



*1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Gal 4:1-7)*

Flesh and blood fathers are important. In fact, next to a mother, they are the most important of all human kin. But we do have a Father who combines both qualities of father and mother into One Personage – God the Father. He gave birth to us through His creative genius beginning at Eden and continuing into the present time. He is the Author of all mortal life. But He is also Author of all who are born of the Spirit. This excludes the greater number of all human beings born upon the face of the earth. It is only in a limited sense that He is Father to all mankind, for His Fatherhood is conditional. He is Father to all in the sense of being their Maker, but He is Father to the elect only in the eternal sense of being the Father with whom we may spend that eternity. We strongly consider the doctrine of the Universalist to be grave error that all that is born of woman is saved.

Everyone who has had any close relationship with a father will admit they have been much influenced by his teaching and character in the way they express themselves, the things they believe by faith, and the daily mannerisms they exhibit. I remember the daily conversations I enjoyed with my father during which he taught me the importance of reading books, his exploits during the Second World War, and, most importantly, how to read and understand the Holy Bible. I believe my father shaped my faith and beliefs more than any other single influence in my life. My father could explain biblical doctrine better than any clergyman I have known. He only experienced some difficulty in reconciling controversial church practices with biblical warrant for the same. He owned the strong quality of believing what he believed without being shaken by any none-

biblical sources such as the 'educated' opinions of men. He was a Rock of his faith, and he had made his mind up early not to hear any voices that contradicted his faith in biblical truth. For the longest time, I believed that my father was the most intelligent man alive. He was well-read, and held firmly to his beliefs. Even so, he still comes close to that image today though he passed from this world more than ten years ago.

But we all can have a Father whose wit, wisdom, and knowledge surpass all others – in fact; He is the epitome of wisdom. All truth and knowledge emanates from that great Mind which is the Mind of God. The stars in their orbits, the galactic universes, the sun, moon, and earth were all flung into their places by His knowing finger. He spoke, and it was done!

We who have heard the call of Christ and responded are privileged to have a special relationship with the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is Savior, Redeemer, King, Counselor, and even Father to us; but Christ is also our closest kin – a brother who sticks closer than any earthly brother. Having the privilege to call the same Father of our Lord our own Father is the most miraculous grace we can enjoy. The privilege was not granted to the people of God until Christ came and made those who have come by grace and faith to the Throne of Mercy His brothers and sisters. That sacrificial blood relationship we enjoy in Christ far surpasses any mortal blood relationship we have with close family and kin. *46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. 47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. 48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, **Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?** 49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, **Behold my mother and my brethren!** 50 **For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.** (Matt 12:46-50)*

As one can discern from the quoted text, Mary and the brethren of Jesus were not yet come to a full faith and knowledge of who He was until after the Resurrection. They did not attend to His preaching and teaching. But, instead, here they stand outside His preaching venue and send word to see Him. Jesus gestures those who hear and believe are more truly His next of kin than even His mother or His brethren. Can you digest the significance that lends to every follower of our Lord Jesus Christ? Our Lord was wont to call His Father, ABBA, Father! *36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.* (Mark 14:36)

This Syriac term used for Father, ABBA, is a wondrously curious term. In many eastern languages, such as Korean, the identical term, ABBA, is used for Father. But Jesus conjoins the terms Father and ABBA. You may already know that Jesus never made any utterances from absolute chance – every term and Word has deep spiritual significance. Jesus was not simply an “only son of the Father” as the modern apostate Bible versions aver, but He was separate and apart from those sons and daughters who come to God by way of adoption – which we are. He is the “Only Begotten Son” of His Father. That means he alone, among all other sons and daughters, is of the same issue and substance with the Father. So why did Christ use the double term - ABBA, Father?

I will tell you what seems a reasonable explanation from my own point of view and, of course, points of view are like points of noses – everyone has one. Father, Abba, daddy, etc., all are words that are first used by a child that has spiritual connotations. Our human fathers (and mothers) stand as examples of that greater Father we have in Heaven. But ABBA bears a broader significance and characteristic of God as Father. Pronounced backwards, it is still ABBA! The doubling of meaning for Father, i.e. Father, Abba, implies the duality of Fatherhood of God to both the Jew and the Greek (commonly used in the stead of Gentile in Scripture). Our Lord was revealing the reality that His Father was our Father, too, whether we were Jew, Greek, Gentile, or Polar Eskimo. To be sure, it was always the case from the Promise made to Father Abraham – all of faith are children of

the Promise. But Jesus codified the fact in His life, Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension. God has the same (or actually far greater) love for His adopted children of faith as the worldly father has for his own physical offspring. Please observe some salient points in how God is a Father to those of Faith:

- 1 A father gives being to his children. Abraham begat, through the legitimate wife, Sarah, a son (Isaac) of promise. Isaac gave being to Jacob (recipient of the blessing), and Jacob gave being to the twelve tribes of Israel thus providing for a posterity of the centuries. But God also has given life and being to His spiritual children – born not only of water, but of the Spirit and the Blood.
- 2 A human father provides sustenance of milk and meat for his children. So has God provided abundantly for our needs. *2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. (Isaiah 1:2) He formed us in darkness while we were yet in our mother's womb. 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. (1 Peter 2:2-3)*
- 3 Earthly fathers clothe their children. Jacob made a coat of many colors for his favored son, Joseph. God also clothes His children. The first man and woman – Adam and Eve – were clothed with the hide of an innocent animal of the Garden for their sin. Our Lord Jesus Christ has purchased a White Robe of Righteousness to those of His Elect.
- 4 I find that I must summarize this last parallel of God to fathers to save space. A father loves his children above every other creature. When they are sick, he pities them. He yearns for their healing. So does our Father God yearn for our healing of the deadly disease of sin for which He has provided a cure in His Son, Jesus.
- 5 A loving father protects and defends his children. So does God hide us under the feathers of His wings.

The mercies and sympathies of the father are most directed toward the frail and weak among his children. So does God grant special relief to those who have suffered most in the testimony of the Gospel. He lifts the unbecoming yoke of the poor and chastens the proud. He places the little child in the central place and admonishes us to become as that child – trusting, innocent, obedient, and loving. And a father loves those children best who bear most His image. God is the same kind of Father. There are far too many similarities between worldly fathers and our Father in Heaven to be included in this devotion. Perhaps you will find a quiet, solitary place to consider those many additional ways in prayer. Of course, that raises another way in which God is like our earthly father – He hears us when we cry!