called sons of God in Gen. 6:4 Job 1:6 2:1 38:7.

¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. I, p. 311.

² Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. I, p. 314.

³ A restatement of Chafer's reasoning. Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. I, p. 315.

⁴ This is a restatement of Dr. John Miley from his book *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 239 (but found in Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., The. D.; *Systematic Theology*; Kregel Publications; ©1976 Dallas Theological Seminary; Vol. I, p. 316).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines