

God The Father (Part 1)

The Godhead, Author of Creation, Natural Attributes

Martin G. Collins

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God the Father seems to have little or no influence on mainstream Christian churches. Although the world has not known Him, we know that He sent Jesus to reveal Himself to us. And, so we have this wonderful gift of knowledge and hope!

Most people do not realize how much the Father is involved in His plan in "bringing many sons to glory" through Jesus Christ. His personal involvement in Christ's sacrifice and resurrection was essential to its success and He continues to be actively involved in the raising of His children.

I Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We have this wonderful promise, from our Father and Jesus Christ, that they will keep us and preserve us with their power. God the Father is so intricately involved in our lives that He personally regenerates His saints. But still, the world is largely unaware of God the Father.

John 8:19 "Then they [the Pharisees] said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

John 17:25 "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these [baptized children] have known that You sent Me."

We see a direct contrast between the knowledge of the world and the knowledge of His church with regard to God the Father. It is a gift from God that we know who He is and what He represents. This is why the apostle Paul called man's civilization, "this present evil world," and this is why the whole world lies in wickedness. They do not know the Father, and they do not know what He has taught and what He has commanded.

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Humankind has been blinded to the right knowledge of God and His plan for all of us—and the world suffers horribly as a result. A time is coming, however, when the knowledge of the LORD God will cover this earth as the waters cover the sea. But that time is not yet.

Mainstream Christianity has confused the Godhead by teaching that God the Father is the harsh God of the Old Testament. They teach that His commands should be ignored and therefore He is ignored. They teach that Jesus Christ is the God of the New Testament, and that the two of them form two-thirds of a closed Trinity. And yet, this false doctrine is so very dear to the hearts of many in mainstream Christianity that they follow this tradition blindly and they are wrong!

We know that there is no biblical proof for the Trinity doctrine! In fact, it has origins going back to paganism in ancient times. Religious people in general tend to ignore what the Bible says. They form their own religions from human reasoning, rather than Godly inspiration through God's written word. They would rather believe the lie that Satan promotes. The only way to know God the Father is by His own revelation in Jesus Christ, and through the implantation of the Holy Spirit, the power of God, the mind of God in the saints.

One of the major reasons Jesus Christ came in human flesh was to fully reveal the Father to His called and chosen people.

Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

God has purposely hidden His identity from the world and He has purposely revealed it to His church.

Matthew 11:26-27 "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

What appears there is that Jesus Christ, in connection with His Father, is the one who decides who this information will be revealed to, who will know God the Father. The only way to know the Father is through Jesus Christ. The Son has revealed Him in the

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inspiration of the New Covenant, and in the way in which He conducted His life here on earth and through His teachings in general.

In the Bible, God is envisioned as "Father," "Our Father that is in heaven" and "the God and Father of the Lord Jesus". The tenderness of this relationship, and wealth of love and grace associated with this profound description, are essential to Christ's message. This Fatherhood is revealed, in the life and work of Jesus, to be of the very essence of the Godhead. The main attribute of the Godhead is love. Therefore, God the Father is the epitome of love.

King David, of Israel, was also a prophet. God gave him incredible insights into the nature of God and God's rule over all creation. He was inspired by God's Spirit; thus many truths are revealed through David's writings. In one of his own psalms he made it clear, in a very succinct statement, who the two Beings of the Godhead are.

Psalm 110:1 The LORD said to my Lord "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

The Father said to David's Lord (the Son—Jesus Christ) "Sit at my right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool". This makes it very clear as to who sits on that throne. In this significant psalm the Father is talking to the Son in prophetic vision. Then, about one thousand years later, the apostle Paul confirmed the identity of these two Beings by quoting David's statement.

Acts 2:34-35 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"

It is important to remember to read the whole context for a complete and accurate biblical understanding. Verse 36 identifies these two Beings.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God [that is, the Father] has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

This makes it all so clear and indisputable. These scriptures, in Psalm 110 and Acts 2, are talking about two members of the divine family—the Father and the Son. But they

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are not two independent self-seeking Beings. They are in total agreement. They are of one purpose.

