

Series: Theological Treatises

The Father

An in-depth study of the First Person of the Trinity and his participation in the plan of salvation.



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1. General Introduction

The search for God’s knowledge and his purpose for man constitutes the most exciting of all the adventures that the human mind can propose. The challenge of finding in the Holy Book the golden thread of the plan of salvation will reward the scholar, who will be able to understand the majesty of the effort of the One who “**who did not spare His own Son**” (**Romans 8: 32**).

The set of Bible tracts, of which you have in your hands one of the studies, has been prepared to provide the lay member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the knowledge required to teach others about how to grow “**in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (**2 Peter 3: 18**) as well as for “**be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you**” (**1 Peter 3: 15**).

The author is a regular member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1977, a church elder since 1979, a husband, father, and grandfather, with the joy of having his entire family in “**the faith once delivered to the saints**” (**Jude 1: 3**) and a full subscriber to the 28 official doctrines of the church.



I reiterate that these tracts have been prepared for the church member, so he must graduate the dose of knowledge that he must transmit to those who are interested in knowing Jesus, whom the prophet calls the “**Desire of all nations**” (**Haggai 2: 7**).

That's why, at the same time, we also wanted to include supplementary material to the Bible study that we hope will allow you to expand your current knowledge, as well as to be prepared to deepen on “**things the angels desire to look into**” (**1 Peter 1: 12**). Your ability to introduce these subthemes in harmony with the central concepts is key to the transfer of knowledge that you and I intend to pursue.

Since the knowledge of our God and His purposes will, by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit, always be in full swing, you will be able to find regular updates of each treatise (see the date yy.mm.dd that accompanies the name of the file). These updates, of course, will also correct some of the human flaws that may have gone unnoticed by the author. On the other hand, your well-meaning intention to help us improve these issues will always be welcome. These treatises were originally written in Spanish, my mother language, but translated to English by the author to reach more people, as the latter is considered

world-wide as the commercial and technical language.

2. Structure of the Theological Treatise

At the beginning of each treatise, we will present the general structure of the set of these using a numbered block diagram, called the General Treatise Map. This chart (shown on one of the following pages) will allow you to see where the tract you have in your hands fits concerning the other topics. To make it easier to locate, in addition to the numbering, it will be marked in a different color than the others. Collect the topics, update them, and arrange them in this sequence if you find it useful to your knowledge development.

The numbers in each block simultaneously establish the order of creation of these treatises and the logical dependence between them as well. The blocks from number 70 onwards represent, in turn, a set of special treatises. I have grouped them into 6 major themes:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|
| a. | Comparative Religions | Series 70.nn |
| b. | Chronologies | Series 75.nn |
| c. | Gospel Harmonies | Series 80.nn |
| d. | Genealogies | Series 85.nn |
| e. | Bible biographies | Series 90.nn |

The reading of these topics will give you the frame of reference to understand the most thematic treatises. These other topics have their own structure that will be related to the one mentioned here.

After the diagram of the whole, you will find a block diagram of the study itself, called the Treatise Map, where you will be able to notice the following:

- Each block of the diagram indicates the reference verse(s) at the bottom and a short phrase that corresponds to the logic of its inclusion in the topic.
- You will notice that there are some blocks, with different colored verses, that refer to parables that help to understand the central theme.



- c. Other blocks, which do not contain verses, expose issues that you might touch on when presenting the study; issues that have historical, geographical, scientific, technical, and other backgrounds. You will find in this study some information that will help you expose these concepts.
- d. These two types of blocks are not necessarily included in all studies.
- e. The arrows indicate the logical sequence in which the author thinks these topics should be presented. The sequence is set from left to right and from top to bottom. However, your initiative and the knowledge about your listeners' needs may point you in a different direction. Let yourself be guided in prayer by the One who cannot err.

At the end of this graphic phase, you will find the study in detail, which will follow, as far as possible, the structure of the block diagram. Some complementary materials to the study will be included at the end. I recommend that you read them in advance to find the exact moment to include them in your presentation.

To the extent possible, I have presented the source of some of these topics so that you can extend your understanding by reviewing them. I do not pretend to know everything these sources deal with, so I encourage you to go deeper and tell me how to improve this content. I have included some images found on the Internet to make your reading more enjoyable, I hope you like them.

The written phase of the study will contain:

- a. Headings for the main subtopics.
- b. Bible quotes (in red).
- c. Quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy (in green).
- d. Quotations from books or articles by various authors, aimed at expanding your knowledge on the subject (in blue).
- e. Comments on the mentioned quotations; in some cases, these will be presented before the quotation, as an anticipation of the statement, while in others they will be placed after it as a confirmation of the concept being held (in black).
- f. Maps, chronograms, genealogies, and other diagrams where appropriate to the subject matter.
- g. Complementary material grouped in a section that helps to understand some of the aspects that could arise when dealing with the central theme with other people. Not all topics necessarily contain this material.

Unless otherwise indicated, the quotes from the Holy Bible are from the King James Modern Version, my favorite in English. Sometime I will include other versions to compare or expand the understanding of a text.

When you develop a Bible study on this subject with non-church people, I recommend that you use the section corresponding to the study (with the verses included in the block diagram) without presenting the statements of the Spirit of Prophecy. Discuss the accompanying materials as they come up in the exposition, as well as in the question and answer phase.

