

# Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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## Who Jesus Is: Everlasting Father

Today, we are looking at the third in our series of talks on “Who Jesus Is” based on Isaiah 9:6. To date, we have considered Him as Wonderful, Counsellor and the Mighty God. It may help to begin with a piece of poetry. It is entitled: “Dad!”

*Take the strength of a lion,  
The crown of humility,  
The light from a dancing fire,  
The peace of a shimmering sea,  
The generous soil of the farmer,  
The comfort in rays of light,  
The wisdom of the sages,  
The power from wings in flight,  
The joy of a spring that bubbles,  
The love for a child in need,  
The patience of eternal days,  
The hope of a budding seed,  
The founding faithfulness of truth,  
The trust from a blushing bride,  
The speed of a deer that's darting,  
And much, much more beside.  
Now place them in the model,  
There's nothing more to add!  
Then turn your face to everyone  
And call the subject, “Dad!”*

*GE Stevens*

This leads us gently into a consideration of the name of “Everlasting Father” which shall be given to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Hebrew word for “everlasting” is ‘**ad**’. It is used many times in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 57:15 it is translated “eternity” where the High and Lofty One dwells. In Job 20:4 it means “from of old”, while in many Psalms it is given as “for ever”. In Habakkuk 3:6 it is translated as “everlasting” and is used to describe mountains. All these make the interpretation of the name “Everlasting Father” difficult. For example, mountains are not strictly speaking “eternal”. They were created. Therefore, they had a beginning. The word “everlasting” shows that they have existed for a long, long time. But “time” **does** come into it. Time is also suggested by the phrase “from of old”. On the other hand, the words “for ever” may mean “eternally” or “till the end of the age” depending on the context. Finally, we have the “eternity” of Isaiah 57:15 speaking of where God dwells. Like God Himself, it has no beginning and no end.

So which of these translations applies in the context of the “Everlasting Father”? Well, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ is called the “Beginning and the End” in Revelation 22:13. So His life spans the whole of time. But we also know that He existed before time itself because the Apostle John tells us that He was the Word who was already in existence at the very first beginning (John 1:1). Furthermore, we remember His own words in the Gospel of John 8:58: “*Before Abraham was, I am.*” In these words, Jesus was not just claiming to have existed before Abraham, but to have existed always. He was actually claiming to be the God who used “I AM” as a name in Exodus 3:14. There we read: “*And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*” So we can see that I AM is the name of the self-existent and eternal God. This is absolutely remarkable because it means that “*the child born and the son given*” in Isaiah 9:6 refers to none other than God Himself. This gives a very special meaning to the words of the “angel of the Lord” who, speaking about the unborn Jesus to Joseph, said, “*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us*” (Matthew 1:23). The little Baby who was later laid to be laid in Bethlehem’s manger was none other than God become flesh. The hymn writer, Charles Wesley, expresses this beautifully in the following verse:

*“Christ, by highest Heaven adored;  
Christ the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time, behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin’s womb!  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail the incarnate Deity!  
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,  
Jesus our Emmanuel.”*

Of Him, we may sing with David of old, *“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows”* (Psalm 45:6-7; Hebrews 1:8-9).

In the context of Isaiah 9:6, the Everlasting Father is the name that would be given to the child born, to the Son given. But why? If the Son of God is eternal, He would have to be the Originator and Controller of all things anyway! The reason is that the name is given to the Lord Jesus Christ as a man. It re-iterates that the Son is the same person in manhood. A similar concept is found in John 17:5 where the Son of God addresses His Father and says: *“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”* He is referring to the glory He had as the Son before He entered into manhood. This is regained in His resurrection and ascension. The only difference being He is a man as well. So we see that the “Everlasting Father” is both God and man.

Having dealt briefly with the word “Everlasting”, we now need to examine what is meant by the word “Father”. The first use of the Hebrew word for “Father” is found in Genesis 2:24 which states: *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”* Here it is clear that the word speaks of one who is the head of a family.

When we look at a further use of the same word in Genesis 4:20-21 we see that “Father” is used to speak of the “founder” or “source”. We read: *“And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother’s name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.”* In like manner, we find that Abraham is the father of many nations in Genesis 17:4. He is the Source of those nations. They spring from him. In the same way, the devil is the father of lying. John 8:44 states: *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*

Therefore, as we consider the Lord Jesus as the Everlasting Father, we see that He is the Head of a family and the eternal Source of all. In regard to the family aspect, God has given Him children. In Hebrews 2:13-18 we find words of Jesus saying, *“Behold I and the children which God hath given me”* (Hebrews 2:13). The Lord Jesus has been given a family by God; but it may also be argued that those in the family are those He Himself delivered from Satan. Hebrews 2:14-15 goes on to state: *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

This in itself is a fulfilment of the parable of the Lord in Luke 11 where we read: *“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils”* (Luke 11:21-22).

In the present age, Christians are classed as the children of God. They have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ (see 1 Peter 1:18-19). They are, therefore, one group of the children that God has given to Christ. As a result, Jesus has responsibilities to fulfil towards us in order that God may be glorified. Those responsibilities include acting in the same way as a father would to his own children. We’ll briefly consider this later.

In 1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 45, the Apostle Paul speaks of those who are in Adam, and then he talks of a “last” Adam. These are two distinct people. Adam refers to the first man to live on this earth. The “last” Adam refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. The first Adam was the head of the human race. He sinned and his sin was the ruin of all mankind (see Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-7). The result was that death came upon everyone because (from then on) people were sinful in both nature and in practice. On the other hand, Jesus is the “last” Adam. He is the Head of the people of faith. He will never fail nor be superseded in any way. Owing to His obedience to God, those who trust in Him have life! This is summarised in 1 Corinthians 15:22-23: *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”* Since it is **in** Christ that we are given life, it is also **in** Christ where we are

- blessed with all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3);
- accepted by God (Ephesians 1:6);

- redeemed and forgiven (Ephesians 1:7); and
- have obtained an inheritance (Ephesians 1:11);

and, much, much more besides!

In pursuing this theme, we read that Christ has His own household, as it is written: *“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we...”* (Hebrews 3:6). Here, “house” implies a “family”. Scripture shows that those who would be overseers in the church had first to show that they could rule their own homes well. We read: *“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)”* 1 Timothy 3:4-5. Hence, the Lord Jesus, God’s Son has to take on a father’s role in His own house. A father manages the home, loves his wife, provides for his family, educates and disciplines, guards, guides and encourages. The Lord Jesus is the *“Shepherd and Bishop of [our] souls”* (1 Peter 2:25). As a father, He leads by example. He is indeed the *“Author and Finisher of our faith”* (Hebrews 12:2).

Furthermore, He is classed, in a future day, as a father to the Jews in particular. Isaiah 22:20-22 states: *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.”*

You may argue that this does not speak of Christ but of Eliakim. You would be right in the first instance; but some of the words are applied to the Lord Jesus in Revelation 3:7, namely, *“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth.”*

Also, Eliakim was appointed to govern the house of David. The Lord Jesus Christ will do that perfectly in a future day. As Isaiah 9:6 tells us, *“... the government shall be upon his shoulder.”* Isaiah 9:7 goes on to say: *“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.”* So Eliakim is but a faint picture of the Father of the Jewish nation to come. The Lord Jesus Christ will reign as King of kings for a thousand years over Israel and His dominion shall be worldwide. He will govern a kingdom that will never be usurped. He will indeed be, as the translation notes of John Nelson Darby to Isaiah 9:6-7 state, *“Father of the age”*.

Secondly, we have seen that Christ is a Father in the sense of being a founder or source. The term immediately reveals that He is the Creator. In Hebrews 1:10-12 we find words spoken by God to His own Son stating: *“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”* This is supported by many other scriptures, but Colossians 1:16-17 should be sufficient confirmation. Paul writes of Christ saying, *“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist”* (Colossians 1:16-17)

The man upon Calvary’s cross was none other the Son of God who created all things. Not only is He the Founder, He is also the Sustainer of them all. If His wisdom in design is amazing, then we must describe His power in creating as awesome! On the other hand, His present control and maintenance of the universe is beyond human thought! He is indeed the everlasting Father who will one day, fold up this universe and replace it with a new one. He is Jehovah the Same! Additionally, the fact that all things “consist” or “hold together” by Him shows, once again, that He is the Source of all.

Christ is also the Founder of the Christian faith. We have already seen that He is the Author and Finisher of faith and, as such, leaves us an example so that we might follow in His steps. But through His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension He has laid the basis of that Christian faith. All the blessings of the New Covenant (and more) come to us through Him. Not only did He found this faith, but He is the Object and Sustainer of it. As such, He brings worshippers to God the Father. This is an entirely new approach to God. It is a spiritual approach. One that needs no material aids, no artefacts and no special places. It is worship in accordance to all that has been revealed of God through the truth of the Bible and is offered from sincere and loving hearts.

Thirdly, Jesus may be called the *“Source of life”*, John 1:1-4 reminds us of this fact by stating: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”* In these verses all life is considered; but there is more to life than living here on earth. Jesus Himself said, *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10). Additionally, He said,

*“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”* (John 10:28). This “eternal life” is a quality of life as well as a length of life. Jesus is its source, for we read in 1 John 5:11: *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”* The Apostle John goes on to say, *“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life”* (1 John 5:20). If you want to see what eternal life is, look at Jesus because He is eternal life personified!

There is no new life without Christ. If God quickens us, then it is **with** Christ. We can see that God gives new life to those who trust in His Son. He quickens them. We read in Ephesians 2:4-6: *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* There is no new life without God! Neither is there any without Christ! John 5:21 tells us that *“as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them; even so the Son quickens whom he will.”* The reason for this is found in John 5:26 which states: *“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself...”* This confirms that Christ is the source of life. It also indicates, albeit indirectly, that He is God! So it is written: *“He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him”* (CH Spurgeon)

According to Jewish custom, the elder brother was the father of the family in the absence of the real father. In other words, the firstborn took up the role of father. The Lord Jesus, being the Firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29) exercises the office of fatherhood. He succours us; provides for us; protects us; trains us; and teaches us. As He Himself said to His disciples, *“I will not leave you comfortless [or, fatherless]: I will come to you”* (John 14:18). The famous evangelist Spurgeon once wrote: *“...You may have come here in trouble, but Christ is still your Father. This day you may be much depressed in spirit and full of doubts and fears; but a true father never ceases, if he be a father, to exercise his kindness to a child; nor does Jesus cease to love and pity you. He will help you. Go to Him, and you shall find that loving Friend to be as tender as in the days of His flesh.”*

We finish with an excerpt from a poem called ‘*Messiah*’ by Alexander Pope (1688–1744) that relates to the Kingdom of Christ in that future day and reminds us that Christ is the Father (the Originator) of that day:

*“As the good shepherd tends his fleecy care,  
Seeks freshest pasture, and the purest air,  
Explores the lost, the wandering sheep directs,  
By day o’ersees them, and by night protects;  
The tender lambs he raises in his arms,  
Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms:  
Thus shall mankind his guardian care engage,  
The promised Father of the future age.  
No more shall nation against nation rise,  
Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,  
Nor fields with gleaming steel be covered o’er,  
The brazen trumpets kindle rage no more;  
But useless lances into scythes shall bend,  
And the broad falchion in a ploughshare end.”*

Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

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