I am using the term *God the Father* as the general term for the highest authority of the Godhead, but God the Father did not become the Father until later.

John 10:22-27 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

This is what we have on our crest for the Church of the Great God. This is what we believe is so important to understand, that only God's sheep hear His voice, and that is why the world does not know who God the Father is. They may use His name, but they do not really know Him.

John 10:28-30 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. "I and My Father are one."

Jesus revealed that there is one Godhead, one God Family, and that its members work together with one mind and purpose. That Family, however, is presently comprised of two individuals, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This is clearly stated in John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

I say that, knowing that you all understand that, but it is so important and I want to set that as a foundation in this sermon on God the Father. The "Word" or "Spokesman" was the One who later became Jesus Christ, as John 1:14 tells us: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

We are regenerated at this time as a result of our baptism, and receipt of the Holy Spirit. But Christ is completely composed of Spirit, and He is the only one so far. He is also the

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only one to be begotten by God the Father through divine impregnation of a human being, and that human being was Mary.

According to Herbert Armstrong, in his book *Mystery of the Ages*, pages 41-42:

The Word is a Personage who was made flesh—begotten by God, who through this later begetting became his Father. Yet at that prehistoric time of the first verse of John 1, the Word was not yet the Son of God. He divested himself of his glory as a Spirit divinity to be begotten as a human person. He was made God's Son, through being begotten or sired by God and born of the virgin Mary.

So here we find revealed originally two personages. One is God. And with God in that prehistoric time was another Personage who also was God—one who later was begotten and born as Jesus Christ. But these two Personages were spirit, which is invisible to human eyes unless supernaturally manifested. Yet at the time described in verse one Jesus was not the Son of God and God was not his Father.

The Father and Christ are one—one united, holy Family. Jesus consistently referred to God as "Father," and Himself as "Son," and whoever does the will of God as "brother," "sister" and "mother." We see there just by those comments that it is a God Family and it is a dynamic God family that will continue to grow.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

In Romans 8:16, 17 and 19 he alternates between "children" and "sons."

Romans 8:16-17, 19 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

We see there that those in God's church are referred to as both "sons" and "children."

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I John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

This is implying that we will one day be more like Him than we are at present, though even now we are in His image and likeness. Many more scriptures show this family parallel, but Ephesians 3 plainly summarizes this concept.

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Now already a Family exists in heaven—not the angelic family, but the Family in which we are already sons and daughters! We are part of that heavenly Family, but still on the earth.

This heavenly Family consists of many members and is growing. It is a dynamic family, not a closed Trinity.

Before anything else came into existence, there was God and the Word. They were composed of spirit—not composed of anything physical. Jesus, of course, is the Word.

John 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

The term "with" is used to indicate that two or more people or things are together, near each other, in agreement, in harmony, in the company of, accompanied by. There is no doubt that they were together, but individual

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, [by God the Father that is] and without Him nothing was made that was made.

We see there that both God the Father and Jesus Christ took part in creation. So they are both creators, God the Father creating through Jesus Christ, who is also a creator. Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:9 that God created all things through Jesus Christ. Therefore, God is Creator. But He created all things by Jesus Christ.

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Ephesians 3:9-11 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

The ultimate source of biblical truth is the Father. God tells Christ what to do, and He enthusiastically carries it out without hesitation and without doubt, because they are in full agreement. They are of one purpose and of one mind.

John 8:28 "Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."

Jesus then speaks as the workman, and the power of the Holy Spirit accomplishes what Jesus commands.

Colossians 1:12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

We do not qualify ourselves for the Kingdom of God—it is God the Father who qualifies us. He and Jesus Christ do the work. Of course, we have our responsibility as well to be obedient to both God the Father and Jesus Christ as they speak as One.

Colossians 1: 13-16 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He [the Son] is the image of the invisible God [the Father who is of the same appearance, form, shape and character], the firstborn [Jesus Christ] over all creation. For by Him [Jesus Christ] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him [Jesus Christ] and for Him [Jesus Christ].

