

(The Names of Jesus) 1. The Wonderful

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Transcript

“His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6.) The idea of a child king was not unfamiliar to the Old Testament. Little Samuel had been Israel’s best prophet and judge; young Josiah, wearing a crown at the tender age of five, was the best of Judah’s kings after David. In English history the most honored name, perhaps, is Edward VI, the youthful king of the sixteenth century.

All these were types of Jesus, God’s holy and anointed King. With beautiful simplicity, even after His resurrection and ascension, the apostles speak of Him in their prayers to the Father as “Your Holy Child, Jesus.” He Himself has told us that His best representative on earth is a little child; for, “Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name (that is, belonging to me) receives me.” And even His Father in heaven is not ashamed to be represented by the same little child. “He that receives me receives him that sent me.”

There is nothing more beautiful in an old and venerable man than the simplicity of childhood which often characterizes the greatest minds. Perhaps when we meet with our God, we will be touched most of all by the simplicity of His presence. At least, it is very beautiful to know that the Christ who comes still to guide and govern us is a child Christ, gentle as the touch of an infant’s hand, accessible as your own little ones, easy to approach, simple and loving as an innocent child; yet mighty as the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father. It is very touching to notice in the Apocalypse that Jesus is continually described by a diminutive term of peculiar endearment; not the Lamb, as it is translated in our version, but literally, “the little Lamb, the dear Lamb of God.”

Let us look, however, at the other side of the picture, and, as we do, let us carry with us the concept of the child. Four illustrious and glorious names are here given to Jesus.

The Wonderful Counselor

This name has reference to His prophetic work and office; for He is our prophet as well as our king, the great teacher and guide to His people. The term “counselor” has reference to His guidance rather than to His teaching. One may know much and be able to say much, and yet not be a good counselor. Jesus is our wisdom and leads His trusting children in the right paths wherein they shall not stumble.

1. He often leads us contrary to the ideas, opinions, and judgments even of wise men, and His thoughts are as high above our thoughts as the heavens above the earth. If He is our guide, He will often bid us do

things which prudence regards as folly, possibly as fanaticism; but God will vindicate His own wisdom in the end, and "wisdom is justified of her children."

It seemed a very foolish thing to the Canaanites for an army to march seven days around their city walls and then simply blow their trumpets and shout, but it was the wisest way to take Jericho. It seemed a very foolish thing to ask a widow to give away her last handful of meal to a stranger when she and her boy were starving, but it was the best way to save her and her boy from starvation and to open the way for a continual supply for the coming months. It seemed an absurd thing for young David to face the giant Philistine with a simple sling and stones, but it was the only way by which he could have obtained the victory. It seemed absurd to commit to twelve fishermen the task of evangelizing the world; but it was God's wisdom, and it became God's mighty power. It may have appeared very strange to Philip for the divine message to come to him to leave Samaria in the height of his great evangelistic work there and go down into a lonely desert where he could not expect to meet a soul, but it was God's way to preach the gospel to the Prince of Ethiopia, and, through him to the whole of Northern Africa. He leads us by a way that we know not; but it is ever the right way, and we shall thank Him at last that He has proved our Wonderful Counselor.

2. He is a Wonderful Counselor because the people He leads are such weak and foolish people. When we commit ourselves to the guidance of Christ we become weaker in ourselves, ceasing to look to our own wisdom. Without His guidance we should indeed be utterly helpless, but this is our very strength. The little child who knows nothing of the way through the strange city is safer than the one who knows a little, because the latter is very apt to trust in its imperfect knowledge and go astray; whereas, the former, knowing nothing, simply holds its mother's hand and is safely led by one who knows better. And so it is said of the heavenly pathway, "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." "Not that we are sufficient," says Paul, "of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God," and it is indeed wonderful how the most simple-hearted and uneducated minds are led by the Holy Spirit, not only into the full knowledge of God's Word, but kept from error and mistake, and guided safely through all the mazes of life's pathway!

