

Isaiah Chapter 9C

As I am sure that you know a few secular radio stations begin their Xmas programming over the Thanksgiving weekend and play nothing but Xmas music 24 / 7 until Xmas day.

- So we have the wonderful opportunity to hear grandma got run over by a reindeer more than 20 times every day.
- I must admit that there is one song that causes me to change the station every time it is played” and that is “Happy Christmas” by John Lennon.
- I have a difficult time celebrating the birth of our Savior to lyrics written by an individual who spent much his public career mocking and maligning religion.

Nevertheless If you listen carefully to the Lyrics of "Happy Xmas" you will notice in the background a continual refrain that is sung by the Harlem Children’s choir, “**War is over, War is over, War is over.**” In reality this was John’s message, it was a political statement about the Vietnam War and it had very little to do with Christmas. OR did it??

If only John would have known the truth about Jesus Christ in December in 1971 when he wrote “Happy Christmas, War is Over;”

- Jesus is the Child who was born, **the Son who was given**, it is upon His shoulders that the government will finally and fully rest, He is the Prince of Peace and one day He will cause every sword in the world to be beaten into plowshares.
- John wrote his songs at a time of moral decay a time of War and political instability. His songs were a melodic cry for enlightenment, but sadly HE rejected the true Light. J.C.

Returning to the Book of Isaiah I would remind you that Isaiah wrote chapter 9 under very similar conditions to those experienced by John Lennon here in the U.S. (1970’s)

- In Isaiah’s time Israel and their King had rejected God and were living in idolatry and morally bankruptcy.
 - In 1966 John Lennon made the statement, “Christianity is in decline and the Beatles have become more popular than Jesus Christ.” (*rejection of God*)
 - The “free love” of the 60’s was the beginning of 20th century immorality.
 - And the Vietnam War was on everyone’s mind.
 - Time Magazine’s cover asked the question - “Is God Dead?”
- Back in Isaiah: Israel’s idolatry, and their rejection of the true and living God, opened the door for terroristic threats from the Syrian Army.
- Ahaz spurned the Word of God that came through the mouth of Isaiah. Rather than trusting in the Lord he relied upon his own strength and his coalition of allies.

When you stop to think about it, the condition of Israel in the time of Ahaz sounds very similar to the condition of our own nation today.

- Like Israel there is a significant LACK of strong moral leadership.
- Both then and now terroristic threats arise out of Syria.
- The rumblings of war were on the horizon. The enemies of Israel were threatening.
- Rather than trusting in the Lord, Ahaz trusted in the coalition of his allies.
- It was in Isaiah’s day and it is in our day a time of spiritual darkness, moral decay and rampant idolatry.

But I would remind you that it was at such a time as this when the Prophet of God declared:

Isaiah 9: 2 **The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.**

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.**

- With very picturesque words in a time of national darkness, God graciously shined His spotlight on the **child who is born**, the **Son who is given**.
- When the whole nation was floundering like a blind man in the blackest of night GOD graciously revealed the brilliance of the person of Christ. (*I pray God, do it again*)

The revelation of God to the people of Israel is very similar to the revelation he has give us.

- When we were wondering in the darkness of sin, living our lives in gross immorality and moral decadence, chasing after materialistic and sensual pleasures,
- GOD sovereignly, miraculously and graciously opened our blind eyes to the power, the forgiveness and compassion of Jesus Christ.
- Isaiah illuminates the person of Christ like the waves of a brilliant light passing through a prism where the wonderful colors of Christ's beautiful attributes are broken down and clearly displayed for those who have eyes to see.

This morning we will quickly peruse the unfathomable attributes of our blessed Savior as they are described by the Prophet Isaiah in the four titles he attributes to Jesus Christ.

1. WISDOM - Wonderful Counselor
2. POWER - Mighty God
3. COMPASSION - Everlasting Father
4. PEACE - Prince of Peace

Wonderful Counselor

The first descriptive word that is used in this fourfold exposition of the Character of Christ is actually quite striking and all of the subsequent titles are influenced by and raised to a higher level through this first WORD. "WONDERFUL!"

Isaiah is not merely telling us that the Messiah will do wonderful things. He is making a statement about the Nature of Christ.

