

What's In a Name, Part 3

Isaiah 9:6c

INTRO:

In our Christmas series this year, we are exploring the most remarkable birth announcement in history. It is remarkable because it was sent seven centuries before the child was born. This is the most important birth in history. The announcement described the character of the One who would be born that first Christmas Day.

We learned that He would be called, Wonderful Counselor. He is the one who does the wonders that only God can do and who has planned and carried out the decrees of God. Last time we discovered that He is the Mighty God. He is God in human flesh. He is holy, just, merciful, and the conquering King. Today we come to the third compound name. ***“His name shall be called . . . the Everlasting Father.”*** As we explore this important name together, our itinerary will involve two stops.

I. He Is the Eternal One

II. He Is the Fatherly One

I. He Is the Eternal One

Isaiah 9:6 ***“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”***

A. There is some discussion as to how this name should be translated. Some would translate it as it is in our text, ***“Everlasting Father.”*** Others would make it ***“Father of Eternity.”*** However you want to translate it, this name contains two emphases. First, He is the eternal One.

1. The baby born in Bethlehem that first Christmas morn was not like any other baby ever born. His life did not begin at conception like other babies. He existed before He was conceived by the Holy Ghost in Mary's womb.

2. Not only did Isaiah in this name tell us our Lord pre-existed, and in fact is eternal, the prophet Micah also makes this abundantly clear.

Micah 5:2 ***“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel. Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”***

3. When we go to the New Testament, we find that John agrees with Isaiah about the eternal nature of the incarnate Son of God. **John 1:1-3** tells us,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

John drew a clear distinction between the Lord Jesus and creation. He speaks of that which was, as in always was, and that which came to be. That which **“was”** is eternal, and that is God and God alone, while that which **“became”** is that which was created.

B. The One who was born of a virgin in Bethlehem the first Christmas is the same One whom Isaiah describes in

Isaiah 57:15 *“For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’”*

The same One of whom Moses said in the **90th Psalm**, ***“From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God!”*** was the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The eternal God the Son was stepping into time. God was beginning His earth walk.

C. What does all this mean to us?

1. First, it means that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, is greater than anyone or anything in all creation. We then must recognize this reality requires we give Him sacred preeminence over everything else in our lives.

2. Second, this shows us that we need to live our lives with eternity in view. We need to live recognizing that our lives are played out before the face of God. We sometimes mourn over teenagers, who destroy their lives by living for sin and pleasure instead of living for eternal things. We say about them, ***“What a shame to destroy their entire lives for a moment of pleasure.”*** What a tragedy to sacrifice that which is lasting on the altar of the temporal. Yet, quite often we do the very same thing. We invest our lives in that which is momentary and forget that which is eternal.

3. Third, this truth shows us God has a purpose for our lives. The God who inhabits eternity did not step into time for no reason at all. He came to die for us. He came to call us to Himself and use us to glorify Him. If He laid down His Son to save us, we should give our lives back to Him that He might use us to accomplish His eternal purpose.

II. He Is the Fatherly One

A. Isaiah did not just say that this child is the eternal one, but also that He is the ***“eternal Father.”*** This immediately stimulates the commentators to point out that this is not referring to our Lord's relationship to the trinity. There is one and only one God, yet, He is manifested in three distinct personalities. We put it in this way because we cannot comprehend it any other way. Within our Triune God there is God the Father, God the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit, co-equal in power and in essence, yet distinct. It is God the Son, who is not the Father and the Spirit who ***“became flesh and pitched His tent among us.”***

B. So, then, why does Isaiah say His name is ***“Everlasting Father?”*** This name describes His relationship with His covenant people that's us. What does this relationship look like?

1. We catch a glimpse of this ***“fatherly relationship”*** in **Psalm 103:13-17** ***“As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children.”***

The Lord knows exactly what He can expect from us and never asks more than we can do with His help. Daddy's help their children when they need help.

2. The main aspect of God's Fatherhood we think about is His providing for His children. Do you remember that great passage in the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 6?**

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?”

Leading into this text, our Lord said that no one can serve two masters. One evidence that our heart is with mammon (money) and not God is that we worry about what money can buy. God gives us wise counsel here about living for Him and not for things or money.

a. First, He reminded us that life is more than having stuff.
“Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

b. Second, He gives us an object lesson about the birds.

“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”

Who is it that feeds the birds? It is not their heavenly Father. Our heavenly Father feeds these birds. They have no claim on Him as their Father, but we do. God has given eternal life to us, and He has pledged Himself to take care of us. That is why we have more value to the Father than the birds have.

c. Finally, He reminds us how foolish worry is. We deceive ourselves by thinking that worry accomplishes something positive. It does not. All that worry does is negative.

The greatest provision God the Father made for us is Salvation. Had He not come and died, we would have no hope. Because He came, **John 1:12** is ours.

“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”

Hymn #395 Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord