

Christmas, Christ, and the Everlasting Father (In What Sense is Christ the Everlasting Father?)

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Isaiah 9:6

“For unto us a child is born (the humanity of Christ), unto us a son is given (the deity of Christ): and the government shall be upon his shoulder (the reign of Christ): and his name shall be called (during the Millennium) Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

The expression and title “Everlasting Father” in this oft-used Christmas verse has puzzled many expositors because the Messiah, God’s Son, is distinguished in the Trinity from God the Father. (Matt. 28:19). Isaiah 9:6 is the only Biblical text that uses the word “father” with reference to Christ. However, this verse does NOT suggest that the Son is the Father (the same person), for each Person in the Godhead (Trinity) is distinct and separate personages (Matt. 3:16-17). Oneness Pentecostals deny the Trinity and teach that Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are all one person. They sometimes quote Isaiah 9:6 in their attempt to prove their position. However, Isaiah 9:6 cannot be used to disprove the Trinity nor bolster their Oneness doctrine (God is only one person).

So, how should we understand this description of Christ? One view suggests that this expression about Christ is a reference to how He reveals the Father to mankind. In other words, Christ is simply being compared to the “everlasting Father” because He came to reveal the Father’s nature, existence, and ways to a lost human race. It is true that the Son revealed the Father to mankind (John 1:18). However, the title “everlasting Father” is actually attributed to Christ Himself. Therefore, the sense here cannot mean be to be like the Father and reveal the Father to mankind, but to in some way be known as a father, when He enters the world.

A second view suggests this title merely conveys that the Messiah will be a Father to His people eternally. He will not only be the wonderful-counselor but the everlasting father to His Jewish people. In other words, as the Everlasting Father, the Messiah will be a father to His ancient people Israel, and His fatherhood will be without end. In other words, Messiah will forever be “perfectly father-like” in the way he shepherds and leads His people. This view is therefore suggesting that Christ

is a *fatherly figure* forever and reveals God's fatherly character (father-like qualities) to His people, since He is one in nature and essence with the Father (John 10:30). This particular view cannot be dismissed as having no merit. There certainly will be a fatherly and shepherding emphasis connected with Christ's earthly reign (Isaiah 63:16).

The Focus Bible Commentary takes this position and states: "The reference to 'father' should not be taken to mean that the messianic king will be the first person of the Trinity in his human appearance. Rather the emphasis is on the character he bears, and the manner in which he cares for his children with fatherlike compassion and tenderness. For all eternity he will deal with his children as a loving father."

As cozy as this interpretation might feel, this view seems to miss the point of the entire name ("Everlasting Father"), which teaches something about the personal nature and eternal existence of Christ Himself – not simply His fatherly relationship to others. The "everlasting Father" emphasis does not seem to be on Christ's relational role as a father but is an expression of His divine attributes as God. Jesus Christ is not merely an eternal, fatherly figure, but the eternally-existent God! In fact, Christ is directly stated to be "The mighty God" just prior to the expression "the everlasting Father," which suggests that Christ is the eternally-existent God and Creator of everything, including His everlasting reign, when the Millennium merges into the time when "his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:7) and "when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when (after 1,000 years) he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24).

We might understand this title ("everlasting Father") as a Jewish expression that means "the father of eternity." Vine, in his collected writings, comes to this conclusion, among others. Vine states: "The everlasting Father" is, literally, "The Father of eternity." We can be sure that this is not a name portraying that Christ is God the Father, but one that emphasizes how Jesus Christ is God, the eternal Creator (the "father" of everything that exists). In other words, Christ is the eternal God who created everything. Jesus is not the Father, but he possesses the characteristics of God. In fact, He shares the Godhead with the Father (Col. 2:9). In other words, Jesus has all the attributes of God, including His eternity, and as the eternal God He is the father or creator of everything that has existed and will exist

in the future, including the Millennial Kingdom (the 1,000-year-reign of the Messiah).

The expression “Everlasting Father” more appropriately emphasizes God’s eternal being (the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending” - Rev. 1:8) and how He is the source or father of everything. The title is likely an idiom used to describe the Messiah’s relationship to time, not His relationship to the other Members of the Trinity. Christ as the Son of God is said to be everlasting just as God the Father is called “the Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9). It’s interesting that among the Jews, the word “father” took on the meaning of “originator” or “source.”

The Hebrew lexical evidence suggests that the term “father” can be “used of a producer, a generator.” For example, Satan is the “father [originator] of lies” (John 8:44). Matthew Poole concludes that “The everlasting Father” in the Hebrew refers to the “Father of eternity” and then states: “lest this (being called a child and son) should be misinterpreted to his disparagement, he adds that he is a Father also, even the God and Father of all things; the work of creation being common and commonly ascribed to each of the persons of the blessed Trinity, the Maker and Upholder of all creatures, as he is said to be, John 1:3; Heb. 1:3.” Poole seems to be correct in his analysis.

