

Advent 2018 Part 4

A Child Is Born, A Son Is Given

Welcome to the last Sunday of Advent as once again we prepare for the arrival, the birth of Jesus the Messiah. These past weeks we have focused on who he is and on his name and what his name says about who he is. He is called Jesus which means “the Lord saves”, for the angel said he would save his people from their sins. He is called Immanuel which means “God with us”, the great message of his incarnation. This morning I want to focus on four unique names ascribed to Jesus by the prophet Isaiah to help us understand who he is.

“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. 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 forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.” Isaiah 9:6-7

There is no reason to believe Isaiah had any idea how these words would come to pass or to whom these words would apply, but we know they find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus our Savior, the Messiah. How extraordinary that at Christmas we stand at a manger looking at a newborn baby and apply these words. That is the mystery and the miracle of the incarnation. God with us. Let’s explore who Jesus is in light of Isaiah’s prophetic words.

First, consider the unusual nature of this passage: It’s a birth announcement. Before amniocentesis or ultra sound, Isaiah knew the gender of the child. Couples today have parties to reveal to family and friends the gender of their yet to be born child, but Isaiah knew by the word of the Holy Spirit. It’s a boy. “A Son is given.” Not only does he know the gender, he knows something of his character, his nature, what he will be called. He knows his destiny. He will reign on David’s throne forever. He knows how this will occur, by the zeal of the Lord. And Isaiah is writing all of this seven hundred years before it happens!

The opening words reveal the extraordinary nature of Jesus. We referenced this last Sunday, from the Council of Chalcedon, that Jesus was fully God and fully man, two natures existing without confusion, change or division, the characteristics of each nature preserved. Both natures, divine and human come together to form one person...the Only-begotten God, Son, Word, Lord Jesus Christ. Where do we see that in Isaiah’s words? The opening statement.

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.” A child born points to his humanity. He had to come in flesh the writer of Hebrews tells us in chapter 2, because “the children have flesh and blood” so “he too shared in their humanity” so he could free us from sin and death by his sacrifice on the cross. He became one of us, like us, so he could carry our sin and die for us, in our place. Jesus was not born as a son, he didn’t become a son in Bethlehem because he was already a Son! He was the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Godhead. But it was as the Son of God that he was given to us and for us. **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** **John 3:16** Born as a child, but given as a son!

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.” The government will be on his shoulders affirms his position as Lord over all. Isaiah points to that future time we spoke of a few Sundays ago when Jesus will reign over a literal kingdom on earth and all nations and people will serve and glorify him. We will reign with him, but as believers we are already citizens of a heavenly kingdom. Jesus already has begun to rule and reign in the hearts and lives of all those who know him as Savior, Lord and King.

Isaiah speaks of this King of Kings with four names and titles, describing him and his nature. I looked at the name and title of England’s Prince Charles. **His Royal Highness Prince Charles Philip Arthur George, Prince of Wales, Knight of the Garter, Knight of the Thistle, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, Order of Merit, Knight of the Order of Australia, Companion of the Queen’s Service Order, Privy Counselor, Aide-de-Camp, Earl of Chester, Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles and Prince and Great Steward of Scotland.** Some of those titles speak of roles he plays, aide-de-camp and privy counselor refer to his role as advisor to the queen and so on. None of it tells about his nature or character and none of it can compare to the name and titles Isaiah shares with regard to our Sovereign and King. Looking forward by the Holy Spirit seven hundred years, to a baby in a manger, God in flesh, Isaiah tells us, this is who he is!

“He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Wonderful Counselor. King James Version places a comma between wonderful and counselor, as if those are separate titles or descriptions. Five names rather than four. The truth is, you could divide each of them and the description would still be appropriate and truthful. He is Wonderful, he is Counselor, he is Mighty, he is God, he is Everlasting, he is a Father over

creation, he is a Prince and he is Peace incarnate. However, our modern translations put the two words together. He is a wonderful counselor.

This speaks of the wisdom he alone possesses, the counsel and direction he shares with us as we turn to him and follow him as Lord. The prophet Isaiah asks, **“Who has understood the mind of the Lord or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?”** Isaiah 40:13-14 The answer implied is “no one!” Jesus the Wonderful Counselor has no need to ask for instruction of another for he is the way, the truth and the life. He is wisdom. He knows the path of understanding. He is the wise and Sovereign Lord, ruling and reigning in our lives. That’s good news for us because that means there is no chaos or confusion, no uncertainty in his kingdom, in his administration. He knows exactly the steps to take. He will show us the way, he’ll lead us and give us the insight we need to make wise choices if we follow him and obey his word, his instruction.

The truth is, we all need his counsel. All of us are lost, needing someone to show us the way. We can’t make it on our own but in Jesus we find what we need because He is the personification of wise counsel. The bible says to keep his commands in your heart, follow his instructions for they will “prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.” His wise counsel brings health and life. **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.”** Proverbs 3:5-6

Not only is Jesus the Wonderful Counselor, he is Mighty God. This speaks of his divinity. Fully God and fully man remember. The bible says of Jesus, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together...He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him...”** Colossians 1:15-19 This baby in the manger born on Christmas day, this Savior come into the world is more than just a good man or a great teacher or a moral leader born to show us how to be better people. He is the Mighty God who spoke worlds into existence. By him all things were created and in him all things hold together. This is who he is!

