

A CHILD IS BORN, A SON IS GIVEN

ISAIAH 9:6-7

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.

And His name 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, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

LendingTree is an online marketplace for borrowers and lenders. In 2021 the company did a study that analyzed the cost of raising a child in America. **If you birth a baby and raise that boy or girl in a middle class home, through their 18th birthday, it'll cost you \$237,482. That's a quarter of a million dollars to get that kid through High School - which doesn't include college expenses.**

In the state of Georgia to provide a child *food, shelter, clothing, child care, transportation, health insurance, and other necessities* it costs a whopping \$16,477 annually. That represents 15.5% of household income. And for those keeping track, that's a 19% increase since 2016.

The study does say that "**economies of scale**" help with the expense of having children. **The more children in your family, the cost per individual child decreases. In other words, the more kids you have the less they cost per child. Kid's are like donuts - cheaper by the dozen.**

So if you're married, and you and your spouse are thinking of Christmas presents... **here's a choice: You can raise a child... or purchase a new Ferrari Roma: sleek style, lush interior, 3.9 liter turbocharged engine, 612 horsepower, goes from 0-60 in 3.1 seconds... Both the child and car will cost the same amount of money!**

Yet, the emphasis on the Promised Child in Isaiah 9 is not on what *He'll cost us*, but the value *He'll bring us*.

Here's "**a Child, a Son**" whose shoulders are broad enough to carry all the responsibilities of government. Imbedded in His name are possibilities galore. What kind of a baby gets referred to as "**Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace?**"

This “*Child*” - this “*Son*” will sit on “*the throne of David*” and “*of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.*” Both phrases are *biblical clues* - *Jewish code* - that would’ve alerted Isaiah’s readers to familiar promises. This was no ordinary Child - no random Son.

This Child will fulfill God’s promises to the Davidic Dynasty. He’ll be the root that grows from David’s family tree - *the forever king who rules over a forever kingdom.*

All the Hebrew kings were anointed with olive oil, but One King was to be *the anointed of the anointed.* He would be drenched with the spiritual oil of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, this King was given a special name, “*Anointed One.*” In Hebrew, it’s “*Messiah.*” In English, it’s “*Christ.*”

Think of it, there was a child in Israel’s future who would *save His people, and bless His people, and be great among His people.* In essence, here’s a Child who grows up to take care of the family that bore Him. Generations to come will stand upon His shoulders.

This is the football player who signs a big contract and immediately buys his mom a new house... Or the child who builds a business and employs all his family members... Or the son who lands a job at Augusta National and invites his dad to join him for a round of golf... *Rather than a drain, this Son is a wondrous gift!*

Unlike the average child that costs His family a quarter of a million bucks, Messiah will be a **blessing** to *the house of David* - and ultimately, *the whole human race.*

The Offspring our text envisions - that mankind longs for - “*a Child, a Son*” is so great He’ll lift humanity *from all ages, all continents* - onto his broad shoulders, and orchestrate a wise, a kind, a just government, and bring the world its much-desired and long-awaited peace.

And if you listen, you hear a yearning in Isaiah’s voice, “*For unto us...*” Isaiah takes this promise personally. **He is our Messiah,** but even more so, **He is my Messiah.**

Harris Lenowitz, a Jewish literary professor from the University of Utah, put it this way, “*Who at different times in their life hasn't had a belief... that someone, a messiah, can help them and help the world? The messiah is the biggest answer to the biggest single question: 'Does God care about me?'*” And I agree, if God really *cares for us*; He’ll send someone to *save us.*

The Messianic longing is a basic human instinct. And all the centuries... all the atrocities... all the highs and lows that combine to make Jewish history since Isaiah, haven’t dampened the hope of a Messiah. Even today, among all men, the Messianic hope burns brightly.

Twenty years ago Jewish science-fiction writer, Jack Dann, was convinced our cynical culture had abandoned its belief in a Messiah. But his views have now changed.