These verses reveal the Word, who became Jesus Christ, as the agent of creation,

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performing the work necessary to carry it out. He is not only God, but with another who is also God. Both of these individuals of the Godhead are creators. The phrases, "by Him" and "through Him," imply that this other Being authorized the works of Creation carried out by the Word. So we have here two distinct personalities, both called God by inspiration, working in harmony to accomplish this wonderful work of beginning the creation of new sons for the Kingdom.

God's Word reveals that God and the Word—two Supreme Beings—coexisted always. They coexisted before anything had been created, including this earth and the entire universe. This means that there was a time (if time is the correct term) when those two Beings coexisted and nothing else did.

God speaks of the creation of the earth in the thirty-eighth chapter of Job.

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy...

Therefore all the angels were in existence when the earth was first created. Much of this, I know, is a review for most of you, being long term members in God's church, but it is extremely important to have as a foundation of the knowledge of God the Father.

In Genesis 1:1 it speaks of God (*elohim*, the two members of the God Family) creating the heavens and the earth. In the King James the singular word "heaven" is used. But the original Hebrew as Moses wrote it was in the plural—"heavens"—implying that the whole physical universe was created simultaneously with the earth.

Genesis 2:4 "This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LOORD God made the earth and the heavens,"

The Father is intimately concerned with the whole creation, and He is deeply concerned about His future sons of glory.

Psalms 45:6-7 records a Messianic prophecy:

Psalms 45:6-7 Your throne, O God [Jesus Christ], is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God [the Father],

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has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

I intentionally made this sermon scripture heavy because I wanted to hide behind the scriptures on God the Father and let them speak primarily for themselves. I cannot turn to every scripture that relates to it, but I do want to hit on the major ones. In Hebrews 1 the word for "God" used once of the Messiah and later for the Messiah's God, is *Elohim*. Paul quotes this psalm in Hebrews 1:8-9 to prove that Jesus is worthy of the worship of angels. It is this Messiah, Jesus the Christ, the Son through whom also God the Father made the worlds.

Hebrews 1:1-2 God [the Father], who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He [the Father] made the worlds;

The Creator God *the Father* created the universe through His Creator *Son*. This was before they were Father and Son.

Hebrew 1:3 who [Jesus] being the brightness of His [the Father's] glory and the express image of His [the Father's] person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He [Jesus Christ] had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high [God the Father],

To worship anything less than God breaks the first commandment. This shows Jesus to be God before and after His incarnation.

Philippians 2:6 adds more to our understanding of this. Paul says,

Philippians 2:6 who [Jesus Christ], being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God [the Father],

As in other Scriptures, He was God, divine by nature, with (accompanying) a different personality, also called God.

A similar conclusion emerges in considering the subject of will. Jesus prayed to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Luke 22:41-42 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

We see there again the oneness of the minds of Jesus Christ and God the Father in their purpose. Luke described two divine Beings with individual wills harmoniously coexisting in one Family because One submits His will to the other. This also explains why Genesis 1:26 uses the plural pronouns "Us" and "Our" to refer to their forerunner *Elohim*. Two divine personalities were working as one. Jesus said it Himself in John 14:28, "... 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I."

God the Father is the creator and sustainer of the universe. He has provided humanity with a true revelation of Himself through the natural world and through His Son Jesus Christ. This true revelation is almost entirely refused and ignored by the world, and false gods are accepted instead. The world swallows the lies that they have been fed and they do it willingly.

The Bible does not seek to PROVE the existence of God; it simply AFFIRMS His existence by declaring: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God has clearly revealed Himself through the physical universe. We know when we try to explain to relatives or friends (who do not believe in God) how impossible it is to get them to believe that there is a God, or that God is the Creator of things. The Bible is not there to try to prove to anyone (except those who are called) the doctrines of God the Father and Jesus Christ and how unified they are.

By observing the universe we can find positive indications of God's existence. Creation reveals the results of a universal mind that devised a master plan and executed it. It makes more sense to accept the idea of God as Creator of the universe than to assume that our orderly universe came into existence apart from a divine being or divine family.

The greatest revelation of God, however, comes through the Bible—through the inspired written word. Both the existence of God and the nature of God are revealed in, and through, Jesus Christ.

