



introduction

The Amazing Names of the Messiah

During World War II, my father-in-law spent 18 months in a prisoner-of-war camp. In the camp, loudspeakers often played music, including a song entitled “Lili Marlene.” Somehow it gave him hope, and he fell in love with the beauty of that name. Years later he gave that name, filled with personal significance, to his only daughter—my wife, Marlene.

Names are like that. They have great importance in human relationships. Nowhere, however, is a name more important than in our relationship with our God. In a way that sets Him apart from all others, He ties

His name to His reputation and introduces
Himself to us as "God with us."

This booklet is about the amazing prophecy
of Isaiah 9:6, where the prophet, 700 years
before the coming of Messiah, described the One
whose names reveal His importance to us.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Crowder". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

BILL CROWDER

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one

What's in a Name?

What's in a name? Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet made this question famous. They fall in love before learning they bear the names of rival families. Romeo is a Montague and Juliet a Capulet. Willing to deny name before love, Juliet cries out, "Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name. Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, and I'll no longer be a Capulet." A few lines later, Juliet asks, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet."

In other settings, the family name becomes even more important. As a young boy, I watched my father endure the pain of a failed business that left my parents deeply in debt. Rather than declare bankruptcy, he went to each of his creditors and told them he would fully pay them

back if it took the rest of his life. On his handshake and his name, each creditor took him at his word. He kept his promise, furthering his credibility and example of integrity in the business community.

The significance of a name was particularly true in Bible times. In both Old and New Testaments, names reflected personal experience or expressed character:

Jacob (GEN. 25:26). Jacob (which means "supplanter") was so named because he would overtake his brother, Esau, in position and significance. This became reality as Jacob stole both the blessing and the birthright from his firstborn brother.

Naomi (RUTH 1:20). The name Naomi means "delightful one." Upon her return from the land of Moab, however, she changed her name to Mara, meaning "bitter." Why? Because in Moab she had suffered the bitter loss of a husband, two sons, and a daughter-in-law.

Barnabas (ACTS 4:36). In the New Testament, we find a man named Joseph, who was so active in caring for people and encouraging others that he received a new name—a nickname. That name was Barnabas, which means "son of encouragement."

While names were important to the people of the Bible, nowhere was this more significant than in Matthew 1:21, where we read the words spoken to Joseph:

She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

The name *Jesus* means "Jehovah our Savior." It is the



New Testament equivalent of the Hebrew name Joshua, Yeshua, or Hoshea. While others wore these names to honor God, Jesus bore His name as the Savior-God that the New Testament says He was. It's important for us to see that the Scriptures honor the name Jesus for several reasons:

- **It is the name by which we must be saved.** "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under

***The name Jesus means, "Jehovah our Savior."
It is the New Testament equivalent of the
Hebrew name Joshua, Yeshua, or Hoshea.***

heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (ACTS 4:12).

- **It is the name that establishes the tone for everything a Christian does.**

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (COL. 3:17).

- **It is the name at which, one day in the future, every knee shall bow.**

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should



God considers His name to be important.

He showed His power to Pharaoh so "that My name may be declared in all the earth" (ROMANS 9:17).

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (PHIL. 2:10-11).

From the time of Jesus' birth until now, many have missed or dismissed the significance of His name. In His childhood days, His neighbors knew Him as the son of Joseph the carpenter. In our generation, many know Jesus only as an expression of anger or profanity. Few understand the many additional names given to Him in the Bible. For that reason, we want to look at four significant names written in anticipation of a coming Messiah more than 600 years before the birth of Jesus. By discovering His names, we can be led deeper into an understanding of who He is and why He deserves our trust.



► The Predicted Names Of Messiah

No Old Testament prophet had more to say about the promised Messiah of Israel than Isaiah. He described the coming Servant-Ruler as One who would bring a mysterious blend of power and suffering (ISA. 53; 61:1-3). The character of this coming Servant is most clearly stated in Isaiah 9:6, where the prophet declared:

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.

Here, Isaiah said several things that remained a mystery until the coming of Christ. While it was clear that he was predicting a coming world leader and messianic

age, what could not have been seen until after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection is that Isaiah was actually predicting the arrival of the Son of God. All of this we can now see packed profoundly into the series of names Isaiah used for the coming Servant of God.