3. This Counselor is wonderful in His patience and love. He is willing to take infinite trouble with us. Over and over again He teaches us the lessons we are so slow to learn. Over and over again He repairs our mistakes and lifts us up from our stumblings, saying to us, "How is it that you do not understand?" There is no difficulty too intricate for Him to unravel. There is no little detail of life too petty for Him to take an interest in. There is no toil too tedious for Him to go through with us. There is no tangle too involved for Him to unthread and loose. There is no complication of difficult circumstances too extreme for Him to be willing to take hold of and lead us gently out into the light. Even our stupidity and rebellion have not always provoked Him to leave us; but He waits, loves, and leads us, until at last He brings us into His perfect will and our hearts are ready to say, "Wonderful Counselor, patient Teacher, gentle Christ" who teaches like Him?

4. The best of all about this Wonderful Counselor is that He does not merely tell us what to do and give us a chart of the way, but He comes with us every step of the way and becomes our personal guide. If you were to go to Cairo and try to find directions about the best way to cross the desert from some Bedouin, or perhaps some map of the way or some itinerary of stations, he would laugh at you and say, "Why, you will never find your way in that manner. I cannot tell you the way, but I will go with you and show you the way. I will be your personal guide." This is exactly what Jesus does. He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He says that when He puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them, and they

know His voice, and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall abide with you forever, and he will guide you into all truth."

How may we have the guidance of this Wonderful Counselor? First, it is always necessary that we be wholly yielded to follow His guidance and have a single purpose to please Him only. Willfulness will ever miss the way, but "the meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek (the yielded ones, the little and bending hearts) will he teach his way."

Second, we must bring to Him every particular need and acknowledge Him in all our ways, and He shall direct our steps. It will not do to take it as a matter of course and say it will be all right anyhow, for the very thing in which we ignore Him is most likely to go wrong just because we have trusted in general and not specifically recognized Him.

Third, let us not expect startling revelations to come, but go by the simple light of His Word and our sanctified judgment and the voice of the Spirit as He speaks to us through quiet convictions, intuitions, and impulses. There are voices and voices. There is light which will come to us all, but it is false light. It may often be known by its blaze and glare. God's light is the soft and simple light which rests us and brings the satisfying sense of His presence and peace.

Last, if we have His light, let us be willing to take it step by step. We shall not see all the way at once, but as we follow on we shall know the Lord in all His fullness, and all His purposes will ripen and unfold in all their fullness.

The Mighty God

He who is our Counselor is also abundantly able to carry out His plans, and He always follows up His directions with His strong and mighty hand. He never sends us on any path without standing by us and seeing us through. He who sends Israel around Jericho never fails to level the walls at the right moment. He who bids the people go forward into the sea never fails to divide the floods. He who sends us through the waters and the fires never fails to go before us and keep them from overflowing us. He who bids us march up against the gates of brass never fails to precede us and break in pieces the brazen gates and make the crooked places straight. When the Holy Spirit is working in us, the mighty Providence of God is always working outside of us in perfect correspondence and preparation.

The Christ of the Gospels is the Jehovah of the Old Testament "the God who said to Jeremiah, "Is there anything too hard for me?" He is the God of creation and of providence "the God who said to Moses, "I lift up my hand to heaven and say, I live forever . . . neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." He is able to control all the forces and elements of nature, able to restrain all the influences and movements of society, able to turn the hearts of men at His pleasure and overthrow their counsels and their works. He is able to save the lost, to pardon the guiltiest soul, to cleanse the blackest heart, to renew the most wrecked and ruined life. He is able to fill the heart of sorrow with untroubled gladness. He is able to take away the strongest tendencies to sin and give the degraded and selfish soul the power to do that which is right and holy. He is able to satisfy our inmost, utmost being. He is able to put His own heart and nature in the most corrupt and helpless soul. He is able to touch the springs of physical life and fill them with His own strength and healing. He is able to meet the temptations that overcome us and to make us more than conquerors in all things through His love. He is able to make even our little lives mighty forces for everlasting good, and so clothe us with His power that we shall be able to

open the blind eyes, and turn men from darkness into light and from the very power of Satan to God. He is still standing in our midst and saying: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth . . . and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

He is greater than the greatest difficulty, the greatest sin, the greatest sorrow, the greatest failure in your life. From this day place Him, your mighty God, over against the things that are too strong and too hard for you. Only touch the hand of that little Child, and lo, all the forces of Omnipotence, if need be, will be called forth to blast the very rocks of adamant, to roll back the tides of the ocean, to prepare the way for His ransomed.

