

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

What A Name!

PART

4

TITLE

Everlasting Father

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9:6-7



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Well, it is great to see you, Providence family. I hope that this is going to be a significant week for you. If you are new here with us, welcome. Your kids, if you're still in here, they did an absolutely fantastic job, and so thank God that He has blessed us as a family of faith with so many young people for us to be able to train, encourage, and help them to learn and love the Lord. But it is so good to see. I hope this is a great week for you, and I hope that this time will help your heart to be ready so that it can be a great week.

The fact is, is that there's so many hurdles that are set in front of each one of us that make it really difficult for you to wake up on Tuesday morning, which is Christmas, and be ready to worship and to celebrate. There's so many things that can stand in front of us. There's anxieties, there's work, there's sickness, there's also de-filement. And God has blessed us in so many amazing ways that we see within the word, that He explains to us so that we can be ready come that morning of Christmas with a full heart, with a clean heart, because of what He has made available.

I pray that this is a time that's really encouraging to you. I want to pause and just pray for us. Okay? Father in heaven, thank You so much for Your word and we pray that Your word would do just what it says it can do and what it will do, and I pray, God, that You would help Your word, Father, to pierce our heart, Lord, to, Lord, remove, to reveal, to unveil the things in our life or the lack of faith, the sin, Lord, areas where there's ingratitude. Father, I pray, God, that You would take that out and You would replace it with gratitude and with mercy and with fullness, that we would be able to celebrate You out of a full heart because of what You have made available to us in your Son Jesus Christ.

I pray that as we look at this amazing prophecy one more time this month, I pray, God, that the words of Isaiah, Lord, that they would be such a comfort to those in the room. I pray, Father, that You would help us to see that in Jesus Christ we have a father figure that is unlike any experience that we have had here on the earth. And so would You open up our eyes? Would You speak to weakness? And would You encourage our hearts and prepare us to celebrate the most amazing news that You came for us in Jesus Christ. And we pray all of this in His perfect name. Amen. Amen.

We are in the 9th chapter of Isaiah, and so love for you to head there. We are in a series. It's simply called What a Name. Where that comes from is in this verse, in verse 6 of chapter 9, is that God the Father tells us that He's sending to us a Son and that that Son has four different names. We've looked this month, four different weeks at what and who Jesus will be and who He is and what He'll be for each and every one of us.

The fact is, is that you guys know that it doesn't take very long after the news of pregnancy for the search for that right, appropriate, perfect name to start, and every single one of us, we look at various things in order to limit those names. For some, we have favorite names, or maybe there's family names or there's Bible names or there's trendy names. There's also some names that just really quickly come off the list because, well, for obvious reasons they're sort of off limits.

For example, if you or your spouse have ever dated anyone in the history of your life other than your spouse and that person had a name, well, that name is off limits for you and for your child. Or if you or your spouse just naturally, and all of us do, all of us hear a name and we sort of build these associations with different characteristics with people who have had that name before. Some of us, for no reason whatsoever, it's still a great name, but we just think, "No, just not going to name that person that name. This is our child. This is important."

Then, of course, we have to consider first, last name connections. And so if you have a last name like Ball or like Lear, like I had in high school, I had two friends, the Lear family and the Ball family, and they named their daughters Chanda and Crystal, so we had Chanda Lear and Crystal Ball. Now that should've been a clue, but it wasn't. They were loving families and they were really kind girls. But the fact is, is that sometimes it's very difficult to find that name, and the reason is because we want to find a name that matches this person, and yet we can't see the person. How amazing it would be to be able to pick a name that's synonymous with their life purpose or with their character, but the problem is, is we're limited because we don't know those things.

But God was not limited, and when He sent Jesus Christ, His Son to us, He knew exactly who Jesus was and He knew exactly what Jesus would come to do, and so He gave Him very specific names that were synonymous with who He is and what He would do for us. Isaiah 9, verse 6, says, "For to us, a child is born and to us, a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And of the increase of His government and of peace, there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this."

