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The Names of the King

The King is Here, Part 2

Isaiah 9:6-7

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

Christmas is the season to reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ. Though His birth occurred around 2,000 years ago, the church still worships and exults Jesus as Lord of lords and King of kings, and the prophesied Messiah and Redeemer of the scriptures. The prophet Isaiah focused on His attributes when penning a hymn about His names, granting the church a worshipful picture of the Son of God.

Discussion Points:

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was both ***born*** and ***given***. He is both fully human and fully divine.

- How does His being ***born*** and ***given*** affect the way we view the birth of Christ?
- Why is it essential that Christ be both human and divine?
- What does this communicate to us about God and His character?

Isaiah prophesies that ***the government shall be upon his*** (the Messiah's) ***shoulder*** (Isaiah 9:6b) and that ***of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end*** (Isaiah 9:7a). Isaiah also reveals that the Messiah will sit ***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*** (Isaiah 9:7b).

- Why did Jesus choose not to overthrow Rome or any other government while here during His first coming?
- How does knowing Jesus our Messiah will rule all the governments of the world with justice and righteousness bring comfort in our current cultural climate?
- In what ways does knowing this prophecy is an eternal promise give hope? What does this indicate about God's character and His plan?

Discussion Guide Cont.

Isaiah's hymn seeks to bring worship to the names of Christ: ***His name shall be called – Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

- How do these names reflect God's attributes in Jesus Christ?
- Which name of Jesus, our Messiah, impacts you the most? Why?
- How does this knowledge regarding Jesus influence your life personally? How does this change the way you relate to others?

Gospel Connection: (Most of this taken directly from the sermon, “The Names of the King”.)

Though Jesus has not yet taken the throne of government upon His shoulder, make sure you have placed Him upon the throne of your own heart and life. Today He may not rule the empires of the world, but make sure He rules the empire of you. Come to Him, if you haven't already, and sing along with Isaiah, that the Lord Jesus – my Messiah – is:

- Wonderful to me;
- He's my wisest Counselor;
- He's my Almighty God;
- He's my everlasting Father – the source of my eternal life;
- He is my Prince of Peace.

Practical Implications:

Think: How often do I consider the implications of the birth of Christ in my life? How often do I meditate on the names of Jesus and the significance that they represent?

Pray: Praise God for sending His only Son to earth as a baby in order to give us all the opportunity of redemption.

Do: Meditate on the names of Christ and reflect on their significance.



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The Names of the King

The King is Here, Part 2

Isaiah 9:6-7

This Christmas season allows us to experience and participate in some of the most glorious music ever composed or created, and that is only fitting because the Lord Jesus – our Messiah – happens to be the most glorious subject of any composer. He is the highest and most glorious object of attention for our minds and hearts to think about, marvel at, and worship together. We are so incredibly blessed here in this assembly with our music ministries and tech team.

I rarely come to December without recalling our early years and how far the Lord has allowed us to develop. It is good to reminisce periodically, lest we take it for granted what we have. If you were here 32 years ago when this church was just beginning in that schoolhouse we were renting, we had no choir; we certainly had no orchestra; we had no special lighting; and, in fact, our sound system was two speakers and a mixer we would rent every Saturday night. We put it in the back of my pick-up truck and then a couple of volunteers would set it all up in the band room of the local middle school.

I'll tell you how long ago that was. One of the new church staff members whom we have just hired remembers Colonial renting the middle school, because he happened to be a student in that middle school at that time.

That's how old I am.

In that band room in December, 32 years ago, our small congregation met, and in my notes I recorded some of the order of that Christmas service. I led the congregational

singing because we didn't have anybody else who could do it. We sang four hymns from hymnals because choruses hadn't been invented yet. Our special music for that Sunday was from a cassette I had brought from home – cassettes are these little plastic rectangular things – and on that cassette was a recording of a choir singing "Away in A Manger".

I don't take for granted what God has allowed us to experience this Sunday and every Sunday, because for one thing I can still remember that cassette tape. Now we have the privilege of being led in worship by our music director, an amazing choir, and a phenomenal orchestra and tech team . . . are we spoiled or what?

One thing that hasn't changed over all of these years is the object of our worship and the exaltation of our Lord who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, our Messiah and our Redeemer.

