

The Doctrine of the Trinity

1st Person of the Trinity: The Father

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Who is God the Father?

The first person of the Trinity is the Father. We refer to Him as the Father because that's what Jesus calls Him throughout the Gospels in addition to many references in the Old Testament and the Epistles. To this Person of the Trinity the church has traditionally ascribed the works of Creation and Preservation. Many times in the Old Testament the Father is referenced by the title "LORD" (Jehovah). While the nature and the work of Son and the Spirit are often denied by heretics and false teachers, the nature and work of the Father is rarely blasphemed against by those who profess to be Christian.

How did Creation take place?

The first verse of the Bible informs us that *in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*. This process took six 24-hour days to complete, as Scripture records for us that each day was made up of *the evening and the morning*. There is no justifiable reason to take these days to mean anything else than what the plain text indicates. Many have vainly attempted to reconcile evolutionary theory and Scriptural truth by claiming each day was really millions of years. He created everything from nothing, and brought forth man, beast, and bird from the dust of the earth (Gen 2:19).

- Read Col 1:16 and Gen 1:2. Was the Father working alone in Creation?

- There are some who believed that God is “the Great Clockmaker”, who built the world, wound it up, and let it go. These are called “Deists”. How can we know that God is still involved in our lives, and that even 6,000 years after Creation we are still His workmanship? Read Psalm 139:13-14 and Eph. 2:10

How does Preservation take place?

Martin Luther elaborates in his explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed: *God still preserves me, therefore, richly and daily, providing clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, land, cattle, and all my goods, and all that I need to keep my body and life.* By the Father's good grace, our lives are preserved through the many earthly blessings He pours out on all people, not only believers. As Luther also explains in the 4th petition of the Lord's Prayer: *God gives daily bread even without our asking; even to all the wicked.*

- We often fall into the trap of thinking with the rest of the world that we've earned everything we have through hard work and determination. What does James 1:17 have to say about that?
- Read Jesus' words in Matthew 5:43-48. What can we know about the Father's love by the way He cares for His creations? How can we emulate this love in our lives?

Whose Father is He?

The title “Father”, which Scripture gives to this First Person of the Trinity, tells us a lot about how He works and thinks. By seeing how even the imperfect, sinful fathers of the world care for and love their children, we are reminded of the perfect and powerful love that the Father of heaven and earth has for His children. We call Jesus, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, the Son because He is the only begotten Son of the Father (John 1:14). Yet because of Jesus’ vicarious atonement we have been named children of the Father, adopted into His family by faith (Eph 1:3-5).

- If Jesus is the Son of God, does that mean that the Father is superior to the Son? Read Phil. 2:5-6.
- According to the following passages, what are some of the many ways that our heavenly Father deals with His children in love? Read Psalm 103:13, Matt. 7:7-10, and Heb 12:6.

How can we pray to the Father?

Jesus invites us to bring all of our prayers and petitions to our heavenly Father, assuring us that *whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you* (John 16:23). Likewise, He encourages us *in this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name* (Matt. 6:9). Very often we address our general prayers in the church service to the Father, sometimes making specific requests of the other two Persons of the Trinity when a particular petition calls for it (ex. Son – grace; Spirit –

missions). But by and large, we address our prayers to the Father. And since the Trinity is all three Persons in one Godhead, we can be assured that everything the Father knows, the Son and the Spirit know as well (John 10:31; 1 Cor. 2:11). On top of this fact, Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:8 that our heavenly Father knows what we need before we even ask it.

- There are a lot of reasons a child might find to avoid asking their earthly father for something. What are some of them and how do they apply or not apply to our prayers to the Father?
- What are some prayers that we might specifically address to the Father because of his particular work in our creation and preservation (both prayers of petition and of thanks)?