

WHY CHRISTMAS? – Discovering Jesus in the Old Testament

Part #4 THE CHILD WITH FOUR NAMES

Delivered at Central Baptist Church on December 18, 2016 by Pastor Steven Edelman

My girls could hardly sleep - with the anticipation of a snow fall a couple of weeks ago in Victoria. The next morning, they woke up to a winter wonder land. Early that morning they piled into our room and with excitement Halle says, “Daddy, Daddy, can we have a snow day? Can we go out and play right now?” I jumped out of bed and the fun began. We built a snow man and had a snow ball fight before 8:00 am. We grabbed our toboggans and marked out a path to avoid the threatening areas. The threats included black berry bushes, a fence post on both sides and a creek at the end of the run. All three girls went down many times for about 45 minutes. At one point, I noticed Anna, our five-year-old, was struggling to stay on the route and almost hit a fence post. She went down again and went way off the path heading straight for the opposite fence post and SMACK... her forehead connected with the corner of the fence post and with a loud cry called out “MOM!” The other name for Megan. Anna calls out that specific name because she knows that name will bring her comfort, kisses, nurture, and love. For some reason, she didn’t call out for dad! Even though I was right there!

What “name” gives you hope when you are broken?

Today, we are going to be looking at the book of Isaiah. The name Isaiah means “Salvation of the Lord,” and salvation means **deliverance**. God was going to use Isaiah to help bring a message of deliverance to Israel. He was God’s mouth piece. In the book of Isaiah, we see that Israel continues to veer off God’s path and their disobedience causes them to fall into brokenness. In their brokenness, God allows them to experience oppression and fear because of their disobedience. They become afraid of other surrounding kingdoms because of invasion and loss.

In the middle of the Israel’s mess, Isaiah paints a picture, a future picture of hope coming with a powerful name. A name that has meaning. A name that is attached to a baby. A name that will change the course of history. His name is the Messiah. The name Messiah means “anointed one” ... the name above everyone else. This name will bring them hope in the middle of the darkness. The Jews had this image that the Messiah was going to come as a great King and defeat their enemies. In the middle of a difficult time Isaiah is foretelling the plan of the Messiah 800 years before the Christmas story took place. It goes without saying that this is one of the clearest and most meaningful Messianic prophecies in the whole Old Testament. Isaiah’s role was to point Israel in the right direction so they could be delivered.

In the beginning of chapter 9 Isaiah paints a future picture to bring hope:

9:1–2 - Light will come to those living in darkness

He introduces a future Davidic king who will bring a period of light and peace to God’s people. Light is a connection to Joy and every possible blessing that age of the Messiah can bring.

9:3–5 - God will defeat the nation’s oppressor.

God will bring light, joy, and peace, which sharply contrasts with war, distress, and darkness of King Ahaz’s reign in 7:1–8:22.

9:6–7 - A son (Jesus) will justly rule the Davidic kingdom

Isaiah’s message provides us with very specific information about how this going to happen:

- (a) Birth
- (b) Role in government
- (c) He has four names
- (d) Reign of peace
- (e) Eternal rule on the throne of David

Today, we are going to focus on the four names given to the child. The child we celebrate at Christmas.

Look with me at Isaiah 9:6-7. It says, “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 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 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.”

These names give us hope in difficult times.

The four names of the child are:

1. Wonderful Counsellor
2. Mighty God
3. Everlasting Father
4. Prince of Peace

Let’s look at the first name.

We need to find hope in our brokenness because:

1. The Child is Wonderful Counsellor.

When you think of wonderful what do you think of? Maybe it’s a person, place or things that you like. We use the word “wonderful” in everyday conversation for something we like. For example, this tea is “wonderful” or “that is a wonderful haircut” or “wonderful cheese cake” - meaning pleasant, lovely, or the least bit likable. **The word is much weightier than the way it’s used in normal conversation today.** The word *wonderful* in this passage literally means “incomprehensible.” The Messiah will cause us to be “full of wonder.” **Jesus is wonderful in a way that is boggling to the mind. Beyond your understanding?** Incidentally the word wonderful in Hebrew, *pele’* which is used here is a word that is very frequently associated with the **miraculous**. He is GLORIOUS!

Jesus demonstrated His wonderfulness in many ways when He was on the earth, by giving up His position and becoming baby (Matthew 1:23). He showed He is the “wonderful” One in His power to heal (Matthew 4:23), His amazing teaching (Mark 1:22), His perfect life (Hebrews 4:15), and His resurrection from the dead (Mark 16:6). Jesus’ kind of wonderful is awe-inspiring and superior to any other kind, for He is perfect in every way (Matthew 5:48). He is wonderful because of all that He has done.