We have paused our exposition of Ecclesiastes for a few Sundays to focus on the prophecies surrounding the arrival of the Lord in His first coming, His incarnation, to earth. Last Lord's Day we focused on seven or eight of them fairly rapidly, but today I want slow it down and focus on one of them. This is considered, and rightly so, to be "one of the clearest and most meaningful – and most moving – Messianic prophecies in the entire Old Testament."

Old Testament scholars believe that this passage was one of the first hymns composed and sung regarding the Messiah's birth.

It has been sung in some fashion or form by the church now for the past 2,000 years, and, most famously for us, over the past nearly 300 years, in Handel's Messiah.

It was a prophetic poem composed by the prophet Isaiah around 700 years before the birth of Jesus. No other child could possibly fulfill all that Isaiah writes about this child's birth, nature, and attributes in this amazing hymn of prophetic praise.

A Child is Born

If you have a Bible, turn to *Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6* and read:

*For to us a child is born,
To us a son is given;
And the government shall be upon his
shoulder,
And his name shall be called* (Isaiah 9:6).

Stop for a minute, or maybe 10 minutes, and reflect on just that first phrase – *For to us a child is born*.

In our last study we referenced prophecies that indicated the eternal pre-existence of God the Son, who is now born into time and space, and a miraculous result of the Holy Spirit supernaturally fertilizing an egg of Mary. This staggering moment arrives in an outdoor animal shelter more than likely surrounded by temple sheep destined for sacrifice in the Temple five miles away. God the Son is literally born a baby.

If you remember the New Testament narrative, He is swaddled in strips of cloth and put in a manger, a feeding trough, or, if this animal stall was carved into a hillside as they often were in that region, the manger would have been a ledge carved into the side of the hill and filled with grain or hay. The shepherds nearby were told they would identify this newborn Savior as the one lying in a manger.

And what amazes me – if I can digress for a minute – is that this newborn baby wasn't in the arms of Mary or Joseph when the shepherds arrived; Jesus was lying in the manger, the

feeding trough. I believe, although we can't know for sure, that Jesus, Joseph, and Mary were sleeping at the moment, absolutely exhausted, His parents too exhausted to even hold him.

I don't know about you, but newborn babies are usually in somebody's arms. Either the mother is holding him or the father is taking a turn, or perhaps other siblings, grandparents, or friends. People you don't even know have shown up to hold the baby! Those first few hours that baby is being held.

There is no doubt other babies were born in Bethlehem during this busy time, but no other baby was born in an animal stall, lying alone, at that moment, in a feed trough. This is an incredible picture of Joseph and Mary's desperation, their exhaustion, their poverty, the aloneness and their challenges which had only just begun.

A Son is Given

Wherein the phrase, *unto us a child is born*, is a picture of the Messiah's humility in His humanity, the next phrase, *to us a son is given*, refers to His deity.ⁱⁱ In other words, He was born, but He was also sent. He pre-existed. He was born entirely human, but He has a divine origin. The Messiah is both fully human and, at the same time, fully divine.

And He has to be human or He can not die because God can't die. Paul, that converted Pharisee and attorney writes later, *The wages* (that is, the payment) *of sin is death* (Romans 6:23). For Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins, He must be able to experience the payment for sin and that payment is death. But since He is also eternally God the Son, He is capable of not just dying as a man but, at the same time, bearing the penalty of your sins and mine in a moment in time on the cross. Peter, the converted fisherman turned spokesman, would write that Jesus *himself bore our sins in His body on the tree* (1 Peter 2:24).

He must be both fully man and fully God or His messianic mission will be a waste of time.

And Isaiah prophesies centuries before that He will indeed be both human and divine. He is not just a human baby, He is a divinely sent son.

Jesus is actually three different types of son in the Bible. He is:

- The son of Mary – (a reference to His human substance);
- The Son of Man – Messianic purpose;
- The Son of God – Divine essence.

He will Rule

This opening phrase is a loaded prophetic declaration - ***For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.*** But, Isaiah goes on to write:

And the government shall be upon his shoulder (Isaiah 9:6b).

He is going to rule the governments of the world! Obviously this particular part of the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. When Jesus came, He did not overthrow the government of Rome or any other country. He wasn't crowned, He was crucified. But when He does fulfill this second role of ruling, this is what His kingdom is going to look like – notice **verse 7**:

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end (Isaiah 9:7a).

