

## THE EVERLASTING FATHER

December 17, 2017

Isaiah 9:1-7

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

This text is a prophecy regarding Jesus Christ. Hundreds of years after it was uttered, it began to be fulfilled by Jesus’ birth. Its fulfillment continues today, and will forevermore. Indeed, “of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:32, 33).

Our text ascribes five names to Christ. We will focus upon one of them: “everlasting Father.” Scripture teaches that there is one God who reveals Himself as three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; yet does so without contradicting His “oneness.” One biblical term for this mystery is “the Godhead” (Colossians 2:9). Scripture assigns distinctive roles for each person, but our text seems to cross these roles when Isaiah refers to the Son as “The everlasting Father.” What does this mean?

We consider this question in three parts. First, what is communicated by the name “Father?” Second, what is added when He is called “Everlasting Father?” Third, what is signified regarding Christ when this name is assigned to Him?

When fatherhood is well-fulfilled, the term “father” is comforting. Those who have/had honorable, wise and loving fathers recall them with dignity and respect. Those whose fathers were not honorable may try to imagine what it would have been to have a good father. God the Father excels in perfect fatherhood. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103:13, 14). Many other biblical descriptions present God as the most fatherly being to be known.

Many remember the day of their father’s death. Whether he was a good or a poor father, his fatherhood was temporary. By contrast, the otherworldly superiority of our heavenly Father is enlarged by its eternal duration. He is “The everlasting Father.” The psalms cite this attribute often. “For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations” (Psalm 100:5). But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children” (103:17).

Why did the prophet ascribe the title “everlasting Father” unto Christ? Paul answers by affirming that “in [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). Philip asked Jesus, “shew us the Father.” “Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake” (John 14:8-11; also 8:12-59; 10:22-39).

Jesus Christ is the revelation of God the Father unto man the sinner. Humanity and deity were united forever in the body of Jesus Christ. Without Christ, we have no Father. Because Christ is “Immanuel,” meaning “God with us,” Scripture appropriately ascribes unto Christ every attribute of deity, including the title “the everlasting Father.” Christ secures forever every blessing of God the Father to all who come to the Father by Him. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).