During World War II, my father-in-law spent 18 months in a prisoner-of-war camp. In the camp, loudspeakers often played music, and one of the songs that was heard repeatedly was “Lili Marlene.” Somehow it gave him hope, and he fell in love with the beauty of that name. Years later he gave that name, which was 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 the living Lord. In a way that sets Him apart from all others, He ties His name to His reputation, and then to His own self-introduction 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.

Bill Crowder
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 can seem more important. I remember as a young boy watching my father go through the pain of a failed business that left my parents several thousand dollars in debt. Rather than declare bankruptcy, he went to each of his creditors and told them he would pay them back every cent if it took him until the day he died. On his handshake and his name, each creditor took him at his word—and he kept his promise to the full, furthering his credibility and testimony of integrity in the business community.

“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches.”

*Proverbs 22:1*

A name is important. From the day of our birth, our parents use our name to link us to their own preferences and values. People name their sons Peter and Paul, and their dogs Nero and Brutus. But no one uses the name *Judas*—not even for a dog.
The significance of a name was particularly true in Bible times. In both Old and New Testaments, names were used to reflect personal experience or express or influence character:

**Jacob (Gen. 25:26).**
Jacob (which means “supplanter”) was so named because, though the second of twin brothers, he would overtake his brother, Esau, in position and significance. This was foreshadowed during his birth, and 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.

**Samuel (1 Sam. 1:20).** In the opening chapter of 1 Samuel, Hannah, in extreme anguish of heart, prayed intensely for God to give a life to her barren womb and bless her with a son. She promised to commit that son to the work of God among His people Israel. God graciously granted her request and gave her a son, who would be the final judge of Israel. He would also anoint Israel’s first two kings, Saul and David. The name she gave to that son was Samuel, which means “heard of God,” because God had heard and granted her request.

**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

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“son of consolation” or “son of encouragement.”

Names are important to the people of the Bible. Nowhere is this more significant than in the one who, according to the New Testament, has a name that means “Savior.” In Matthew 1:21, we read words attributed to an angelic messenger speaking 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 in honor of God, Jesus bore His name as an expression of the Savior-God that the New Testament says He was.

Whether or not we have accepted the claims of the New Testament regarding Christ, it’s important for us to see that the Scriptures honor the name Jesus for several reasons. According to them:

- **It is the name by which we must be saved.** “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

- **It is the name that is to set 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 confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11).

It is just as clear, however, that from the time of Jesus’ birth until now, many have missed or dismissed the significance of His name. In the days of His childhood, His neighbors knew Him as the son of Joseph the carpenter. In our generation, many of our neighbors know Jesus only as an expression of anger, alarm, or profanity. Many more have only a casual understanding of the scores of additional names given to Him in the Bible. For that reason, in the following pages we will look at four significant names that are used in anticipation of a coming Messiah more than 600 years before the birth of Jesus.

As we consider these names, keep in mind that while others use aliases to hide their true identity, the

“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.”

Isaiah 9:6

Scriptures use many names for Christ to help us get to know Him. By discovering that He is a person of many names, we will 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 the prophet Isaiah. In a period spanning at least 64 years, Isaiah (whose name means “the salvation of Jehovah”) was God’s spokesman to Israel during the reigns of four kings—Uzziah (or Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

Isaiah predicted a coming messianic age marked by world peace. He foresaw a world government in the last days that would turn the eyes of the international community on Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1-4). He also described the coming of a Servant-Ruler who would bring a mysterious blend of power and suffering (Isa. 53; 61:1-6). But 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 says several things that remained a mystery until the coming of Christ. While it was clear that he was predicting a coming world leader and the inevitability of a 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 tightly and profoundly into a series of names Isaiah used for the coming Servant of God.

Before we look more
closely at these names, let’s review the scope of this amazing prophecy. Let’s share the wonder of a passage that could be understood clearly only after the prophecy’s partial fulfillment in the first coming of Christ.

**The Son of God became the Son of Man, so that sons of men could become sons of God.**

**The Birth Of Messiah.** “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . and His name will be called . . . Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Because of such prophecies, generations of Jewish women dreamed of being the mother who would give birth to the promised and long-awaited Messiah.