He writes, "I would've said that the idea of a messianic message was dying out in the popular culture, that it was being overtaken by a more sophisticated secularism. Obviously I was mistaken. More and more people seem to be embracing the idea that a Messiah will appear to fix everything." People of all races and all cultures and all age groups - people the world-over - long for a Savior.

Every human heart whispers, "For unto us..." We're all longing for a Messiah who will "fix everything" for us.

And in these two verses, 6-7, Isaiah unfolds Messiah's resume' - and it is extensive... *from His birth to eternity.*

Seven hundred years before the first Christmas - long before a virgin girl, Mary, got news she'd bear a Son - seven centuries before she birthed that Child, and laid Jesus in a manger - the prophet penned this passage.

Isaiah's 66 chapters contain numerous pictures of Jesus, but here is perhaps the most vivid and complete. Read this prophecy with unfiltered, un-biased eyes and the Messiah Isaiah speaks of can be no one else. Here we have a portrait of Jesus Christ in the scroll of Isaiah.

Verse 6 describes Jesus' coming to us in a couplet. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given..."

Notice first, God sent *a person* to be our Savior. Not an ideology, or movement, or revolution, *but a person*. Today's secular Jews have turned the hope of Messiah into a mindset. It's progress and advancement. Rather than a *man*, Messiah is a *can-do* attitude for all men. Yet this is not what Isaiah sees. Clearly, Messiah is to be an individual - a member of the human race - a man.

And this is vital, for God could've sent seraphim to be our Savior - or crowned cherubim. Messiah could've been a type of angel - an other-worldly creature... But Messiah didn't come from the angelic ranks.

Instead, God insisted on "a Child, a Son" - *one of us*. In fact, God could've sent a fully-grown specimen or us, like the first man, Adam - an adult from Day One. Messiah could've come with muscles, and street-smarts, and the where-withal to protect Himself. *But not so...*

Isaiah predicts, “*A Child is born...*” God’s Anointed One, the Redeemer of all mankind, entered a woman’s virgin womb and planted Himself on her uterine wall.

He came as “*a Child.*” He subjected Himself to the birthing process, and breast-feeding, and potty training, and the first day of Middle School, and chores, and zits.

As “*a Child*” He developed, and learned, and grew. His feelings got hurt and His feet got tired. God blew His nose. He was just as human as you and I are human. From the outset of His reign Jesus wanted us to be sure of His love. That He didn’t just come to rule, but to care.

For a child is more than just human. A child is the littlest, most vulnerable, and most dependent of humans. This is how Jesus chose to come to us. He disarmed us with His humility. Rather than tower over us, He put Himself on our level. Before He reigns, He first relates.

Isn’t it odd, we spend most of our passing life seeking just the opposite... *to be big - to come off invincible - to be dependent on no one*. Our lives are dominated by *pride*, and *defensiveness*, and *self-sufficiency*.

But that’s what Messiah came to save us from - not just oppressive regimes, but from ourselves. He came to teach us the loving way... *humility - compassion - faith*.

“For unto us a Child is born,” and “unto us a Son is given.” More than one of us, Messiah is also a gift to us!

Jesus was born a child. But God is and has always been Father and Son. Thus, Jesus was the Son of God before time began. When He, the Messiah, came to us, He wasn’t just “*a Child born*” - He was “*a Son given.*”

In taking on *humanity*, He never lost His *divinity*. Messiah was God in the flesh. The perfect blend of *undiluted deity* and *undistorted humanity* - the God-man.

Imagine, for nine months the Creator of land and sea swimming in Mary’s amniotic fluid... When her water broke, for the first time in all eternity the Creator of the Universe had lungs to breath in what He’d dreamed up.

It was a monumental moment for God. I’m sure every angel in every corner of creation stopped in their tracks and gawked in stunned surprise. *What is God doing?*

But on Earth there were few who knew. The event that sent heaven into shock went unrecognized on the fallen planet. Only a few shepherds, and a faithful Joe realized Mary’s baby was Almighty God incognito. Not only had *a child been born*, but *a Son was now given*.

