

Everlasting Father

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Isaiah 9:6-8 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. ⁷ Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.* ⁸ **The Lord sent a word against Jacob, And it has fallen on Israel.**

There are many stories one could tell of children who don't listen to their fathers. One that sticks in my mind is my brother's daughter Anastasia. David was visiting a number of years ago and we were all out in the front yard playing. Anastasia started running towards 73. David told her to stop. She ignored him. He told her to stop again. She made an excuse and kept running right towards highway 73. When children don't listen to their fathers or think they know better they often put themselves in danger.

Isaiah tells us that Jesus is the eternal father. This means that he rules over all things for our good. It also means that we, like children, need to trust him. We face many difficult, dangerous and dubious situations in our life. When we fail to trust Jesus and insist that we know better we often put ourselves in very dangerous situations.

Jesus is the Everlasting Father, what does this mean?

It is unusual to hear the title "father" given to the second person of the trinity. I believe this is the only time and only place where it happens. Normally the term refers to the first person of the trinity, not the second. So, what does it teach us about the second person of the trinity that it is used here?

First it reminds us that Jesus, the Son of God, is true God equal to the Father. Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:6 that Jesus "**did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.**" This verse is an example of that. The bible does not shy away from giving to the second person of the trinity the same title, the same name, as it gives to the first. The title "father" belongs to the first person of the trinity, but it is not robbery for the Son to also claim it as his. Just as it is not robbery for the Son to claim the names of Jehovah, Almighty, Creator etc. All that the Father has belongs also to the Son and the Holy Spirit, for they are one.

Second although Jesus is equal to the Father is also separate from the Father. Even though the Son of God can claim for himself the same titles and names as the Father, this does not mean they are one and the same person. John tells us in his gospel, that Jesus "was with God and . . . Was God." They are equal but distinct. This is seen even in our text because although both are given the title "father," they are given for distinct reasons.

In God the Father's case the term father indicates God is the creator and preserver. In Jesus' case the term father is a reference to his ruling activity. Kings were sometimes called father because they were supposed to watch over, protect, and provide for their people. In the same way the term Father is given to Jesus because he ascended on high, received all power and authority, and rules over all things for the good of his people.

In our text Isaiah says that he is the "everlasting father", "of his kingdom there will be no end." "The government will be upon his shoulders." Our verses in Isaiah are clearly focused on Jesus' ruling activity. In fact, all the names for Jesus mentioned in Isaiah 9:6 are teaching us about Jesus as our King.

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."

In Colossians 1:15 Jesus is called the "firstborn over all creation." He is not called the firstborn because he was born first, in the sense that he did not exist and then he became. Rather he is given this title because the firstborn is the one to receive the inheritance. He ascended on high and as the firstborn received the inheritance that is the kingdom. In Psalm 2 the Father declares to the Son, "Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession." Psalm 2:8

Jesus is the everlasting father. This title emphasizes how he is going to rule. He will not rule as a tyrant but like a father. In the same way Jesus is also called the Good Shepherd, the Prince of Peace, the Son of David, etc. All these terms make it clear that he is to be our King, but that nature of his rule is not that of tyrant but of father, not that of despot but of a good shepherd. Because of this Jesus is worthy of our trust.

Jesus is worthy of our trust, and it is essential that we trust him.

In that movie *The Man In the Iron Mask* King Louis XIV of France sends Raoul to the front lines, so that he can romance Raoul's fiancé Christine. King David is a real-life example of the same thing.

He sent Uriah to be killed in battle so that he can take Bathsheba as his wife. Earthly kings and authority cannot be trusted. They often chose their own desires over the good of the people.

Jesus however is the good shepherd and the everlasting father. He rules for the good of his people. He does not send his people to die for his desires. Rather he came to die for us. He came **“to serve and not be served.”** For this reason he is worthy of our trust and worthy to be our king.

When we watch the news or read the paper there is quite a bit going on that makes it seem as though Jesus is not in control. It often seems like evil and or foolish men are in control and can't be trusted. Even in our own lives things happen that make us doubt Jesus' control. Why would Jesus allow this or that to happen if he were really in control and really loved me?

In our sinful we often find it hard to trust Jesus. Just like children don't always understand why their father tells them not to do this or to do that, so also the way that Jesus rules and the things that he allows do not seem good to us. This is especially so when things are most dark, most difficult, most dangerous. That is when we most tempted to trust ourselves instead of Jesus, but it is also when it is most important to trust him.

Jesus is our everlasting father. He is our good shepherd. He rules over all things and works all things, even suffering and hardship for our good. Whenever we fail to trust him, we put ourselves in danger. We often think the road is clear, but we do not see as well as our ruler Jesus can.

Yet as our good father, when we fail to trust him, Jesus forgives our sins and can bring good even out of our sin.

Jesus is the eternal father. He has been in control from the before the foundation of the world and will continue to be in control beyond eternity. He knows what he is doing, and he rules over all things for the good of his people.

Tonight, God's word reassures you that you are one of his children. You were made a child of God through baptism and faith and by his blood. Although you often fail to trust him as you should, nevertheless he has never failed to be a good father to you and never will. He is the everlasting father, whose kingdom shall not end. Amen