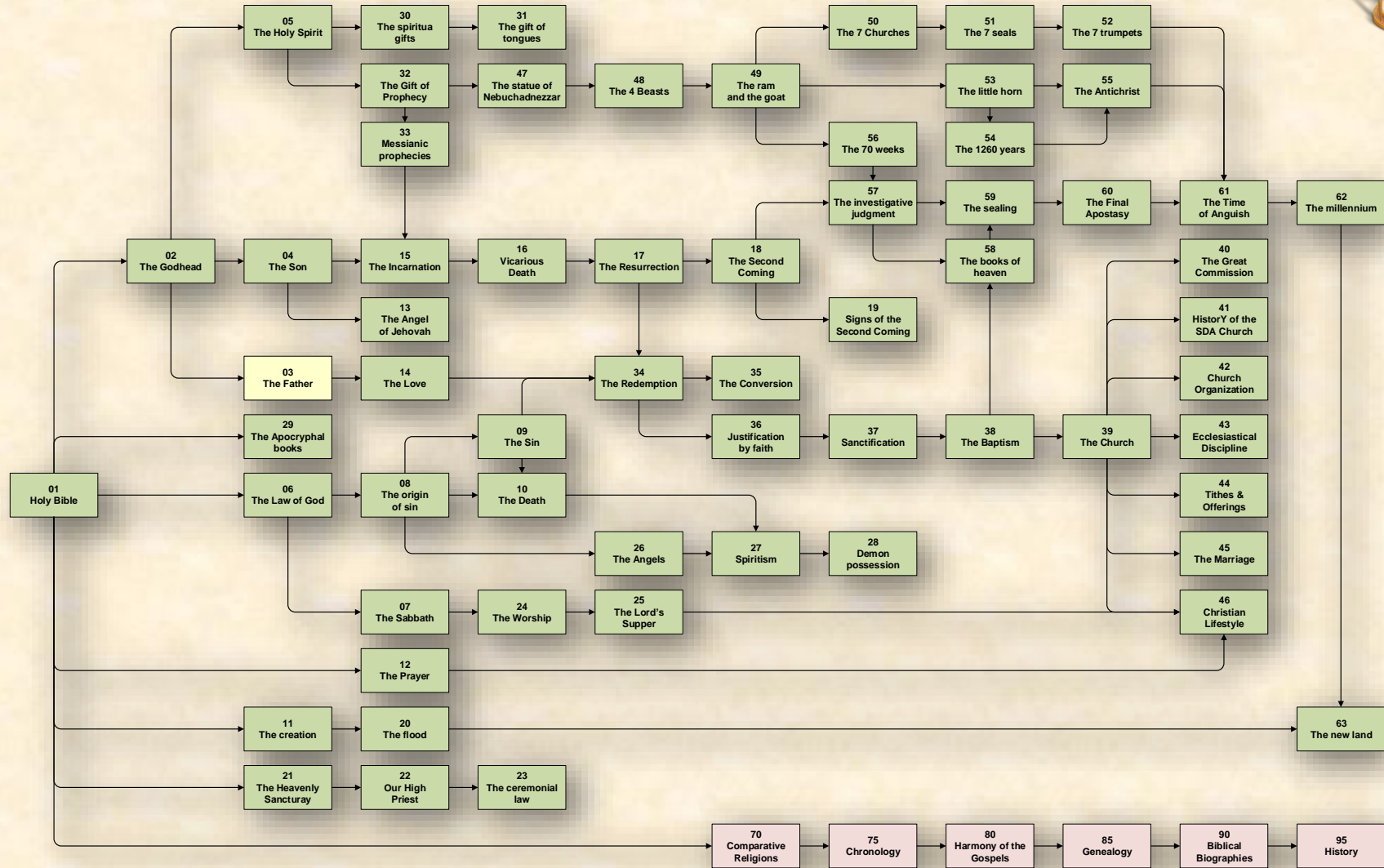
I have also prepared a file that includes all the block diagrams from the tracts so that they will be helpful to your memory when presenting the topic. I have also created a file with a copy of all the contents of the treatises so that you can review them without opening each of the documents, in case you are looking for a specific subtopic.

Allow me, as I have done so far, to address you personally during the study. I believe that this is how our Savior spoke to those He loved and wanted to save. Surely you will do the same with those who listen to you for this purpose.

This is a free material that has surely come to you from someone who appreciates you and wants you to know even more about Jesus and His wonderful plan of salvation. Spread the word in the same way, as you " **have received freely, freely give** " (**Matthew 10: 8**).

