

Everlasting Father

Isaiah 9:6 Part - 3
by Chuck Jones

As mentioned before, we are left at the mercy of the translators in giving us what the ancient manuscripts said. In this article the point of interest is, I think, properly translated. Here we will find it isn't what the text says, but our understanding of what we are presented with that makes the difference.

From Isaiah 9:6, I will be writing about one of the names that the son who would be king will be called: "Everlasting Father." Although this may be a proper translation from the Hebrew, I don't think we can make an immediate jump to connect this name to the Creator of all things. To do that would be to ignore some of the basic usages of the words that make up this name. It would also cause us to miss some aspects of the work the Son has done. Let's investigate "Everlasting Father" and see if you don't agree with me.

Everlasting

Our English word, everlasting, carries a meaning which may be quite different than the Hebrew word it is translated from. This is also true of the Greek word in the New Testament as well. The Hebrew word "olam" or "aloni" and the Greek word "aeon" all refer to long periods of time. We use the word "age" often to reference this, such as "the age of dinosaurs" or the "bronze age", this "present age," or the "age to come."

"Olam" indicates distant time whether past, present, or future. It is a term of perpetuity or a perpetual time. We can find this sort of usage throughout the Old Testament. Some examples are:

*"The Nephilim were in the earth in those days, and also after that, when God's sons came to men's daughters. They bore children to them: the same were the mighty men who **were of old, men of renown**" (Genesis 6:4). Here "olam" makes reference to the distant past. These mighty men were from a remote time long gone.*

*"I will establish my covenant with you; neither will all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither will there anymore be a flood to destroy the earth." God said, "This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, **for perpetual generations**: I set my rainbow in the cloud, and it will be for a sign of a covenant between me and the earth" (Genesis 9:11-13). We still can see the rainbow in the sky because this covenant was made for "olam" generations. From that time and long into the future.*

*"I will make you exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of you. Kings will come out of you. I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations **for an everlasting covenant**, to be a God to you and to your seed after you. I will*

give to you, and to your seed after you, the land where you are traveling, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. I will be their God” (Genesis 17:6-8). These two promises given to Abraham were from old, and will last on into the future.

“Olam” is used in a wide variety of ways and a connection can be made to Jesus of Nazareth. In 2 Samuel 7 we have the record of God speaking through Nathan the prophet to King David about his son Solomon, and beyond:

*“When your days are fulfilled, and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who shall proceed out of your bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish **the throne of his kingdom forever**. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my loving kindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before you. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before you: your **throne shall be established forever**.”* (Verses 12-16).

Both references to the throne being “olam” refer to the distant future king – Jesus. The reign of Christ on the throne of his father David is perpetual; on into the age to come. Usually, when we use the term, forever, it has reference to a starting time, but no end. So, it is easy to see how the word “olam” can be used for Jesus, as everlasting on into the future.

Father

The second part of the name I found to be very interesting. I want to explain this part first and then put the two together.

Our English word “father” is used to translate the Hebrew word, “ab.” You may more readily recognize the Aramaic form, “abba.” In its simplest use it is the designation for a biological father. It is also used, however, to identify a principle person. In America, we use the term “father of our country” for George Washington. “Ab” is a title used of both Yahweh and men.

Since we are familiar with the term, as it is used for biological fathers, here are some ways it’s used in non-biological terms:

The father of a servant is his master. Elisha used this title for Elijah in 2 Kings 2:12. The protector of the poor is their father. Job classified himself as a father of the needy, looking into the cases of those he didn’t know (Job 29:16). The governor of Jerusalem is father to the inhabitants. As Isaiah tells us, *“It shall happen in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: and I will cloth him with your robe, and strengthen him with your belt, and I will commit your government into his hand; **and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah*** (Isaiah 22:20, 21).

The title father is used for one in authority whether it be prophet, priest, king, or founder of a tribal unit. Perhaps the most familiar is Abraham as the founder of a tribal unit. He is called the

father of those who are of faith. *“For this cause it is of faith, that it may be according to grace, to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, **who is the father of us all**”* (Romans 4:16).

We have the privilege of being counted as sons of Abraham, *“Know therefore that those who are of faith, **the same are sons of Abraham**. The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you will all the nations be blessed. So then, those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham”* (Galatians 3:7-9).

Now To Jesus

As promised, I want to make the application to Jesus. Using Jesus’ own words we read in John 8:56-58: *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I tell you, before Abraham was born, I am.”*

In the same way as Abraham is a father of the faithful, Jesus is for his people. “Before Abraham was” Jesus said, “I am.” Before Abraham received the covenant Jesus was already in God’s plan. As Paul explains, the gospel was preached to Abraham. The plan was already in fully in the mind of God in Abraham’s day.

It may be best explained here: *“But you, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which are little among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall one come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting”* (Micah 5:2).

Jesus of Nazareth was in God’s plan from the beginning, from “olam” the long distant past. Yahweh has established the throne of David forever, and Jesus will occupy it.

Jesus is the founder of our “tribal” unit, the church. He is our protector, our master, our governor, and our King into the ages to come. In those regards, he is our Everlasting (olam) Father (ab). His position with Yahweh will remain in the age to come. We can be secure in that.

Now is a good time to join with Jesus and his “tribe.” We must turn from the world, agree with Yahweh that Jesus is indeed our Everlasting Father and seek the perpetual kingdom to come.

Reprinted with permission from *Wisdom and Power* - Nov/Dec 2007