

Text: Isa 9:6

Title: "The Christmas Child's Name"

Time: 12/19/2021 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: In our world determined to take Christ out of its celebration of Christmas, Handel's *Messiah* still stands as a powerful testament to the true meaning of the holiday. Its composer, George Frederick Handel, would have been pleased with this result.

He was born in 1685 and died in 1759, so he lived during a time in Germany in which the revivals of Pietism were sweeping through Lutheran churches and German hearts. Handel first studied music at a town called Halle, which was the center of the pietistic influence sweeping through the land, largely through the leadership of Handel's pastor, August Hermann Francke.

In addition to being a faithful pastor, God used Francke to make the University of Halle a thoroughly Bible-believing Christian university, which trained many men for gospel ministry and for missions, including one who came to our own shores named Henry Mullenberg. Mullenberg was the principle leader of early American Lutheranism in our nation and planted many Bible-believing churches in Pennsylvania and the South.

Halle was home to a Christian day school movement and an orphanage, and all this was funded primarily through God's answers to the prayers of His people. A generation later, George Muller was converted to Christ in Halle and went to England as a missionary to the Jewish people there, bringing with him, of course, the influence of the Halle burden for needy orphans.

So that is the kind of place Handel's music and Handel's *Messiah* come from. It is probably one of the best named pieces of Christmas music we have. It is certainly difficult to take Christ out of this part of Christmas. You can get Christ out of the Christmas tree and out of the caroling time and out of gift-giving, but you try to take him out of this Christmas song, and you have nothing left, not even the song's name.

Messiah is the Hebrew form of the title *Christ*. These words mean *Anointed One*, and they refer to the Old Testament Christmas promises of a coming Prophet, Priest, and King who would redeem humanity and its world from every effect of man's disastrous fall. The first Christmas promise is Gen. 3:15, when the Lord told the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." The birth of the Babe on Christmas day was the beginning of the fulfillment of that promise.

Messiah's "Hallelujah Chorus," of course, is focused on the Christmas promise of Isa. 9:6, which tells us the importance of a number of other names of this Promised One. That verse is our text this morning, and I have titled our message simply, "The Christmas Child's Name." I want us to take some time thinking about these glorious names in our text this morning.

I. The child is named *Wonderful Counselor*.

Illustration: Only a fool would deny the benefits of wise counsel. But it is certainly possible today to have lots of counseling with little wise counsel involved. The world is full of people who spend hard-earned money to go see professional counselors, more for therapeutic purposes and

less for truth-seeking purposes. As they do, many distance themselves from their Lord's will and their church family, becoming more self-centered than Christ-centered. Well, that is not the kind of counselor we read about here. Note with me two special things about this Counselor with me.

A. The counsel of this Counselor is not the advice of a professional, but the declarations of omniscience. He does not give us advice; He declares to us what is so. He knows everything. His counsel is far superior to anything man can provide for us, because He is far superior to any man. Another Isaiah passage very important to Handel's *Messiah* celebrates the superiority of this Counselor (Isa. 40:12-31).

Any counselor who could honestly guarantee the outcome mentioned at the end of that chapter would make a lot of money in our day. None of them can, because none of them are the Wonderful Counselor. But the Child of Christmas can make this guarantee, because He is the Counselor that pronounces the declarations of omniscience, not the fallible advice of limited men. Are we listening to Him?

B. The counsel of this Counselor is not natural common sense, but wonder-working supernatural power. The promised Child is called the *Wonderful* Counselor. The passage we just read taught us that this kind of counsel put the stars in the heavens. The word *wonderful* in the Hebrew Old Testament means far more than it does in our own language. It means wonder-working or miraculous.

Any human counselor who is honest has to warn his client not to expect miracles. The name of the child of Christmas teaches us to expect miracles from Him. The sin problem we face is so severe it takes miraculous counsel, a word of supernatural wonder-working power, to deal with that

problem. Paul says in Romans, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Luke tells us that God's Word is "living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12). God's Word has the wonder-working miraculous power to open our blind eyes and to make us believers. It not only tells us how to be saved. It saves us.

Satan understands that the best way to remain unfaithful is to ignore God's Word, because faith comes by hearing God's Word. So the question is first, "Are we listening?", but then also, "Are we believing and obeying?" "Has God's Word done the miracle of faith in my heart so I confess Jesus Christ as my Wonderful Counselor?"

II. The child is named *The Mighty God*.

Illustration: It is possible to go on the internet and pay \$39.90 to have a star named after you. What the website fails to tell you, however, is that every star already has a name.