When He makes bare His arm, Who shall His power withstand? When He His people's cause defends, Who, who shall stay His hand? The Father of Eternity

This is the true translation of this strange verse. It means that His being is unlimited, His years eternal, His element boundless, and all His plans and thoughts shaped and drawn on a gigantic and infinite scale. When we come into God, we come into the infinite. Eternity begins for us before time ends. The life we have now is eternal life. It takes hold upon illimitable things. There is about it a depth and a height, a length and a breadth that defy all calculations and computations, and the things that we take from God and do for God are eternal things. We now see but a little of what shall be revealed, but when He appears we shall be like Him. But let us build today for eternity. Let all our thoughts, plans and hopes be in view of the gigantic future, the colossal scale which is to unfold when we pass through the narrow gates of the earthly life into the illimitable beyond. Let us ever see ourselves as we shall be then, and our work as it shall seem then. Let us be content with nothing that is not going to last. Let us, like Him, belong to the ages to come. Ours is not an ephemeral breath of life, like the fluttering moth or butterfly, like the flashing meteor of the sky. We shall live when the sun is burned to ashes and the stars have faded away or taken on their new and everlasting forms. Could we see today the scope of our future being, the height of our future glory, the grandeur of our future recompense, we would be afraid, we would be paralyzed with awe and then with shame at the pettiness of our conceptions of God and our expectations from Him. Let us give our future to Him who is the Father of Eternity; let us lay up our treasures in hands that will give them back there with the compound interest of their glory. Let us take more of the vastness, rise to more of the boundlessness of thought and purpose, of love and faith, of joy and service, which He expects of those who would be worthy of His great and infinite heart which throbs within our breasts.

The Prince of Peace

There is an allusion here to the kingdom of Solomon, whose name was significant of peace and whose reign was typical of the coming King, his greater Son. It is to Him that the seventy-second Psalm is dedicated, with its beautiful words, "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. . . . In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures."

His first conquest is through the gospel of peace. Having made peace through the blood of the cross, He came to preach peace to them that were afar off and to them that were near. His coming was heralded with the words, "On earth, peace, good will toward men." His last bequest before He died was, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." His benediction as He arose and met them in the upper room was, "Peace be unto you." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." He brings to the guilty heart the sense of pardon and eternal peace, and then He brings to the

surrendered heart the deeper rest that comes from passion and sin subdued and perfect trust in Him as the sovereign and keeper of the soul. He brings peace by conquest, but His conquest is that of love, the soul subdued into harmony with Him by its own consent, and every part of the being in harmony with itself.

His glorious kingdom of peace extends further, for it brings us into perfect harmony with all the relations of life and circumstances that surround us, so that the soul in which this glorious Prince reigns easily adjusts itself to every situation. It finds God adjusting everything in its life in glorious rest and fitness, so that it is true that when a man's ways please the Lord He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him; and where things are at war with us we have a still higher victory, and can cry, with the apostle, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

And so the government shall be upon His shoulder; and when it is, it is true that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." They that fully trust Him will find Him able to carry on His shoulder, not only the government of their own life, but all the things that concern them.

Wonderful names! Wonderful Savior, Counselor and Prince! Let us give Him the increase of the government and enter into His perfect peace. Then in a little while we will find ourselves in the glorious millennial kingdom of His everlasting peace, where the last enemy will be destroyed and universal nature will at length be brought into perfect and everlasting accord with His love and will. War will cease and strife will disappear; sin will come no more, and sorrow will have passed away. Satan will be cast out, the storm and tempest will never darken its sunny skies. Universal peace and everlasting love, like a golden chain, will bind the heavens and the earth together in one long endless kingdom of felicity and peace.

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