He is not just wonderful, but Wonderful Counsellor.

Charles Spurgeon describes how Jesus the Messiah is counsellor in three ways. “**First**, he is God's Counsellor; He sits in the cabinet council of the King of heaven; he has admittance into the inner chamber, and is the Counsellor with God.

In the **second** place, He is a Counsellor in that he communicates to us on God's behalf, what has been done in the great council before the foundation of the world.

And **thirdly**, Christ is a Counsellor to us and with us, because we can consult with him, and he counsels and advises us as to the right way and the path of peace.”

The Bible is clear that Jesus will be effective in leading and formulating a plan, that will actually work. **A great work will be done by Him that will exceed any other leader. The promises made will not be empty.** These plans are not just for present days, but for the eternity. The same thought appears in Isa. 28:29.

Wonderful Counselor – means “Supernatural and Extraordinary Counselor.” Jesus is the fulfillment of this prophecy, because we can look to wonderful life, his wonderful teaching, his wonderful miracles his wonderful love, his wonderful compassion, his wonderful mercy, his wonderful grace, his wonderful

forgiveness, and his wonderful sacrifice for us on the cross. Jesus is the wonderful Counselor that Isaiah prophesied about. This name points out the truth that there is nothing common about Jesus, He is the Miracle man! So, Isaiah in calling this coming king wonderful counselor, is making it clear that he is powerful, mighty, and glorious, a doer of great miracles and guide. He is so far beyond our level of comprehension that we can never figure Him out, yet He can be known by a little child! He is Wonderful in His Words, His Works, and His Ways. The word counselor refers to His role as the leader and guiding force of our lives, (see Psa. 37:23; Rom. 8:28.)

WHY DO WE NEED CHRIST'S COUNSEL?

Our hearts gravitate to selfishness and sinful behavior which shows up in all areas of life. The sinful nature of human leadership leads to self-gain. What can I do to get a raise, position, influence, power, control or accomplish my agenda? Empty promises to get a vote. Human leaders fight to be right. I see this in my own marriage. You want to be "right" over being "loving." Human leadership falls short. Many of us will seek the counsel of the friends who will agree with us rather than the counsel of Jesus. If their advice agrees with mine it adds to my gratification and confirms that I am "right." We like to position things so we look and feel better about ourselves even if they don't line up with the counsel of Jesus.

We lead ourselves into brokenness and hopelessness when we are selfish. The guidance of Jesus flips the leadership paradigm upside down. Jesus leads from the bottom coming as a child. He leads from humility, sacrifice, and love. Matthew 20:28 says, "even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." **Do you lead like Jesus?**

How do you know if you are leading like Jesus?

1. You are leading from a place of humility, sacrifice and love.
2. You look to Jesus as your counselor.
3. You study him and his ways to learn how to be a better leader.
4. You rely on His Spirit for the counseling and care for others.
5. Not being right, but righteous.
6. Not just heard, but listening.
7. Not human advice, but the mind of Christ.
8. Not leading others into darkness and confusion, but into light and order.
9. Not leading others into danger, but into safety.

Jesus leads us from a selfish leadership perspective to a hope filled leadership perspective. *As we have seen, we can find hope in our brokenness when we follow the leadership of the Wonderful Counselor.* **Secondly, we need to find hope in our brokenness because the Child is Mighty God.**

2. The Child is Mighty God

"Mighty-God" means He possesses the capacity for carrying out the plan in full. He has nothing less than the full omnipotence and power at his command. The Hebrew literally means "God-hero" who in His full strength will rise out of the ashes to rescue us.

Mighty God – means "All powerful"! It refers to one who is "strong, mighty and invincible." When we see God as the Almighty, we are struck by His power and by the fact that He is indeed a great, mighty, and awesome God. When you understand what this means you have a sense of awe and wonder toward Him and the realization that He is God above all things without limitation.

He is mighty because he defeated Death (1 Cor. 15:55). He defeated Sin - Rom. 6:14; He defeated Satan - Gen. 3:15; and He defeated the Grave –Matt. 28:1-6; 1 Cor. 15:20; and finally, Eternity (Hell) - John 10:28. JESUS

CHRIST IS GOD! Christ is not only Mighty God in His birth and in history; He is also Mighty God in His life, Death and Resurrection.

And since He is God, He deserves our absolute reverence, He deserves our genuine faith, He deserves our supreme love, He deserves our unconditional obedience, He deserves our consecrated service and He deserves our sacred worship. Recognize that you are weak and nothing in comparison.