Now these names, these four names that you see there in verse 6, each and every one of these names, they described who Jesus is, but they also describe what Jesus would provide for us, what problems we had that Jesus was going to come and be our solution. You see, it says, "To us, a child is born and to us a son is given," and this is important that we're given as gifted. In other words, you and I, we've probably, most of us, have bought a gift for a loved one, maybe even this month, and when we bought that gift, we thought about what that person likes, what they need, what would cause their heart to sing, what would make them really pleased and maybe what wouldn't.

And so we bought a thoughtful gift. We provided a thoughtful gift and then we gave it. And what this is saying when he says, "And to us, a son is given, is that God Almighty looked at you and He looked at me and all the rest of us and He says, "You know what they need and do you know what they long for? They long a son that will be these things to them."

You see, all that Jesus is, is available to you, and this is the good news, that every single one of us have is that some of us right now, we need counsel because we have a big decision in the new year and so what did He give us? He gave us a Savior that's called Wonderful Counselor, who's full of wonder, full of wisdom. Some of us right now, we know what we need to do, but we simply don't find the strength to be able to do it. What did He give us? He gave us a mighty God, someone who has strength and power, ability and might. Some of us right now, we're so full of anxiety that we need peace, so who did He give us? He gave us the Prince of Peace.

We come to the last one, it's actually the third on the list, but for our month of planning, it's last. He gave us somebody that He calls Everlasting Father. Now it's really interesting you understand this because most of us in this room, most of us in this room, we long for someone to be a father figure even if we have an amazing father, someone to protect and provide and mentor and teach. Some of us have lost our father. Some of us have been totally separated, very estranged from our fathers, and what He says here is this, is that He provides this for us.

And you need to understand this is such a gift. If you can understand exactly who Jesus is for you, that God Almighty can look not only into your life, but into your heart all the way to the depths of everything that you need and everything that you desperately want. He says, "This is the gift. It's the gift of my Son." And you would say, just as Jeremiah said, when he says, "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom and let not the mighty man boast in his might and let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this that he understands and knows me."

Jesus Christ is the greatest gift that you will receive not only this week, but on your stay on earth. You cannot improve upon it, and when you understand the gift that He actually is and all that He provides and all that's available to you, even if you never use it, even if you never even lean on it, you would recognize that the greatest boast of your life is the fact that you know Him, that you understand Him, and you have a relationship with Him.

What does it mean? This is actually one that has perplexed theologians for years. I read so many books on this because it really is interesting to read what past thinkers have thought, that here we have the Son of God and He's called the Everlasting Father. You see, the Bible tells us that God has revealed Himself to us that here is one God, and that one God has three persons and they're totally distinct. They're not the same, that God the Son ... There's God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit. So here He says this. God the Father is telling us that God the Son is going to be our Everlasting Father.

How are we supposed to think about this? In Isaiah 9, he doesn't give us all the answers, but the rest of the Bible fills in exactly what we need to know of what it means that Jesus is our Everlasting Father. Let me show you two amazing truths. Then we're going to look at three applications for our life. The first is, this is what it means. It means that Jesus is the Father of eternity. He's the Father of eternity. When He says everlasting, it's a synonym for eternity. They mean the same. In fact, it's the exact same word in most cases.

Now you and I both know that even in our language, we use the word father in different context. If I had my three sons up here and I said, “Hey, I’m father and these are my sons,” you would recognize it is in the context of that relationship. However, we also use it in a variety of other ways, such as when we talk about a founder or an author of something, someone that first wrote the document. We have founding fathers, even Jesus Himself, He told us in John Chapter 8, verse 44, he says, “Satan is the father of lies.” He calls him a father, a author, a founder of deceit. We look at our founding fathers and that’s what we call them. We call them fathers. They founded the country. You look at this slide and what you see up here is you see the father of the Constitution. You see the father of physics. You don’t have to be very old to be a father in this context, you see the founder or the father of Facebook.

Jesus is the Father of eternity. He’s the founder, the originator, the author of eternity. That’s what He means, Everlasting Father, Eternal Father. He has no beginning and He has no end. Psalm 90, verse 2 says, “From everlasting to everlasting, You are God.” If you just look at that word everlasting and switch it around, what it says is He lasts forever. He lasts forever. He never began and He will never end. In John Chapter 1, verse 1, it says, “In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.”

