

Christmas Eve 2011: “A Child is Born” *Isaiah 9*

Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV, *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.”*

Wonderful verses we hear each Christmas. *But what would be the conditions leading up to this wonderful birth?*

In chapter 8, Israel had stopped trusting in the Lord; they had deserted following His Word and had slipped into a very self-centered hedonistic lifestyle.

A national and personal lifestyle away from God is always a barren road leading to loss and emptiness.

As a nation, Israel had chosen a path leading away from the safety and warmth of God’s presence, power and protection.

Assyria and Babylon invaded their land, and they were powerless to stop them; defeated, they were led away captive.

They lost their king, their right to rule themselves, their land, their holy city, and their temple lay in ruins.

Eventually they were allowed to return to their land to rebuild their temple but they would not have their own king. The glory of their nation had disappeared.

They were living in a land without their king and worshipping in a temple without their God and it remained that way for **400 years**.

Darkness, gloom, distress and a deep depression overshadowed them. With Israel’s dreams shattered, they groped about in the darkness.

But God had not given up on them. There was still hope for a better future. So as we look at these wonderful verses they are preceded by these words.

Isaiah 9:1-2 NIV, *“Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*

His birth is described as a great light bursting forth in the future from the region of Galilee into the gloom and darkness of a life lived in the shadow of death.

As that light rose over the land its rays spread across it overflowing into regions even beyond Israel.

Now, interestingly enough, Galilee wasn’t where the promised child would be born. He was born further south in the town of Bethlehem of Judea.

So why didn't it say the light would burst forth there?

When He was born in Bethlehem, only a few shepherds and magi were invited to get a glimpse of the one who would bring light to a darkened world.

Galilee was the place from which, this boy who would grow into a man and the Messiah, would begin His public ministry. It was from there that His life and message would begin to shine forth.

And it would shine so brightly that both Israel and Gentiles alike would be bask in its joy giving glow.

Isaiah 9:3, *"You have **enlarged the nation** and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder."*

Hosea 2:23, *"Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy [**his bride Israel**]; Then I will say to those who were not My people [**Gentiles**], 'You are My people!' And they shall say, 'You are my God!'"*

There is hope for **all** who live in darkness, despair, and the shadow of death. God promised to shatter the chains of Israel's bondage and release them from those who oppressed them and held them captive.

Isaiah 9:4, *"For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor."*

Israel's foes would be defeated and the loss, pain and death of wars waged against them by their oppressor would come to an end.

Isaiah 9:5, *"Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire."*

What would usher in this hope, this joy, this end to war and increasing peace? This is where we began!

Isaiah 9:6-7, *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."*

*"For to **us** a child is born, to **us** a son is given,"*

There is coming the day, says Isaiah, when **our own king** will be born and reign over us from David's throne. David's dynasty would take its rightful place and reign permanently. This ideal kingdom would have an ideal king.

Who would that ideal King be?

Isaiah's prophecy wasn't new in message. In fact, through the prophet Nathan, the Lord God had told David of this coming one, in **2 Samuel 7**.

2 Samuel 7:12-16 (NIV), “When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom **for ever**. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the **rod of men**, with **floggings inflicted by men**. 15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.”

None of David’s sons stayed on the throne forever, nor did they rule in righteousness David admitted that in His last words in 2 Samuel 23. This was speaking of the coming Messiah King.

But why would He be afflicted and flogged by men? Is this saying that He would do wrong?

2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

God counted our sin against Him so that we could have His righteousness applied to our account.

Isaiah 53:4-5 NKJV, “Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was

bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.”

We know that the power to draw all people to the Father came through the cross Jesus later carried.

John 12:32-33, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”

The light of the message of Christ gives hope to all those who living in darkness, despair, and the shadow of death. He is able to shatter the chains that keep us in bondage and release us from people and things that oppress us and hold us captive.

This newborn child and son would bring light and life into the lives of people and as such He would come to be known by four titles:

[1.] **He will be called Wonderful Counselor.**

I don’t know about you, but there have been times when I have received counsel that was anything but wonderful. And when I have followed that advice against my better judgment, let’s just say that it was less than worthless.

Clara Null, “If it’s free, it’s advice. If you pay for it, it’s counseling. If you can use either one, it’s a miracle.”

On the other hand, I have to tell you that in the last year, if I had not had a counselor during my deepest darkest trials, I don’t know where I would be today.

It is interesting that the Christ would assume this title as Wonderful Counselor, it reinforces the ministry and goodness of counseling. But that shouldn't be a surprise to us. The Bible has always supported our need to pursue counsel.

Proverbs 12:15, *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise."*

Proverbs 24:6, *"For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors there is safety."* **NKJV**

It's not just saying that it is wise to seek **wise** counsel, it's saying that it should be pursued from several wise counselors.

The coming child was promised to be a Wonderful Counselor because He would be intimately acquainted with the counsels of our Heavenly Father.

*"While camping in a national park, Bill struck up a conversation with Ray, who was shaving in the campground restroom. Bill asked Ray what he did for a living. Ray replied, "I'm a juvenile rehabilitation counselor." After a little pause, Bill said, "Yep, I'm a parent too." **Reader's Digest, Nov. 1992, p. 64***

Those of us who are parents and who love our kids to pieces are still capable of giving advice that is less than perfect, but we always give what we think will best benefit our children.

God is perfect and His counsel is too. Seek His Word.

Proverbs 19:21, *"There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the LORD'S counsel—that will stand."*

In this same way, the coming one would be known for His wonderful wise counsel.

Jesus grew to be a wonderfully wise counselor.

John 6:68, *"But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."*

The wonderfulness of who He is doesn't stop here.

[2.] **He** (this child and son) **will be called Mighty God.**

God, the mighty One. As sure as His wisdom is, so is His power to save those He reaches out to.

Jesus grew into a man who healed the blind, made the lame walk, raised the dead, and calmed the raging seas. No one but a mighty God could do that. And better than that – He was able to forgive sin!

Matthew 9:5-8, *"For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? 6 "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" —then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 7 And he arose and departed to his house. 8 Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men."*

[3.] He will be called Everlasting Father

To the Apostle Philip He said this in...

John 14:9, "Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

He is God, one with the Father, who is from everlasting to everlasting.

The same who is mighty God is born a fragile child; the ancient of days becomes an infant with a short human lifespan; the everlasting Father is a Son given.

Micah 5:2 ESV, " But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old."

Yes, Jesus is Wonderfully wise, for he is both God and man. His life was accompanied by a constant series of wonders, and, without controversy, great was the mystery of godliness concerning him.

His love is the wonder of angels; in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, were all indeed wondrous. It is the awesomeness of who He is that lends to the truth of His last title here...

[4.] He will be called The Prince of Peace.

He is our peace, and it is His peace that both sustains us and empowers us through the difficulties of life.

He is a peaceable prince, and his reign peaceable, for He is the author and giver of all good.

The promise made hundreds of years earlier was fulfilled in Jesus – the child born – the son given!

No more gloom for those in distress.

Galilee of the Gentiles was honored

Great Light has come for those in darkness

Dawning light for those in the shadow of death

The nation or kingdom has been enlarged

Joy has increased and will continue to completion.

For those of us who have received Him as the gift that He is; light has dawned and dispelled the power of darkness and distress in our lives.

Yes, we are still in battle over these things, but Jesus will always come through – He promises to bring us out of your troubles into a place of rejoicing by shattering the things that bind us and burden us.

Isaiah 9:7, "Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."

Justice & Righteousness: In justice the penalty for sin was met and His righteousness was imputed.

2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."