Although the full revelation of God was in Jesus Christ, the human mind cannot fully understand God. One reason for this is that scripture does not record all the actions and teachings of Jesus. Another reason is the limitation of the human mind. How can man's finite mind understand the infinity of God? It is not possible for us to understand completely! What God reveals to us through His Spirit, His written word, and the

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example of Jesus Christ's life, is sufficient at this time.

Although we cannot fully understand God, we can still know Him. We know Him through a personal relationship of faith, and through a study of what the Bible teaches about His nature; and of a willing, repentant and humble mind so that we are teachable.

God may be described in terms of attributes, in terms of His inherent characteristics. While we cannot describe God in a complete way, we can learn about Him by examining His attributes as revealed in the Bible.

For the most part, our knowledge of the attributes of God is derived from the Scriptures. They should not be regarded as mere human conceptions, but as true representations of the divine nature. They blend harmoniously with each other in the unity of the one Being, God.

Let us look at a partial list of the revealed attributes of God. For the purpose of organization, I would like to separate the attributes into two categories—Natural Attributes and Moral Attributes. In no way do I mean to limit God, but just to help us to understand that there are different types.

Some of God's natural attributes are that He is: Spirit, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, immutable and unchangeable. We will cover just two of these today.

Some of God's moral attributes are that He is: perfect, just, true, wise, loving (probably the most important), merciful, graceful, holy and righteous. We will cover these in a future sermon.

The first natural attribute I would like to go through, because this is a foundational sermon so to speak, is that God is Spirit. God has no physical or measurable form. Thus, God is invisible, as Colossians 1:15 tells us. In Genesis 1:26, "God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;" The image, likeness, form and shape of God can be seen in the form and shape of man. Again, very basic foundational knowledge.

In various scriptures, it is revealed that God has a face, eyes, ears and mouth. He has arms, legs, hands, fingers, feet, toes, and hair on his head. Since we know what a man looks like, we know what God looks like, because he made man in His image to look the same. Jesus looked like the Father and was actually, "God with us."

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If manifested now, we would see God the Father and Jesus Christ now glorified in heaven, with faces (though formed as human faces) as bright as the full strength of the sun. Their eyes flames of fire, feet like burnished brass and hair white as snow. The description of these was seen in a vision.

Some have been confused by a statement Jesus made in John 5:37 referring to the Father. Jesus told His audience, "You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." Jesus was speaking directly to those gathered around Him—those who sought to kill Him, as the context of verses 16-19 reveals. This statement does not say that no human at any time has ever heard the Father's voice.

John 5:16-19, 37 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

A few people in Jesus' day heard the Father's voice conveyed from heaven to earth. It is clear from Matthew 17:5, for example, that the disciples actually heard His voice. It was the Father's voice that Jesus, and maybe John, heard on another occasion.

Matthew 3:16-17 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

There can be no doubt that it was God the Father speaking and that Jesus recognized the voice as the Father's. What about other references to people seeing God?

In John 6:46, Jesus says only He Himself who came from God has seen the Father. Israel heard God speak the Ten Commandments as recorded in Exodus 20, and Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy elders of Israel saw the God of Israel as recorded in

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Exodus 24. It appears they may have eaten a meal in His presence. But which God is it speaking of? Most of you already know that answer.

Genesis 3 says Adam and Eve walked and talked with God in the Garden of Eden. Abraham often talked with God, and before the destruction of Sodom. Genesis 18 says he entertained Him at his tents. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek in Genesis 14, whom Paul identifies as Christ in Hebrews 7. Joshua saw Him before the children of Israel marched around Jericho as recorded in Joshua 5. There are many sightings of God, but it was not God the Father, it was God who became the Son.

If many have seen God, and no one has seen God "at any time," we must conclude that two personalities make up the God family, since the Bible does not contradict itself. They saw God, the one who became Jesus of Nazareth, not the other personality of the God family, called later "the Father." Before Jesus' ministry, Israel had only hints of the Father's existence, since part of Jesus mission was to declare the Father to His people.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

So, too, the manifested relationship between the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son, illustrates their distinctiveness. Matthew 1:23 recorded that through the power of the Holy Spirit, God the Father impregnated Mary, and His seed, Jesus, was called Immanuel, "God with us." He is called "the only begotten of the Father" in John 1:14. The Father begot the Son. These are two distinct and separate Beings involved in this regeneration. Again, this is just a review of what we already should know.

