

A Whole NEW Paradigm: The Doctrine of ‘the Father and the Son’!

With Volatile Issues abundant, the Early NT Church didn't need More things to have to Debate. Yet One Issue was Always 'Right There' Waiting to Erupt. Few have noted the Extreme Genius Exhibited by New Testament writers in Modifying the Fundamental Perceptual Parameters of Who Elohim Is.

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We're all fully aware that the first century Judaic religion was 'strictly monotheistic'. That fact was then, and even is now, brought to remembrance by daily repetition of the Shema: Deuteronomy 6:4.

However, there was a distinct perceptual shift that occurred with the New Testament era. We're not as focused on it in this generation, as we're thoroughly familiar with the matter. But such wasn't the case in the early Church. What was posed in the early first century was drastically different from what was commonly believed and understood at the time, especially among the Jewish community, in which the former opinions are still tightly embraced.

Among those who know of the major 'personality' of the New Testament, and in some manner accept or at least acknowledge Him, they often make a point with emphasis that the Father is identified in many places distinct from Jesus Christ. The Father is called God, but the Son, they say, is not. Their conclusion therefore being that the Son is not God!

Reason Run Amuck

Let's consider one line of reasoning: Applying the same logic, we must also conclude that the Father is not Lord. There is one God the Father...and one Lord Jesus Christ, as it says in 1st Corinthians 8:6. So, we have one God AND one Lord. If 'one' means there is no other Being called God, (as some allege) then, applying the same logic, the same must be true that there is no other Lord. If each of these is to be understood as exclusive to one specific individual Being, then we must recognize that there is only one Lord. If there is ONE God only, then correspondingly, there must be only

ONE Being who we can legitimately regard as Lord, on the strength of the same logic and the same wording. So, we must never regard anyone but the Father as God, and no one but the Son as Lord. (In fact, the New Testament rarely if ever refers to the Father as the Lord.) So, we have two Beings: one is God, the other is Lord. Neither, it seems, are referred to in the New Testament by the other's name. (I'm not saying I believe this, I just want to call attention to a thought process that leads to the premise on the part of some that Jesus is Lord but **not** God.)

The LORD God

The problem is, in the Old Testament, we have God consistently referred to as the LORD God! Which is who there? The name LORD God is the major personal mention. There, whoever the LORD is, was also God! So, prior to the New Testament Church era, we have a Being who was identified by BOTH names! What changed?

Contradicting that opinion, apparently both God and Lord in the NT can be worshipped! (Romans 14:11, Eph. 3:14, Phil. 2:10) Does this clear fact 'confuse' the first commandment issue? Believe it or not, that claim has been made, that it violates the First Commandment to worship any other than the LORD God of the Old Testament, who is generally identified by them as being God the Father!

But we also do have the Father specifically calling the Son, 'God', with the Book of Hebrews quoting an Old Testament passage that says so, and making it explicitly clear that that's who He meant. The Father calls Jesus God! He'd know! Hebrews 1:8-

9 quotes Psalm 45, saying: “*But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*” (So, here we have God talking to God!)

The Creator YHWH God

Another not-so subtlety: Those who present a ‘unitarian’ view of God often use the name: ‘*Creator YHWH God*’. A phrase or combination of names not found anywhere in the Bible, New Testament or Old. Bringing these names together, they then present that as proof that we’re talking about **only** the Father, and then draw a conclusion appropriate to that understanding. Truth is, we can find YHWH as applying to either Being. YHWH means LORD, which when we slide into the New Testament, Lord is the name predominantly specific to the Son.

Merging the name ‘*Creator*’, as some are inclined to do, doesn’t add clarity or affirmation that we’re talking about the Father only! In fact, it confuses the issue, as the Being who became the Son was the one **by whom** God the Father made all that is.¹ It was at least a collaborative effort: (“*Let US make man in our image and after OUR likeness.*” (Gen. 1:26)) To suggest that the Father ALONE created all things, not involving the Son, is blatantly unbiblical. But, of course, that requires that we understand that the Being who later became the Son was ‘*with God and was God*’, alive and from the beginning fully cognitive. Not all ascribe to that!

It’s in this ‘*unitarian*’ (strict monotheistic) position, found even today, that we can see some of the ‘problem’ that was in the theological environment of the early New Testament Church era. We need to realize that the issues of the first century were not all the same ones we have today. (Since Nicea, we’ve been occupied with the unresolved questions regarding the Nature of God generated by the non-acceptance of God actually being in the flesh!) Deferring to this provocative consideration, the early writers chose carefully how to represent the Truth as it was becoming understood, after the Son had come and revealed the Father. Instead of

upending prevailing opinion among their (formerly Jewish) converts, they chose to introduce the Truth in an undeniable but revealing way. Thus the doctrine referred to as “the Father and the Son”, consistently calling the Father, *God* and the Son, *Lord*, the other component of the familiar OT two-name: *LORD God*. (Posing it another way, was there no perceptual difference before and after the Son revealed the Father? Obviously there was!)