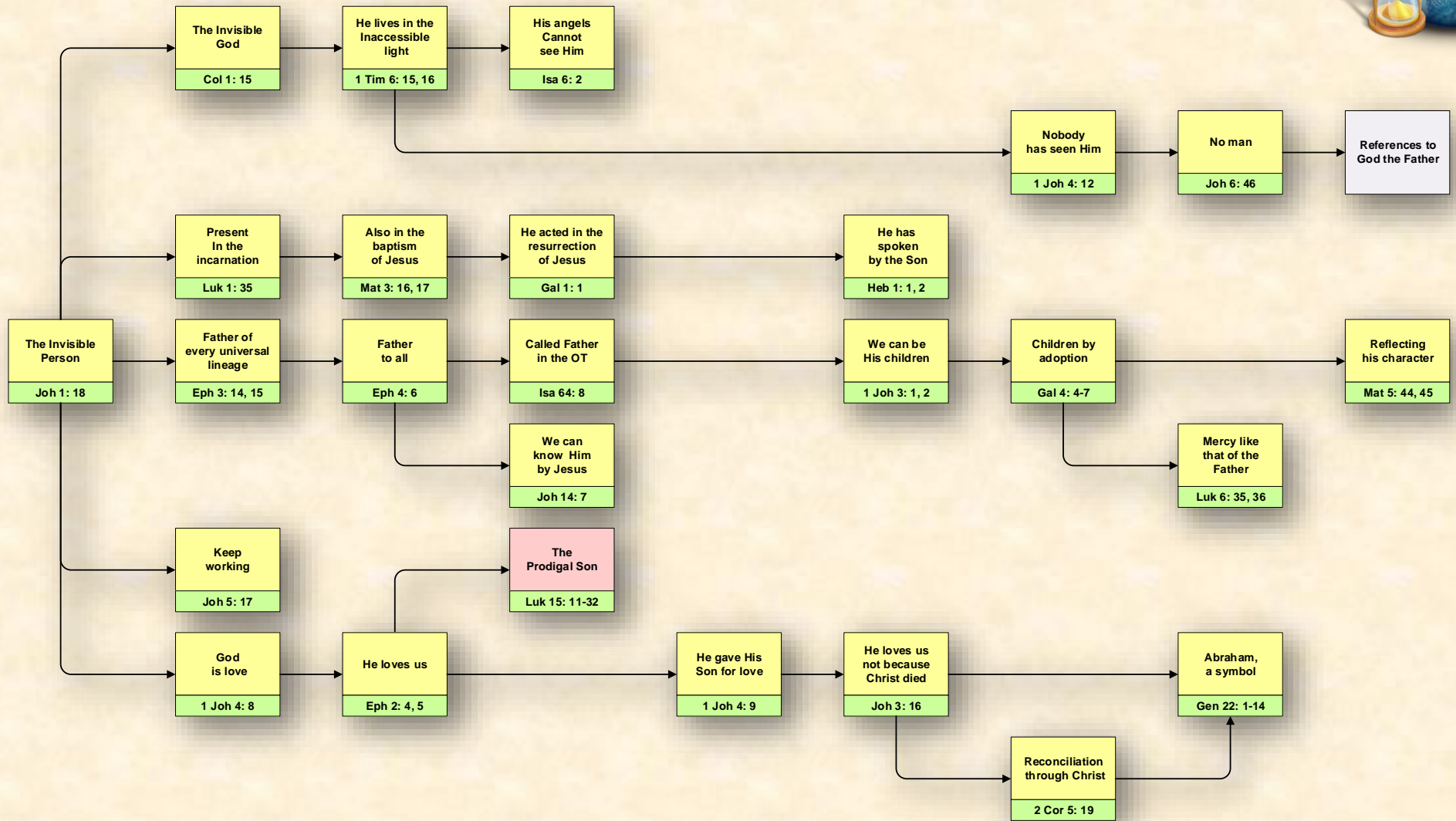


3. General Treatise Map





4. Treatise Map





5. Purpose of the Treatise

The purpose of the treatise is as follows:

- a. To know what God the Father has revealed about Himself.
- b. To establish the participation of the First Person of the Godhead in the plan of salvation.

6. Development of the theme

6.1. Introduction

Contrary to what the casual reader might think, God the Father is the Person of Divinity that the revelation deals with the least. We have evidently more information about the characteristics of the Son and even of the Holy Spirit as we shall see in due course. I am referring to the biblical evidence, which is actually the only one that is valuable for a Bible study in this important matter. Obviously, much has been written about the Father and his place in the Trinity, but very rarely have these writings been based on what the Word of God holds. We have studied much of this in the treatise "The Godhead", as well as the characteristics common to the 3 Persons of the Godhead.

However, even though the amount of biblical information is relatively scarce (compared to the other Persons of the Godhead), what these few verses convey is a treasure that could be written about in countless treatises of varying depth.

One of the most outstanding aspects, which since almost the beginning of the Christian era has created controversy, is the relationship between the Father and the Son, as well as between them and the Holy Spirit. We will try in this treatise to determine what the Holy Bible says about God the Father and we will deal with the relationships with the other Persons of the Godhead in the following treatises.

6.2. The Invisible God

John claims by inspiration that no one has seen God, and to clarify his claim he maintains that he has revealed himself only through his Son, who evidently does know Him. This truth seems to me very important because it begins to portray the Father as the God who only reveals himself through the other Persons of the Godhead, but who remains far from the access of His creatures. For some reason which, I understand, has not been revealed to us. This revelation, however, is completed, as far as the characteristics of the Father are concerned, by what the Son has revealed of Him.



No one has seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

John 1: 18

When it says "**no one has seen God at any time**" it implies all created beings from eternity, therefore, all the theophanies (theos=God, faino=appearance, manifestation; manifestation or appearance of God) of the Old Testament evidently do not refer to God the Father.

We will see this at length in the treatise "The Angel of Jehovah", in another study, otherwise, it would deviate from the subject we are trying to expound in this document. Since the Father has not revealed himself, in some respects we can know him through the Son as well as through the Holy Spirit.

who is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation.

