

**Hope Has a Name**  
Isaiah 9:6-7  
Rev. Brian Bill  
December 14-15, 2019

Names and descriptions tell us something, don't they?

As we all waited in anticipation for our facility to be finished, I was eager to try a decaf cappuccino from the Edge Café. After our team time one Tuesday afternoon, Pastor Kyle showed the staff how to use the coffee machine. About an hour later I went behind the counter, scrolled through the touch screen and made my selection. I took my cup of froth to the Fireside Room, turned the fireplace on and went to work on my sermon. The cappuccino was so delicious I decided to have two cups. I noticed I was unusually alert for it being so late in the afternoon.

When I got home, I had so much energy it was hard to sit still. After crawling into bed, I flopped around like a door on its hinge, so decided to just get up. I pulled out my notes and worked on my sermon again, not really sure why I couldn't get to sleep. At 1:00 am I finally felt tired and went back to bed.

The next day I overheard Kyle tell someone the decaf wasn't in yet, so all the coffees had caffeine in them (this has been fixed, BTW). I told him what had happened to me and he immediately apologized but also started laughing really hard. I told him an apology accompanied by a guffaw didn't count. He just laughed some more.

Have you ever been tricked when the nature of something didn't line up with its name? Names are important, aren't they?

Most parents spend significant amount of time trying to decide what to name their children. Why is that? Because we know a name is more than just what someone goes by. Some of us are very strategic and specific when it comes to choosing names. I have some relatives who obviously spent some time determining what to call their kids. Here are the names of everyone in their family, starting with the parents (and I'm not making this up): *Bob Bill, Bonnie Bill, Bernie Bill, Brenda Bill, Bruce Bill, and Blain Bill...and their baby bunny named Bertha* (OK, I made that last one up!).

In Old Testament times, a name stood for a person's "*reputation, their fame and their glory.*" The word translated "*name*" literally means "*a mark or a brand.*" Parents often gave children names to describe their hopes and future expectations regarding that child.

A study of Bible names reveals much about the personality of the person bearing that name. For instance, David means "*Beloved.*" Abraham is "*Father of a multitude.*" Jacob is "*Deceiver.*" Isaac implies "*laughter.*" Moses means "*drawn out.*" And Jesus is "*Jehovah saves.*" All of these people proved true to their names!

Today we're going to zero in on a four-fold name given to Jesus, 700 years before He was even born! We're going to see that *Jesus is indescribably unique.*

### **From Gloom to Gladness**

Isaiah's primary purpose was to remind his readers of the special relationship they had with God as His covenant community. The nation had experienced prosperity but now Assyria was poised to pounce on them. In the midst of this impending threat, Isaiah gives a number of glorious promises.

Grab your Bibles and turn to the opening verses of Isaiah 9. We focused on this last weekend when we learned that *Jesus lights the way for those living in darkness.* This original birth announcement was made in the midst of grief and gloom. Look at verse 1: "***But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.***"

Zebulun and Naphtali are tribes from the north of Israel, making up the land of Galilee. For many years the people knew only grief because of the onslaught of enemies unleashed by the Almighty as a result of their sins. Isaiah tells of a time in the future where gloom will be replaced with gladness in Galilee.

Verse 2 describes how the birth of Christ will bring brightness to a world of despair and darkness: "***The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.***"

In reflecting on this truth last weekend, Mike Russell mentioned that when people are in the dark, they can't see and end up stumbling through life with no sense of direction. In order to help those dwelling in the dark, those of us who are Christians must make sure we're giving off a pleasing aroma. Someone might not be able to see but they can smell the fragrance of Christ coming from those who follow Him as 2 Corinthians 2:15 says: ***“For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.”***

In Isaiah 9:4, we read the enemies of Israel had burdened the people with ***“the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder.”*** When the light of life comes, the heavy yoke will be shattered. Instead of wiping us out, Jesus says in Matthew 11:30, ***“My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*** In the place of burdens, God wants to give us blessings.

With that as context, let's get to our text. Listen to Isaiah 9:6: ***“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.”***

### A Child and a Son

We see here the indescribable uniqueness of Jesus and the core truth of Christianity. In the incarnation we notice both His humanity and His deity.

- ***“For to us a child is born.”*** This describes his birth as a baby (his humanity as a man)
- ***“To us a son is given.”*** Jesus is God's son given as a gift (his humility as deity)

The child was birthed in Bethlehem *and* the gift of the eternal Son is given to us. I appreciate the insight of one commentator, *“The Son wasn't born, the Son eternally existed; the child was born, the Son was given.”*

On top of that, the ***“government shall be upon his shoulder.”*** The Baby bundled in the straw holds the universe together. The One nestled on Mary's shoulders, bears everything on His shoulders. He is redeemer and ruler of all. Part of the reason we have been inoculated by the incarnation and even bored with the baby is because we tend to focus only on the infant Jesus.