Now you and I are using words right now to try to explain things, to describe what’s in my mind and in my heart. You’re going to leave this place, and if someone asks you, “Hey, what did you just hear?” you’re going to use words to explain if they missed it. Well, see, God also chose words, and so what He did was He sent Jesus Christ and He calls Him an analogy. He says, “This is my word. This is the one that’s going to explain Me to you. This is the one that’s going to explain life to you, how you’re supposed to live in My world?” And this is what he says again. It says, “In the beginning was the word.” In the beginning actually points back to in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and so Jesus was before creation.

You keep reading in John chapter 1, and he says that all things were created by Him, and the Bible keeps reinforcing this truth that the eternal one chose to create space within time. Psalm 102, verse 25 and 27 says, “You laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish. Things fall apart here on the earth, but You remain and Your years have no end.” You get to the last book of the Bible, and Jesus Himself appears before John and this is what He says of Himself. He says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega.” This is the first and last letter of the alphabet in Hebrew.

What is he saying? He’s saying, “I am the first and the last. I never began. I will never end, who is, who was, and who is to come.” What this means is that Jesus is the eternal, uncreated creator of the heavens and the earth. You see, you and I, we may found things. We may become the father of something here on the earth. We may discover things within the sandbox that is life, but you need to understand that Jesus Christ created every founder. He created the sandbox and He created everything that is to be discovered. He is the Father of eternity.

Now we have to ask the question. If the verse begins, “For unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given,” then God Almighty looked at us and in love, He says, “This is what they need and this is what they want and this is what their heart would sing over if I gave them this.” And then He says, “This is what it is.” What does it mean that God Almighty looked at you and me and in our heart, and He says, “I’m giving you the perfect gift. It’s called the Father of eternity.” How is this a benefit to us? Why should we wake up every single morning and say, “I just received again the greatest gift that could ever be given to me. I actually have been given the Father of eternity”?

How is that a gift to us? This is how. When God created us, and specifically when Jesus Christ created us, He actually planted within each and every one of us almost like an alarm that would keep us close, that when we got far from Him, we would recognize and the heart would begin to sound an alarm. We’d begin to ask questions like, “What is life even for and why am I here? And everything’s worthless and everything’s meaningless. I just built a hospital. I’m helping kids in China. I’m helping all these people in the world, and yet I still don’t know why.” Well, God Almighty, He created within us this alarm clock to keep us close and you know what that alarm was called? It’s called eternity. Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verse 11, He says, “He has put eternity into man’s heart.”

Now what does that mean? It means that Jesus created us to feel restless until we connect with Him, the Father of eternity, and experience His gift of eternal life. You see, your heart and my heart it simply feels restless until that thirst for eternity is filled by the Father of eternity. When He looked at us, after we had sinned against Him, after we had walked away from Him, and He says, “You know what pained more than anything else? I have already placed within them an alarm clock that’s sounding throughout the entire world. Every heart is far from Me. What I need to do is to provide the very one who can fill that hole within their heart, that longing for eternity, that longing for eternal life.” He knew that we couldn’t get to Him, and so He sent his Son to us.

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish,” but have what? Eternal life. Only the Father of eternity can grant you the gift of eternal life, and so what we find here is this, is that Jesus Christ did exactly what the Father promised. He’s the only one that could fill that longing within your heart. He’s the only one that could cause you to begin to experience soul rest this side of heaven, where you can work and you can labor and you can see everything in relation to the fact that you are in a relationship with the eternal one and He’s given you the gift of eternal life. It helps you sleep. It helps you see the significance of your relationships, the significance of your responsibilities. What a gift that He’s given to us, that He is the father of eternity.

