

## The Fatherly King, Forever

Dads can create quite a stir on the elementary school playground. Claims of “my dad can beat up your dad” and “my dad is smarter than your dad” swirl among the littles as they banter back and forth, taking pride in their dad, who - in their mind - is bigger than life.

Similarly, the title, **Everlasting Father**, has created quite a bit of discussion around the theological watercooler. Isaiah uses it to describe the long-promised and long-awaited Messiah. Some interpret the title describing Jesus’ divine nature and eternal relationship to His creation (Jn 1:1-5; Col 1:16-17). Jesus is the “Father of Eternity”, who is beyond creation, over creation, as well as near creation. While this is certainly true, Isaiah likely had a much simpler and more intimate understanding in mind. “Jesus opens the way to God’s fatherly heart”<sup>1</sup> and functions like the neverending fatherly King. He is the “Forever Father” behaving like the perfect father. He is present, faithful, devoted, kind, gentle and so on.

The gospels demonstrate this dynamic by consistently showing Jesus’ kingly goodness in action as He provides and protects during His earthly ministry. He loves the unlovable, heals the sick, and forgives the guilt ridden. Moreover, in the Gospel of John, **Jesus explains that He provides and protects like a good shepherd does his sheep** (Jn 10:1-18). Jesus, the Good Shepherd leads (v. 4), enriches (v. 10), and welcomes (v. 16). All the while His everlasting fatherly heart is evident - active, reliable, generous, caring, and tender.

I give [my sheep] eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one (John 10:28-30)

We are secure in our neverending fatherly King’s hands. According to Charles H. Spurgeon, “There is no unfathering Christ, and there is no unchilding us. He is a father to those who trust Him.”

**John 1:1-5 (ESV)** - *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. **All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 204-205