The phrase, **“and his name shall be called”** means *“He will justly bear this name...”* Technically, all four of these descriptions make up His name. Do you see that it’s in the singular? It doesn’t say *“names,”* but rather **“name.”** This is similar to the **“Fruit of the Spirit”** in Galatians 5, which is sometimes mistakenly referred to as the “fruits” of the Spirit. We can’t just pick and choose like a buffet because it’s the whole meal deal.

Let’s look at His four-fold name now. I should warn you ahead of time that you may break out into worship.

Do you remember what a preposition is? Prepositions tells us where or when something is in relation to something else, indicating direction, time, location and spatial relationship.

I see a number of prepositions in our passage today – Jesus speaks *to* us, He stands *for* us, He sits *near* us, and He satisfies *within* us. *Jesus is indescribably unique.*

**1. He speaks to us as “Wonderful Counselor.”** This title literally means *“a wonder of a counselor.”* The word **“wonderful”** means, *“full of wonder, glorious, exceptional, astonishing, extraordinary.”* In Judges 13:18, the Angel of the Lord says, **“Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?”** Isaiah 29:14: **“...Behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder.”** Psalm 77:14: **“You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples.”**

The adjective **“wonderful”** is coupled with the word **“Counselor,”** which refers to an *“advisor”* or *“consultant.”* Life is filled with decisions, details, and disasters. That’s why we need a wonderful counselor. David wrote these words in Psalm 16:7: **“I bless the Lord who gives me counsel.”** Another example is found in Isaiah 11:1, which describes a shoot that will come out of the stump of Jesse. In the very next verse, the Messiah is referred to as having the **“Spirit of counsel and might.”**

What are some elements that make someone a good counselor? When we’re in need, we want a counselor that is available, gives undivided attention, able to provide comfort while remaining confidential, and can tell us the truth about ourselves while giving us what we need to make changes. In short, we want someone who has empathy, expertise and experience.

However, keep in mind that as our Wonderful Counselor, Christ is not just someone who makes suggestions. I appreciate what Tim Keller wrote in his book called, “Hidden Christmas.”

“When you come to Christ, you must drop your conditions. You have to give up the right to say, ‘I will obey you *if*...I will do this *if*...’ As soon as you say, ‘I will obey you *if*,’ that is not obedience at all. You are saying: ‘You are my adviser, not my Lord. I will be happy to take your recommendations. And I might even do some of them.’ No. If you want Jesus *with you*, you have to give up the right to self-determination. Self-denial is an act of rebellion against our late-modern culture of self-assertion. But that is what we are called to. Nothing less.”

Q: Is Jesus *your* Wonderful Counselor? Are you willing to follow Christ without conditions?

**2. He stands for us as “Mighty God.”** The word “*mighty*” means “*strong one*” or the “*powerful, valiant warrior.*” In Isaiah 9, the adjective “*mighty*” literally means, the “*God-hero.*” Jesus is the hero of the Scripture story! David asks the question in Psalm 24:8: “***Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle.***” He is profound in His counsel and He has the power to accomplish what He wills.

This facet of His name tells us Jesus is not only the Son of God; He is also God the Son. The Baby born in the feeding trough is also the King of glory. Or to say it another way: “*The humble Carpenter of Nazareth is also the Mighty Architect of the Universe.*”

Jesus can manage anything because He is mighty. He healed the lame, the blind and the sick. He calmed the storm. He brought Lazarus back from the grave. Therefore, He can do the impossible in your life right now. He will give you victory over whatever you’re struggling with today. Let Him fight your battles as you honor Him as your Holy Hero. Worship Him as your warrior and praise Him for His power.

Remember the words spoken by the angel to Mary in Luke 1:37: “***For nothing is impossible with God.***” Ray Pritchard writes: “*As the Wonderful Counselor, He makes the plans; as the Mighty God, He makes the plans work.*”

Q: Are you trusting in your own strength or are you ready to make Him your Mighty God?

*Jesus is indescribably unique.*

**3. He sits *near us* as “Everlasting Father.”** When I was growing up, God always seemed so distant. I had no trouble seeing Him as powerful; I just didn’t know He was also personal. I had a sense of awe of Him, but never knew I could know Him personally. I saw Him as big and mighty and mad at me. In Jesus, He has come near. In this third facet of His name, we see Jesus is “*everlasting,*” meaning He is before, above and beyond time. This literally means that He lives in the forever.

Isaiah 57:15: “*For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’*” He lives forever and He loves like a Father. Christ is holy *and* human, dwelling on high while lying in the hay. And He sits near us.