Ever since the Bethlehem arrival of Jesus, it has been clear that this prophecy anticipated far more than the birth of an eventual world leader. We can 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 both prophetic and practical significance. Prophetically, Isaiah saw the day when a son of Israel would bear upon his shoulder 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. He said the Lord Himself would “judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they
shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Isa. 2:4). Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, says 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. While we regard as mythology the image of Atlas bearing on his shoulder the globe of the world, we can see in God’s Messiah a real Lord who can carry the combined weight of all human problems. Inexpressible comfort can be found as we discover that the “shoulders” which will someday carry the government of the world are large enough to bear any personal weight or burden that we bring to Him now.

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**The shoulders that will bear the government of the world are large enough to bear the weight of all of the problems of all of His people.**

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**The Character Of Messiah.** “... and His name will be called . . . .” Remember, Hebrew names are significant. In this final portion of the verse, the prophet used a marvelously descriptive set of names to unfold to us the very essence of the person of the Messiah. In order to give us
a full understanding of the coming Redeemer, Isaiah used four compound names, each giving a different window through which to view the Son of God who was to become the Son of man for us. These four names shape our understanding of who God’s Messiah is. They can help us develop a personal relationship with Him, and show us in moments of fear where to find Him.

Let’s take these names one at a time. The first of them is “Wonderful Counselor.”

A GUIDING NAME: “WONDERFUL COUNSELOR”
“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . . And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor.”

What is the meaning of the name “Wonderful Counselor”? This name literally translates, “a wonder of a counselor.” But what does it mean? Let’s look at it in two parts.

“Wonderful.” The first is the word Wonderful. The Hebrew word pala indicates “something uncommon or out of the ordinary.” It reflects “a phenomenon lying outside the realm of human explanation; that which is separated from the normal course of events; something that cannot be explained.”

The same Hebrew 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 is something miraculous! The problem is that we have a low view of the miraculous, and therefore a limited sense of wonder.

Think of some of the ways we routinely use the word miracle. In 1980, when the US Hockey Team won
gold in the Olympics, Al Michaels’ now-famous cry was, “Do you believe in miracles? Yes!” In a once-popular television ad, a monk is able to get productive work out of his photocopier, and all present exclaim, “It’s a miracle.” A college student comes out of a classroom holding her exam paper, which bears the grade “A+” and says to her friend, “This is a miracle! I didn’t think I was anywhere near ready for that test.”

In reality, however, those things are not miracles. They can all be explained—though some may take a little more effort to explain than others.

Do we have a sense of wonder that goes beyond all human, rational explanation? Or have the successes of human 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.

A real wonder is something beyond human explanation. And the prophet Isaiah declared that the coming Child and Son would be a wonder. This not only describes what He does, it describes who He is. Do you see Him that way? He, Himself, is the wonder!
“Counselor.” The second part of this compound description of the coming Messiah is Counselor. In its historical Hebrew usage, the word is used to picture a king giving counsel to his people. To that end, Micah declared the dilemma of the 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 ever born, long before the Son was given, Isaiah foretold that God was planning to send a Counselor for the brokenhearted people of the world. And long after Jesus’ entrance into the world we can see that He personified the kind of counsel that will go out from Jerusalem in the last days.

- “He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3).
- “… the Spirit of wisdom and understanding” (Isa. 11:2).
- “… the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance” (Isa. 28:29).

What is the evidence that Jesus Christ is the Wonderful Counselor? For us who live on this side of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, these statements are not just theory. We can see them fleshed out in a Person. We now can read, and reflect, and appeal for help from the One “who became for us wisdom from God” (1 Cor. 1:30). From our point in history we can see that Jesus is the very wisdom of God.

When you take all that we know about Christ, it adds up to a marvelous
truth—He is the God who is, and who is called, 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 Lord who clothed Himself in human flesh:

> 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. It speaks of the Hero of heaven who gathers little children to Himself. He is the Son of God who offers to bring people of all nations to His Father, and who invites all who trust Him to be part of His family forever.

We now can see the principle of wisdom fleshed out in a Person of unlimited understanding.

What He did in His work of redemption for us is beyond comprehension. Try to imagine what it will mean to enjoy for all eternity a wondering, worshiping, loving relationship with the Creator God, the Son of heaven who became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:20-21). Think about Him: God the Son, deity in every way, yet willing to bear our sins in His body on the tree. Everything about Him...
should stir our hearts in wonder-filled submission!