Mary's baby boy Jesus is Savior, Messiah, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is Mighty God, incarnate, appearing in flesh, born of a virgin. Wonder of wonders!

Isaiah said concerning this King there would be no limit and no end to his kingdom. This speaks of power and dominion. We are frightened by all-powerful rulers because we can't trust human kings and rulers. They become power hungry despots and dictators, but not so with Jesus. He is the Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God who with his power humbled himself, made himself a servant and gave himself for us that we could be saved and have eternal life. That's why he was born. He became one of us so we could be saved through him and become like him, made righteous and adopted as part of his family. Paul writes, **"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" Romans 8:31-32**

Because Jesus is Wonderful Counselor and Mighty God we know he can and will forgive our sin. We have no reason to fear him. Because He is Mighty God we know he answers prayer and restores broken lives, He mends broken hearts and marriages and liberates from addiction and heals sickness and disease and brings hope to the hopeless. All you need is found in him. We can trust this Mighty God to be Savior and Lord and King of our lives!

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father. I get the first two, but how can he be Son and Father at the same time? He isn't. He is God the Son, however by referring to him as Everlasting Father in this passage we notice a couple of things. First, we see once again that Jesus and the Father (along with the Holy Spirit) are one. The writer of Hebrews says **"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word." Hebrews 1:3** We've already quoted from Colossians, that the fullness of God was in Jesus. Jesus said **"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me?" John 14:9-10** Jesus shows us the Everlasting Father.

But consider as well that according to some bible scholars the title Everlasting Father literally can be translated **"Father of Eternity."** He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God and Father of Eternity. He rules and reigns as Sovereign Lord above time, beyond time. To some of his critics Jesus said "Abraham saw my day and rejoiced." They said, "You're not even fifty years old. Have you seen Abraham?" And Jesus said, **"Before Abraham was, I Am." John 8:58.** That passage we read from Colossians declares that Jesus is "before all things." He is

before all things in pre-eminence and he along with the Father and the Holy Spirit existed before anything existed. He spoke the world into existence. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.”**

John 1:1-2 This is who he is. This is who we worship - the Everlasting God, now in flesh.

He is the Father of Eternity, the Lord over all Creation and he is in control. Don't panic. Don't get frustrated by life. God's got this. One scholar wrote, **“Let us be steadied, calmed, righted, as we remember that he whom we serve is not one who is shut up to a few years or decades, or even a few centuries, in which to work out his mission of love; he is the ‘Father of Eternity;’ he is Lord of all future time; he will cause his Word to be fulfilled; we may patiently wait, while we earnestly and faithfully work.”** (Clarkson/Pulpit Commentary). If you're wondering why God hasn't done what you think he should have done, or why he has delayed his help or his intervention, remember he is the Father of Eternity and Lord of all. He will watch over his word, keep his promises and fulfill each and every one in his time and in his way. Trust him. He will love, provide, protect, teach, lead and keep his word just as you would expect from one who is the exact representation of the good, unfailing, faithful, Almighty and Everlasting Father.

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Peace is a rare commodity in this world and something we can only find in Jesus. You see, our sin separates us from God. We are alienated from him, at war with him by our sinful choices and behavior and we can't find peace on our own. But in Christ there is mercy, forgiveness, and peace. If we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus, we will have peace. The bible says, **“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”** **Romans 5:1** Through faith in Christ we have peace with God.

Knowing Jesus, trusting our lives to him, we can not only have peace with God, we can have the peace of God! Jesus puts order back into our lives, replaces fear with his loving care and restores peace to our hearts. The bible instructs us, **“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”** **Philippians 4:6-7** We can have peace with God and we can have the peace of God in our lives, through faith and trust in Christ.

The prophet Isaiah added this declaration concerning the future reign of this child. **“Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.”** In other words, His

government, his peace, will just keep on expanding and improving and growing and increasing in every aspect. What am I saying? I'm telling you that knowing Jesus, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace is an ever-increasing journey of grace and glory and redemption and peace. Knowing Jesus keeps getting better and better.

How something perfect gets more perfect is a mystery, but it's the nature of his ever increasing kingdom. Are you a part of that kingdom? Is Jesus your Savior and Messiah? Is he your Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace? If not, there is a message of good news for you. It's the same message the angels delivered to the shepherds outside Bethlehem all those years ago. "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of angels joined in praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:10-14

Today you should know the invitation extends to you. All may come and find life in Him. You can find peace in Him. You can experience his grace, his favor. Peace with God and the peace of God and of his peace there will be no end.

We have cause to rejoice today. This world is messed up, but the message the angels brought is still true. The word of the prophet is still true. He is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. He is ruling and reigning. He will have the last word. The day will come when his glory will spread over the whole world. John in the Revelation saw that day and declared, **"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign for ever and ever...We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign."** Revelation 11:15, 17. He is ruling and he will rule, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, forever and ever! Let him be born in your heart and let him rule and reign in your life today!