This title “everlasting Father” suggests that at Christ’s birth He was recognized as the eternal Creator and source (the father) of all things, even time itself and the ages, including His coming Kingdom rule during the Millennium, which is the context in which this expression (“the father of eternity”) appears. Hebrews 1:2 states that (God) “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (ages). Jesus Christ as the Creator oversees the “ages” (all universe of time, space, and matter) and this would include the coming age of the Kingdom (Millennium). The translation of the Greek word “aion” should be “ages” instead of “worlds,” and that is the thought in this title given to Christ - “father of eternity.”

The “Everlasting Father” or “father of eternity” (the timeless God and Creator) is an expression of Christ’s eternal being as the Creator of the universe and the ages of time itself. It reminds us that Jesus Christ is God and the Eternal Creator (the father or originator) of everything. As the “father” He is the sovereign originator of all things (Isa. 45:7) and as “everlasting” He is eternal, hence, the eternal creator of

the universe and time itself. During the Millennium (the 1,000 years), mankind will universally recognize that Christ is the source of the blessed time of peace on planet earth (Isaiah 66:12) and this is why He will rule as “the Prince of Peace.”

John 1:3 states this about Christ: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” In Colossians 1:16 Paul said, “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.” Christ is the “father” (source) of everything that exists. Just as an earthly father is the source or provider for the family, so Jesus Christ, as the eternal (everlasting) God, is the source and Creator of everything that exists in the universe, including time and the dispensational ages, which will be evidenced during His millennial reign.

In the context of the Millennial Kingdom, this title (“Everlasting Father”) is best understood to mean that Jesus is the “father” (source and originator) of everything that exists in the space/time/continuum and this would include His 1,000-year rule on planet earth. This means that Jesus Christ is being viewed as the originator and source of every blessing that comes upon planet earth during the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus Christ will rule as the eternal or “everlasting” God, who inhabits eternity (Isa 57:15), the One who is “of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). Here we clearly see how the throne of David, which is to be forever (2 Sam. 7:16), is to be preserved (Luke 1:32-33). Upon this literal throne in Jerusalem will be a Ruler who Himself is Eternal!

The coming earthly theocracy is called “the Millennium,” which means “one thousand years.” The phrase is used six times in Revelation 20. During the 1,000 years, Christ will also rule as the “father” or originator of everything that has come to pass on earth. During the Millennial Kingdom, Christ will create peace, justice, and righteousness over the earth and bring multitudes of blessings upon mankind, so much so, that Isaiah (the millennial prophet) describes the Millennium in a similar way as the eternal state.

Isaiah 65:17-18

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.”

In summary, in the coming era of the Golden Age (the Millennium), Christ will not only be called and recognized as “**Wonderful**” (His character as Ruler - the exceptional and distinguished One who rules over the earth), “**the Counselor**” (His wisdom as Ruler - the world will listen to Messiah’s teachings - Isaiah 2:3), and “**The mighty God**” (His omnipotence as Ruler - Isaiah 10:21), He will also be recognized as the “**Everlasting Father**” (the eternally-existent Ruler). Jesus Christ will be recognized as the “everlasting” God who is the “father” (source) of the peace and tranquility that will be experienced on earth throughout the age of the Kingdom (Psalm 46:6-10). During His glorious reign, He will also be known as “**The Prince of Peace**” (the peace-giving Ruler – the One who brings peace to a troubled world) when He rules planet earth with a rod of iron during this special age of peace.

Jesus Christ is then:

- The Eternal God (“everlasting”)
- The Creator God (“father”) – the source of everything
- The Ruler God (“Prince of Peace”).

All of these titles speak to Christ’s divinity – not His personal fatherliness. Jesus Christ will be magnified in all these ways during the Millennium. According to Isaiah 9:6, Christ will be known throughout the millennial earth as the wonderful God, the counselor God, the mighty God, the eternal-creator God (“everlasting Father”), and the ruling God (“Prince of Peace”). No wonder there will be peace on earth! The baby (the God-man) that was born in Bethlehem would be the source of every blessing that comes to mankind, including the blessings of salvation (Luke 2:11) and the establishment of peace on earth (Isa. 9:6-7). There can be no peace on earth until the Prince of Peace is ruling over the earth.

Of course, as we close this short study, let us not forget that Christ is also the “father” or source of every blessing that comes in to our life today. He is the source of all our spiritual blessings “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:3).

“Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”