His Counsel. Even as a child of 12, Jesus astounded Jewish rabbis with His wisdom (Lk. 2:46-47). Luke recorded that “the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (2:40). In His public life, people were amazed at the truthfulness of His 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).

It’s appropriate, then, to ask ourselves whether we are 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 go to learn how to love, how to cry, how to live, and how to die? Where else can we be so assured of the acceptance and forgiveness and comfort of God? Where else can we look into a face that is the face of our Creator, Savior, and Counselor?

What is the importance of the name “Wonderful Counselor” to believers today? How does this “Wonder of a Counselor” give us help? How does He impart His wisdom, and how should we seek it? It would be a serious error to think that we can now come to Him the way a person comes to a fortune teller or a spiritual medium.

Because the Wonderful Counselor whom Isaiah predicted 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 conversations with the people of His day. The letters of the rest of the New Testament represent the practical application of His teaching to life.

We find His counsel in the Sermon on the Mount, and in His conversations with Peter, James, and John. We find His teaching and wisdom in the letters of the apostle Paul. We find His insight in the letters to the seven churches of Revelation.

Our Wonderful Counselor urges us to let Him bring us to the Father. He offers Himself as the sacrifice for our sin and the basis of our acceptance with God. He offers to be for us everything we need for this life and the next. He was not just telling us what we want to hear when He reassuringly said:

Do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble (Mt. 6:31-34).

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).

Our Wonderful Counselor’s ability to help us goes far beyond the limited help that we are able to offer one another.

I was reminded of our own limitations to help one another while on a brief stopover in London on a return trip from Israel. While standing on a corner of Oxford Street, a man came to me and asked me for directions to a certain place in London (where I had now been for a total of about 18 hours). No matter how concerned I was for this man, or how sincerely I wanted him to reach his destination, the problem was that he was asking the wrong person for directions. I simply was not equipped to give him the guidance he needed (and told him so).

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.”

A POWERFUL NAME: “MIGHTY GOD”

“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . . And His name will be called . . . Mighty God.”

What is the meaning of the name “Mighty God”? The name “Mighty God” is an Old Testament title here applied to the coming Messiah. It is the compound Hebrew El Gibbor, and both
parts of the name need to be understood.

“God.” The first part of the title is El, which is used in the Old Testament to refer to the one true God (though on occasion it is used of mighty heroes, or even false gods). It is the singular form of the word Elohim.

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. Isaiah himself used El in the same way when he declared, “Now the Egyptians are men, and not God [lit. El]; and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out His hand, both he who helps will fall, and he who is helped will fall down; they all will perish together” (Isa. 31:3).

That Isaiah 9:6 was predicting One who would be far more than a man is indicated not only by the third name “Everlasting Father” and by other prophetic references such as Isaiah 2:1-4, but by the New Testament record of Christ. The Christ who walked on water, died voluntarily for our sin, and then rose bodily 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 determined by their athletic
prowess or financial power, we are told that the only One truly worthy to be adored is the One whose might is unparalleled! Isaiah 10:21 describes Him as the refuge of the remnant, and Deuteronomy 10:17 declares that He is the “great God, mighty and awesome.”

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!

In other parts of his prophecy, Isaiah gave more details of what this mighty power would look like. For instance, in a messianic section of his prophecy, Isaiah declared:

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\text{The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that}
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they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified (61:1-3).

What is the evidence that Jesus Christ is the “Mighty God”? Jesus used Isaiah 61:1-3 to make His claim as the Messiah (Lk. 4:16-21). But because He only partially fulfilled this prophecy in His first coming, He was only partially recognized. By His resurrection, perfect life, sacrificial death, and many mighty signs He showed we could trust Him to return one day to rule the world. Most of His own people rejected Him. John wrote, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him” (Jn. 1:11).

In many cases, however, 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 (cp. Mt. 8:27 with 16:16). Mary Magdalene recognized Him, and her life was transformed (Lk. 8:2). Others’ lives were changed as well, even the life of the church’s most feared persecutor, Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9).

These and thousands of other first-century Jews believed—and for good reason. Jesus Christ proved Himself to be El Gibbor as He displayed His life-changing might and power.

