

Names of God from the Bible

14 – Everlasting Father

If only we could grasp the significance of this eternal name of God, our world would be an entirely different place to live.

Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7

Our enemy, Satan, has done all he can to deceive us, distort our understanding of God and discredit the character of God, and unfortunately, far too many people have succumbed to his deception and lies.

It all began in the Garden. Satan's opening question to Eve was, "*Did God say...?*" He raised doubts about her understanding of God's instructions. He then went on to undermine God's character and plans by lying that "*you will not die*". Satan then followed with deception and gave a false view of God's will. "*Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*"

Adam and Eve died spiritually immediately and physically later. Death entered a perfect world at that point.

What Adam and Eve appear to have missed was that they were already 'like God'. They have been created in His image, and they knew only good. Now they were to know and experience evil for themselves. Satan underplayed the consequences and overplayed the prohibition. He portrayed God as an egotistical spoil-sport, rather than a loving Heavenly Father who cared passionately about the people He had created and sought only their best interests.

Ever since, people have struggled with this 'default' view of God. That He is an aloof, holy Being who dislikes people, demands unquestionable and unrealistic obedience, and who is quick and merciless to punish any misdemeanour, however minor it may be. Someone who looks to the guilty culprit to do penance, but is unlikely to give them a real sense of forgiveness.

However, that is not the picture of God that we read of in the Bible. Yes, God is holy. He is totally unique, uncreated. Yes, He is totally righteous, and that means He will always do what is right. Yes, He is sinless and yes, sinful people cannot enter His presence. Nevertheless, God made a way so that we, though totally incapable of living up to our standards let alone God's holiness, can still have an intimate relationship with Him. He achieved that through the sinless life, sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God.

The God of the Old Testament is the same God as the God of the New Testament. God the Father did not change His character after Jesus died on the Cross. God the Father has been the Everlasting Father from eternity past and will be for eternity future.

So how does the Bible reveal God as a Heavenly Father? Well, ironically, we go back to Genesis 3 and see how God's intention was to guard Adam and Eve from evil. He had given Adam and Eve all the 'good' they could ever want or need. The only thing He denied them was evil.

God treated them with respect; gave them a free will to do whatever they liked. He even gave them the power to choose to eat or resist eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. He visited them in the cool of the day, a time suggesting refreshment and conversation, friendship and discovery, education and bonding.

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Even after they disobeyed His direct command, God still came to see them to initiate reconciliation. In changing their coverings of leaves with garments of skins, God demonstrated that the way back to a relationship with Him was through sacrifice. The 'work' was not done by Adam and Eve; it was done by God and through the death of the sacrifice. It fore-shadowed Calvary, with Jesus being our Eternal Sacrifice.

Throughout Scripture, we find God is the one that initiates reconciliation. He doesn't demand allegiance, so much as showing that it is the way to blessing and prosperity.

What does that name mean for us today

We have a Creator God who loves us, cares for us, desires what is best for us and longs to have an intimate relationship with us that starts on earth and continues in Heaven forever.

Prayer

Father, I am so grateful that I can turn to You at any moment of the day or night, and know that You are there loving me, supporting me and ready to hear the deepest cry of my heart. I pray that everyone reading this will come to know You as their loving Heavenly Father, too. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Psalm 103
- Isaiah 55:1-13
- Luke 15:11-24
- John 3:1-18

Questions

1. How would you describe your perspective of God the Father?
2. Has God revealed Himself as a loving Heavenly Father to you?
3. How do you feel Jesus fulfils the title of Everlasting Father?