There are four descriptions in this text: first, His government will be *fruitful*. Isaiah writes about the *increase* of His government; *increase* is a Hebrew word used for crops flourishing and herds and cattle multiplying. It is going to be a prospering, fruitful kingdom.

It will be, secondly, a *peaceful* kingdom – ***of peace there will be no end.***

Thirdly, it will be an *honorable* rule; notice:

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 (Isaiah 9:7b).

No graft, no deceit, no greed - His rule will be right and just and honorable.

His kingdom will be fruitful, peaceful, honorable, and, fourthly, it will be *eternal*. Isaiah writes that this kingdom will last ***from this time forth and forevermore.***

He Shall Be Called

Isaiah now turns to the subject of the baby's name. Whenever a baby is born into someone's household, the big news is the naming of that child. Parents spend a great deal of time choosing that name. They read books. They talk to other couples. They call their friends. But have you noticed, they never ask their parents? The grandparents never get involved in the discussion.

So what is the name of the Messiah going to be?

Isaiah writes in the middle of **verse 6**:

And his name shall be called (and you can almost hear the drumroll) ***Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*** (Isaiah 9:6c).

As if to say, one name just is not going to be able to cover it all!

The idea behind the phrase, "***And his name shall be called***", is the Hebrew mindset that someone's name was the type of character they wanted their son or daughter to represent, to demonstrate, and to live out. Their name represented everything about who they were. Which is why one single name is not enough to comprehend everything that the Messiah was or would do.ⁱⁱⁱ

By the way, that idea is picked up in the New Testament where you read verses like this one in *I John* where John the Apostle writes,

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life (*I John 5:13*).

Eternal life and the assurance of eternal life is not in believing that the Son of God's name is Jesus – or any of these names. What he means is that when you believe in the name of the Son of God, you believe in everything about Jesus, the Son of God – everything He did, everything He was, and everything He is.

So here are essentially five names that tell us who the Messiah will be and some of what He will do, and the list could go on and on. But Isaiah focuses on just a few. He starts with this one:

1. His name shall be called – Wonderful.

This word is not an adjective describing the kind of counselor He would become, it's a noun and stands alone as one of Messiah's descriptive names.^{iv} Simply put, let's call Him what he is – **Wonderful!** You could translate this Hebrew noun as *marvelous*. He is marvelous, and He is wonderful.

By the way, would you notice that Isaiah is not telling us something about what Jesus our Messiah will do (He will do marvelous and wonderful things), he's telling us who Jesus will be. He will be marvelous and wonderful. And unlike you and me, who might do something marvelous every so often or might be wonderful to someone every once in a while, the Messiah will be altogether, consistently, unchangeably, incomprehensibly, entirely, and eternally wonderful.

2. His name shall be called – Counselor.

Isaiah adds here . . . ***His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor.***

The all-sufficient source of wisdom.

- whatever He says is dependable
- whatever He reveals is valuable
- whatever He advises is beneficial

He is the infallible, omniscient, perfectly insightful Counselor.

Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus is the only counselor you will ever go to

that doesn't have His own set of problems. He is not struggling with anything. And He has never given bad advice; He is never wrong. In fact, He has never needed counseling. Paul wrote, *who has been His counselor?* (Romans 11:34).

He knows your heart and your desire, your sin and your problem, your sorrow and your situation. He is the one counselor you will never need to tell what's been going on in your life. He already knows.

The world then and the world now is following all the wrong advice and the wrong advisors. It is in desperate need of good counseling!

Isaiah also announces, "Let me tell you about someone who will arrive and doesn't just give counsel, but He can give you the power to live out His inspired advice."

3. His name shall be called – Mighty God.

Isaiah adds, ***His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor*** – now notice – ***Mighty God.*** Mighty is an adjective, describing what kind of God He is. He is almighty.

Don't miss the fact that the Messiah is called here none other than Mighty God – El Gibbor. This was a traditional name for God, the mighty one. Moses used this name for God in *Deuteronomy 10:17*; Jeremiah used it in *Jeremiah 32:18*; Nehemiah called him this in *Nehemiah 9:32*; David used it in *Psalm 24:8*.

