

Jesus the Wonderful

by R.A. Torrey

Jesus is wonderful in His nature, character, and work, and He offers salvation and transformation to all who accept Him.

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1

Topics: "The Nature of Christ", "Salvation and Transformation"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the wonder of Jesus Christ, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah, highlighting His divine nature, perfect character, and redemptive work. He explains that Jesus is both fully divine and fully human, embodying absolute perfection in holiness and love. Torrey illustrates how Jesus' atonement for sin is complete, offering salvation and transformation to all who believe. He concludes by urging the audience to consider their response to this wonderful Jesus, who promises to transform lives and grant eternal hope.

Transcript

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6.

THE prophet Isaiah with a mind illumined by the Holy Spirit, looked down 740 years and saw the coming of Jesus of Nazareth and uttered the sublime words of our text. In them is wrapped up a world of meaning concerning the Divine glory, the matchless character, and wonderful offices of our Lord. But to-night we must limit our thought to one clause in this great verse, "His name shall be called Wonderful. In the Bible names have meaning, especially when applied to God the Father, the Son or the Holy Ghost. The name is a revelation of what one is. Jesus is called Wonderful because He is wonderful. First Jesus is Wonderful in His nature; second Jesus is Wonderful in His character; third, Jesus is Wonderful in His work.

1. JESUS IS WONDERFUL IN HIS NATURE.

First of all Jesus is wonderful in His nature.

1. He is a Divine Being. He is Divine in a sense in which no other man is Divine. The Bible, both the Old Testament and the New, is full of that great truth. He most unhesitatingly made the claim. In Mark 12:6, after speaking of the Old Testament prophets as servants, He speaks of Himself as the "beloved" Son of

God, and "only" Son of God. In John 10:30 He says, "I and my Father are one. In John 14:9 He goes so far as to say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and in John 5 : 23 He says, "All men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father."

The Apostle John said of Jesus in the opening verses of His gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him ; and with out Him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:1-3). And further down in the 14th verse he says, "And the Word (that is this Word that was in the beginning and that was with God and was God) became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

The Apostle Thomas after the resurrection of our Lord, fell at the feet of Jesus and cried to Him, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). The Apostle Paul said of Him that "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9), and he says of Him again in Rom. 9: 5 that He "is over all, God blessed forever." The Apostle Peter in Acts 10 : 36 says of Him, "He is Lord of all." The author of the epistle to the Hebrews said of Him, "He is the effulgence of His (God's) glory, and the very image (or exact expression) of his (God's) substance," and that He upholds all things by the Word of His power (Heb. 1:3).

And Paul in Phil. 2:6 says that before He became man He existed originally "in the form of God." If the Bible makes anything as plain as day, it makes it plain as day that our Lord Jesus is a Divine being with all the attributes, glory, majesty, and power that belong to God. He is God. Well then might the prophet Isaiah in his inspired vision of the coming of Jesus, cry, "His name shall be called Wonderful." If Jesus was not "very God of very God," then John was mistaken, and Paul was mistaken, and Jesus Himself was mistaken, and only that denomination that has never been noted for its prayerfulness, its spirituality, its devotion, its self-sacrifice, its missionary enterprise, that denomination which has only a history of building churches to see them die, that denomination alone is right, and John, Peter, Paul, and Jesus are wrong.

Do you believe that? Can you believe that? No, a thousand times no. No man who is thoroughly sane in his head and thoroughly honest in his heart can believe that. Jesus then is a Divine being. He is wonderful, most wonderful, wonderful beyond description, wonderful beyond conception. The wonderfulness of His being and nature will be the object of our glad and adoring contemplation and the theme of our highest praises throughout the endless a?ons that are to come, throughout eternity.

2. But there is another wonderful thing about the nature of Jesus. While He is Divine He is at the same time a real man. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." He was "the only begotten Son of God," but He is at the same time the Son of man. He is, Paul tells us in 1 Tim. 2:5, the mediator between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus." Do you ask how are the perfect Deity and the perfect humanity united in Jesus? I do not know. Neither do I know how spirit and body are united in myself, but I know that they are. I do not know how the Divine nature that I received in the new birth is united with the physical and intellectual and moral nature that I received by my natural birth, but I know that it is, and so also I know that Jesus is perfectly Divine and perfectly human. Well might the prophet say, "His name shall be called Wonderful."