We need also to realize the religious climate of the day. They had other looming ‘biggies’ also: ceremonial Law-keeping, circumcision, baptism of Gentiles, the Faith as opposed to Works factor, etc. They didn’t need to stoke the ‘Two Being’ controversy, which obviously remained extremely volatile, even deadly, as evidenced by Jesus’ condemnation and at Stephen’s stoning. They packaged and presented the new revelation as benignly as they could. That explains the repetitive reference to the doctrine of “the Father and the Son”, as we’ll see below. Jesus Himself made specific reference to it! (John 17:3), as had His mother decades earlier! (Luke 1:46-47) There was a subtle change to the perceptual dynamic. As some today would put it, ‘**a whole new paradigm!**’

Most converts of the first generation were predominantly of Jewish persuasion, with that indelible component in their thinking: that God was one single Being only. The Apostles and early Church had to package the new idea in a way that would be both accurate yet acceptable without provoking a volatile reaction. They were adding a new player. They referred to that new player (new to their conceptualization) as God! Who would reject that? But the ‘second’ Being, (who in fact was the Being they’d known of throughout their history) was presented as “the Son of God”, which had Old Testament basis already.² That was provocative enough for the time. But, every once in a while the full picture peeked thru, that the Son was also God! As faith grew, the ‘objectionableness’ of that faded within the Church, though it didn’t in the Jewish community.

The Messiah was recognized increasingly, but He was also called ‘Lord’! They were left with two Beings to worship. They were taught to pray to

¹ John 1:3, Hebrews 1:2

² Psalm 45:6-7, Hebrews 1:8-9, Isaiah 9:6

the Father in the name of the Son! They were assured that the Son would return to Earth in like manner as they had seen Him go, but that the Father would remain in heaven **until after** the Millennium, until the Lake of Fire at the end had done its work. (Even consuming the institution of Death itself! (Rev. 20:14)) Then He'd come and assume direct control over all things. (1st Corinthians 15:28).

The early Church saw the wisdom of **not** hammering the subject specifically. Rather, they opted to word it in a way that was non-provocative, yet revealing.

Yet Another Paradigm

Even as late as 325 AD at Nicea, the increasingly apostate theologians didn't have the explicit and specific scriptural proof they desired, to 'solidify' their doctrinal opinions. They wobbled between two opinions, each flawed in different ways. That of Dr. Arias prevailed at first, but by the second Council, a long generation later, that of Athanasius ultimately prevailed, bequeathing what developed into 'Trinitarianism'.

Trinitarians had by then devised a way to present God's Nature where they could subtly reject the idea that God had **come into** the flesh, by posing that God was a single Being who manifests Himself in any of three spirit 'hypostases'. (A physical Being **can not** be a 'hypostasis' of a Spirit Being! So, that **must** be false!) With that idea and with the Hellenistic (Gnostic) immortal soul, the apostasy was by then fully on its way!

The early Church had to present a conceptual shift, and chose to do so by taking one of the names in the two-name moniker common in the Scriptures, (they only had the Old Testament prior to the mid 60's AD) and applying it to one Being while using the other in near exclusive application to the other Being. Knowing the sentiments of the day, this has all the appearances of pure genius. Without calling point blank attention to the two-person concept, the hearers could put two and two together, gradually coming to get the point on their own. Would that we today were that sharp!

God is given top billing, but the Lord a near-equal. As the early converts began to realize who Jesus was in His prior relationship to the nation, the

'LORD God' of the OT, (one of a twosome actually) they were chinked into a position where they couldn't reject either Being! God ain't stupid! The remaining 'problem' is entirely our doing!

Think about Isaiah 9:6. The Son is "*the Everlasting Father, the Mighty God*" of the physical nation. How could they reject Him as God, realizing this?

God is OUR Father

The Apostle Paul begins nearly all of his epistles by telling us that God is our Father, and by drawing a distinction between God, and the Son of man (the Son of God): Jesus. That frequent reminder was not without specific purpose!

There are a couple of things we should discern from that! It was important to make it clear that Jesus was, for the purpose of effecting remission of our sins, **able** to die. That was **just** as important as the earlier 'monotheistic' consideration. After all, without His substitutionary death, all of this is irrelevant so far as our obtaining remission of sin is concerned. The idea of God having 'come into the flesh', John identified as being a most essential doctrine. (1st John 2:22)

The person who denies that Jesus is the Christ is a liar. But he that denies "the Father and the Son" is an **antichrist**. Why do we see this **quantum leap in seriousness? Do we understand his point?** There is a doctrine. It's called "*the Father and the Son*", for lack of a better term. That's what Paul and John (even Jesus in John 17:3) used to identify what they were trying to get across. The term '*bi-theism*' (or for that matter '*mono-theism*') hadn't yet been created. The only good way he could word it at that early date was to refer to it as the doctrinal understanding of "*the Father and the Son*".