The liberals and unbelievers who want to deny that Jesus is the Messiah, if the Messiah is none other than Almighty God, like to translate Mighty God as "the Hero of strength". This could refer to anyone who serves as a hero for the people. There is no way Isaiah can be referring to the virgin-born Son as none other than Almighty God!

But all you have to do is turn one page further in Isaiah's prophecy to the next chapter where he uses this same name once again in *Isaiah 10:20-21*:

In that day the remnant of Israel . . . will return . . . to the mighty God (same expression).

Listen, this Christmas season, it is okay to talk about Jesus as the little baby in the manger, just don't spread the notion that He happens to be almighty God, the second person of the Triune God. Let's keep Him in the manger; it's safer if He just stays in there. Don't let Him grow up. But if He grows up, make Him out to be a good teacher and a good example who didn't hurt anybody, but was just a moralist who never judged anybody and just delivered the golden rule, and that was it.

Oh no, my friend, that baby in the manger was not:

- just a good teacher, He was almighty God.
- just a moral example, He was almighty God.
- just a martyred Messiah want-to-be, He was and is and ever shall be Almighty God.

Isaiah couldn't say it any plainer. This baby is God in the flesh, almighty God.

And if you have trouble with the deity of Jesus, you are going to have trouble with His next name.

4. His name shall be called – Everlasting Father.

Isaiah writes that His name shall be called ***Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father.***

This particular name sounds odd to us because we think of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The word *Father* here is a reference not to His position but to his eternal authority. ***Everlasting Father*** or ***Eternal Father*** means He is the Father of Eternity. That is, He is the source of – He is the originator of – eternity.^v

Think of it this way. You may know of that Gospel account where Jesus describes Satan as a liar, in *John chapter 8*. Jesus says that lying is

Satan's native tongue; it is his language. And Jesus says this in *John 8:44* that Satan is the father of lies. What the Lord means is that Satan is the original liar. He is the origin of lying; he is the source of lying. So Jesus is the Father of eternity, which means He is the origin of eternity and the source of eternal life. You could say it this way – The Messiah is the originator of eternal life. Lying is Satan's specialty, while eternal life is Jesus's specialty. Jesus is the dispenser and the originator of life everlasting.

Do you want to have eternal life? He is the source! Do you want to live forever in Heaven? He is the way there!

5. His name shall be called – Prince of Peace.

Finally, Isaiah adds one more name: ***His name shall be called – Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

Those who come to Jesus Christ for salvation *find peace with God* (*Romans 5:1*). But here in this text, Isaiah is prophesying about a time in human history that hasn't occurred yet.

How do we know that Isaiah is referring to some distant time, still unfulfilled? Well just look around. World peace has not arrived. When Jesus was born peace didn't arrive with Him. In fact, everywhere He went conflict typically broke out until, eventually, He was betrayed, mobbed, beaten and crucified.

Jesus knew nothing of world peace. In fact, He told His disciples clearly that He did not come to bring peace to the earth, but a sword, dividing family members in conflict over the gospel. (*Matthew 10:34*). The Bible promises followers of Christ that they will experience not peace but suffering for the gospel (*2 Timothy 3:12*). The birth of Christ didn't bring peace to planet earth; in fact, His birth and His gospel have brought suffering, hardship and conflict. Perhaps you have noticed by now that following Christ didn't actually make your life easier but harder.

This name – ***Prince of Peace*** – is prophetic. Isaiah is referring to that time when Messiah will return to planet earth, ascend the throne in Jerusalem, and rule the world and establish His glorious 1,000 year kingdom and then beyond. During this kingdom the world will finally experience peace on earth.

In the meantime, make sure you have placed Him upon the throne of your own heart and life. Today He may not rule the empires of the world, but make sure He rules the empire of you. Come to Him, if you haven't already, and sing along with Isaiah, that the Lord Jesus – my Messiah – is:

- Wonderful to me;
- He's my wisest Counselor;
- He's my Almighty God;
- He's my everlasting Father – the source of my eternal life;
- He is my Prince of Peace.

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i H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Isaiah: Volume I (Baker Books House, 1968), p. 187

ii Adapted from Warren W. Wiersbe, Isaiah: Be Comforted (Victor Books, 1992), p. 37

iii Leupold, p. 185

iv Adapted from W. E. Vine, Isaiah: Prophecies, Promises, Warnings (Zondervan, 1971), p. 43

v Wiersbe, p. 38