The second thing we see here is this, is that Jesus is our loving father figure for eternity. Now I struggled with knowing exactly how to word this point. I can explain it probably better than I can make that sentence really short. I could say Jesus is our loving Father for eternity, and I believe that that would be accurate because that's what God said. But I don't want you to get confused and to think that, wait a minute, is Jesus the exact same as God the Father? And he's not. But as the Son of God, Jesus will be fatherly to us and He will do so forever. And the amazing thing is that no matter what your experience is with your father, Jesus will be a father type to you that is better and unlike anyone has ever experienced on the earth.

I recognize that the very idea that Jesus is everlasting Father, to some of you it's like you just hit a wall or maybe it feels like I just threw you into a wall. You see, some of you right now, you think about your experience with your earthly father and it wasn't a good experience. You've been so hurt by a human father that the idea that you now have an everlasting father doesn't feel like a gift at all. Some of you couldn't wait to get away. In fact, you're right now totally estranged from your earthly father and you don't want to be in that relationship. Now all of a sudden the Bible says, "Oh, not only that, but I'm going to give you an everlasting Father you can't get away from forever."

Some of you are just saying, "I just don't have a category for that kind of pain and that long a time." But have you ever considered the fact that the strength of your emotion towards your earthly father is due to the importance of fatherhood that God wrote upon your heart? Have you ever thought for a moment this world is so absolutely broken that no matter how qualified, no matter how gifted, no matter how intentional a human father is, every father has failed in some way. I know that I have.

The fact is for most of us, if another person other than our father treated us the way that our father treated us, we may not like them. We may have great bitterness towards them, but we wouldn't feel the angst that we feel towards our father because that's within our heart, is that God intended to give us a person that we could lean upon, that would appreciate us, that would be strong and that would be approachable, that would be present. They would come to our ball games. They would root for us, and no matter what happens, they would be there and say, "I'm still proud of you." Who can provide and protect and mentor and teach.

This is because that category has been etched upon our heart by God Himself is why we feel the strength of emotion towards the failure of earthly fathers, but I want you to think about this. For those who trust Jesus Christ, He will be the father figure that's etched upon your heart, that He has etched upon your heart. Yeah, there's a lot of people. Just remember the amazing athlete, Bo Jackson. This guy was truly remarkable. There's all kinds of documentaries about this athlete. He played pro football and pro baseball and he was amazing at both of them. Then he got hurt early, but it's interesting. He was estranged from his father. One time in 1995, he sat down and this is what he said to Sports Illustrated. He says, "You know what? My father has never seen me play a game," and that stung. He says, "I, here I am, I'm supposed to be the premier athlete." He says, "And yet I'm sitting in a locker room envying my teammates whose dad would come in and talk."

Listen to me. That may be you, but I want you to know something. If you trust Jesus Christ, what you have in Jesus Christ is a father figure who is able to perfectly meet the categories of longing that God Almighty has already etched upon your heart, a protector, a defender, a teacher. See, the Bible says that Jesus Christ is a Father who will be safe to us. Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous man runs into it and it's safe." He's approachable and He's present. Psalm 34, verse 18 says, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted. He gives us loving correction." Proverbs 3:12, "The Lord reproves him whom He loves in the Father, the Son in whom he delights." He delights over us. Every single child does something when they're young, and then they turn, they want to turn and have Dad say, "I'm watching. I saw it too."

Zephaniah 3:17 says that Jesus over us, he says, "He will rejoice over you with gladness and He will quiet you by His love and He will exalt over you with singing." You see, when you admit you are a sinner, that you cannot save yourself, and if you believe and place your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and confess Him as Lord of your life, Jesus says to us that he adopts us into His family where He is everlasting Father. Do you know what He does once we get there? He protects and provides in such unusual ways. John chapter 10 says this, Jesus says, "I give them eternal life." He's the provider of eternal life, and He says, "And they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand." What's He saying? "I'm going to protect them."

Some of us think, oh, salvation is all up to me and keeping is all up to me, and so we treat it like it's an egg. And if we stumble and we drop it, oh, my goodness, look what I did. And Jesus says, "It's not in your hands to lose. It's in My hands and I will not drop the ball. I will not drop, but I will not let you out of My hand." And not only that. Then all of a sudden he pulls back into the Trinity. He says, "You know what? There's also God the Father," and He says, "And 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."