II. JESUS IS WONDERFUL IN HIS CHARACTER.

But while Jesus is wonderful in His nature, in His Divine glory and perfect humanity, He is not wonderful in His nature alone, He is wonderful in His character. His character was absolutely perfect. He was

absolutely without blemish and without spot. He was not only faultless, but every possible perfection of character rested upon Him. There is not a perfection of character of which we can think that is not to be found in Him, and found in Him in its fullness. As the years go by and we study Him more and more carefully and come to see Him as He was and is more fully, the more the absolute perfection of His character shines forth. For thirty-four years He lived in a hostile world that sought to find some imperfection in Him, but they could find none. For

eighteen centuries since, infidels have been hunting for some flaw in the character of Jesus and they cannot find it. "What would not the infidels give if

they could only put their finger upon one single flaw, even one little defect in that character, but they cannot. Even the bitterest and boldest and most unscrupulous infidel of his day was forced to say, "I wish to say once for all that to that great and serene man I pay, I gladly pay, the homage of my admiration and my tears." Jesus in the perfection of His character is indeed wonderful. He is the wonder of the ages. He stands out absolutely peerless and alone. When any man ventures to put anyone else alongside of Jesus Christ he at once loses the confidence of all candid and fair-minded men.

1. Jesus was perfect in holiness. Peter spoke of Him as "The holy One and the just" (Acts 3:14). John spoke of Him as "the Holy One" (1 John 2:20).

Even the unclean spirits when they met Him were forced to cry out to Him, "I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark 1 : 24). The epistle

to the Hebrews speaks about Him as "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners." He passed through all our experiences of conflict and temptation yet "without sin" (Heb. 4: 15). The dazzling white light that glorified the face and garments of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration was the outshining of the moral purity within.

2. But He was not only perfect in holiness, He was also perfect in love. His love to God was perfect and so was His love to man. His love to God revealed itself in His unhesitating obedience to every command of God, in His unreserved surrender to God's will, in His drawing back from no sacrifice that God demanded, in His delight in doing God's will, a delight so great that forgetting the long denied demands of bodily hunger, He could triumphantly say, "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work" (John 4: 34, E. V.). His love to God was absolutely perfect, but so was His love to man. His love to man took in all men, it took in the good, but it took in the vilest as well. It took in men like John and Nathaniel, but it took in also the demoniac of Gadara, the thief on the cross, the woman with the seven devils, and the woman who was a sinner. It took in His enemies for whom He prayed even as He endured the agonies and the reproaches and the shame they heaped upon Him, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." His love hesitated at no sacrifice. "Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8: 9, R. V.). "Being in the form of God, He counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8). Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful love, that seeing full equality with God Himself in honour and glory, turned His back upon all this and chose the cow stable for His birthplace, the poor carpenter shop for His school, the contempt and rejection of men for His reward, the agony of Gethsemane and the shame and ignominy and torture of death upon the cross for its consummation, because by these things He could

save the vile and worthless and outcast. Well ight Isaiah say that Jesus name should be called Wonderful. There are many other perfections in the character of Jesus, e.g., the perfection of His meekness and gentleness and humility and patience and courage, and manliness, but we cannot stop to dwell upon these now. Enough has been said to show that He is wonderful in character.

III. JESUS IS WONDERFUL IN HIS WORK.

But as wonderful as Jesus is in His nature and in His character, He is not wonderful in His nature and character alone, He is also wonderful in His work.