*Isaiah 9:6 was one of the passages selected by George Frideric Handel for his magnificent oratorio **Messiah**.*

No prophet had more to say about the promised Messiah than Isaiah.

Let's review the scope of this amazing prophecy.

The Birth Of Messiah. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ..." Such prophecies infused generations of Jewish women with dreams of being the mother who would give birth to the promised and long-awaited Messiah. But it has since become clear that this prophecy anticipated far more than the birth of a world leader. We now see in the phrase "unto us a Son is given" the entrance of God's own Son into the human race that He had created.

The Kingdom Of Messiah. "...and the government will be upon His shoulder ..." These are words filled with



*The four titles of the coming king in Isaiah 9:6 clearly point to His **human birth** and His **divine nature**.*

both prophetic and practical significance. Prophetically, Isaiah saw the day when a son of Israel would bear the weight of world leadership. In chapter 2, Isaiah predicted that in the last days the house of the Lord would be established in Jerusalem. Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, agrees, saying that on that day an angel of God will declare, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ [or Messiah], and He shall reign forever and ever!" (REV. 11:15).

Those who have bowed their knee to this coming Messiah and Lord can find present encouragement in that future day. Our comfort is found in the reality that the shoulders that will someday carry the government of the world is large enough to bear any personal burden that we bring to Him now.

The Character Of Messiah. "...and His name will be called ..." Hebrew names are often significant for defining character. Isaiah used four compound names to provide a full understanding of this coming Savior. Each name forms a different window through which to view the Son of God who became the Son of man. These four names shape our understanding of who God's Messiah is—helping us develop a personal relationship with Him and showing us where to find Him in our moments of need. Let's take these names one at a time.



two

A Guiding Name: **Wonderful Counselor**

“And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor.”

► **“Wonderful Counselor”** literally translates, “a wonder of a counselor.” What does this name mean? Let’s look at it in two parts.

“Wonderful.” The Hebrew word *pala* indicates “a phenomenon lying outside the realm of human explanation; that which is separated from the normal course of events.” The same word is used in Psalm 139:6 in just this way: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.” It describes something miraculous!

We often have a low view of the miraculous, and therefore a limited sense of wonder. Does our sense of wonder go beyond all human explanation? Or have the successes of science and technology robbed us of our ability to worship a God of miracles? Do we honestly believe that

the greatest "miracles" are not come-from-behind victories by our favorite sports team, or the latest in technological wizardry, or the wonder drug that calmed our hay fever?

All of those can be explained, but a real wonder is something beyond human explanation. The prophet Isaiah declared that the coming Christ would be a wonder. This not only describes what He does, it describes who He *is*. He, Himself, is the wonder!

"Counselor." In its historical usage, the word pictured a king giving counsel to his people. Micah declared the dilemma of the Jewish captives in Babylon this way, "Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished?" (4:9). Long before the Child was born and the Son was given, Isaiah foretold that God was planning to send a Counselor for the brokenhearted people of the world.

What is the evidence that Jesus Christ is the Wonderful Counselor? We see it fleshed out in a Person. We read of, reflect on, and appeal for help from the One "who became for us wisdom from God" (1 COR. 1:30).

When we take all that we know about Christ, it adds up to a marvelous truth—He is the God who is a "Wonder of a Counselor."

His Wonder. If a wonder is anything that excites amazement, then it describes everything about the One who came in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul expressed the wonder of the Christ who clothed Himself in human flesh:



And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

The wonder of this brief statement disturbs philosophers, delights beggars, and comforts the brokenhearted. What He did for us in His redeeming work is beyond comprehension. Imagine what it will mean to enjoy for all eternity a loving relationship with the Creator, the Son of heaven who became sin for us (2 COR. 5:20-21). Think about it: the Son, God in every way, was still willing to bear our punishment for sin. That should stir our hearts in wonder!

His Counsel. Even as a child of 12, Jesus astounded Jewish rabbis with His wisdom (L.K. 2:46-47). Luke recorded that "the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled



In Micah 4:9, the prophet uses the words "**counselor**" and "**king**" as **synonyms**. The title "Wonderful Counselor" combines those two ideas.

A real wonder is something beyond human explanation. Isaiah declared that the coming Christ would be a wonder.

with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him" (2:40). In His public life, people were amazed at His wise counsel. "When He had come to His own country, He

taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, 'Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?'" (MT. 13:54). Later, the apostle Paul wrote that in Him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (COL. 2:3).