Colossians 1: 15

When speaking of God the Son, it is said that "**is the image of the Invisible God**", that is to say, this condition of inaccessibility to creatures is ratified. I would like you to notice that by qualifying it as "**Invisible**" we differentiate it from the typical condition that we observe in the divine manifestations in the Old Testament, nor from the appearance of God the Son, for example, in the Apocalypse.

However, when the prophet Daniel speaks of the judgment, he does see (in vision) the "Son of Man" approaching the "**Ancient of Days**" so we cannot dogmatize about this issue. According to the account of the



prophet's vision, this event occurs in heaven, in the presence of the holy angels. I think the Father is reserved for our condition as sinners, for we could not see Him and live. Let us leave the other part of the verse for when we speak of the divinity of Jesus, in the treatise on the Son, where we will explain the use of the firstborn concept.

For He in His own time will reveal who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in light which cannot be approached, whom no one of men have seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.

1 Timothy 6: 15, 16

The statement that the Father "no one of men have seen, nor can see" or that he "dwelling in light which cannot be approached" indicates that God the Father has hitherto been hidden and will surely be so in our present fallen condition. It remains to be seen whether we have any inkling of what will happen, in this respect, in the glorious future of an again sinless universe, of which we hope, you and I will participate.

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us.

1 John 4: 12

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God, He has seen the Father.

John 6: 46

Clearly, right? Well, one might ask if unfallen beings have access to see God the Father. Let the Bible answer with Isaiah's vision.

Above it stood the seraphs; each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Isaiah 6: 2

The angels, seraphim, have 6 wings and use 2 of them in the presence of God to cover their eyes. This tells me that even these heavenly beings do not dare look at God, in the perfection (sinlessness) of their heavenly worship. It is striking to note that when the servant of the Lord narrates the "Peace Council" in the heavens after the fall of man, she says that no one can see God the Father. She explains that when Jesus approached the Father, he was wrapped in the light around him and she lost sight of him. Let's see how she relates it and what details this gives us about the Invisible God.

Sorrow filled heaven as it was realized that man was lost and that the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and that there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I then saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, "He is in close converse with His Father." The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father we could see His person.

Ellen G. White, Early Writings, 126

Allow me to express my opinion on this. This quote makes it very clear to me that even in the heavenly environment, where only faithful angels dwell, God, the Father remains in a dazzling light that prevents us from seeing his figure. I believe this will be true for eternity. We will see the light that surrounds the Father, but only the one who is equal to Him can know Him and reveal Him... but come on, relax, we will see Him through His Son.

Please note that God the Son, in his divine condition, not in his condition as God incarnate (since the vision is about an event that occurred immediately after man's fall in Eden) is visible to the angels and to the one who receives the vision.

6.3. His participation in the Plan of Salvation

Like the Godhead in full, the Father actively participates in the plan of salvation. Not only in the design of this contingency plan for the potential entrance of sin into a perfect universe, designed from the beginning, but in every stage thereof. Remember that God the Son had been set apart from eternity to be the Lamb of God, to be given in place of the sinner, to free us not only from the bondage of evil but to give us the opportunity of eternal life.

During the Incarnation, one perceives the participation of the Most High (really the Trinity as a whole) whose power would cover Mary as announced by the angel. In this wonderful process in which the immeasurable God accepted to be born as a creature, in this fallen world, will never cease to amaze us.



And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit shall come on you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you. Therefore also that Holy One which will be born of you shall be called Son of God.

Luke 1: 35

During Jesus' baptism, the Trinity also manifested themselves to point out that they were together in this purpose. At this moment where Jesus presented himself as the Lamb of God, the Trinity said present and presented to the world that they were together in the great goal of recovering for man the possibility of returning to Eden. At a key moment in the life of Jesus Christ, when he was about to begin the 3 and a half years of preaching that would culminate in his death on the cross, the Father showed "pleased" in the "beloved Son".

And Jesus, when He had been baptized, went up immediately out of the water. And lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And lo, a voice from Heaven, saying, this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 3: 16, 17

Likewise, at the key moment of the resurrection, the moment that validates and seals our opportunity to live eternally with God, the Father calls his Son to life. I am moved to see the closeness with which the Trinity is present, and in this case, God the Father is present at the key moments of the great plan of salvation.

Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

Galatians 1: 1

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven". Clothed with the panoply [complete armor] of God, this angel left the heavenly courts. The bright beams of God's glory went before him, and illuminated his pathway.

"His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men". Now, priests and rulers, where is the power of your guard? Brave soldiers that have never been afraid of human power are now as captives taken without sword or spear. The face they look upon is not the face of a mortal warrior; it is the face of the mightiest of the Lord's host. This messenger is he who fills the position from which Satan fell. It is he who on the hills of Bethlehem proclaimed Christ's birth. The earth trembles at his approach, the hosts of darkness flee, and as he rolls away the stone, heaven seems to come down to the earth. The soldiers see him removing the stone as he would a pebble, and hear him cry, Son of God, come forth; Thy Father calls Thee.

Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, 779, 780

The story of the inspired pen is equally wonderful, I think I'm seeing it with the eyes of faith. How wonderful! Just as God sent His Son when the climax of history came, just as He was with Him when He began the prophesied period of His ministry on earth, He must be with Him when it was time to return Him to His side. Wonderful love of God!

