

Eternal Father

On December 22, 2019, Brother Jeffries presented an excellent sermon on "The Names of Jesus" listed in Isaiah 9:6. *"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."* In that sermon, he pointed out that Jesus demonstrated the characteristics of a father in His protective and corrective attributes. In the remote and extended context of scripture, the full importance of that name becomes evident.

Isaiah mentions the children of the messiah several times and shows us that his fatherly role does indeed fulfill prophecy. In Isaiah 8:18 we are told, *"Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion."* In this, the prophet has given us a glimpse of the family that will belong to the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. The Hebrew writer quotes this verse to indicate the necessity for The Son of God to take on a human body to be like the children in Hebrews 2:13-14.

The description of the cruel suffering and death of the Messiah are given in Isaiah 52 and 53. The second portion of Isaiah 53:10 states, *"He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days."* While this passage tells how He will be marred beyond recognition, beaten, crucified, killed, and buried, it also specifically tells us that He will have decedents!

Later, in Isaiah 63, the prophet speaks of the mystery contained in the promise to Abraham. At that time, however, God did not reveal how and when the blessing to all nations would come. Jesus and the apostles made that known through the preaching of the gospel. The Jews rejected the very idea of an assembly of people bought by the blood of the Messiah, but the faithful recognize the Christ as *"Our Father, Our Redeemer from of old"* (Isaiah 63:16). Now, look at the many ways Paul describes Jesus and what He does for us in Titus 2:11-14. He is *"the grace of God, the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior,"* and names Him *"Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us, to purify for Himself a people for His own possession."*

The wise man of Israel said to all parents, *"Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). The prophet referred to Christ when he said, *"But now, O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand"* (Isaiah 64:8). As father teaches, chastises, and molds his children, so the messiah molds the children God has placed in His care. Writing of the Christ, Paul says, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10). Each member of His body, the church, has been shaped and molded into the individual the creator wants us to be by the gospel of Christ.

Often the person who raises a child is called the child's parent, even when they are not related by blood. We see this in scripture as Paul calls Timothy his son in 1 Timothy 1:2 and 2 Timothy 1:2. In the first, Paul refers to him as *"my true child in the faith"* and in the second as *"my beloved son."* Paul had raised Timothy in the gospel and "molded" him to be a worker among the gentiles. There are

also instances where an older brother or sister acts as a parent for younger siblings when the parents are no longer around. It is a fact that for baptized believers, Christ is our savior, redeemer, and brother. Figuratively, He is our father in the respect that He taught us the words of truth brought down from heaven.

In addition, a father makes it possible for his children to have an inheritance. Christ Jesus has provided us with a "joint heritage" with Him. *"He (God the Father) predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself"* (Ephesians 1:5). The Hebrew writer quotes a portion of Isaiah 8:18, *"Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me"* (Hebrews 2:13). Further, *"In Him, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will"* (Ephesians 1:9-11).

Throughout scripture, the duties, powers, capabilities, characteristics, and personalities of individuals name them. The name used changes as they and the times change. Abram became Abraham when another son was born. Saul became Paul when he went to the Gentiles. In a similar manner, the names and titles of Jesus change to describe Him in the various duties He performs. Regardless of all other designations, *"God has made Him both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36).