For those who see their need of a Savior, the evidence of Christ’s mighty power is overwhelming. For those who sense their own weakness and 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).
What the New Testament provides is an opportunity to see the fullness of the “Mighty God” Isaiah was predicting. Before we go on, let’s make sure we understand what a Mighty God our Savior and Champion is to those who trust Him.

**Jesus as the Mighty God before His birth.** The clear statement of the Word of God is that Christ displayed His might in the creation of the world before He physically entered the world. 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 displayed His might in the very act of creation itself, and He did so in a way that distinguished Him from mere men. Man has the ability to make things, but he requires some basic raw materials. Christ, however, showed His might in the ability to create—to make something out of nothing! While ingenuity, genius, and creativity are all commendable and necessary in inventing and making new things, it takes divine might to create. Christ demonstrated that power in the most profound way.

**Jesus as the Mighty God during His earthly life.** Look at the way Jesus showed His right to be recognized as the Mighty God that Isaiah predicted. He demonstrated 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 were also intentional validations of His claim of deity (Jn. 20:30-31). When we see the otherwise inexplicable demonstrations of the might and power of God 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).

What is the importance of the name “Mighty God” to believers today? In the midst of evidence that shows Christ to be the Mighty God, it is important to remember that this is more than just theological data. It is divinely 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 to be His representatives in all the world. Inherent to this provision of the Spirit is the fact that He wants us to live distinguishable lives and to display an honesty of heart 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

What the Old Testament foreshadows, the New Testament displays.

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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, by His might, can endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. How can we do that? Only as we do it 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 the divine power that keeps us in Christ. What a great assurance it is to know that we are not secure because of our own strength to hold on to Him, but because of His power by which He holds on to us.

In view of the predictive evidence of Isaiah and the historic record of the Gospels, how can we see our Lord Jesus Christ as anything less than the Mighty God, El Gibbor? In 1885, J. B. Figgis described in his book *Emmanuel* the surprising yet ingenious way in which the Mighty God showed Himself by miracles, as well as by His disarming display of approachable 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.

A TIMELESS NAME: “EVERLASTING FATHER”

“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . . And His name will be called . . . Everlasting Father.”

What is the meaning of the name “Everlasting Father”? This name offers honor that goes far beyond recognition given to the Jewish national father Abraham. For centuries it was a name, like “Mighty God,” that was shrouded in mystery. What mortal could bear such a name?

The symbolic use of the word father was an ancient Hebraism for “possessor of.” Notice that 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”). He became a child in time (through the incarnation), but He is the Father (and possessor) of eternity. This means several basic things:

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 several 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 we find the name “I AM.” This name describes and defines the God who is. He is totally independent of His creation, and totally independent of time. He is the God who is Alpha and Omega, the God of the eternal present tense. As self-existent, He is wholly and completely self-dependent. Frederick Faber wrote, “No age can keep its outward years on Thee, dear God! Thou art, Thyself, Thine own eternity.”

What is the evidence that Jesus Christ is the “Everlasting Father”?
In the events recorded in John 8:12-58, a fascinating dialog occurs. The exchange is between Jesus and His religious antagonists, the Pharisees. Jesus called God His Father. The Pharisees called Abraham their father. 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 fornication (implying that Mary had been sexually active before marriage), and
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 wasn’t backing down. More important, He clarified that their link to Abraham was only physical. Spiritually they were of their father the devil.

Then Jesus made the most amazing statement of all. He said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (Jn. 8:58). To His countrymen, He had finally gone too far. They recognized that by such a claim He was making Himself equal with God. (In Exodus 3:14, Moses met the God who identified Himself as the “I AM WHO I AM.”) As on several other occasions, Jesus so infuriated the Pharisees that they picked up stones with the intent to kill Him.

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**When Jesus said, ‘Before Abraham was, I AM,’ He linked Himself to the ‘Everlasting Father’ Isaiah foresaw.**

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

The truth of the eternality of the Messiah is something that has come under continuous attack for centuries. But the inescapable fact is that all groups 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. Yet Isaiah 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 immutable (unchanging). Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

- His New Testament title Alpha and Omega (Rev. 1:8) uses the first (alpha) and last (omega) letter of the Greek alphabet to symbolize that Christ is before everything and will surpass everything.

- He declared that His divine judgment will be an eternal one (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 God’s Messiah means that He will not leave us, as all earthly fathers eventually do. 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.