God the Father has appointed since the fall of man, where the latter lost direct access to the Godhead, the prophets to communicate to man His will, as well as to expose the plan of salvation. His prophets also announced the arrival of the Son, through the incarnation, in our world. From there Jesus became God's principal means of transmitting His purposes and presenting the love and mercy of God the Father. It was a joy for Jesus to show us the Father through His character.

God, who at many times and in many 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, by whom also He made the worlds,

Hebrews 1: 1, 2

In viewing the holiness and glory of the God of the universe, we are terrified, for we know that His justice will not permit Him to clear the guilty. But we need not remain in terror; for Christ came to





the world to reveal the character of God, to make plain to us His paternal love toward His adopted children. We are not to estimate the character of God by the stupendous works of nature alone, but by the simple, lovely life of Jesus, who presented Jehovah as more merciful, more compassionate, more tender, than our earthly parents.

Jesus presented the Father as one to whom we could give our confidence and present our wants. When we are in terror of God, and overwhelmed with the thought of His glory and majesty, the Father points us to Christ as His representative. What you see revealed in Jesus, of tenderness, compassion, and love, is the reflection of the attributes of the Father. The cross of Calvary reveals to man the love of God. Christ represents the Sovereign of the universe as a God of love. By the mouth of the prophet He said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (**Jeremiah 31: 3**).

We have access to God through the merits of the name of Christ, and God invites us to bring to Him our trials and temptations; for He understands them all. He would not have us pour out our woes to human ears. Through the blood of Christ we may come to the throne of grace and find grace to help in time of need. We may come with assurance, saying, "My acceptance is in the Beloved". "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father". "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (**Ephesians 2: 18; Ephesians 3: 12**).

As an earthly parent encourages his child to come to him at all times, so the Lord encourages us to lay before Him our wants and perplexities, our gratitude and love. Every promise is sure. Jesus is our Surety and Mediator, and has placed at our command every resource, that we may have a perfect character.

Ellen G. White, In heavenly places, 18

The enemy of God has been very successful in attributing to God the Father, and in general to the Godhead, the attributes of his own character. Many people have perceived the God of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, as a god who is vengeful, violent, and bloodthirsty, and who seeks to find fault with the character of men in order to punish them. Unfortunately, some theologians have contributed to this negative and totally unjust image of God. This was already the case in Jesus' time, and today, as people are even more distant from the direct teaching of God through the Holy Scriptures, the situation is worse. Christ came to reveal the true character of God.

Christ came into the world to represent the Father before men; for Satan had presented Him to the world in a false light. Since God is a God of righteousness, of terrible majesty, who has the power to destroy man so as to preserve him, Satan led the people to regard him with fear, and to see him as a tyrant. Before the creation of man, Jesus had been with the Father from the eternal ages, and He came into the world to reveal the Father, declaring, "God is love". Jesus represented God as a loving Father who cares for the subjects of his kingdom. He declared that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father noticing it, and that in his sight human beings are of far more value than all sparrows; that the very hairs on their heads are numbered.



In both the Old Testament and the New, the Lord is represented not only as a righteous God but also as a Father of infinite love. The psalmist declares: "It is the Lord who does justice and righteousness to all who suffer violence. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love He has not dealt with us according to our iniquities, nor paid us according to our sins. For as the height of the heavens above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us... But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him, and his righteousness upon the children of children". **Psalms 103: 6, 8, 10-12, 17...**

Satan disguised the Father's character with his own attributes, but Christ represented it with His true character of benevolence and love. The way Christ represented Him to the world was as if a new gift were being granted to man...

The Son of God declared in unmistakable terms that the world was destitute of the knowledge



of God; but this knowledge was of the highest value, and constituted his own particular gift, the priceless treasure which he brought into this world. In exercising his sovereign prerogative he imparted to his disciples the knowledge of the divine character, that they might communicate it to the world.

Ellen G. White, Exaltation to Jesus, 30 (translated by the author)

6.4. His relation with us

God the Father is the Father (worth the redundancy) of every human and heavenly family. God, who is the origin of life, is indisputably the one on whom the angels, the unfallen beings, and of course us, the sin-defeated race, depend. Though we do not deserve it, because of our evident sinful tendencies and our character (I refer in general to the human race, which I include) increasingly distant from that of the One who created us, God desires to call us children.

For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named,

Ephesians 3: 14, 15

I would like to clarify a point that seems to me to be key. While all human beings are by creation part of God's family, not all of us are his children. Becoming one goes through a process of personal decision that we will study sometime in more depth when we discuss Baptism, where we will see that we really need to be adopted, although I will deal with this briefly a few lines later. God does want to be our heavenly Father.

one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all.

Ephesians 4: 6

Some assume, incorrectly, that the term Father was not attributed to God but in the New Testament, which is not accurate. I will cite one of the passages where the prophet Isaiah reminds (you will understand that this is one way of putting it) God of his sonship with his people Israel, even though he acknowledges that we are clay in the hands of our Maker.

But now, O Jehovah, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You are our Former; and we all are the work of Your hand.