A college student named Bill, with unruly hair, a holey T-shirt, old jeans and shoes with no socks, recently became a Christian. Located next to campus was a church that wanted to develop a ministry to students but didn’t know how to go about it. One day Bill decided to go to church there. He walked in late, wearing his everyday wardrobe. He couldn’t find a seat because the church was full.

People noticed him walking down the center aisle and became uncomfortable. Seeing no seats anywhere, when Bill got up to the front, he just sat down right on the floor. While this was perfectly acceptable at a college fellowship, this just wasn’t done in church. The congregation became visibly uptight, tension filling the air. And then people noticed a deacon in his eighties slowly making his way to Bill. He was a distinguished man with silver-gray hair and a three-piece suit. He walked with a cane. As he made his way to Bill, the congregation was relieved and most thought to themselves, “*I’m glad somebody is going to tell that kid he can’t sit there!*”

It took some time for the deacon to reach the young man. The church became utterly silent except for the clicking of the man’s cane on the tiled floor. All eyes focused on him. When he finally reached the college kid, he dropped his cane and

with great difficulty he lowered himself to the floor and asked, “*May I sit with you?*”

Two thoughts come to mind. First, Jesus calls us to reach out and get near to all those God considers dear (which is everyone). Second, this is similar to what God did when He sent His Son. Jesus entered our world and wants to sit down in relationship with us.

Jesus is a child and a Son, and He is also eternally like a father to us. I’m fortunate to have a very good father, but some of you struggle because you do not have a positive father image. As you see the Savior in the stable, focus on the fact that He is your forever Father, who cares for you with compassion. **Psalm 103:13: “*As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.*”**

If you’re a mother with young children, listen to how tender the Savior is toward you in **Isaiah 40:11: “*He will tend His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs in His arms; He will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.*”**

Q: Have you put your faith in the Everlasting Father? Will you allow Him to sit next to you?

**4. He satisfies *within* as “Prince of Peace.”** In a recent *Breakpoint Commentary*, John Stonestreet said the following...

*“Between 1959 and 2016, life expectancy in the U.S. rose from 69.9 to 78.9 years...But did you know that since then, it’s reversed course? A new study paints a portrait of a society in deep trouble. For the third year in a row, the average life expectancy in the United States has declined.*

*As a recent Washington Post article describes, the causes behind this dramatic shift are things like ‘suicide, drug overdoses, [and] liver disease...’ These causes are summed up in the phrase ‘deaths from despair...’*

*In other words, we are facing an epidemic of young people who are giving up on life, sometimes before it really even starts for them...the same hopelessness leading to the uptick in ‘deaths from despair’ is also driving what I will call ‘acts of desperation,’ that we also see in our culture. In this*

*category, I'd put acts of mass violence, abuse, and the increasing numbers of young people willing to self-mutilate in a pursuit of their identities."*

Jesus comes into our desperation with the promise of peace within.

This phrase "***Prince of Peace***" can be translated, "*The prince who's coming brings peace.*" A prince in Bible times was the "General of the Army," and describes leadership and authority. This title reverberated across the centuries and echoed through the hallways of Heaven, finally culminating in an expression of angelic adoration in Luke 2:14: "***Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.***"

In the Old Testament, the word *shalom* was a state of wholeness and harmony that was intended to resonate in all relationships. When used as a greeting, *shalom* was a wish for outward freedom from disturbance as well as an inward sense of well-being.

To a people constantly harassed by enemies, peace was the premiere blessing. In Numbers 6:24-26, God gave Moses these words to use when blessing His people: "***The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.***" Some of you are on an elusive search for peace. Hold on to Isaiah 26:3: "***You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.***"

The New Testament describes at least three spheres of peace:

- Peace *with God* – that's the *vertical* dimension
- Peace *of God* – this takes place *internally*
- Peace *with others* – happens *horizontally*

Jesus has come to put us back together as Ephesians 2:14 states: "***For He Himself is our peace...***"

Q: Are you out of sorts with God? Receive the Prince of Peace into your life and be made right with Him immediately. Are you all shaken up on the inside? Give all your anxiety to the Almighty and His unexplained peace will give you calm in the midst of chaos. Are your relationships with others severed? Do the hard work of being a peacemaker. Do you know Him as your Prince of Peace?

## The Second Advent

Incredibly, Jesus was named 700 years before He was born. That shows *He is indescribably unique*. He *speaks to us*, He *stands for us*, He *sits near us*, and He *satisfies* within. The good news is we can experience all of this right now. The even better news is that there's more to come! We get a taste today, but all of these titles will be fully realized when He returns to rule and reign over all the earth.

