

# God the Father

by R.A. Finlayson

---

*God's Fatherhood is a unique relationship between God and His redeemed people, based on the closer eternal relationship to the Only Begotten Son.*

**Scripture:** Isaiah 64:8, Acts 17:28, Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Galatians 3:26

**Topics:** "God The Father", "Trinity Doctrine"

---

## Description

R.A. Finlayson delves into the concept of the First Person of the Trinity as the Father, emphasizing His role as the Fount of Deity, the Source of all things, and the initiator of both creation and redemption. The sermon explores the various aspects of God's Fatherhood, including Creational Fatherhood, Theocratic Fatherhood, and Eternal Fatherhood, highlighting the unique and eternal relationship between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity. It also delves into the Christian understanding of God as Father, emphasizing the redemptive nature of this relationship through justification, adoption, and regeneration, all made possible by faith in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

---

## Transcript

When we say that the First Person of the Trinity is the Father, we mean that He is the Fount of Deity [The phrase 'Fount of Deity' (often referred to by its Latin translation *fons deitatis*) is open to misunderstanding. It could be interpreted to mean that the other persons of the Trinity originate at a specific point in time, which is not true; or that there is subordination on the part of the Son and the Holy Spirit where there is none (except in terms of role and function). The phrase as Finlayson uses it is applicable where distinctive doctrines regarding the Fatherhood of God are in the foreground of thought], the Source of all there is, who supremely represents the dignity, honour and glory of Deity. In both creation and redemption the initiative is attributed to Him - 'of Him are all things' (1 Corinthians 8:6). He is called in Scripture in a special sense Elohim (God) and Yahweh Elohim (LORD God). He is called God in relation to Jesus Christ, who is the 'Christ of God', and who addressed Him as 'My God'. He is likewise called God in relation to the Holy Spirit, who is referred to repeatedly as the Spirit of God. And 'Father' became the special New Testament designation for God.

### Creational Fatherhood

But the designation was not by any means unknown in the Old Testament. It was used in the earlier instances to denote creational relationship. It is used by Isaiah as a plea to God for His gracious intervention: 'But Thou, O LORD, art our Father; we are the clay and Thou art the potter, we are the work

of Thy hands' (Isaiah 64:8). Without this relationship to His rational creatures, there would be no race of man, no family of mankind.

But it is particularly for man's spiritual nature that this relationship is claimed. In the Book of Numbers He is called 'the God of the spirits of all flesh' (16:22), and in the Epistle to the Hebrews 'the Father of spirits' (12:9). Paul used this argument when he spoke from Mars Hill to show the irrationality of rational man worshipping idols of wood and stone, and quoted their own poet Aratus: 'We also are his offspring' (Acts 17:28). Thus the creaturehood of man is the counterpart of the general fatherhood of God. It also is used to set out God's tender care, as when He is called the Father of the fatherless, a Father to the poor and the orphan (Psalm 68:5).

#### Theocratic Fatherhood

More common in the Old Testament is the thought of the Theocratic Fatherhood of God, denoting His covenant relationship to Israel. 'For I am a Father to the house of Israel,' He declared (Jeremiah 31:9). Moses takes up the same plea as he remonstrates with his people: 'Do ye yet requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? Is not He thy Father that has bought thee and established thee?' (Deuteronomy 32:6). This is, of course, a foregleam of the New Testament Fatherhood of all who are in Christ.

#### Eternal Fatherhood

But we have to enter the New Testament to see this relationship interpreted and made meaningful to us. Christ used it as His most common designation for God, but He used it to designate a relationship that was His uniquely. And we understand that the name 'Father' very particularly belongs to the First Person in His relation to the Second Person. It is not a relationship assumed at a particular stage of time: it is an eternal relationship. In theological terminology, this is referred to as the eternal generation of the Son. Christ claimed this relationship for Himself in a sense in which it could not be shared even with His disciples. It is a mystical relationship inscrutable to the human mind, as the words of Christ seem to suggest: 'No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son' (Matthew 11:27). In His resurrection message through Mary, He brought the two relationships together - His and theirs - in clear distinction: 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God' (John 20:17). It is on record that the Jews sought the destruction of Christ because He 'said that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God' (John 5:18). They recognised that, on Christ's lips, the term signified

not only special affinity, but unique relationship that meant equality. It is significant, in this connection, that, in addressing His disciples, Christ never used the term 'Our Father' as embracing Himself and them.

#### The Christian Relationship

It is only in the Christian context that we can understand the full significance of this relationship. God is Father in a special sense to His redeemed people; Christ taught His disciples to address God in this intimate relationship. It was His gift to them in virtue of their union to Him. 'My Father and your Father' bears the suggestion of cause and consequence: 'My Father' and therefore 'your Father'. That would mean that God's Fatherhood to the brethren of Christ is based on the closer eternal relationship to the Only Begotten Son who is their Elder Brother. Paul indicates that it is this relationship to Christ that gives them their relationship to God: 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ' (Galatians 3:26), and that it came to them by the grace of adoption: 'God sent forth His Son ... that we might receive the

adoption of sons' (Galatians 4:4-5). It is the Holy Spirit who communicates this experience of sonship to Christ's brethren: 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, that is, Father' (Galatians 4:6). It is significant that the Aramaic word for an intimate domestic relationship, 'Abba', is used for so sublime a relationship. It was used by Christ in prayer to the Father (Mark 14:36). It is a child's appeal to all that is paternal and loving in his father, the equivalent in our language being 'Papa', both words equally easy to pronounce by a child. We are further reminded that it is the Spirit who maintains the consciousness of this relationship in the Christian heart: 'The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God' (Romans 8:16). This is therefore much more than creative fatherhood, it is a redemptive relationship, involving justification to put our standing right, adoption to put our relationship right, and regeneration to put our natures right.

### The Prerogatives of Fatherhood

Every relationship in life carries its own rights and responsibilities, and this is true in the spiritual sphere, no less than in the social. Divine Fatherhood in its sublimity is in a sphere all its own.

### It is a Sovereign Fatherhood

The opening words of the Lord's Prayer - 'Our Father which art in Heaven' - introduce us to a sovereign Father whose throne is in heaven and whose kingdom is yet to emerge. Is it any wonder, then, that this prayer breathes the spirit of reverence, loyalty, and obedience? It is addressed to a Father, but a Father in heaven. A sovereign Father suggests a mind that plans, a power that carries out all the plans, and a wisdom that carries them out in His own time and way. So it stands written that towards His family God makes all things work - this means power; He makes them work together - this means wisdom; and He makes them work together for good - this means love. There is a Father's hand, a Father's mind, and a Father's heart in sovereign power and wisdom and love working for those that love Him. We rejoice in the Fatherly Sovereignty of God.

### It is a Covenant Fatherhood

Covenant relationship is distinctive of the God revealed in the Scriptures, and it is this that gives cohesion, unity and purpose to the divine revelation. Why God should deal with His rational creatures by covenant is not easy to understand, until we realise that its purpose and inspiration may lie in the constitution of the divine Being as within Himself a Fellowship that is based on covenant relationships. This may well explain why God chose to deal with His rational creatures in the way of mutual relationship and responsibility. It is clear that God is a covenant Father to His people, pledging to them His faithfulness and claiming from them loyalty and obedience.

### It is an Ethical Fatherhood

It imposes upon man ethical obligations as fatherhood does in the human family. It involves reverence, loyalty and love by which His children accept the discipline and correction inherent in the family relationship. This discipline never takes the form of punishment, but of fatherly chastisement (Hebrews 12:11).

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**