- His very person is miraculous, the fact that he is both God and Man, that he was born of a virgin, He himself is a WONDER. (*Not the only place where "Wonder" is used*)

The same Hebrew Word (PELI) is used in the book of Judges:

Judges 13: 17 **And Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that, when your words come true, we may honor you?"** 18 **And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?"**

- When we encounter "*The Angel of the Lord*" in the O.T. we are actually witnessing a preincarnate appearance of the Son of God.
 - So here in Judges the Lord is actually saying that his name is "wonderful."

Isaiah calls him “**WONDERFUL Counselor.**”

- By combining these two words Isaiah is telling us that the child to be born the Son to be given will possess miraculous wisdom and divine understanding.
- Literally Jesus Christ is the embodiment of Divine Wisdom.

The crowds that heard Jesus speak attested to his extraordinary wisdom:

(Soldiers sent to arrest him returned empty handed) John 7:46, “**No one ever spoke like this man.**” Luke 4: 22 (In Nazareth) **They all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”**

- NO He is God’s son who came through Mary and IN him are found ALL of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Colosse he affirmed the Wisdom of Christ.

Colossians 2: 3 (Jesus Christ) **in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

- IN Jesus Christ, the invisible God was manifested to mankind.
- What Paul is saying is that there is NO Secret formula, no hidden wisdom, no spiritual knowledge that is revealed only to a select few enlightened gurus in the world.
- The Eternal God has chosen to reveal himself openly in the person of Jesus Christ. **IN HIM are hidden ALL of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

If we would listen and obey the words of this Wonderful Counselor:

- We would understand WHERE we came from and WHY we are here.
- We would discover that we were fearfully and wonderfully made to bear his image. We did not come into existence by chance through some impersonal evolutionary process.
 - God purposefully made us for his own glory.
- The words of Christ bring clarity to the gender confusion that afflicts our society. In Mark 10:6 “**from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’”**
 - Try as we may to twist or reject those words, the wisdom of God is revealed to man through the Word of God.
- The divine blueprints for marriage, family and all of human society come from this wonderful counselor.
- As a matter of fact, YOUR Own eternal destiny is dependent upon the revelation of the person and saving work of Jesus Christ.
- For those who believe, those who have been born of God through the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is a never-ending source of wisdom. All we need do is ask.

Jas 1:5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.**

In this world we face enormous difficulties that necessitate a wisdom that exceeds the wisdom of man. But God by his grace and for his glory has given us a **Wonderful Counselor.**

In the same way, in this present world, we face troubles that arise from both human and spiritual opponents, and they are far too strong for us to conquer. We need a divine counselor to give us wisdom but we also need a Mighty God who has the power to overcome.

- That brings us to the next attribute of our Precious Savior.

POWER - Mighty God (EL GIBBOR - God the mighty one)

Even though he was born in obscurity, raised by a very simple family in Nazareth, even though he remained out of the public eye for 30 years, when his ministry finally began Jesus boldly displayed the power and authority of God the Mighty one.

- His power over sickness and infirmity, yes and even over death itself. (By his gracious touch the *deaf heard*, *blind saw*, lame walk, the *dead are raised* to life!)
- He had power over all of the elements of nature (commanded *the wind* and the *waves* to be still, *turned water* into wine, *multiplied loaves* and fishes)
- His power over the forces of spiritual darkness: (*demons fled* at his command, he endured every temptation known to man and remained sinless.)

Throughout the New Testament this same Jesus is declared to be God over all, blessed forever, the great God, the Living God and eternal life, He is spoken of as the Mighty One, who created everything that exists and even today He continues to uphold and sustain all things by the word of his power.

- What does this mean for those of us who follow him today?
- He has the unique ability to open our blind eyes and rescue us from the dominion of darkness. NOT only does he have the power to save, he also has the power to guard, to keep those he has saved.
- John10:28 **I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.**

John Calvin: “We learn from this title (Mighty God) that there is in Christ abundance of protection for defending our salvation, so that we desire nothing beyond him; for he is God, who is pleased to show himself strong on our behalf.”

- We rejoice in the immeasurable power of our Mighty God AND as we move on in the writing of Isaiah we see that this mighty power is contained in one who displays the compassion of a father. Jesus is called the Eternal Father.

Eternal Father - Father of eternity

This title, this description of Christ has led to some confusion. Is Jesus the Father as well as the Son?? NO the mystery of the Trinity is that there is one God who eternally exists in three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- The title, “**Eternal Father**” does not denote Christ’s position within the Godhead instead it describes HIS character and eternal nature.
- As the Psalmist declared, “*He is from everlasting to everlasting*”
- Listen to Micah’s birth announcement:

Micah 5; 2 **But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.**

As it relates to the people of God, Jesus will eternally be a Father to them.

