

GOD: The Year of The Father  
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It is a fact that the references about the fatherhood of God in the Old Testament are not as numerous as those found in the New Testament. However, though the passages are few, they are by no means insignificant in the messages that they convey. A few quotes, taken at random, will give us an idea of the richness and power of the Old Testament view on the fatherhood of God:

- "The Lord says: Israel is my first-born son, and I say to you 'Let my son go.'" (Ex 4.22-23).
- "I will be his father, and he shall be my son." (2 Sam 7.14)
- "Yet Lord, you are our Father; we are clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand." (Is 64.8; 63.16)

A father is a figure of love, mercy, and forgiveness. These three aspects of fatherhood are made explicit in different books of the Old Testament, for example, in Jeremiah and the book of Wisdom:

- "With weeping they had departed, and with consolations I will lead them back ... for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born." (Jer 31.9)
- "But you are merciful to all, for you can do all things, and you overlook men's sin, that they may repent..." (Wis 11.23-26)

The Old Testament portrays God as the Creator, Rescuer, Judge, King, Friend, The Jealous One, Healer, and many other beautiful and powerful titles. The God of the Old Testament is described as "One who is steadfast in His love." This attribute of God, the God of the Covenant, is gracefully expressed in the expression "ehyeh immak", "I will be with you" (Exodus 3.12) Holiness and Mercy are projected in the New Testament as attributes which we are to possess. Jesus told us:

- "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Lk 6.36).
- "Holy Father protect them in your name" (Jn 17.11)

God is the father of Israel and the Father of mankind; but it is through Jesus Christ that He has become "Our Father".

In the next issue we will deal with God as Father in the New Testament.