

GOD JUST TOUCHED ME - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT

Chapter 3 - THE FATHER

Introduction to the Father

The concept of God as Father is unique to Judaism and Christianity. No other religions have ever seen their gods as a father figure. Even Islam sees its god, Allah, as impersonal and not working in the lives of men. The pagans have to appease their gods or suffer the consequences. Their reason for seeking favor is to avoid angering their gods. Islam is living under the law, but without a compassionate, loving father, just an authority. The Hebrew people had two different words translated father in the English language. One had the connotation of the male parent that takes care of you, and the other was the authority figure. At the time the scriptures were written the authoritative father of the family literally owned his spouse and offspring, and could do with them as he pleased. The Greek language used in the New Testament also had two words, similar in connotation to the Hebrew. When the people of that time prayed, they usually used the dad word. When they talked about the authority and majesty, they used the father word.

Creator

Our heavenly Father created us (Genesis 2:4-9). We were created from the common dust of the earth, and without the breath of God, are merely a pile of dirt. Our value comes, not from what we are, but whose we are. First He prepared a place for us to live and grow, our Father prepared a nursery for the crown of His creation. Then He put us in it, and in the cool of the day walked and talked with His son and daughter.

Not only did He create us, He made us in His own image (Genesis 1:26 & 27). We have a physical body and our Father doesn't. However, we were given His characteristics, personality, and a capacity to love. He intended us to be like Him, and we had a family resemblance. The truth is that we were created to be a lot more like Him than we could ever know by observing people today. His trust was so great that He gave us authority over all of His creation. We have fallen so far, yet He intends to restore us if we will allow Him. That is what life is all about, and why Jesus came.

Redeemer

He is both our Father and our Redeemer (Isaiah 63:16). He not only considered us worth creating, but also worth saving. We had nothing of value left and could not make any kind of reparation for our sins. As a loving parent would ransom a child back, or pay bail to get out of jail, our heavenly Father paid the price to get us back, not from jail, but from eternal death.

Handmade by God

We are the work of His hands (Isaiah 64:8). Genesis repeatedly tells us that, "God said...", and "It was so." He simply spoke everything into existence. However, He didn't simply speak us into existence, but took the time to form each of us individually with his own hands. When He formed Adam from the dust it wasn't simply piling up some dirt. He took the time to intricately form Him, physically and mentally. Though Adam was created from the earth; our heavenly Father created us within our mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:5). Each and every one of us was specifically custom designed.

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The Family Of God

He makes us part of His family (Romans 8:15-17). The official seal put on us is His Spirit, proving we are really and truly adopted by Him. There is meaning in using both abba and father in the scripture. Abba indicates a loving, nurturing, caring parent, daddy in today's language. Father, Greek pater, is the founder of the family, the authority figure of the household, formally father. We are kin to Jesus, adopted into the divine family.

He claims us for Himself (2 Corinthians 6:18). It is God's desire to be our Father and to have a large family. Jesus is to be the first-born with many brothers and sisters (Romans 8:29). At the time these scriptures were written both the law and society made no distinction between adopted children and natural descendants. They were considered to be one and the same. We are not foster children that can be discarded for not fitting in. We can call our natural children flesh of our flesh. God calls us spirit of His Spirit.

Giver of Gifts

He only gives good things (Matthew 7:11). Our Father is not selfish, begrudging, or stingy. He is a loving Father who understands, cares for, and comforts us. Even when we have trouble clearly stating what we ask for, He understands the real desires of our hearts. His love prevents Him from giving us harmful things we might ask for, such as power over others, or revenge on someone, or even excessive wealth due to greed. Sometimes He may delay for a more opportune time. Other times He may withhold because He has something much better to give. You may see this in a position opening up at work you are asking for, and He has a much better position to give you. However, we sometimes bring bad things on ourselves by aggressively seeking things and not consulting our Father, who is neither the author nor the source of the grief.

He gives us His Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit is not only a gift, but is a promise from our Father. The Holy Spirit was sent so God could reside within His children. There cannot be any way to be closer to Him. Not only is the Spirit a gift, but a necessity. Jesus told the Apostles to wait for the power. They were not even to leave the city without it. If they had to wait for the power from on high, we need to wait more than they. If we do not have the Spirit we are none of His (Romans 8:9) and we cannot even call Jesus Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3).

He determines our rewards (Matthew 20:23). All authority belongs to the Father and comes from the Father. Because of sin we have lost all rights to anything. Because of Jesus we have been given the gift of salvation and eternal life in our Father's family. In His love for us our Father has promised rewards for our good works. However, we cannot do this, and that, and one other thing, and claim we have earned a particular reward. Our good works earn nothing (Luke 17:9&10). They are our response in love to a loving Father, and any reward is another gift from our Father. We don't get to choose gifts. Giver chooses the gifts. Though the gift giver may ask what we would like, the final authority to choose is the giver's.

The Father Forgives

Our Father forgives (Matthew 6:14&15, Mark 11:25 & 26). Forgiveness from the Father is conditional upon us forgiving all those who offend us. Many of our Father's promises come in the form of "If you do this, then I will do that" and usually adds, "If you do not do this then I will do

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something you will not like!" We might think that our actions can control our Father's responses, but all we are really doing is exercising a preordained option to choose between life and death, between blessing and curses (Deuteronomy 30:19). Being the loving Father He is, He even hints at the option to choose; "CHOOSE LIFE!"

The Father Sets Timetables

Only our Father knows and decides the opportune time (Mark 13:32). When the Son became human He voluntarily gave up unlimited use of His divine attributes and limited Himself to what we are capable of. Until He ascended, the Son lived as a human with human capabilities. The mighty works He accomplished were through the power of the Spirit, to which we also now have access. We long to know the Father's timetables, and He mercifully withholds them from us. If something to come was revealed to us before we were made ready for it by Him we may respond with fear. If we were over-confidant in ourselves we might run ahead of Him and take a wrong turn or start before conditions were ripe. Then to, we are prone to trying to help, and mess things up so He has to start over.

The Father Is Compassionate

He is the source of compassion and comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3). We are offered comfort and compassion from Him so we can offer them to others. It is related to His requirement that we love one another. We should feel toward our Father's other children the same as He does. We are to strive to become like Him as much as we are capable of.

What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31).