Application: The Child of this promise is not only the omniscient wonder-working Counselor; He is also the omnipotent mighty God. He has named all the stars already; we see evidence of God's might all around us. Isaiah tells us that the Holy One of Israel, Jehovah or Yahweh, is this mighty God (Isa. 10:20-21, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God").

Here in chapter 9, Isaiah tells us that the promised Child is that same mighty God. The Babe born, the Son given, is the mighty God.

As the God-man, Jesus could not feed Himself lying there in the manger. Yet as the God-man, Jesus ensured that every other creature on the earth had something to eat that day. As the God-man, Jesus could not pull himself out of the manger. Yet as the God-man, Jesus ensured that all of creation held together under the laws of physics and that the universe stayed on course for another day.

In the Scripture this term *mighty* refers especially to a warrior who defends his people (Psalm 45:3-9). Luke in Hebrews, of course, understood that this Psalm speaks of Jesus, the Son of God. The child born and the Son given is the mighty God enthroned, who fights our battles for us.

Nahum 1:8-9 reminds us when we are tempted by fear that our God is the mighty God: "But with an overflowing flood he will make a complete end of the adversaries, and he will pursue his enemies into darkness. What do you plot against the Lord? He will make a complete end; trouble will not rise up a second time."

Because the Christmas Child is the mighty God, we can be sure of ultimate victory over the destroyer and his lies. Do we have courage to face the foe faithfully through His might? Can we fight on following the mighty God?

III. The child is named *The Everlasting Father*.

Illustration: I have had the privilege over the years of serving on the ordination councils of young men whom the Lord has called to gospel ministry. Those are thrilling times for me. It is encouraging to see, in the midst of so much that

seems to be going hopelessly wrong in our day, that the Lord of the harvest is still sending forth laborers into His harvest and as a part of that work still gifting local churches with pastor-teachers.

One of the questions I like to ask young men while examining them as part of the council is in what sense was it true that Jesus born in Bethlehem is the Everlasting Father.

Application: Well, we are orthodox Christians who believe in the Trinity. This is the truth that God is one in essence and three in person: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So in a Trinitarian sense, we can say that the Son is God, but we cannot really say in that same sense that the Son is the Father or that the Son is the Holy Spirit. We say that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all one God, but we do not say that they are each other (the heresy of modalism).

Now when we read the title *Father* in the Scripture, we normally read of the First Person of the Trinity in distinction from the Second, His Son, and the Third, His Spirit. Our verse certainly speaks of the promised child as a Son (“a Son is given”). So in what sense is Jesus also the Everlasting Father?

I believe our best answer to that question is tied up in the comparison Paul makes between Adam, the father of the human race, and Jesus Christ, whom Paul calls the last Adam in 1 Cor. 15:45, “Thus it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” Christ is the last or second Adam, because He too is a father or federal head of a race of people to whom He has given life (Rom. 5:18-21). Adam gave us temporal physical life as our mortal father, but also spiritual death. Jesus gives us eternal life, spiritual life and resurrection life, as our Everlasting Father.

The disobedience of Adam, as our temporal father, affected all of us who are his sons and daughters – he sinned and died so we were born dead in our sins. Adam’s sin meant that the human race is made up of fallen creatures.

The obedience of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, as our Eternal Father, affects all of us who are born again as His sons and daughters by faith in Him. He bore our sins and died in our place so we could have eternal life. The temporal father offered us death by physical birth. The Everlasting Father offers us eternal life by the spiritual birth of faith. Is the child of Christmas, Jesus, your Everlasting Father? Have you been born again by faith to life eternal through His obedient work on the cross for your salvation?

IV. The child is named *The Prince of Peace*.

Illustration: Handel’s *Messiah* proclaims that the Child of Christmas is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Handel’s text for his music comes from passages like Rev. 19:11-16.

Application: So Christ is the Prince who creates peace by conquering those who are at war with Him. It is not that He comes on the white horse and makes us feel better; it is that He comes on the white horse and demands submission from His enemies. Where you have true peace, you also have this Prince conquering and ruling the life. The nations of eternity shall be at peace because the throne of God and the Lamb is at the center of their world.

As believers, we are to sanctify Christ as Lord or Prince of our hearts, and we will be without His peace to the degree we have yet to enthrone Him. Peace comes through submission to the Prince of peace. It comes from doing His will and pleasing Him. The angels spoke of this truth plainly:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward men.” Peace happens only when God is glorified.

Conclusion: Note one last thing the verse tells us about this Christmas Child. He would be the gift of a Son. This gift is “unto us.” In the words of the angels that night to the shepherds, “Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, for *unto you* is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

The child born, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, is the gift of Christmas to you and to me - John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Have you received that gift? John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name.” How could we possibly refuse such a gift as this?

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching