

Was God referred to as Father in the Old Testament?

In the Old Testament God was known as the creator of the heavens and the earth (Is 40:28). In the New Testament Jesus made clear that God is our Father (Mt 6:26).

Regarding the Book of Malachi J. Vernon McGee wrote:

There are some expositors who say that the "father" refers to Abraham since both Israel and Judah are mentioned in the verse that follows. However, I think that the next question makes it clear that Malachi is speaking about God as the Father: "Hath not one God created us?"

He also makes it clear in what way God is the Father. He is the Father by creation. But man lost that relationship. Adam was called the son of God, but after the Fall, he begat a son in his own likeness — not in the likeness of God, but in the likeness of his own fallen nature. Therefore, when the nation Israel comes into view, we do not find God speaking specifically of any individual Israelite as His son. Rather, He speaks of the corporate body of the nation as a son. Never in the Old Testament does God refer to an individual as His son. Even of two men who were outstanding, Moses and David, it was "Moses my servant" and "David my servant." Never does God say, "Moses my son" or "David my son." Individuals become sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ. God is the Father of mankind in the sense that He is the Creator.¹

Malachi said that God's people had sinned (Mal 2:10–17; 3:5–15). Their iniquities (2:10–17; 3:5, 8–15) included: They were untrue to each other (2:10); They had divorced their wives (2:13–16) and married pagan wives (2:11–12); They claimed evil is good (2:17); were: sorcerers, adulterers, liars, cheaters, oppressors and unjust people (3:5); They slandered God (3:13–15) and robbed him (3:8–12).

God invited them to repent (3:6–7)² as he invites men to repent today (Acs 2:37, 38).

We are not all children of God (Jn 8:4). Men must come as they have always come—by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9) to be his child (1 Jn 3:1).

¹ McGee, J. Vernon. Edited Messages on Malachi. OnePlace.com. ©1994. Web. 16 May 21: <https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/thru-the-bible-with-j-vernon-mcgee/read/articles/created-by-one-god-9405.html>

² Willmington, H. L. (1999). The Outline Bible (Mal 2:4–3:7). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.