Isaiah 64: 8

The verse I quote below could be confusing, concerning what we mentioned earlier, if we did not see that it appears in the context of the description of the Church that the Lord has called to be the bearer of the message of salvation. Read the previous verses to understand the context of the statement. Notice that John says that the "world does not know us" because it does not know the Father. We can know Him as a son knows his father (in our world today this is not always true, unfortunately). For now, the likeness of God is not fully visible, but when Jesus manifests himself in glory and we are transformed "we shall be like him".

Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God. Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when He shall be revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3: 1, 2

An anecdote. A few years ago when my oldest daughter was still in high school (today she has made us grandparents of two beautiful girls), her mother took her in the afternoons, after school, to study English at a university. At this university, I had taught some postgraduate courses. My daughter told me one day that she had been outside the classroom chatting with her friends, and a lady, whom she did not know, had approached her and said: "You are Federico's daughter, aren't you?" She was very surprised and said yes. To this day I don't know who was the person who discussed this with my daughter... but evidently she saw the resemblance. I want you to notice that only those who know the father can tell if his son (or daughter in this case) resembles him or not. This is what this passage points to. Don't worry if you still don't reflect the Father in his fullness, keep struggling to reach him with the help of the Holy Spirit. Do not worry if others do not see the resemblance to your Father, most likely they do not know him...

The Creator of the universe addresses you as an affectionate Father... Your heavenly Father proposes to make you a member of the royal family, that through His exceeding great and precious promises you may be a partaker of the divine nature... The more you partake of the character of the pure, sinless angels, and of Christ your Redeemer, the more vividly will you bear the impress of the divine, and the more faint will be the resemblance to the world.

Ellen G. White, Son and Daughters of God, 14

This point becomes clearer when Paul talks about adoption. Clearly, the one who needs to be adopted is not a son. Therefore, before we know the Lord and formally accept Him as our Father we are not children. We are the slaves of sin who need to be rescued and adopted to enjoy the inheritance destined to



the saints. Hallelujah! Thank you, Lord, for your love and mercy. Remember also that Jesus told those who were persecuting Him to kill Him that they were children of the devil and not of Abraham as they argued.

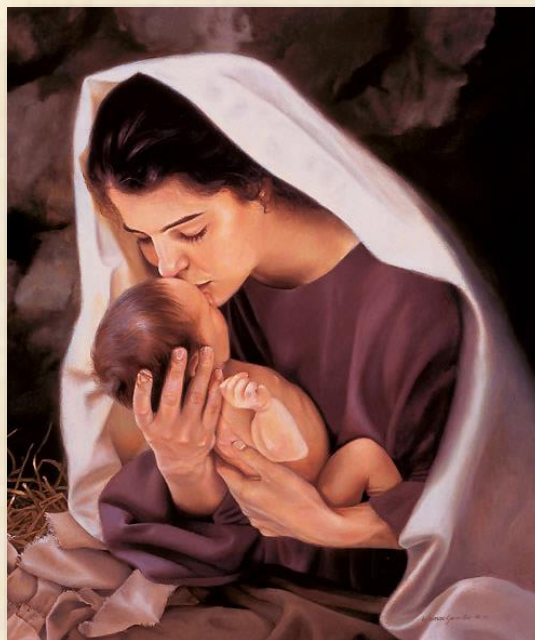
But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, coming into being out of a woman, having come under Law, that He might redeem those under Law, so that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, also an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 4: 4-7

God has provided the proper means to recover his fatherhood lost by the fall of man, when the latter submitted to the one who overcame him. This process of adoption, however, is not instantaneous as far as the nature of the adoptees is concerned.

To know the Father, to understand through Jesus His virtues and love, must gradually model in our lives the character of the Father, through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

To understand that we must develop new characters, in the likeness of the One who has called us into this new relationship do requires an initial assent or commitment, but it is the work of a lifetime.



But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father in Heaven. For He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Matthew 5: 44, 45

The Father's character will be progressively reflected in us and we will be able to be "children of the Most High".

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return. And your reward shall be great, and you shall be the sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Therefore be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6: 35, 36

In conclusion, we can know this Father, who is hidden from our mortal eyes, because his Son has revealed him to us. The Son's revelation is also perfect; he has shown the Father in all the fullness of his love, mercy, justice, and every one of the many virtues of the character of the King of the Universe. He has not presented Him to us by way of a declaration, though I have done so, but most of all by His perfect life, by His love of all trials, and by His spirit of sacrifice. Praise God!

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. And from now on you know Him and have seen Him.

John 14: 7

6.5. Love in Essence

Some theologians maintain that God after creating the world, if he ever did (according to them, I clarify), has not been more interested in his creatures whom he has left to their fate. A theological current called deism concludes that God exists, that he set in motion some mechanism, that he has brought the universe into existence (this range goes from those who consider themselves evolutionists to those who approach creationism) but then he has not been interested in man, nor his current suffering, nor his future. Belief in such a deity undoubtedly leads to the belief that such a god is not worthy of being worshipped or even studied for a relationship.

Nothing could be further from the reality shown to us by the Holy Scriptures, that of a loving God who continues to work on our behalf, who is a personal Creator, who did not set in motion the wheel of nature, but formed the father of our race with his own hands. Not only did He care to provide man with the best place



to live, He surrounded him with beauty and wonders that now our eyes desire to behold again, but when man fell into sin He already had a plan prepared for rescue and it was He who went in search of what was lost. This plan is not complete... yet God continues to work out your salvation and mine.