Are we as astonished at the wonder of a counselor as Isaiah was? Are we captivated by His charm, insight, and practical genius? Where else can we be so assured of the acceptance and forgiveness and comfort of God?

What is the importance of the name "Wonderful Counselor" to believers today? Because the Wonderful Counselor is also our Creator and Savior, and because He is the fulfillment of all that both Old and New Testaments teach, His counsel is found wherever we can find the words and provisions of God. The Old Testament is His story. The New Testament Gospels are the record of His interactions with the people of His day. The letters of the rest of the New Testament represent the practical application of His teaching to life.

How then does our Wonderful Counselor help us with our problems and lead us to a place of security, satisfaction, and enjoyment? He does so through His Word and prayer (PS. 119:24; JAS. 1:5). He does so by reminding us that there is safety in a multitude of good counselors (PROV. 11:14). But most of all He does so with the assurance that because of who He is, He can help us in ways that go far beyond our ability to understand (PS. 32:8) or our own limitations.

Christ is able to give us the needed direction for life. How thankful we should be that Isaiah spoke of a Wonderful Counselor, who is also rightly named the "Mighty God."



three

A Powerful Name: Mighty God

“And His name will be called . . . Mighty God.”

► **What is the meaning** of the name “Mighty God”? This name is the compound Hebrew title *El Gibbor*, and both parts of the name need to be understood.

“God.” The first part of the title is *El*, the singular form of the word *Elohim*. In the Old Testament this referred to the one true God (though on occasion it was used of mighty heroes, or even false gods). Yet even though Jesus Himself pointed out that the title is sometimes used of mighty sons of men (JN. 10:34), the title is so often used of God and only God, that the prophet Hosea used *El* to set God in contrast to man in Hosea 11:9. That Isaiah 9:6 was predicting One who would be far more than a man is indicated by the third name “Everlasting Father” and by the New Testament record of Christ. The Christ who walked on

water, died voluntarily for our sins, and then physically rose from the dead is the One who also said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (JN. 8:58). He is the One of whom John wrote:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made (JN. 1:1-3).

"Mighty." The other part of the name is *Gibbor*, which means "strength, power, hero." What a statement! In a world where heroes are often determined by athletic prowess, personal talent, or financial power, we are told that the only One truly worthy to be called "hero" is the One whose might is unparalleled.

The focus of Isaiah's prophecy is *El Gibbor*, the mighty God who is our true Hero. What this prophet in the seventh century BC anticipated, the New Testament confirms. Because the Messiah would be God, He would have God's power—but to Isaiah the amazing thing was that the Messiah would not only have the power of God, He would *be* the God of power!



What is the evidence that Jesus Christ is the "Mighty God"? By His perfect life, sacrificial death, and resurrection, He showed we could trust Him, though most of His own people rejected Him. John wrote, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (JN. 1:11).

Yet in many cases He was recognized as the long-awaited

Messiah. Nicodemus, a rabbi of Israel, recognized Him (cp. JN. 3 with JN. 19). The disciples recognized Him (compare MT. 8:27 with 16:16). Mary Magdalene recognized Him, and her life was transformed (LK. 8:2). Others' lives were changed as well, including the church's most feared persecutor, Saul of Tarsus (ACTS 9).

These and thousands of other first-century people believed—and for good reason. Jesus Christ proved Himself to be



Elohim is a name for God that emphasizes Him as the Creator of the material world, yet standing above it.

The Messiah would not only have the power of God, He would be the God of power!

El Gibbor as He displayed His life-changing might and power. Still today, for those who see their need of a Savior, the evidence of Christ's mighty power is overwhelming. For those who sense their own inability to live up to God's standard, the apostle John wrote, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (JN. 1:12).

The New Testament provides us an opportunity to see the fullness of the "Mighty God" Isaiah predicted, showing both how His power was displayed in His

life on earth—but also how it was seen before He even came to the earth.

Jesus, the Mighty God before His birth. The Bible clearly states that Christ displayed His might by creating the world before He physically entered it. John 1:3 says, "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." Colossians 1:16 agrees: "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."