Illustration – The strength of a thunder storm.

When I was eighteen, I was a counselor at a camp that did an overnight trip to an island in the middle of a lake. We would have to canoe with our entire cabin to get to the island. Once we arrived, we would setup our little camp complete with tents and a fire. I remember feeling proud and in control of our camp. Late that night, a strong storm thunderstorm rolled in and the force of the wind lifted and destroyed most of our setup. I saw lighting flashing and heard thunder crashing from the position of a little tent. Everything was black and swirling around as we sat in the middle of the storm with our insufficient shelter that would take off without the weight of us in it. Trees snapped like tooth pics and the lightning struck another tree near by which we could see sparks fly. I remember feeling so helpless and weak in comparison to the strength of the storm. We thought we were going to die. The strength of the storm brought us to our knees. I realized I was not in control.

It's our pride and self-sufficiency that keeps us from recognizing the need for His strength. **Our fallible weakness can be seen in so many ways:**

Even the great leaders in the bible had weakness... we saw immaturity in Joseph, inadequacy in Moses, sexual temptation in Samson, David, and Solomon, depression in Elijah, marriage problems with Hosea, impulsiveness in Peter, the love of power in James and John, oversensitivity in Timothy, and criticism for Paul. Your weakness could be seeking approval, addiction, laziness, avoiding conflict, anger, blame shifting, depression, envy, jealousy, fear, rebellion, sexual temptation, or guilt.

Can you admit your weakness? If you can't, turn to the person next to you and ask them to tell you what your weakness is!

Our pride leaves us dependent on ourselves and ignorant to the strength that is available to us.

Do you feel weak? All of us are weak. Admitting your weakness is the beginning of finding strength in God!

David Trip says, "Remember, it is not your weakness that will get in the way of God's working through you, but your delusions of strength. His strength is made perfect in our weakness! Point to His strength by being willing to admit your weakness."

As we have seen, we can find hope in weakness when we rely on the strength of Mighty God.

Thirdly, we need to find hope in our brokenness because the Child is Everlasting Father.

3. The Child is Everlasting Father

Some scholars have translated the name to "Father-Forever" rather than Everlasting Father. The emphasis is on the eternal existence or timeless quality. Father refers to the loving and paternal concern he has for His kids.

Jesus is NOT God the Father! But notice that Jesus has father like characteristics. Isaiah is not using the Trinitarian title “Father” for the Messiah; rather, it is describing him as a king. **He is the caring protector** which is the task of a good king. In ancient times, the “father of the nation” was viewed in much the same way as the father of a family. It was the father who was to protect and provide for his children. In the same way, this Child to be born will become a king who will be a father to the children of Israel—He will protect and provide for them. And His role as protector and provider will not be limited by aging or death. His role as father (protector and provider) will continue into eternity.

How can Jesus Christ be called the Everlasting Father? Our answer comes in a proper understanding of the Hebrew word for "Father." **The Old Testament Jew reading Isaiah 9:6-7 would understand that the use of the word "Father" would mean "originator of, author of."** Meaning that Jesus is the source of life.

Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world.**”

This word means “Producer or generator.” He is our “source” “provider and protector”! He brought us into being and He sustains our lives by His power. He fulfills His role by: Loving us - Jer. 31:3; Rom. 8:38-39; Supporting us - Psalm 18:35; Deut 33:27; Sustaining us - 2 Tim. 1:12; Comforting us - John 14:16-18; providing for us - Luke 12:32; Matt. 6:25-33; Phil. 4:19. **Everyone wants to be loved. How wonderful it is to hear someone say to us "I love you." The greatest, most magnificent person has declared His love for us.** It is a love that is unconditional. It is a love that knows your faults and yet still loves you.

Illustration: The day Halle was born.

As a father who loves his child Jesus loves you. But you can't make that child love you back! But do you love Jesus back? Do you recognize that Jesus is the one who provides for you, protects you and gives you a full life? Or do you ignore Him? Or do you take advantage of Him despite all that He has done for you? When we recognize Jesus as the one who gives us life, we find hope and love in our brokenness.

As we seen, we can find hope in our brokenness because Jesus is Everlasting Father. Lastly, we need to find hope in our brokenness because the Child is Price of Peace.

4. The Child is Prince of Peace

After all His work is done, He will rule over the world as “Prince.” A Prince that will bring peace when He reigns. His peace has a rich connotation, both spiritual and physical. Both external and internal. We can think of the external peace as the physical and spiritual world around us.

a) External Peace

We see the need for peace in a world filled with war, violence, terrorism, abuse, and brokenness.

