

Godhead Class

November/December 2018

November 11: Who is the Father?

As we noted last week, the Godhead is composed of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We noted that these are three distinct persons who all share in the Divine nature. By *persons*, we do not mean humans – rather, we mean *persons* by the philosophical definition: “a self-conscious or rational being”¹. Beginning with this lesson, we want to examine each member of the Godhead in some degree of detail.

Properly or improperly, whenever we hear the term “God,” most of us tend to think of God the Father; and, indeed, He is quite often referenced simply as “God” throughout Scripture (Mark 1.1; 16.19; Acts 13.23; Ephesians 1.1-3). However, there are times in Scripture when the term “God” references another member of the Godhead (Acts 5.3-4; Hebrews 1.8) and there are times when the term references all three members of the Godhead equally (Genesis 1.1; Deuteronomy 6.13; Matthew 4.10). Thus, we need to understand that sometimes “God” is used generally and sometimes with specific reference to the Father.

That this Divine being is referenced as “Father” is significant for a number of reasons. First, there is the very general sense in which God is the Father of all of humanity by means of creation (Acts 17.28f). Second, there is the sense in which God is a Father to all of those who have submitted themselves to Him (2 Corinthians 6.16-18). Third, there is a sense in which He is a Father with reference to Jesus. It is not the idea, as some of our LDS friends say, that the Father literally procreated with

¹ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/person>

Mary to produce Jesus. Rather, speaking of the "Father" with reference to the "Son" is indicative of a relationship marked by love and submission (John 14.31; 15.9) – it is in this sense that Scripture speaks of the Father and the Son with reference to the Godhead.

Prior to creation, it was the Father who planned to provide an avenue of grace for the forgiveness of sins through the blood of His Son (Ephesians 1.3-8). In creation, the Father authoritatively spoke the world into existence (Genesis 1.3ff). It was the Father who thundered down His approval of Jesus, His Son, at the transfiguration (Matthew 17.5). It was the Father who gave all authority to the Son who willingly submitted to Him (Matthew 28.18ff). It is the Father before whom Jesus now intercedes on our behalf (1 Timothy 2.5; Hebrews 9.24).

The Father is described to us in Scripture in various way: all-knowing (Isaiah 40.13f), all-powerful (Isaiah 44.24; Psalm 147.4f), all-seeing (Psalm 139.7ff). But, these are not the only characteristics of the Father revealed to us in Scripture! God is also characterized by His holiness (Psalm 99.9), righteousness (Deuteronomy 32.4), goodness, and forgiveness (Psalm 86.5).

- 1) Why is "Father" an appropriate description for the first Person in the Godhead? _____
- 2) Does "God" always refer to the Father? _____
- 3) Does "Father" ever refer to a different member of the Godhead? (cf. Isaiah 9) _____
- 4) Jesus is a mediator for us before whom? _____
- 5) Understanding this, to whom should we pray? _____
- 6) Browse 1 John and note some terms that reference the Father: _____

- 7) Thought Question: Although He is infinite in power, what is God able to do according to Genesis 9.11,15? _____