Thankfully for all of us, the distinct Supreme Being—the Father—resurrected His Son to everlasting life to sit at His right hand.

Jesus witnessed to the woman of Samaria who drew water from the well that "God is Spirit."

John 4:23-24 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Jesus was conveying to the woman that God cannot be confined to one place, nor

conceived of as a material being. He cannot be represented adequately by an abstract concept, which is fundamentally impersonal, nor can an idol depict His likeness since He is not material. We know that God is without a physical body and that He is not composed of material parts.

Since He is spirit, He does not dwell in physical temples made with hands, neither is He worshipped with human hands as though He needed anything, since He gives life and breath to all.

Acts 17:22-31 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; "for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, "so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; "for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

God wants pure, holy, and spiritual worship of Himself. He is spirit and He demands worship in truth, but not in a way that seems right to a man. We see this improper and impure worship of false gods every day in this present evil society. It just does not seem like they can create their own gods quick enough.

The prophet Daniel gives us an insightful look into the heavenly realm. Although God is spirit, which is normally invisible to the human eye, Daniel was permitted to see these two Beings in his mind. He received a vision of events on the spirit plane and he

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recorded a clear description of the Father just as the apostle John would, several centuries later.

Daniel 7:9 I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days [God the Father] was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire;

We read earlier that Jesus later revealed in John 5:37 that even though God the Father is a spirit Being, He still has form and shape. Daniel also saw a multitude of loyal angelic beings, constantly serving the Father, who had a shape and form but in the spiritual realm.

Daniel 7:10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

Angels are spirit beings as well, and are often portrayed with form and shape.

Daniel 7:11-13 I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. "As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days [God the Father], and they [the angelic host] brought Him [the Son of Man] near before Him [God the Father].

Jesus often times called Himself "the Son of Man" as you know.

Daniel 7:14 Then to Him [Jesus Christ] was given dominion [or rulership] and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His [Christ's] kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

All this happens on the spiritual plane. Invisible to the human eye, but seen by Daniel,

through vision in his mind's eye.

The second attribute, or combination of attributes, that I would like to cover today, is that God is immutable and changeless. Immutability is the perfection of God, in that He does not change in character, will, purpose, and aim.

Hebrews 6:13-18 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

In verse 17, the English word "immutability" is translated from the Greek word *ametathetos*, an adjective signifying "immutable." The 'a' in "*ametathetos*" makes the Greek word negative, making the meaning include unchangeability, in contrast to the positive root form *metatithemi*, "to change." The word here in verse 17 refers to "the immutability" of God's counsel. The Greek word used here used to be a technical term in connection with legal wills, meaning unbreakable. Meaning that whatever God has established and determined, and whatever He is, is unbreakable and unchangeable.

The immutability of His counsel refers to His fixed purpose. It is a purpose that does not change. The truth of God never changes, and all the hope that we can have of salvation and eternal life is founded on the fact that His purpose is immutable.

If God changed his plans—if He was controlled by emotional impulse, or if He willed one thing today and another thing tomorrow—who could rely on Him? No one would know what to expect, and no one could have confidence in Him. So this attribute of immutability and unchangeability is absolutely necessary for our hope and our confidence in Him.

The farmer plows and sows because he believes that the laws of nature are established and fixed.

We plant an apple tree because we believe it will produce apples, a peach tree because it will produce peaches, a pear tree because it will produce pears. We have the

confidence that God has designed it that way.

But suppose there were no established laws, that all was governed by chance, as the evolutionists try to tell us they are—who would know what to plant? Who then would bother to plant anything? Even in the world's eyes they have confidence in what God has designed and created, but they deny Him, and they willfully refuse to acknowledge Him.

We should be extremely grateful that God has an "immutable counsel," and that He confirmed it by a solemn oath! It would be tough to honor a God that did not have such an immutability of purpose. It is comforting for us to have this confidence in Him that He is unchanging.