And even after Jesus had been around a while, and had all grown up (*even put His uniqueness on display*) men on Earth were still reluctant to see the truth about Him. When Jesus began to buck their status quo, and mock their stereotypes, and run roughshod over their traditions Messiah became a threat to their authority.

For as Isaiah said, “**the government will be upon His shoulder.**” Jesus Christ came to govern, not to appease.

The Child born didn't just come to *ease our pain* - as *the Son given* He came to *take the reins*. From the beginning, Messiah's mission was to govern our lives.

My firstborn grandson was the only baby I've seen birthed with biceps. Colt has broad shoulders. He was ripped from the womb. I think his mom was on steroids. I don't know if baby Jesus had literal biceps and a stout upper body, *but figuratively He did*. There's never been a baby born with broader shoulders. One day, the government of the world will rest on those shoulders.

Jesus will right all wrongs. He'll put an end to social injustices and financial inequities and racial prejudices. He'll end *corruption in our courts, violence in our streets, chaos in our schools, hostility in our homes*. There'll be no such thing as *bad cops* when Jesus is on the beat.

Some people believe it's up to the Church to build a utopia - or it's society's job to engineer a perfect world. *Not so!* We shouldn't flatter ourselves. Messiah won't need our help. Before Jesus *slept in an earthly manger* He *sat on heaven's throne*. He's use to being in charge.

Jesus is King of heaven - the job of governing Earth is not hard for Him to shoulder. Messiah is not afraid of serious and critical choices. He's qualified for the role.

While on Earth there were those who tried to make Jesus King, *but He refused*. He came the first time to establish a spiritual, not a political kingdom. He came not to reign over institutions, but to rule in men's heart.

This is what He continues to do today. And He's made it *our job* to help Him. To love and disarm and serve our way into human hearts with grace and truth.

But one day Jesus *will* return. *Sure as shooting, He's coming back*. He's still the same God of love and grace that we've come to expect, but along with His *merciful heart*, He'll rule with a *strong hand* - even a rod of iron. He'll deal with those who resist and rebel to insure a peace and prosperity for all who put their trust in Him.

Isaiah continues in verse 6, “**And His name...**” That first Christmas the angel told Joseph, “**You shall call His name Jesus...**” Yet Isaiah informs us He'll be known by five

more monikers: *“Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

Which brings up one of my pet peeves. When it came time to name their firstborn, my mom and dad canvassed all the possible names. They could've chosen *“Ace,”* or *“Duke,”* or *“Bart,”* or *“Thor,”* or *“Max,”* or *“Rocky”* - a strong sounding name. Instead they named me, *“Sandy.”* Hey, I got named after a granular substance. Imagine, getting named after shore erosion.

Shifty, shaky is my namesake. *Sand* gets in your swimsuit. It irritates your skin. *“Hi, my name is irritant?”* Well, *maybe my name is more fitting than I think...*

But I love Jesus' names. These are name tags with a message. Jesus couldn't have five more fitting names.

Isaiah says of Messiah, King Jesus, *“His name will be called Wonderful...”* There was nothing ordinary or run-of-the-mill - *let alone, boring and dull* - about Jesus. He was and is truly *“wonderful”* in every way.

Realize, in the Bible, this word *“wonderful”* is never once used of anything *that man is* or *that man does*. It's a word reserved for God. It's a heavenly, god-like, *we might say “magical” quality* - that spices up life.

When I sense Jesus' presence - or experience His peace - He brings a *“wonder”* to my life. I sense that somehow my life matters beyond time and space. Jesus sprinkles touches of eternity into my daily routine. *Live life with Jesus and it's a wonderful life!*

Here's our Messiah, *“More light than we can learn, more wealth than we can treasure, more love than we can earn, more peace than we can measure, because one Child is born.”* Thus, we call Him *“Wonderful.”*

And Jesus is the *“Counselor”* I desperately need. Some Bible scholars put these two words into a single name, *“Wonderful Counselor.”* That's fine with me, *for He is that!* Jesus is our *“Wonderful Counselor”* in a world teeming with false and foolish ideas and advice.