Paul made the same emphasis, in so many places, referring to "the Father **and** the Son". He called attention to this conceptual discipline, of there being two Beings, referring to it as essential to our salvation, one of whom was in the flesh for a necessary purpose. That is most likely why you see Paul using the term so often and in so many different ways. He also believed and taught "the Father and the Son" idea. That perceptual base that we later came to call 'monotheism' is 'qualified and defined' by this teaching. That we must

believe IN “the Father and the Son”. In BOTH, a **duality**, not just one alone! The two are **not** one-and-the-same Being as Trinitarianism declares!

There is another perceptual development in “the Father and Son” doctrine that we should take note of. We’ve believed as we do for so long, the obvious point doesn’t stand out today as emphatically as it did then. Our perceptions aren’t changing, but theirs were! We understand the Father to be a separate Being of the Son. But prior to Jesus physical incarnation, the God of the Old Testament was thought of as being their ‘father’. (Isaiah 9:6) This was true in a sense, but He wasn’t the Being that the Son would ultimately reveal as His or **our** Father. The existence of this other Being, the TRUE Father, was generally unknown until He was revealed by the Son’s ministry. That earlier Deity, known as God in the Old Testament, was the same One who later became born of flesh. This is the second thing we are compelled to discern!

The Apostle John saw the significance of John the Baptist’s pre-announcement and repeated it in John 1:18. “*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*” This declaration was to be one of the main features in Christ’s ministry.

Revealing the Father

The TRUE Father was largely outside of the field of man’s perception UNTIL the Son came to reveal Him! No man at any time had ever seen or heard the Father. “...*Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.*”³ Had they seen or heard, there would be no need to make this statement, as **it would make Christ a liar!** They might have THOUGHT they had, but they hadn’t! The Being they and their ancestors had dealt with was the Being who for a time, **became flesh** and dwelt among men, even among ‘His own’! (John 1:11)

As perhaps a first step in presenting this subject is John the Baptist’s revelation that “*no man has seen God at any time.*” A rather disturbing comment to some and an intriguing one to inquiring disciples. It was further enhanced by Jesus’ comments, recorded in Matthew 11:27: “...*and no man knows*

the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” A full and correct awareness of the existence of and the separate purposes of the two Beings is not common knowledge. There is a component that requires ‘revelation’.

But even earlier, in fact a generation earlier, shortly into her first trimester, Mary acknowledged something interesting: Luke records her exclamation. (Keep in mind that Luke wasn’t an eye-witness to this. His decision to preserve what he recognized as important was written some 60 years **after** the fact.) Mary said: “*My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*” (Luke 1:46 - 47) She at this time was referring to the fetal life-form within her! Her Savior God (the Lord) was within her! Elizabeth also acknowledged her as the mother of her Lord, just three verses earlier! Notice: Mary refers to her unborn child as “the Lord my God”!

We ought to be asking ourselves, HOW did her soul (life) magnify the Lord? Was it just a ‘praise issue’ or was something greater taking place here? Was what was happening another phase of God’s Master Plan of bringing His ‘firstborn’ into the world, a physical manifestation of God Life? At the least, Mary refers to her unborn son, Jesus, as God!

But the focal issue in all of this is the clear distinction between two Beings: One being the Father and the other being the Son. We see here an early introduction of the conceptualization of ‘the Father and the Son’, likely around the beginning of 5 B.C.

Jesus also clearly encapsulated the conceptualization in His prayer just after His last Passover on Earth. (In John 17:1-3.) “*These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*”⁴

Paul also saw need to define their conceptualization this way: “*But to us there is but one God, the*

³ John 5:37 & 6:46 (John 1:18)

⁴ Emphasis added, obviously.

Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (1st Cor. 8:6) (We touched on this one earlier.) If we were to punctuate this only slightly differently, putting a colon after the word God, we could see this as saying the one true God is composed of “the Father and the Son”. Our translators weren’t so perceptive or so bold. BUT, it IS what most Christians believe, nevertheless!! (Note: The original Greek manuscripts did not contain the punctuation we see in its translation.)