Progress and change may characterize some of His works, but God Himself remains unchanged in His attributes.

Hebrews 1:5-12 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire." But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail."

We see there a quote by the author of Hebrews of a scripture that we had already read part of.

God does not change; otherwise, He would not be perfect. Thus, what we know of God can be known with certainty. He is not different from one time to another.

Malachi 3:1-2, 6 Behold, I send My messenger [John the Baptist], and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord [Jesus Christ], whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger [Christ] of the

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covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LOORD of hosts [God the Father]. "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap. "For I am the LOORD, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

In verse 6, the phrase, "I am the Lord," is more concisely rendered, "I, the Lord." The proper name of God, "I AM" or, "He who Is," involves His unchangeableness. Change implies imperfection; it changes to that which is either more perfect or less perfect. But God is in everything perfect already and always has been. Perfection is determined by God, being the standard of perfection; God is not determined to be perfect by some other standard.

A major error and sin committed by all human beings is that we may tend to judge God as imperfect by our own standard of perfection. Therefore, when something does not go well for us, we judge God as imperfectly handling our situation.

We ask God to heal our ailment, and when He does not (possibly because we have lessons we need to learn so that we may grow in compassion and spiritual character) we lose heart because we have judged Him to be imperfect in His intervention in our lives. We do not realize that we are judging Him in that way, but we certainly are when we lose faith that He will do the best for us. Everything works together for good to those who love God.

Despite what we may think at times, God is immutable and changeless in His perfection and purpose.

God does not change the doctrines of His Church. His laws are immutable because they originate in Him. His immutability and changelessness establish truth as a constant. Truth is not ever-changing. It never was and never will be. Therefore, the same laws and statutes that were ordained forever are still in effect.

Adultery and homosexuality were sins thousands of years ago and still are, as are murder, lying and stealing. Is there sexual immorality in your life? Do you lie? Are you a thief, in that, you rob God of His tithes and offerings? These are important questions that we should be asking ourselves all of the time, but especially as we prepare for the Passover. God inspired Paul to write the following scripture:

I Corinthians 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the

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kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

I know that this sermon will be heard by a lot of different people. I know that some of these people are guilty of some of these sins. So take my word that this statement is directed toward you. Go through this list and make sure that you are not doing any of these things. In preparing for Passover we have to look very closely at our lives and I think sometimes people overlook the major sins that they have in their lives. Without this washing of our sins by the blood of Christ, which requires genuine repentance and acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and a change of our life, we cannot inherit the Kingdom.

Will you be worthy to take the Passover next month? Or, will there be flagrant sins that you continue to commit? I will turn the question around and ask will there be flagrant sins that I continue to commit? At this pre-Passover time it is especially important that we ask serious questions about our conduct. Do we really live our lives as the omnipresent, immutable and changeless God requires or do we ignore Him like the world does. If we ignore Him, then we do not know Him.

It would be wrong, because of its inadequacy, to speak of fatherhood as if the whole character of God were bearing on that one term. God is Father, but equally fundamental is His relationship to His creation as its moral Ruler and supreme Judge.

From eternity to eternity the holy God must pronounce Himself against sin. His fatherly grace cannot avert judgment where a person remains rebellious and unrepentant in unrighteousness. This is part of His righteous judgment.

God is revealed as Father of Jesus Christ, through and by whom the Father has offered salvation and eternal life to His potential firstborn children, and that is hopefully us.

Jesus Christ came to reveal the Father. Since we have Jesus' teaching and example of how to live our lives according to God's way of life, we have revealed to us the Father's teaching and example. If we have truly "known" Christ in a spiritually intimate way, revealed to us through the Holy Spirit, we have "known" the Father by and through the spiritual revelation of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ.

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Fatherhood is love. It is original and selfless anticipating and undeserved forgiving and educating, communicating and sincere. Pray to the Father for all good things because He is the ideal of perfection which we should seek to attain. This is the general character of God as expressed in His Fatherhood. Jesus Christ speaks of God's gift of His children to Him, and His love for Him and for us.

John 17:24-26 Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Next time, we will look more closely at the Father's expression of love for His Son and His spiritual children.