Can you see what's happening? You, your salvation. When you trust Jesus Christ, Jesus Himself places His hands over you and He says, "You are mine." And the Father, His Father, God the Father, he places His hands over Jesus' hands and says, "Oh, you are ours." You see, there is security in Jesus Christ. And that's why when you and I get to the place where we come face-to-face with our very last battle on the earth, and that is when you face death, you will find on that day that Jesus' hands will have not grown feeble over time, that there is nothing that can separate you from His love, nothing that can separate you from His faithfulness, nothing that can separate you from His strength. This is our Father and He will be this to us forever. Forever.

What do we do with this, this Christmas season? How do we respond to the gift that God has given us in an everlasting Father? A few things. First is this, let's allow His eternal reign to frame our days. Now let me explain what I mean by that. Let's allow, let's consider, let's treat it as such that His eternal reign is the frame by which we look at the limited number of days that we have on this earth. You remember Moses in the Bible, he led Israel out of Egypt and all of a sudden they get almost to the promise land.

They sin against God, they rebel and He sends them back into the Wilderness and He says, “This generation, they all have to die. We’re going to wait until they all do.” And so for 40 years, Moses is conducting funerals in a great big desert, and one day he just says, “You know, I just have to write something down,” and so he writes Psalm 90 and he talks about just the brevity of life and he says, “From everlasting to everlasting, You are God,” and then he compares God to us and He says, “But you return man to the dust. You’re the eternal one and we are ones who die and return to the ground.”

He’s not saying that our lives don’t matter. He’s saying that our lives only make sense so long as we view them in context of God who is eternal. Then he goes on and he says that if you and I could possibly see the totality of His glory, if God would allow us right now to go up into heaven and just see Him in all of His wisdom, in all of his mind and all of His holiness, righteousness, mercy, generosity, compassion, and He would allow us to see the totality of our limited number of days on the earth.

Moses goes on and he says, “If God would allow us to see that, then every single one of us would pray a prayer, and that prayer is this. God, would you teach us to number our days that we may have a heart of wisdom? Would you help me to see my days in the context inside the frame of Your eternal plan, Your purpose, to help me to see what it would actually be like if I gave You every day and said, God, would you just use this day? Would you use my life? Would you use these relationships in such a way that gives You glory and that propels the mission forward that Jesus would be known to the ends of the earth?”

You see, our prophecy, it says that the government shall be upon His shoulder and there’s no doubt here that He’s talking about more than just human governments. He’s also talking about the government of your heart, and what we know from scripture is true, what we know from life is true, is that is that when the government of our hearts is resting on Jesus’ mighty shoulders, then two very specific things happen. The first is we begin to ask different kinds of questions.

We begin to look at our life and the things in our life and we begin to ask questions like, How can I leverage my calendar for His glory and His kingdom? How can I leverage my marriage or my singleness or my parenting or my business or my money, my influence? Every one of us has a circle of influence. If for whatever reason you talk and those people listen, how do I leverage that influence over those people to view my days as utterly a tool for God to say, God, you’re the eternal one and I’m here for a brief amount of time? When our heart is resting and being ruled by the mighty shoulders of Jesus Christ, we begin to ask different kinds of questions.

The other thing that takes place is we experience the reign of a better king. You see, our hearts, every one of us, we’re ruled by a king. Sometimes we don’t think of them as kings, but because we’re talking about eternity a lot in this sermon and the Father of eternity, what I want to talk about is two kings, one king of yesterday and another is a king of tomorrow, and both of these kings are really bad kings.

They're cruel kings. They're imprisoning kind of kings. The king of the past is regret. There's things that you regret. The fact is, is it is a king over your life. The king of the future is worry.

Here's how I would describe each one of these. Regret is the king that imprisons us in yesterday's mistakes, and worry is the king that transports us to an imaginary world where grace is unavailable and where fear is unassailable, where no amount of encouragement can help console you. Now who in the world and what in the world could God have given us who can conquer our failures from yesterday, who can absorb the regrets and the guilt that's been stored up from our past mistakes? And who is there who can console our fears about tomorrow, our anxieties and worries about tomorrow other than the one who is, who was, and who is to come?