1. In the first place He made a perfect atonement for sin. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). Every sin of ours was settled by the death of Jesus upon the cross. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree" (Gal. 3:13). The death of Christ so perfectly atones for sin that the moment I believe in Jesus Christ and thus accept the atonement He has made for me, every sin of mine is blotted out from God's account and God reckons me as perfectly righteous in Him: "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin in our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Is not this wonderful? Is it not amazing? that the vilest sinner there is in Los Angeles, or anywhere else on this earth, the liar, the thief, the blasphemer, the murderer, the harlot can come into this place to-night all crimson with the sins they have committed, and yet the death of Christ so perfectly atones for them all that the moment they accept that atonement all their sins are blotted out and they become as white as snow. Oh, when the sins that I have committed come up before me, and they have been great (the sins of every one here to-night have been great), but when they come up I look away at the cross and I see Jesus hanging there, I hear His dying cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and I hear His other cry, "It is finished," and I can see the Roman soldier draw back his spear, and I see it go crashing into that side. I see the life blood pouring out, and I know that all my sins are atoned for. I know that,

"Jesus paid my debt,

All the debt I owe,

Sin had left a crimson stain,

He washed it white as snow."

Oh, it is wonderful : the sin of the whole race atoned for at Calvary, and all that any man has to do to enjoy the fruits of that atonement is, just to accept it.

2. But Jesus not only made an atonement for sin, He also saves from sin's power. Jesus Christ has power to set any man who will put his trust in Him free from any sin, and the power of all sin. He Himself said, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Is it not wonderful that there is not a man on earth to-day so completely in sin's power but that Jesus Christ can set him free? One night many years ago I met a man who had been a wanderer on the face of the earth for many years, but had come of a good family, had been well educated, had moved in good society, but who had turned his back on all this and had given himself up to a life of sin, and now at the age of perhaps 45 he was completely in sin's power. He was a large, powerful man, but he approached me with such hesitation and whispered in my ear the question, "Do you think Jesus Christ can save me?" I replied, "I know He can." Then I sat down

and reasoned with Him out of the Scriptures and He listened and believed and was saved. For years he was a happy Christian and enslaving sins were things of the past. To-night he is with Christ in the glory. That is but one case out of thousands and tens of thousands. I have known many, many such, personally. I have seen Jesus Christ set men free from sin in pretty much every state in the union. I have seen Him do it in England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, China, Japan and India. There are right in this audience to-night many men and women whom Jesus has set free from an awful slavery that once held them captive. Indeed Jesus completely transforms men. The man who was once a blasphemer now prays. The man who once loved the vile book, now loves the Bible. The man who once told questionable stories now sings hymns of praise. The men and women who once gave themselves over to sin and vice are now working for their fellow men. "If any man is in Christ, He is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Oh, the work of Jesus is wonderful indeed, transforming demons into angels. One Sunday night I heard a man who a few years before was a ruffian, a drunken, profane, cruel brute, speaking to the best people of one of our eastern cities with great tenderness and pleading that they too accept the same Jesus who had so wonderfully transformed his life and that of his wife. Jesus is indeed wonderful in His work.

3. But Jesus will do even more wonderful things in the future. When He comes again He will raise the dead with His voice, and we shall be caught up with them to meet Him in the air. He will transform us into His own perfect likeness. This old, weak, sickly, pain-racked body will be changed into the likeness of His own glorious body, free from every ache and pain, free from every weakness, free from every limitation, resplendent with a beauty never seen on earth, capable of unlimited activity. And He will transform us morally also, so that in our inmost character we shall be made just like Him. He will bring us fully into our glorious inheritance as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Himself, heirs of all God is and all God has, heirs of His wisdom, His power, His holiness. Oh, it is wonderful!

Jesus is indeed wonderful. He is wonderful in the infinite glory of His Divine nature. He is wonderful in the matchless perfection of His character. He is

wonderful in His work, blotting out all sin by His death, delivering from all sin by His resurrection life, transforming us from all remaining imperfection into the full glory of sons of God by His coming again. Jesus is the Wonderful One. Now what will you do with Him? What will you do with this wonderful Jesus? Will you accept Him or reject Him? Oh, the wisdom and the blessedness of those who accept Him. Oh, the folly and wretchedness of those who reject Him. What will you do to-night with this wonderful Jesus?

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