I read an interesting tabulation. Today *“Our society boasts of 77,000 clinical psychologists, 192,000 clinical social workers, 105,000 mental health counselors, 50,000 marriage and family therapists, 17,000 nurse psychotherapists, 30,000 life coaches - and hundreds of thousands of nonclinical social workers and substance abuse counselors.”* Since 1950 there's been a 100-fold increase in mental health workers in America. *But are we healthier? More sane and less tortured?* Despite the increase in helpers... we're not.

I heard it put, "A counselor is someone who helps you organize your hang-ups so you can be unhappy more efficiently." *That's a joke of course.* I do want to thank the many caring professionals who offer hurting folks valuable help. There are good, wise counselors.

But there's something wrong when a surplus of help still doesn't put a dent in our problem. *We need Jesus!*

He is the expert *Counselor*. We need His truth, His forgiveness, His love. We need Jesus to point us to God, and cleanse our sin, and break our destructive habits, and overcome our inadequacies, and mend our brokenness, and sort out the details of our lives.

It's interesting, mankind fell into sin because we listened to the wrong Counselor - *the advice of the serpent*. We were ruined by a Counselor, but we're also restored by a Counselor - *a Wonderful Counselor*.

His wisdom is higher than our wisdom. It's *divine*, not *earthly* wisdom. Actually, *the wisdom of God* is foolishness to man. It goes against the grain - against conventional wisdom. He only asks that we trust Him!

Then we're told Messiah is the "Mighty God." In Hebrew it's "El Gibbor" - the "*hero-God*" or "*warrior-God*." Messiah has and will defend His righteousness. He's not afraid to flex His muscle, and fight *with* and *for* His people. God wins victories for those who trust Him.

And today, our society is desperate for heroes. Heroes exemplify courage. Heroes are champions of justice. They help define our ideals, and provide hope.

Yet in the book, "*The Day America Told The Truth*," its authors report that 70% of Americans say they have no living heroes. *Where have all our heroes gone?*

A few years ago, on an episode of Family Feud, host Steve Harvey, asked the question, "When someone mentions *the king*," to whom might they be referring?"

Of the 100 people surveyed, here were their answers... 81 said "Elvis Presley" - 3 people "Martin Luther King, Jr." - 2 people said "The Burger King..." Amazingly, only 7 people said, "God or Jesus Christ."

I hope your King - your role model - your hero - isn't Elvis. *He ain't nothing but a hound dog*, said it himself. As noble as Dr. King was, he had his flaws. And the Burger King plays second fiddle to Ronald McDonald.

If you don't have a hero, let me point you to Isaiah's Anointed One. The Son of God has vanquished armies, walked on water, cast out demons, defeated the devil himself;

then triumphant over sin, death, hell, and the grave. And He is my hero - Jesus the Messiah.

He is the *"Mighty God."* Again, when Jesus came as a man and took on humanity, nothing happened to diminish His deity. Jesus maintained His superpowers. But He laid them aside to live and die in our place.

One day, Messiah will return to this fallen planet to crush the rebellion that has already begun to brew. He'll be armed and dangerous. *"The Mighty God"* will again come welding His mightiness and fearlessness.

But in my heart of hearts Jesus' most heroic act will still be the 30-plus years when love drove Him to be humble. Love drove Him to a cross. When Jesus laid it all aside to take our side, and atone for our sin! That's why the *"Mighty God"* will always be my hero!

And Messiah is also named *"Everlasting Father."* In the Gospels Jesus did nothing to downplay this name. Numerous times He claimed to be one with the Father. On occasion He referred to Himself as *"I am."* The name the true God gave to Moses at the burning bush. In John 10:30 Jesus said, *"I and My Father are one."*

Here it's no surprise Messiah is called, *"Everlasting Father."* *"A Son given"* is also the *eternal Father*.

And the emphasis here is that Messiah acts like a father. He's a watchful, patient dad to His people.