Christ's display of might in the act of creation distinguished Him from mere humans. We have the ability to make things, but we require some basic raw materials. Christ showed His might in the ability to create—to make something out of nothing. It takes divine might to truly create. Christ demonstrated that power in the most profound way—by creating the universe.

Jesus, the Mighty God during His earthly life. Jesus showed His right to be recognized as the Mighty God by demonstrating power over nature (LK. 5:1-11), power over disease (MT. 9:18-26), power over demons (LK. 8:26-39), power over sin (MK. 2:3-12), and power over death (1 COR. 15:1-19). Throughout the course of His public life, Christ revealed His divine might in ways that not only were undeniable (ACTS 2:22) but also intentional validations of His claim to be God (JN. 20:30-31). When we see the otherwise inexplicable demonstrations of God's might in the unparalleled life of



Christ, it becomes clear why Paul would call Jesus “the Son of God with power” (ROM. 1:4) and “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 COR. 1:24).



*Some have claimed that **El Gibbor** merely means “great hero.” But every other usage of El Gibbor in Scripture refers to the one true **Mighty God**. It is no different here.*

What is the importance of the name “Mighty God” to believers today?

While appreciating the evidence that shows Christ to be the Mighty God, we must remember that this is more than mere theological data. It is inspired evidence that urges us to see and respond to Christ as He is—our “Mighty God.”

He is the source of our power. In Acts 1:8, Jesus promised to send the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us

We are secure not because of our own ability to hold on to Him but by His power holding on to us.

to be His representatives in the world. Inherent to this provision of the Spirit is the fact that He wants us to live distinctive lives in an impure world as evidence of His presence in us.

He is the strength of our lives. In Philippians 4:13, Paul wrote, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

What a great promise! He will strengthen us for all the circumstances and inevitabilities of life. This doesn't mean that we will never know pain or hardship, but that we can endure in triumph. How can we do that? Only as we rest in His power, not in our own.

He secures our eternity. The apostle Peter wrote that we are "kept by the power of God" (1 PET. 1:5). Nothing can overcome God's power to keep us in Christ. What a great assurance it is to know that we are secure not because of our own ability to hold on to Him, but by His power holding on to us.

In view of the evidence, how can we see our Lord Jesus Christ as anything less than the Mighty God, *El Gibbor*? In 1885, J. B. Figgis took it even further, describing in his book *Emmanuel* the surprising way in which the Mighty God not only showed His might by miracles, but also by His disarming meekness:

Christ's inimitable meekness and patience never once forsook Him in a vexatious, ungrateful, cruel sphere. He never stepped out of the humble sphere in which He was brought up; He does not seem to have ever possessed for Himself so much as the smallest coin, and when He died had no means for providing for His mother, and could only commend her to one of His disciples. Yet, His life was infinitely superior to all others. If Jesus were no more than a man or a hero, why are there not more men like Him? What God did for one man, God would certainly do for others. It is unaccountable that it has never been done. The incarnation, when Jesus came as "the Mighty God," alone helps us to the solution of such an enigma.



four

A Timeless Name: Everlasting Father

“And His name will be called . . . Everlasting Father.”

► **Like the name “Mighty God,”** for centuries this name was shrouded in mystery. What mortal could bear such a title? In Isaiah 9:6 the Messiah is described as both a Son (“unto us a Son is given”) and a Father (“His name will be called . . . Everlasting Father”). What is the meaning of the name “Everlasting Father”? The symbolic use of the Hebrew word *father* was an expression for “possessor of,” meaning that He became a child in time (through His birth), but He is the Father (and possessor) of eternity. This reveals several aspects of His character:

He inhabits and possesses eternity. “For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones’” (ISA. 57:15).

His name is eternal. "His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed" (PS. 72:17).

He is the eternal provider. "He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son'" (REV. 21:6-7).



He is eternal in all that He is and all that He does. This implies two crucial truths claimed for God's Messiah in both Old and New Testaments:

- ***He is preexistent.*** "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (PS. 90:2).
- ***He is self-existent.*** In Exodus 3 God calls Himself "I Am." This name defines the God who is. He is totally independent of His creation and of time. He is the God who is Alpha and Omega, the God of the eternal present tense. As self-existent, He is completely self-dependent.

