

## THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

What kind of information did Jesus reveal about God's Fatherhood? While clearly picturing Him as "the Lord your God" (4:10; 22:37), as the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (10:28), as the sovereign "Lord of heaven and earth" (11:25) and as "king of the kingdom of God (18:23, 35), etc., our Lord laid heavy emphasis on God's fatherly character. Does Jesus picture Him as a celestial Santa Claus or as an unquestioning, all-accepting divine Grandfather or otherwise? Consider these revelations:

1. All our good deeds must be done so that others' praise will go to our Father (5:16).
2. Loving kindness to enemies makes us true sons of our Father in heaven (5:44). His perfection is our standard (5:48).
3. Our acts of righteousness must be done with a view to being rewarded by our heavenly Father alone (6:1-18).
4. In contrast to dead, pagan deities whose devotees must hopelessly, endlessly cry to them, our heavenly Father knows that we need daily necessities (6:32), and He gives only good gifts to those who ask Him (7:11).
5. Entrance into heaven's Kingdom depends on doing the will of Jesus' Father (7:21).
6. Early disciples, on trial for their Christian testimony, may depend with full confidence on the Spirit of our Father speaking through them (10:20).
7. Nothing sinister can happen to a faithful disciple, apart from what our Father permits (10:29).
8. However, it is before Jesus' Father in heaven that the disciple will be acknowledged or disowned, according to his attitude and faithfulness on earth (10:32f.).
9. Jesus sustained a unique, unshared relationship to this Father, whom He could call "my Father" in a way distinct from the relationship to this Father known by every disciple, because the Father had committed all things to Him (11:25-27).
10. The kinship to Jesus that really counts is not physical, based on a coincidental or miraculous fleshly relationship, but rather spirit, based on doing the will of His heavenly Father (12:50).
11. Although temporarily obscured in this life, after the judgment the righteous will be perfectly obvious in the kingdom of their Father (13:43).

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12. Any doctrine not finding its origin in the will of Jesus' heavenly Father will be eradicated, and those who follow blind leaders who hold such doctrines will suffer the consequences along with them (15:13).
13. Jesus' Father in heaven revealed to Peter the true identity of Jesus (16:17).
14. Our Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost, so their angels are granted instant access to His presence (18:14, 10).
15. Jesus' return to earth will be surrounded with His Father's glory (16:27).
16. All of the might of Jesus' Father in heaven is at the disposition of two humble disciples who agree to ask Him for something in prayer (18:19).
17. However, Jesus' Heavenly Father will not tolerate any unwillingness to forgive in His subjects (18:35).
18. It is Jesus' heavenly Father whose will determines places of honor in His Kingdom (20:23).
19. God is the only one who rightly deserves to be called "Father" in the high, ethical sense of Provider of spiritual life and guidance (23:9).
20. The Father alone knows the day of Christ's return (24:36).
21. The righteous will finally be blessed by the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (25:34), and not unlikely, He is the author of the curse upon the wicked (25:41).
22. Jesus viewed the glorious Messianic Kingdom as belonging to His Father (26:29).
23. Jesus pleaded with His Father to remove the cup of suffering (26:29, 42), and remained steadfastly confident that His Father could at once put more than twelve legions of angels at His disposal (26:53).