

Dec. 11, 2016 Rev. C. van Dam

For To Us a Child is Born!

(Isa 9:6)

Last time we heard about the prophecy of the child who would be named Immanuel, God with us. This child was a sign for King Ahaz that the Lord had not abandoned his people in their time of need but was with them and would defeat their enemies. In the chapters which follow this story, there are more prophecies about the child to be born, prophecies about the ultimate fulfillment in the birth of Jesus Christ, God made flesh, God come down as man.

In Isaiah 9:6 we read that this child to be born will not only be called “Immanuel” but will also called four other names. Isaiah 9:6 reads as follows, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

What an amazing array of names! Surely this is a very special child indeed! This child will have the government upon his shoulders. This child who will govern is no ordinary child for he is God himself, come down in the person of a child, humble and meek, yet powerful and awesome. The nature of this child becomes clear in the names which are given to him.

The first name which the child receives is Wonderful Counselor. Literally it says that the child will be called “Wonder of a counselor.” This child is indeed a wonder. He is a miracle child because he is God himself. He is also a counselor for the child to be born will not be foolish or lacking in true godly wisdom like the rulers of Judah at the time. Instead, he will be a wonderful counselor who will be able to give the counsel and wisdom of God above. In him are to be found all the knowledge and wisdom about God and of God.

We can see this name fulfilled in Jesus Christ. While he was on earth, he spoke to the people with authority and they could sense that he was someone who had divine insight and gave the wonderful counsel of God. May we, also today, receive and accept the teaching and counsel of Jesus Christ in our lives. He has continued his work among his people after he ascended into heaven. he sent his Holy Spirit to his people in order that he might be for them another divine Counselor. Christ's Spirit has been sent to us in order that we might not walk around in darkness, stumbling our way through life but in order that we might be filled with wisdom from above and enabled to fulfill and complete the tasks which the Lord gives us in this life to the praise of his glory.

We pray that you would know and experience the wonder of Christ's counsel in your life. It is not merely the counsel of a wise man but it is the counsel and instruction from God himself. It is the counsel which will never fail but will always help and instruct when we follow it and obey him and listen to his Word wherein we can find this counsel. When you live your life according to God's counsel as found in his Word, then you will walk in his light and will receive true and perfect direction in your life. Then you will be equipped for whatever trial and adversity may come your way because you may know the comfort of having a true Counselor at your side at all times who sympathizes with you and encourages you in the promises and blessings of the Lord.

The child to be born is also called Mighty God. Surely a most surprising name for a child, perhaps even more surprising than the first name. Here a child is made equal to God. The fact that God would come down as a child is a great act of mercy which would never have come up or occurred to man. It is considered to be impossible. How can God be a child? Yet it is clearly revealed here. The name of the child to be born is Mighty God! How great is the wonder and miracle of the incarnation, God made flesh! What we could never have conceived of, God has done for us!

The child to be born will be called Mighty God. God himself will rule over his people and come down to them and dwell with them. There is no one and nothing in all creation which can stand up to the awesome greatness and strength of the Lord our God. With him as our ruler, we are safe from all harm and danger. He is the one who will crush all the wicked and the evil one, the devil himself. They will be terrified and completely conquered when he goes out to war against them. Our God is the mighty warrior who will effortlessly conquer all who oppose him.

It is because Jesus Christ is God that he is able to be our perfect Mediator. For it is only God who can endure and survive the eternal wrath of God against our sins. He alone can deliver us from God's wrath and actually give to us righteousness and life. Because he is Mighty God, there is again hope for God's people!

The child to be born is also called Everlasting Father. Clearly a most unusual name for a child who still needs to be born. The adjective "everlasting" points again to the divine nature of the child. It is only God who is described as being everlasting or eternal in the Old Testament. He is the one who is without beginning and without end. The eternal God will come down to this earth to be born as a child.

The term "Father" here should be understood according to the character and general meaning of the term "father" as revealed in Scripture. In the Old Testament, God is called the Father of his people in order to demonstrate his care and compassion for them. David sings in Psalm 103, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him" (Ps 103:13).

While he was on earth, Jesus Christ also revealed this compassion of a father to God's people. His heart went out to the people of Israel when he saw them as sheep who were scattered without a shepherd and he was filled with compassion. How he longed to gather them as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. He told his disciples, "I am the good shepherd." Christ is the one who will lead us to where it is safe and

provide us with what we need. He even offers up his own flesh and blood in order that we might be strengthened and nourished in our souls always.

He gave himself for us in great sacrificial, fatherly love in order that we might be saved and be able to experience the goodness and compassion of the Lord forever and ever.

The child to be born is called Prince of Peace. It is through Jesus Christ alone that true and lasting peace can be found. It is in him that you can have the peace with God which never ends. He is the who has made this possible because of his sacrifice on the cross. There he offered up himself in order that we might be reconciled with God and be enabled to live before him in harmonious fellowship and communion. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. It is from him alone that we can receive this wonderful gift of peace with the almighty and holy God.

The child to be born is very clearly a miracle from God. This child is God come down from heaven to be born as a man. This has happened already in Jesus Christ. This child enables God's people to have hope again in a very dark and fallen world.

Where do you seek your help when things are going wrong in life? Seek your help from the child who has been born, the child Jesus Christ, who is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, and Prince of Peace. To him alone be all the glory and praise forever and ever.