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God our Father, God the Father of Christ

Introduction

Every epistle in the New Testament was written for a particular situation. In Colossians there were those who taught that Jesus was one of many mediators between God and man. Their doctrines included that God was too high and holy for man to approach Him, consequently there was a considerable number of varying ranks by which one approached God. Colossians has three major truths:

- a) The undebatable deity of the Lord for God is His Father.
- b) The uniqueness of His humanity in His devotedness to God as His God.
- c) The identification of the believer with Christ is so close so that God is also the believer's Father.

It is because of the "b" and "c" above that in this epistle the apostle was guided by the Holy Spirit to put these two balancing truths in close proximity. This is the only time where it is written, "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Col. 1:2) and "God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Col. 1:3). One can see the change of wording for in verse 2 it is written, "God our Father" whereas in verse 3 it is "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". Thus the Fatherhood of God is spoken of in two ways which poses a question, "What is the difference between God being our Father and God being the God and Father of our Lord Jesus?"

What is the difference when the Lord refers to God as "God" or as "Father"? When the Lord speaks of God as "Father" it is emphasizing deity and the eternal relationship. When the Lord speaks of God as "God" it is always in the context of His humanity, but in a variety of contexts. Being the God of our Lord Jesus the emphasis is on His relationship which started at His incarnation (Psa. 22:9, 10). It was a manifestation of His life's attitude to God as a perfect man (Heb. 10:7, 10). When the suffering for sins was over he cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).

In the New Testament the Lord is spoken of as, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". There are other similar scriptures which tell of the relationship of God as the Father and God as God, such as God as Father through our Lord Jesus (Jn. 20:17); "God the Father" (Gal. 1:1, 3; Eph.6:23; Col. 1:2-3; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Jn.1:3; Jude 1:1).

Scriptural references

- 1) When the scriptures read, "God our Father"
 - a) This is a phrase that occurs 11 times in the N T. Nine times to N T churches in Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2 and twice to persons and pastoral letters in 1 Tim. 1:2 and Phil. 1:3. Other similar verses are found such as 1 Thess. 3:13.
- 2) God the Father of our Lord Jesus
 - a) This expression occurs six times, always in the New Testament. While the proceeding words change slightly, the expression of the truth is still the same, the Godhood and Fatherhood of God to Christ.
 - b) A clause which has similar expressions are:
 - i) "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:6)
 - ii) "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3)
 - iii) "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not" (2 Cor. 11:31)
 - iv) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3)
 - v) "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1:17)
 - vi) "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you" (Col. 1:3)

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- vii) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:3)

Observations

I am not aware of any human individual in the scriptures ever calling God “My Father” except the Lord. Sons and grandsons spoke of the “God of my father”, but that is not the individual saying it themselves.

- a) Only He could say “My Father” in the distinct ways the Jews understood it which was claiming deity, perfect equality with God (Jn. 5:18).
- b) Again, the clause “Our Father” was never used by the Lord when with a congregation praying (Jn. 11:41). When on His own He spoke to God calling Him “Father” (Matt. 11:26); “Holy Father” (Jn. 17:11); “My Father” (Matt. 10:33); “Abba, Father” (Mk. 14:36); “Righteous Father” (Jn. 17:25); “O Father” (Matt. 11:25); “My Heavenly Father” (Matt. 15:13); “O My Father” (Matt. 26:39).
- c) When speaking of our relationship to God as Father the Lord said, “Your Father” (Matt. 5:16); “Thy Father” (Matt. 6:4); “Our Father” (Matt. 6:9); “Your Heavenly Father” (Matt. 6:32); “Their Father” (Matt. 13:43).

When the Lord speaks to God calling Him Father what does it signify?

It evidently means that the man Jesus was God’s eternal and co-equal. This is shown by the understanding of the Jews when the Lord, speaking of God said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (Jn. 5:17). The next verse reads, “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (Jn. 5:18). This equality is clearly presented in the following verses:

- a) “But what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise (Jn. 5:19).
 - i) Equality and identicalness in activity.
- b) “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will” (Jn. 5:21).
 - i) Identical in resurrecting power.
- c) “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (Jn. 5:23).
 - i) Equivalent in worthiness of honour
- d) “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (Jn. 5:22)
 - i) Corresponding with God in justice

Christ ever was, is and will be the Son of the Father

Christ was, is and ever will be the “Son”. He was the Son before He left Heaven.

- a) “The Father sent the Son” (1 Jn. 4:14). “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4).
- b) He was the Son in His incarnation, for Isaiah wrote, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isa. 9:6). Careful note should be given to the language, not a son born, but “a son is **given**”. (also Rom. 8:3).
- c) He was the Son while here on earth at the beginning of His ministry (Mk. 1:11) and at the closing days of His ministry at His transfiguration (Matt. 17:5).
- d) He was the Son in resurrection (Acts 3:26; 13:33).
- e) He was the Son in glorification (Heb. 1:5-9).
- f) He was and is the Son in Priestly position (Heb. 5:5).
- g) We wait for His Son from Heaven (1 Thess. 1:10).

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When we speak of God our Father it is ideally:

When we speak to God or about God and refer to Him as “Father” it ideally is in the awareness of a real and living relationship. That relationship is to be lived out in these mortal bodies, for at conversion we were put into the Spirit of God and He in us which results in the life characteristics of Christ being seen in us. Writing to the Romans Paul wrote:

- a) “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. 8:2)
- b) “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Rom. 8:9-11)

Calling God Father results in:

- a) In the consciousness of the fulness of His love. (1 Jn. 3:1)
- b) It is an awareness of the responsibility placed on us to convey His likeness. (1 Jn. 3:2)
- c) In the consciousness of His perfect discipline as the Father of spirits. (Heb. 12:9)
- d) In the awareness that as the Father of Lights there is no variableness or anything hid from His sight. (Jam. 1:17)
- e) In the reality of being conformed ultimately to His likeness morally (1 Jn. 3:2) that results in purity of life now. (1 Jn. 3:3).
- f) A blessing of righteousness provided and bestowed righteousness without works. (Rom. 4:11; Gal. 1:4)
- g) The solemnity of prayer, seeking to know His will before asking. (1 Jn. 5:14-15)
- h) The awareness of the glory of the One to whom we are speaking:
 - i) His unapproachability without Christ (compare Moses when the Tabernacle was finished). (Ex. 40:34-35)
 - ii) The life preserving approach via the holy all sufficient permanently perfect sacrifice of Christ. (Heb. 4:16; Jn. 3:3)

... Rowan Jennings