- It is through Him that we have received eternal life.
- Through Him we have been adopted into the Family of God
- Through Him we have obtained an inheritance.

Edward Young: "IN what sense may the Messiah be designated the Father of Eternity? We may perhaps bring out the thought by paraphrasing, "One who is eternally a Father."

- The word "Father" helps us understand the unique ministry of the Lord Jesus to his precious children, like that of a shepherd to his sheep, a father to his children he cares for them, he deals with them in love and compassion.
- This is best described for us in the words of Psalm 103

Psalm 103: 13 **As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.** 14 **For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.**

- Jesus knows our frame because HE took on flesh and dwelt among us.
- Our Eternal Father knows what it is like to work overtime in the carpenter's shop.
- He understands the dysfunction of a family. Even though he was sinless his mother, father, his sisters and brothers were NOT!
- He knows firsthand what it is like to endure sleepless nights.
- He understands what it means to be so busy that you don't have time to eat.
- He may never have been married when he walked on the earth BUT the Bible depicts him as a bridegroom and WE as the bride, And WE come with a truckload of baggage.
- Regardless of how you viewed your earthly father, those of us who believe, all who are born of God have an eternal Father and we are being transformed into his image.

He is able to show compassion like a Father because he was tempted in every way like we are and yet he remained without sin.

1John 3: 2 **Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.**

WHAT DO WE know about the Lord Jesus so far?

- The wisdom of his counsel is "mind blowing" He is the **Wonderful Counselor**.
- He is unlimited in power so he has the ability to bring about his sovereign will and no one can stand against him. He is **the Mighty God**.
- AND all of this wisdom and power are expressed through the heart of a Father. He is the **Eternal Father**.
- FINALLY Isaiah declares he is the Prince of Peace.

PEACE - Prince of Peace

I began this teaching with a reference to a Christmas Song recorded by John Lennon, "Happy Christmas, War is Over"

- In the late 60's and early 70's people considered John to be a promoter of peace.
- But sadly he died as a victim of the violence that he so strongly stood against. Nothing in John's life or death was actually able to produce a true or lasting peace.
- Just look at history: We have moved on from Vietnam to Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, ISIL.

As I said earlier at the time of Isaiah's writing Israel was enduring the difficulty of terroristic threats that would lead to war with Assyria.

- News of the coming Prince of Peace would spark hope in the true people of God.

- More than 700 years would pass before that silent night would be broken by the angelic choir.

Luke 2:13 **And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,** 14 **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”**

- If there is one thing we have learned from human history any temporary cessation of hostilities between nations, tribes and peoples will be short-lived.
- Treaties that are signed between nations never bring about the desired peace.

LISTEN carefully: If there is any hope at all for a lasting peace the CAUSE of war, namely SIN, must be removed once and for all.

- The ROOT of ALL our hostilities is our rebellion against our Creator.

The problem is this: By himself, Man is Powerless, totally incapable of mending his broken relationship with God. (no acts of righteousness, no religious service can reconcile man)

- Think about it, History proves that we can't even make peace with one another.

BUT the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ came to reconcile the hostilities that exist between Holy God and Sinful man.

- I am happy to say, he accomplished this peace through the shedding of his own blood.

Colossians 1: 19 **For in him (Christ) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,** 20 **and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.**

- This is the peace of which the Angels sang. Peace with God that was purchased at Christ's expense on the Cross.
- Peace with God that results in eternal life for those who repent of their sin and believe.
- DO YOU know this PEACE? The peace of reconciliation with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. **The peace of God that passes understanding.**
- It is my sincere prayer TODAY that you would know the truth of Jesus Christ.
- Only through Jesus Christ can we truly sing, “War is over, War is over.”

As we bring to a close this last Sunday in Advent I want to remind you that this same Jesus the one of whom the Apostle Paul said **“HE is our peace”** is coming back again.

- When he returns, the peace that men have longed for the tranquility that poets and songwriters have desired will finally and fully be realized by all of God's redeemed people.
- Isaiah describes this peace for us in Ch. 11

Isaiah 11:5 **Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.**
 6 **The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.**
 7 **The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.** 8 **The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.**

9 They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. 10 In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

We joyfully find a TASTE of the Peace that our hearts long for as we meditate the prophetic Scriptures. And this Season of Advent fuels the fire of HOPE as we look to the coming of the Prince of Peace.