Terry Glavin from the National Post writes, “Aleppo has fallen. The last and sturdiest fortress of the Syrian uprising is gone. The Battle of Aleppo is over, the revolution is finished, and the Syrian mass murderer Bashar al-Assad has won. Russia has won. Iran has won. Hezbollah has won. The United States has lost. The United Nations has lost, and the bloody war in Syria, already having taken nearly half a million lives, goes on... and from the people, those gut-wrenching final goodbyes — “Pray for us,” “I hope you can remember us.”

“Save us, people. Save us, people, world, anyone who has even a bit of humanity. We beg you, we beg you,” a doctor pleaded, “the dead and wounded are in the streets and people’s homes have collapsed on top of them. Save us. Save us.”

We need peace! We will never have external peace until the “Prince of Peace” is ruling. He will bring shalom, which is the Hebrew word for “peace,” *which means* calm and peacefulness of individuals, groups, and nations.

b) Internal Peace

The **Greek word for peace** “Eirene” means “**unity and accord**”; Paul uses this word to describe the objective of the New Testament church. But the deeper, more foundational meaning of peace is the harmony brought about by an individual’s restoration with God.

To him, the word “peace” (“shalom”) meant far more than silence or the absence of conflict. The Old Testament Jew would view peace as a living, **vibrant thing made for the well-being of mankind.** True peace has nothing to do with the situation on the outside. **It has everything to do with the condition on the inside.** A person can be at peace no matter what the situation, no matter what the circumstances are. How is this possible? Because Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace and he will rule His kingdom in peace. How can He do this? Because he is the righteous king and the righteousness and peace go together. And, those who know Him know all about peace.

i. Peace with God – Spiritual Peace (see Eph. 2:16 – Romans 5:1)

In our sinful state, we are enemies with God (Romans 5:10). “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Because of Christ’s sacrifice, we are restored to a relationship of peace with God (Romans 5:1).

ii. Peace of God - Emotional Peace – (see Phil. 4:7; John 14:27, Col 3:15)

Phil 4:7 “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

iii. Peace with Others - Relational Peace - (see Rom. 12:10; 18,)

Romans 12:10 says, “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Living in unity with each other can be extremely difficult; living in peace in our own lives can very often feel impossible.

Charles H. Brent says, “Peace comes when there is no cloud between us and God. Peace is the consequence of forgiveness, God’s removal of that which obscures His face and so breaks union with Him.”

Finding *peace* doesn’t mean “easy!” But it means that we are in good relationship with God. It’s a contentment that God gives you in the middle of the mess that lifts you spiritually out of darkness.

Jesus never promised easy; He only promised help. In fact, He told us to expect tribulation (John 16:33) and trials (James 1:2). But He also said that, **if we called on the name of Jesus, He would give us the “peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension” (Philippians 4:6–7).**

No matter what hardships we are faced with, we can ask for a peace that comes from the powerful love of God that is not dependent on our own strength or the trouble around us.

As we have seen, we can find hope in our brokenness because Jesus, the Prince of Peace gives us internal peace in the middle of the mess. External peace is still coming!

Conclusion:

What Child is this? The Child is the Messiah. A child with a name. Not just any name, but a powerful name. Jesus came as a child who has more than four names!

To quote Billy Sunday, “There are two hundred and fifty-six names given in the Bible for the Lord Jesus Christ, and I suppose this was because He was infinitely beyond all that any one name could express.” Billy Sunday.

The name of Jesus is above every name! We are to pray in His name, give thanks in His name, and His name gives us His power! If you’re feeling lost, overwhelmed, or struggling in any way, my prayer is that you find the strength and power you need as you call on the name of Jesus.

In your brokenness... Will you call on the name of Jesus? Not just call on His name, but make him:

1. Wonderful Counsellor of your life.
2. Mighty God – Recognize our need for His strength in our weakness.
3. Everlasting Father – That he deeply loves us like a father.
4. Prince of Peace – Gives us an inner peace when we give it all to Him.

Prayer and reflection video:

Benediction:

He fearfully lamented his uncleanness and humbly confessed his sinfulness as he glimpsed the holy glory of God (6:5). He also confessed the sins of the people of Judah. **Isaiah was not self-absorbed; he was ministry-absorbed. After experiencing divine forgiveness and atonement, Isaiah quickly responded to the divine call to go and spread God’s message to his people (6:6–8).**

Repentance leads to deliverance.

“In the words of Paul, “But (JESUS) emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:7–11