Hebrews chapter 13, verse 8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forevermore. He is the only one that can conquer the king of regret in your life so that you do not have to be imprisoned by all of your past mistakes, and He is the only king that can conquer the king of worry in your heart. And He does so by making promises that He places His character upon and says, 'I promise you, I will make good on this promise. I will be God tomorrow in your life. I will provide tomorrow in your life.'" This is the kind of king that we have, and so let's allow His eternal reign to frame our days.

Second, let's trust Jesus today with the rest of our life. Some of you, you know Christ is your Savior and Lord, and yet you know God has spoken to you things within His word that are not fuzzy to you. They're not unclear, and yet you will not obey because you do not believe Him. You do not believe that what He says is in your best interest. You believe that He came and died for you. You recognize that there's even a tension between, you would give Him your soul, but you're not going to give Him this relationship. You're not going to give Him your time. You're not going to give Him whatever He's asking for. You recognize that there is a problem even within your own heart. And yet when it comes down to it, you cannot say yes to something God says. This is your next step. I just plead with you. He is an everlasting Father who will be with you when you get to that next step.

Then there's some of us in the room who never trusted Christ with their heart. We've never leaned upon Him and today is the day. I'm pleading you, make today the day. Right now recognize, admit that you are a sinner. You cannot save yourself. You cannot do it. He tells you you cannot do it. Jesus didn't come to the earth to congratulate us on our morality. He came because we had a lack of it, that we have sinned and fallen short of his glory, and He says, "If you believe in Me and confess Me as Lord, I will forgive you of all of your sin."

The last thing I want to encourage us as a church family with application is this. Let's strive to deepen our relationship with Him. You see, Jesus ... God Himself, frames the entire context of Jesus in our life, in the context of a father figure relationship. He wants you to know Him. He wants you to be able to know Him well enough to know how to lean on Him, how to listen to Him, and He's given us all kinds of gifts.

I just want to talk about two real quick.

One is prayer and one is the Bible. As we begin the new year, I want to encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. The first is this, is prayer. Starting next Sunday, we're going to start a ... It's real brief. It's a four-week series. It's called Pray Like This. It's Jesus telling us how to pray, how to come in contact with Him, how to talk to Him, how to listen to Him, how to respond when we read the word, how do we then talk to Him about what we're reading. Simple messages about prayer.

But then He's also given us the Bible, and I promise you that if the only diet you receive from the scriptures is once a week when you come here, you're leaving so much food on the table, so much food that can strengthen you and that can help you. What we put together once again this year is a little journal. They're free. They're outside. You can just go pick one up. Now listen, this is just a plan, not the plan. It's a plan.

If you have something that you're planning to do to study the Bible next year, do that. Do that. But you don't have something, you say, "You know, I would love to read a little bit of the Bible. I don't even know where to start." Well, this may help you with that. In each and every day, it's actually by date. I just turned to May 7. There's one passage or two, and then there's some lines. Look, if this is too fast for you, slow down. If it's too slow for you, read more.

If you have a thought, write down the thought. If you have a question, you can email me, any of the pastors, your life leaders, to say, "I read something. I don't understand it." God wants us to grow together. This is not supposed to be a prison. It's supposed to be a tool, and so I would love for you to pick one up even more than this tool. The tool may not be helpful, but this book, this book, God wants to speak to you and He wants you to know something of who He is for you. I encourage you, you would seek out a deeper relationship with our everlasting Father as we begin a new year. So let me pray for us.

Father in heaven, thank you for Your kindness to us, kindness that extends and will extend not only today and tomorrow, but for all eternity. We praise You, Jesus, because we believe that You are the Father of eternity, the founder of it, that You're the only one that can fill that gap that You place within our heart for eternal things. And so we look to You now. God, we also come to You. We want to sing to You now. We want to respond. We also want to give, and so would You take our worship from our heart? Would You take these resources? Would You see them as what they are, expressions of faith that we love You more than any? We thank You so much for Your kindness. We thank You for Christmas, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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