New Testament Epistles are hereafter infused with multiple repetitions of the phrase ‘*the Father and the Son*’. If there were any other phrases so often repeated, we’d have emphasized them as major doctrines long ago. Why does this one fall so far off the radar screen? So many times we see the two distinct Persons mentioned in the same breath! Notice just some of them:

Rom.15:6 *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even **the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

2Cor.11:31 ***The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, ...***

Rom.16:27 *To **God** only wise, be glory **through Jesus Christ** for ever. Amen.*

1st Cor.1:3 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from **God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.***

2nd Cor.1:2 *Grace be to you and peace from **God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Gal.1:1 *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by **Jesus Christ, and God the Father**, who raised him from the dead;)*

Eph.1:2-3 *Grace be to you, and peace, from **God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.** 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.1:17 *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.3:14 *For this cause I bow my knees unto **the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,***

Eph.5:20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto **God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;***

(The way this one is worded, Paul must be alleging that Christ is God as well as the Father!)

Eph.6:23 *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from **God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Php.1:2 *Grace be unto you, and peace, from **God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.***

Php.2:11 *And that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

Php.4:19-20 *But **my God** shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by **Christ Jesus.** 20: Now unto **God and our Father** be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (What is Paul indicating by this word structure? Why would he say ‘God and our Father’? Is he making the case that the Father IS God, (was that ever a question?) or is he posing a God in apposition to the other Being, the Father? In other words, is he placing the name ‘God’ where he was indicating the Son? Ponder this one!)*

Col. 1:2-3 *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from **God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.** 3: We give thanks to **God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, praying always for you, (Here again, contrasting Paul’s word choice in verse 2 as opposed to that in verse 3, verse 2 has ‘the Father and Christ’, but 3 has ‘God and the Father of Christ’. In the re-wording in 3, he seems to be substituting the name ‘God’ where he’s referring to the Son! Is he stressing a subtle point?)*

1st Thes.1:1 *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in **God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ:** Grace be unto you, and peace, from **God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.***

1st Thes.1-9-10 *For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the **living and true God;** 10: And to wait for **his Son from heaven**, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. (Why would there be a need to **WAIT** for the Son from heaven in order to worship the True God? Weren’t they doing that already, before?)*

1st Thes.3:11 *Now **God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,** direct our way unto you.*

1st Thes.3:13 *To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before **God, even our Father,** at the coming of **our Lord Jesus Christ** with all his saints.*

2nd Thes.1:12 *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of **our God and the Lord Jesus Christ**.*

1st Tim.1:2 *Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from **God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord**.*

1st Tim.2:5 *For there is **one God, and one mediator** between God and men, the man **Christ Jesus**;*

2nd Tim.1:2 *To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from **God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord**.*

Titus 1:4 *To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from **God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ** our Saviour.*

Philemon 1:3 *Grace to you, and peace, from **God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**.*

Heb.1:1-3 ***God**...Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his **Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3: Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,⁵ and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Notice: Verse 3 exhibits two ways these two Beings are identical, then two ways they are distinct, then shows one sitting at the right hand of the other!)*

Again and Again and Again

Why did the Apostle Paul see need to present the idea of ‘*the Father and the Son*’ so frequently and so emphatically? This is the question **we** need to answer. It wasn’t just to exhibit stentorian ‘Biblical Prose’. It was an essential doctrinal component in developing Christianity. Most of the Church during Paul’s ministry were former Jews. Even the Gentiles, called by God, many at least, were former Jewish proselytes. They had some background in Judaic beliefs. It was essential that he (and the other Apostles) bring Jesus into the picture in His appropriate role and regard. Jewish concepts were inadequate for this of and by themselves. This is demonstrated in their official and continual

⁵ This word ‘person’ is the Greek: ‘*hypostasis*’, a word meaning ‘substantiator’, thus suggesting a Being working to uphold the work of another. See my article on “*The Hypostasis Hoax*” for more on this! Notice, the very next phrase defines the term: ‘*hypostasis*’: “upholding all things”!

rejection of Him as their Messiah, AND their determination to kill Him for claiming even the faintest degree of “equality”! “*Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself **equal** with God.*” Have **we** noticed that the use of the term “*my Father*” establishes EQUALITY? They did!

Honor Matters

Those who worship God the Father only, relegating Jesus to anything less than full equality as God, no matter how sincerely, remain faced with a powerful consideration having serious implications. Part of our worship of God must include an equal regard for the Son. (John 5:22-25) *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23: That **all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honours not the Son honours not the Father** which hath sent him. 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on **him that sent me**, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25: Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the **Son of God**: and they that hear shall live. Proper regard for God’s Son, the Being who **was both seen and heard**, who interfaced with His Creation since Adam, is essential to our salvation and resurrection. The Being most often presented in the Old Testament was Jesus. (Luke 24:37) We wouldn’t even know of the Father except that the Son had revealed Him to us! (John 1:18, 5:39 & 46, John 8:42, Matt. 11:27, Luke 10:22, etc.) **Ω***

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