What is the evidence that Jesus Christ is the "Everlasting Father"? In John 8:12-58, a fascinating dialogue occurs between Jesus and His religious antagonists, the Pharisees. Jesus called God His Father. The Pharisees called Abraham their father. So Jesus said that if Abraham were their father they would do the works of Abraham. They responded that at least they were not

born of sexual sin (implying that Mary had been sexually active before marriage), and

Jesus made the most amazing statement of all: "Before Abraham was, I Am."

then matched Jesus' claim that all have one Father—God. To this Jesus replied:

If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do (JN. 8:42-44).

The Pharisees were making their claim to Abraham and to the God of Abraham, but Jesus didn't back down. Instead, He clarified that their link to Abraham was merely physical. Then He made the most amazing statement of all: "Before Abraham was, I am" (JN. 8:58). In the mind of the Pharisees, Jesus had now gone too far. They recognized that by such a claim He was making Himself equal with God—the "I Am" of the burning bush in Exodus 3:14. This claim so infuriated



Fire symbolizes the holiness of God. Hebrews 12:29 calls God a **"consuming fire."** God revealed Himself to Moses through the burning bush that was not consumed.

them that they picked up stones to kill Him.

In retrospect, we can see more than the Pharisees' rage. We also see One who by His miraculous life, death, and resurrection has shown His right to the name Isaiah's prophecy had declared 600 years before Jesus' birth.

The truth of the eternality of the Messiah has come under continuous attack for centuries. But the inescapable fact is that all who reject the eternality of Christ also reject His deity. The two are inseparable! If Jesus is not eternal, He is not God—and vice versa. Isaiah clearly said that when Messiah came, He would be the physical embodiment of the Everlasting Father.

The ability of Christ to be a timeless source of fatherly protection and provision is claimed in a number of ways in the New Testament.



- His character is described as eternally consistent and unchanging, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (HEBREWS 13:8).
- His New Testament title Alpha and Omega (REV. 1:8) uses the first (alpha) and last (omega) letters of the Greek alphabet to symbolize that Christ is before everything and will surpass everything.
- He declared that His divine judgment will be eternal (MT. 18:8).
- John the Baptist, whose birth preceded Jesus, still recognized the eternality of Christ when he said, "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me'" (JN. 1:30). He is the eternal One!

What is the importance of the name “Everlasting Father” to believers today?

The self-existence of Christ means that He will not leave us as all earthly fathers eventually must. This, among many other facts, makes the incarnation an amazing thing. The eternal God took upon Himself the limitations of a human body so that He could bring us into an everlasting relationship with Himself. Even though this world is marked by unfairness, inequity,

All who reject the eternity of Christ also reject His deity. The two are inseparable!

and suffering, those who believe in God's Messiah are in the hands of an Eternal Father and Provider. As the author of Hebrews says:

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (HEB. 13:5).

This is the Father who will never leave us:

- He provides the strength of “everlasting arms” (DT. 33:27).
- He ministers with an “everlasting consolation” (2 TH. 2:16).



The Hebrew word for truth is **emet**, which is comprised of the first (**aleph**), middle (**mem**), and last (**tav**) letters of the Hebrew alphabet and is also one of **God's attributes**.

- He performs His work with "everlasting power" (1 TIM. 6:16).
- He rules over an "everlasting kingdom" (2 PET. 2:11).
- He maintains an eternal presence (MT. 28:20).
- He gives us life that is eternal (JN. 14:19).
- He graciously provides for those who realize that eternal values are what really count (MT. 6:33).

These eternal values are not easy to consider, but we cannot afford to ignore them. It is of enormous benefit for us to ponder the timelessness of our God. If He were only God for the length of our lifetime on earth, He would still deserve our reverence and trust, but as the God of eternity, He is worthy of our unending devotion and most careful attention.

A. W. Tozer said that the most important thing about us is what we believe about God. In that light, consider Tozer's words:

Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the I AM, the self-existent Self, back of which no creature can think. Such thoughts are too painful for us. We prefer to think where it will do more good—about how to make a better mousetrap, for instance, or how to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. And for this we are now paying a too heavy price in the secularization of our religion, and the decay of our inner lives (THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY, p.34).

May we take time to ponder Christ, the timeless One who invaded time to rescue us from sin and self, the Father of Eternity who has given His life so that we may have eternal peace with God and with one another.



five

A Comforting Name: Prince of Peace

“And His name will be called . . . Prince of Peace.”

