

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD THE FATHER

Introduction: With the coming of Jesus, God gave the fullest revelation of Himself to men (Heb 1:1-2). In this study we shall gather together the things that Jesus taught about His Father, Himself (the Son) and the Holy Spirit.

Theologians call these three *The three Persons of the Godhead*, and the understanding that all three are distinct and yet are one God is termed the *Trinity*. There is no mention of the word *Trinity* in the Bible, nor a direct reference to God being *three yet one*. However, whilst the Bible unequivocally insists there is only one God (Deut 6:4), there are several occasions when the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit are mentioned either individually or together. The clearest references to all three were made by Jesus in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) and in His discourse to the disciples at the Last Supper, recorded in John 15:26 – “*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*” (The **Helper** referred to here is the Holy Spirit).

Activity: Record which Persons of the Godhead are included in the following passages from the Last Supper. (*Hint:* Remember that when Jesus mentions Himself He is referring to God the Son). Write **F** for the Father, **S** for the Son or **HS** for the Holy Spirit:

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|-------------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| (a) John 14:1-2 | [] | (f) John 14:26 | [] |
| (b) John 14:10-11 | [] | (g) John 15:26 | [] |
| (c) John 14:13 | [] | (h) John 16:7 | [] |
| (d) John 14:16-17 | [] | (i) John 16:28 | [] |
| (e) John 14:23 | [] | (j) John 17:1 | [] |

A. GOD

On a few occasions, Jesus referred to *God* rather than to one specific Person of the Godhead. Some of these references seem to be synonymous with The Father, but others tell us things about God in more general terms, namely:

1. **God is spirit** (*read* John 4:24). This was said to a Samaritan woman who was concerned about the correct locality in which to worship. Since God is spirit, He is not confined to any locality but He can be found and worshipped at any place, at any time, by anyone who truly seeks Him on the level of the spirit. However He will not be found in even the grandest of cathedrals by those who do not truly seek Him in spirit.

2. **God is Sovereign** (*read* Matt 23:22). Jesus called Satan the *ruler of this world* (John 12:31). This is because fallen humanity has given its allegiance to him. However, God is ultimately in charge. When Satan wanted to afflict Job, he could do so only with God's permission and with limitations (*read* Job 1:12 & 2:6).

3. **God is all powerful** (*read* Mark 10:27).

4. **It is in the nature of God to love** and to show compassion (*read* John 3:16 and Matt 6:25-26, 30).

B. GOD THE FATHER

There are 189 references in the Gospels to God as *Father*. Jesus distinguishes God's fatherly relationship with people from His own relationship to the Father (*My Father and your Father* John 20:17) because of Jesus' unique relationship in the Godhead.

Jesus uniquely gives knowledge of the Father (*read* Luke 10:22). This is especially so for those who can see Jesus, for He is *the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being* (Heb 1:3). *Read* John 14:8-9). We do not have the privilege, enjoyed by the early disciples, of seeing Jesus in the flesh. However, we can learn from those who did so by reading the Gospels, which are the faithful records of what eyewitnesses saw and heard. In fact, believers who have not seen Jesus in the flesh are the greater blessed because of their faith (*read* John 20:29).

Time will not permit us to study what the character of Jesus shows us of the Father, but we shall look briefly at what He told us verbally:

1. The Father loves (*read* John 16:27). We have already seen that love is a characteristic of God. This passage tells us that God's love is the special love that a father has for his children

2. He does not want anyone to perish (*read* Matt 18:12-14 and Luke 13:3). This does not mean that sinners will not perish but that it is not God's wish. He would rather them repent and be saved.

3. He forgives and restores. The parable of the Lost Son tells of a son who left his father's home and foolishly wasted his inheritance but returned penniless to his father. His father embraced him, took him in, and restored him to the family (Luke 15:20, 23-24). This is just what our Heavenly Father will do for us.

4. He is perfect and wants us to become perfect too (*read* Matt 5:48).

5. He gives wisely (*read* Matt 7:9-11). A wise father will not give his child a gift that he knows the child cannot handle responsibly. Neither will our Heavenly Father, but He does give good gifts, such as

6. He takes pleasure in giving us the Kingdom (*read* Luke 12:32). The Kingdom of God (His divine rule) is a state to be sought as a place of peace and joy (*read* Matt 13:44 and Rom 14:17).

Activity: Circle the letter before each true statement:

- (a) God wants the righteous to live and sinners to perish.
- (b) God wants us to be perfect.
- (c) God loves as a father loves his children.
- (d) God loves His children, so He will give them whatever they ask for.
- (e) God forgives the repentant, but does not restore them to fellowship.