But Jesus answered them, My Father works until now, and I work.

John 5: 17

It's not like God stopped. God is creator and sustainer and maintains the life of his creatures throughout the endless universe. I like the way Jesus points this out, as a work of God to sustain and care for his creatures as a good father or mother would do in our world to give their little ones what they need. Actually, I couldn't understand God any differently, but as a diligent, caring, loving, prodigal entity interested in his own... such is my God.

The one who does not love has not known God. For God is love.

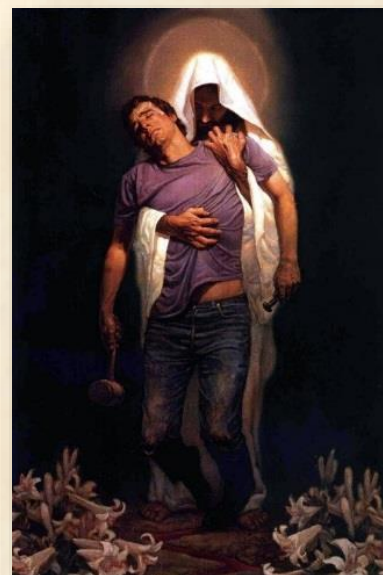
1 John 4: 8

This passage is one of the classics when analyzing the character of God. This passage shows that love is one of the fundamental characteristics; the passage does not say that God "has" love, but that he "is" love. I am interested in this point.

Love is a principle that to be manifested requires the existence of an entity that loves and one that is loved (note that I am not saying that love cannot be repaid, since in that case the roles are reversed, but two entities are still needed). If the nature of "God is love" then God can never have been without loving.

For those who do not believe in the Trinity, which we hold in another treatise, it will be very difficult to answer: if this is so, whom did God love before the first being was created? Note that, since God is eternal, this means that he was "an eternity alone" until he created, say, the first angel. This situation would have prevented him for "an eternity" from manifesting this key aspect of his character: love.

When one, instead, sustains the existence of Three Persons, in a Unity, it is possible to understand the love of One for the Others and that together, from eternity, they have had someone to love.



Note the following quote, where the author refers to the Unitarianist doctrine (one God, one Person):

The Unitarian professes to agree with the statement that "God is love". But these words, "God is love", have no real meaning unless God is at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God were a single person, then before the universe was made, he was not loved. For, if love be of the essence of God, he must always love, and being eternal, he must have possessed an eternal object of love. Furthermore, perfect love is possible only between equals. Just as a man cannot satisfy or realize his powers of love by loving the lower animals, so God cannot satisfy or realize his love by loving man or any creature. Being infinite, he must have eternally possessed an infinite object of his love, some alter ego, or, to use the language of traditional Christian theology, a consubstantial, co-eternal, and co-equal Son.

Bruce M. Metzger, The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ, 82, 83

But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us (even when we were dead in sins) has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved),

Ephesians 2: 4, 5

I can perceive in every verse the love of God, undeserved love on the other hand since we were His enemies, and "dead in sins". I, too, exclaim like Paul that the Grace of God is wonderful.

In this the love of God was revealed in us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.

1 John 4: 9

How wonderful! That God out of love for me, not for us; for me (we must personalize it to understand the impact it has for each one), has given his Son so that we have life through Him. Read with me the parable of the prodigal son.

First a little digression. The word prodigal is used for something or someone generous in providing



for others. We can say that nature is prodigal in offering us the beauty of flowers or the colors of the sky at sunset. We can speak of a prodigal writer, having produced many recognized works. That is why I think it should not be called the parable of the prodigal son, but in any case of the prodigal father... but, in any case, let us focus better on the theme.

And He said, A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that is coming to me. And he divided his living to them. And not many days afterward, the younger son gathered all together and went away into a far country. And there he wasted his property, living dissolutely. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land. And he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country. And he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to fill his belly with the husks that the pigs ate, and no one gave to him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father about in loaves, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you and am no more worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, Bring the best robe and put it on him. And put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet.



And bring the fattened calf here and kill it. And let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry. And his elder son was in the field. And as he came and drew near the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him safe and sound. And he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and entreated him. And answering he said to his father, Lo, these many years I have served you, neither did I transgress your commandment at any time. And yet you never gave me a kid so that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fattened calf. And he said to him, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Luke 15: 11-32

Let me highlight the father's situation:

- The father could have told the son, when he asked for his share, that nothing was due to him from the inheritance since he was alive. But he was generous and condescending and gave him what he asked for. Sometimes God grants us things that we ask for but that are contrary to his will.
- I imagine instead the father trying to make his son think before he left, lovingly reconnecting him. The son left, but the father looked ahead every day to be the first to see him return. I'm sure he would look every day... waiting forever. If someone has wandered away from God, it's not that He has wandered away, it's that He is waiting for him to return.
- I once had the experience, for work reasons, of going to a modern pig farm, where the conditions of hygiene are absolutely superior to those experienced by the prodigal son. I asked the driver how long it took me to get there and he said I would notice. Indeed, when I was a kilometer away, the smell was impressive. For a Jew, moreover, it must have been painful to work in such a place, with these animals considered unclean. I can imagine, therefore, the condition of the son when he returned to the father.
- But the latter did not care about the son's condition, that he came dirty and smelly, ran to him with the strength worn out by the years, embraced him and put his mantle on him to hide from his servants the poverty and dirt of the son's clothes. What an image to translate the love of the Father in heaven.