The New Testament reminds us that it is not proper for the children of God to act as if we do not have all that we need. Even though this world is marked by unfairness, inequality, and suffering, those of us who believe in God’s Messiah are in the hands of an Eternal Father and Provider.

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).

A. W. Tozer wrote, “We poor human creatures are constantly being frustrated by the limitations imposed on us. The days of the years of our lives are short! Life is a short and fevered rehearsal for a concert we cannot stay to give. Just when we appear to have gained some proficiency, we are forced to lay our instruments down” (The Knowledge Of The Holy, p.52). This is true, and it demands that we turn from our limitations to an uninhibited dependence on the Father of Eternity who has no limitations!

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).
- 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 the values that will never end are what really count (Mt. 6:33).

Eternal values are not easy to think about. But we cannot afford to ignore them! It is of everlasting profit for us to ponder the timeless vastness of our God. If He were only God for the length of our lifetime here on earth, He would still deserve our reverence and trust. But as the God of eternity, He is worthy of our fullest, unending devotion and most careful attention.

Someone has said that the most important thing about us is what we believe about God. In that light, consider again the words of A. W. Tozer:

> It is not a cheerful thought that millions of us who live in the land of Bibles, who belong to churches and labor to promote the Christian religion, may yet pass our whole life on this earth without once having thought or tried to think seriously about the being of God. Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the IAM, 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

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While all other fathers grow old and die or leave us in our youth, our everlasting Father will never leave us nor forsake us.

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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 think about Christ, the timeless One who invaded time to rescue us from sin and self, the Father of Eternity who has given eternal life to make it possible for us to have eternal peace with God and with one another.

**A COMFORTING NAME: “PRINCE OF PEACE”**

“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . . And His name will be called . . . Prince of Peace.”

What is the meaning of the name “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 automatically sets Him apart from most human rulers whose reigns often depend on bloody conquest. His rule rests on a bloody sacrifice! What a contrast to such biblical kings as Nebuchadnezzar, and even David, whose rule was established on _might_, but not necessarily on _right_.

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 establish again the glories the kingdom of Israel knew in the golden days of Solomon. They
wanted Rome taken away and all their other oppressors with them.

**Peace or a sword?**

Jesus didn’t lift a finger against Rome. He didn’t make one international peace treaty. How can He then be considered the Prince of Peace? 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? Can we blame Jesus’ countrymen for rejecting the Prince of Peace if our own world is still engulfed in conflict as we move into the third millennium?

**The two phases of peace.** 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 the fall of Adam into 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 brought is more than a negotiated ceasefire between ourselves and God. It is a peace that changes us from enemies into the children of God.

What is the evidence that Jesus Christ is the “Prince of Peace”? This is seen in a variety of ways in the New Testament Scriptures:

His power. So significant was the power of the Son of God that He was able to bring calm to the natural storms on the turbulent Sea of Galilee. “He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm” (Mk. 4:39).

His cross. So effective is His work on the cross that it is able to make peace between God and man. “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 alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled” (Col. 1:19-21).

His gospel. The good news of salvation in Christ is acknowledged as the root of peace in the hearts of the redeemed. “The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36).

His body. Though Judaism separated Jews and Gentiles, Christ has not only reconciled God and man, He has reconciled Jew and Gentile so that we are now one body in Christ.
“He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation” (Eph. 2:14).

What is the importance of the name “Prince of Peace” to the believer today? Those who trust Christ as their Mediator and Savior are given by God an assurance that flows out of a right 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 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; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th. 5:23).


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 worship, as we ponder the great God that He is!
WHAT DO YOU CALL HIM?

Jesus asked His disciples two questions: “Who do men say that I am?” and “Who do you say that I am?” (Mk. 8:27,29). The first question is significant because it allows us to get a read on the minds of the people around us. The second question, however, is eternal 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 very 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 display deity and redeem humanity. And 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 save sinners. What is your response to that claim and to the evidence that He is the only deliverer for sin-laden, lost people who are the object of God’s love? Will you receive His gift of forgiveness and be saved?

If you are already saved, having been rescued from your sin and its just punishment, will you live under His perfect will and wisdom so that He may guide you into a life that pleases Him? May it ever be so, for He brings peace wherever He reigns!
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