A good dad realizes that his kids are a work in progress. He invests in their training and loves them despite their flaws and failures. This is the heart of Jesus - *and this will be His heart forever and forever*. In fact, the only way a child can disappoint such a Dad is to reject His forgiveness or to stonewall His love.

And then fifthly, Messiah is called *"Prince of Peace."* I once read that in the last 4000 years of history only 268 years have been lived in peace. And in that time over 8000 peace treaties have been made and broken.

The world we live in today is overflowing with war. Did you know there're 32 current conflicts around the globe, effecting nearly two billion people. From the latest war in Gaza, to the fighting in Ukraine, to the civil wars that rage in Myanmar, and Ethiopia, and Yemen, to the drug war that continues south of our border in Mexico, to the mob rule that's brought desperation to Haiti, to the unrest that flares up regularly on our own city streets. Our world overflows with violence!

It reminds me of the little boy who was doing a history report. He asked his dad, "Why do wars start?" His dad replied, "*Well it varies. Take World War 1 for example it started when Germany invaded Belgium.*"

His wife was nearby, and overheard his answer. She corrected him, "Why don't you tell the boy the truth. It began when someone was murdered." Dad snapped back, "*Were you being asked the question, or was I?*"

His wife got angry. She stomped out of the room and slammed the door behind her. After an awkward silence, the boy said, "*It's okay dad, you don't have to tell me anymore. Now I know why wars start..*"

The reason there's unrest among men is because there's unrest within men. Sin makes us selfish, angry, jealous, greedy, proud. Only Jesus has the antidote.

We desperately need peace - our problem is that we seek it without its Prince. Messiah alone can spread seeds of love and spiritual rest. **Jesus is our peace!**

As the angels announced to the shepherds that first Christmas, "*On Earth peace, goodwill toward men.*" One day, the Prince of Peace will bring *peace to the Earth* - but today, He first brings *peace to our hearts*.

The Messiah's resume' ends with a drumroll. Isaiah states, "*Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever.*"

History isn't a crap shoot. All of history is barreling toward an appointed end. Messiah's kingdom is growing today spiritually, under the surface. But when Jesus returns His throne will be established on Earth, and will mark the beginning of divine order, justice, healing, restoration - *all that humanity has been hoping for since the first sin entered the world in the Garden of Eden.*

Tomorrow we celebrate *the birth of a child* and *the gift of a Son - a royal one at that* - and His government will grow and bring about an everlasting peace to this troubled planet. And He'll have no term limits. No one will want them. We'll rejoice that His kingdom is forever.

And if there's a doubter in the crowd today, Isaiah closes with these words, "*The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*" When it comes to our salvation, and the restoration of our broken world *God will get it done!*

Though He's been patient with our failings for eons and ages, there is a fire in God to bring it to a close. To redeem the stolen, heal the broken, reorder the chaos.

God will see to it Messiah comes again **and fixes everything** - for He's already come once! He proved His ability to do above all that we could ask or think. Over 2000 years ago, **"A Child was born, a Son was given..."**

In February 1809, a conversation took place outside a little town in Kentucky. One man asked his friend, **"Any news down t' the village Ezry?"** Ezry answered, **"Well, McLain went t' Washington t' see Madison sworn in, and ole Spellman tells me this Bonaparte fella has captured most of Spain... What's new with you?"**

The other fellow replied, **"Nuthin', nuthin' a' tall, 'cept fer a new baby born t' Tom Lincoln. Nuthin' ever happens out here."** Of course, the baby he mentioned was Abraham Lincoln, who grew to be one of our country's greatest presidents, but there was nothing special about him at first. And how similar this was to that first Christmas. **Nuthin' a' tall** ever happened in Bethlehem. Yet **"a Child was born, a Son was given."**

Messiah, *rightful ruler of David's throne, the anointed of God*, had come! His shoulders are broad enough to rule forever, and bring about a long-awaited peace.

Call Him, **"Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"**
Call Him **Jesus!** Receive Him into your heart. This Christmas, let the Prince of Peace rule over you, and give your soul rest.