Jesus came in the *cradle* in order to go to the *cross*. When He comes again, He'll be wearing a *crown*! Look at Isaiah 9:7: ***“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.”***

This makes me think of Handel's Messiah...

*The kingdom of this world  
Is become the kingdom of our Lord  
And He shall reign for ever and ever  
For ever and ever, forever and ever*

God makes a startling promise to King David in 2 Samuel 7:12-13: ***“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”***

After David dies, Solomon's sins trip him up. If you read through the books of Kings and Chronicles, you see this covenant promise remains front and center. As king after king disobeys and disqualifies himself, a longing developed for a coming king who could fulfill all the conditions of the covenant and sit on David's throne to rule and reign forever.

Psalms 89:3-4 says it clearly, ***“I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’”*** This is highlighted in verse 28: ***“My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him.”***

In Luke 1:27 Gabriel was sent **“to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the [wait for it...] *house of David*...”**

When Gabriel gave God’s message to Mary, he called on the covenant with David in Luke 1:31-33: **“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the [wait for it...] *throne of his father David*, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”**

Check out how the opening verse of the Gospel of Matthew links the coming of Christ to the covenant with Abraham and the covenant with David: **“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the [wait for it...] *son of David*, the [wait for it...] *son of Abraham*.”** King David is listed five times in the family tree of Jesus found in Matthew 1. Why is that? Because first and foremost, Jesus Christ is a direct descendant of David and therefore qualified to be the eternal king.

I love the last phrase of Isaiah 9:7: **“The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”** The word **“zeal”** means **“intense desire.”** Isaiah 59:17 says that God has **“wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.”** God is greatly desirous of seeing His plan of redemption accomplished in your life.

He has always been zealous for a remnant to take Him at His word (see Isaiah 26:11). We see this in Isaiah 37:32: **“For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”**

The phrase **“Lord of Hosts”** means the **“Lord of Armies.”** God has at least three kinds of armies at His disposal. He uses national armies like the Babylonians to accomplish His purposes, He enlists the creation army to do His bidding, and He drafts the angelic army to do His work. He unleashes all of His passionate zeal and all of His resources to bring to completion all of His purposes.

Here’s something really cool. The Lord of the Armies deployed all three armies to activate His plan that first Christmas.

- He mobilized the Roman *government* to call for a census so Jesus could be birthed in Bethlehem.
- He caused the *star in heaven* to burn bright enough to get the attention of astrologists living hundreds of miles away in another country.

- He unleashed an *army of angels* to announce the good news of the Savior's birth to some shepherds.

Do you realize God is exceedingly zealous for you? He loves you beyond what you can even fathom. He has arranged all the details of His intricate plan to deliver you from the bondage of sin and is offering to *speak* to you, *stand* for you, *sit* near you, and to *satisfy* within.

All of these prepositions are designed to enable you to know Christ personally.

It's common for people to believe all religions are basically the same. David Platt describes a time he was in a conversation with two other guys who followed two other religions. He spoke up and said,

*"It's almost like you guys picture God at the top of a mountain and we're all at the bottom: 'I may take this path up and you may take this path up...but in the end we'll all be in the same place.' They smiled and said, 'Exactly. You understand.'*

*Platt then said, 'What if I told you that the God at the top of the mountain didn't wait for us to find our way up to Him, but He actually came down to where we are?' They responded, 'That would be great.' To which he replied, 'This is the difference. What we find in the Bible is the story of God who has not left us alone to try to find our way to Him, but He has come to us and He has made the way to us through Jesus.'*

Isaiah 9:6 contains two prepositions which are followed by a personal pronoun, **"For to us."** We actually see them repeated: **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given."** The gift of Christ is a personal gift from God *to us*. A gift requires a response. If I put a gift under your tree, you may acknowledge it, may admire it, may even thank me for it, but it isn't yours until you open it and take it for yourself.

Pastor Kyle may have offered me a couple complimentary cappuccinos but the next time he gives me a gift I'm going to make sure what's inside matches what he says is on the outside. I'll make certain the name on the outside matches the nature of what's inside.

You can be confident that when you take Christ you will get exactly what He promised – forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Jesus is calling you by name. Will you call out to the only Name given under heaven by which you can be saved?

### **Invitation**

*Jesus, you are indescribably unique. Thank you for coming down to earth and dying in my place on the cross and then rising from the dead on the third day. When I consider who you are, and what you've done, I'm convicted by my selfish sinfulness. I repent from how I've been living and turn to you right now. Please save me from my sins. I ask you to come into my life and be my Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. I submit and surrender to your reign and your rule.*

### **Closing Song: "Your Name"**

#### **New Members**

Saturday Night

Ed and Diane Mumma

Sunday at 10:45

Ed and Ann Parker