► **The name “Prince of Peace”** is the Hebrew *Shar Shalom*, which means “the one who removes all peace-disturbing factors and secures the peace.” This instantly sets Him apart from those human rulers whose reigns depend on bloody conquest, for His rule rests on a bloody sacrifice. What a contrast to such biblical kings as Nebuchadnezzar, and even David, whose rule was established on power but not peace.

The name “Peaceful Prince” helps to explain why Jesus disappointed His countrymen when He came. They did not want a peaceful prince. They wanted a monarch who would annihilate their foes and reestablish the glory Israel knew in the golden days of Solomon. They wanted Rome and all their other oppressors taken away.

But Jesus didn’t lift a finger against Rome, nor did He

make any international peace treaties. How then can He be considered the Prince of Peace? Going further, notice two very different statements from the New Testament: Luke 2:14 states, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" But in Matthew 10:34, Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword."

How can these two statements be reconciled? The answer of the New Testament must be considered. It claims that the first phase of His coming was to establish a basis for peace with God and to offer it to individuals of all nations. The New Testament also claims that He will come a second time to bring peace to the earth.

According to the apostle Paul, the first phase of Messiah's coming produced a peace unknown to man since Adam's sin. It is rooted in the saving mission carried out by Christ on our behalf. Paul wrote:

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation (2 COR. 5:19).

This means that the peace Jesus provides by His work on the cross is more than a negotiated ceasefire between ourselves and God. It is a peace that changes us from enemies of God into the children of God. "It pleased the Father . . . by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alien-



ated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled" (COL. 1:19-21). The Prince of Peace has brought to us the opportunity to have peace with God.



Some commentators note that the title "**Prince of Peace**" comes last in Isaiah 9:6 because we are yet anticipating the peace to come.

What is the importance of the name "Prince of Peace" to the one who believes in Christ?

Those who trust Christ as their Savior are given by God an assurance that flows out of this new relationship with Him. Once we are in Christ, the Prince of Peace shows us that He can bring peace wherever He rules. He can bring:

Peace in life's trials. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not

The peace that Jesus provided by His work on the cross changes us from enemies of God into the children of God.

your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (JN. 14:27).

Peace in life's maturing process. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. . ." (1 TH. 5:23a).

Peace in life's victories. "The God of

peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (ROM. 16:20).

Peace in life's relationships. ". . . endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (EPH. 4:3).

Peace in life's witness. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (GAL. 5:22-23).

What a treasure is ours in Isaiah's predicted Messiah. He is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. May we give Him our full devotion, as we ponder the great God that He is!



six

What Do You Call Him?

Jesus asked His disciples a critical question: "Who do you say that I am?" (MK. 8:27,29). This is the eternal question because it is only by acknowledging Jesus Christ and responding to His gift of forgiveness by faith that a person can live forever.

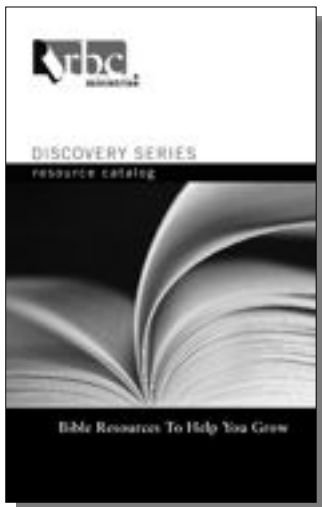
Isaiah made it clear that when the promised Messiah would come, He would fulfill the matchless titles he had prophesied: "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," and "Prince of Peace." Jesus Christ came into the world and proved beyond a doubt that He was the Messiah by fulfilling all those requirements. He was God in human flesh, come to reveal deity and redeem humanity. On the strength of His ability to fulfill all these things, He made

this claim: "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (JN. 14:6).

This is the claim of the Bible, and the heartbeat of the Christian faith: Jesus Christ is God and He came into the world to rescue lost humanity. What is your response to that claim and to the evidence that He is the only deliverer for sin-burdened people who are the object of God's love? Will you receive His gift of forgiveness?

If you already know Him, will you live under His perfect will and wisdom so that He may guide you into a life that pleases Him? May it be so, for He brings peace wherever He reigns!

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