- He did not wait to hear the little speech of the son who wanted to be treated like a laborer. He hurried to give him his place before his servants and celebrated with them all his return.
- He lovingly resisted the complaints of the older son (how often do we behave like the latter for lack of true forgiving love?) and showed him his love too.

I have sometimes come across people who attribute to the Father the condition of a hard God, an implacable and inflexible judge, who expects his creatures to make mistakes to bring their judgments upon them. This is far removed from the reality that the Bible presents. Under this line of thought, they suggest that God the Son had to soften the hard heart of the Father through his sacrifice on the cross, as if my God were a bloodthirsty being like the pagan gods the world worshipped in ancient times (even now, unfortunately). Another monumental error.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3: 16

In order to fully realize the value of salvation, it is necessary to understand what it cost. In consequence of limited ideas of the sufferings of Christ, many place a low estimate upon the great work of the atonement. The glorious plan of man's salvation was brought about through the infinite love of God the Father. In this divine plan is seen the most marvelous manifestation of the love of God to the fallen race. Such love as is manifested in the gift of God's beloved Son amazed the holy angels. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (**John 3: 16**). This Saviour was the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person. He possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence. He was equal with God. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell" (**Colossians 1: 19**)...

Ellen G. White, God's Amazing Grace, 160

God does not love the world because his son died, his son died because he gave him to the world out of love, and his love is such that he gave all He could, He gave Himself. We can get a glimpse of this wonderful love in the high point episode of Abraham's life.

And it happened after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Behold me. And He said, Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love. And go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will name to you. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, You stay here with the ass. And I and the boy will go on to this way and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took the fire in his hand, and a knife. And they both went together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they both went together. And they came to the place which God had told him of. And Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. And the Angel of Jehovah called to him from the heavens and said, Abraham! Abraham! And he said, Here am I. And He said, Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked. And, behold, a ram behind him was entangled in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Will See; so that it is said until this day, In the mount of Jehovah it will be seen.

Genesis 22: 1-14

Many comments can be made about these passages. Let me give you a set of ideas that I can draw from it.

- God asks him to sacrifice his only son and says, "Take now your son, your only one, Isaac, whom you love". It seems that God wants to make him see in detail the magnitude of the sacrifice. Let us think that God asks an old man, who had received a son from his old wife out of time, to sacrifice him, reiterating to him that he is the only one.



- He sends him to do it, not in his camp, but more than 3 and a half days away. When Jesus began his public life with his baptism he had a time of 3 and a half years in which he was separated as the Lamb of God. Day by year, as in the case of prophecy.
- Furthermore, it tells him to go to the mountains of Moira. There in the future would be Jerusalem, the temple and in one of those hills, on Mount Calvary, should the Father, about 20 centuries later, sacrifice His Son.
- Abraham has to face the innocent question of Isaac who did not know which victim should be offered.
- I can imagine Abraham telling Isaac later that he was the victim. I also see, through the eyes of faith, Isaac letting himself be meekly bound, giving, on the contrary, strength to his troubled father. If Isaac had been different (for example: like me) he would have given his father a shove and fled, but just like Jesus he voluntarily submitted to death.
- When Abraham decided to sacrifice Isaac, when he pressed the knife into his hand and was ready to strike, a heavenly voice stopped him. Then he saw the lamb offered to replace Isaac.
- God wanted Abraham to experience in some measure what the Father suffered in giving up His Son. Only... there was no merciful voice that stood in the way of the climax of Jesus' sacrifice, as in the case of the patriarch.

But what is most extraordinary to me is God's decision to give up his Son, His only Son, to save those of us who were his enemies. I recognize that I would not do it, I would not be able to give up any of my daughters for my enemy... but what is my love compared to that which God manifests.

Said the angel, "Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle? No, no." It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His darling Son to die for them. Angels were so interested for man's salvation that there could be found among them those who would yield their glory and give their life for perishing man. "But," said my accompanying angel, "that would avail nothing." The transgression was so great that an angel's life would not pay the debt. Nothing but the death and intercession of God's Son would pay the debt and save lost man from hopeless sorrow and misery.

Ellen G. White, Early Writings, 127

7. Complementary material

7.1. References to God the Father

There are numerous references to God the Father, as well as to God as a father. Let's look at some facts from an interesting article.

The References involved:

He is referred to as Father on 271 occasions in the Scriptures.

- 13 times in the Old Testament
- 258 times in the New Testament
- 178 times in the Gospels
- 80 times from Acts through Revelation

He is mentioned by the title Father in six Old Testament books (2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi) and in every New Testament book, with the single exception of 3 John.

The Old Testament first and final references:

- First: **2 Samuel 7: 14**
- Final: **Malachi 1: 6**

The New Testament first and final references

- First: **Matthew 5: 16**
- Final: **Revelation 14: 1**

Jesus refers to him as "Father" on all but 2 of the 178 occasions in the Gospels. The two exceptions are **John 13: 1, 3**.

He mentions him:

- 17 times during the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5-7**)



- 22 times in the Upper Room (**John 13-14**)
- 22 times during his final discourse (**John 15-16**)
- 6 times during his great high priestly prayer (**John 17**)

The Doctrine of the Father, 1

God bless you.