Wonderful UNSFI OR =verlasting ATHE Prince of

> DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY 2025 CHRISTMAS DEVOTIONAL

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6 NIV)

The majesty of the Christ-child was articulated by the prophet Isaiah long before Jesus's arrival in Bethlehem. His glory is revealed in the descriptive names for Him that are listed in Isaiah 9:6. Isaiah said that the Messiah's name would be fourfold: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Each descriptive title is stunning and provides us with confidence in who He is.

For the 2025 Dallas Theological Seminary Christmas Devotional collection, we have assembled devotionals that focus on these four names for the Messiah. Each devotional, written by a DTS faculty member, addresses the name from a distinct perspective. All point to the perfect character of Jesus—the Child born for us, the Son given to us.

This Christmas devotional is a gift of gratitude for friends like you who support DTS's mission to glorify God by equipping godly servant-leaders for the proclamation of His Word and the building up of the body of Christ worldwide. On behalf of our faculty, staff, and students, thank you for your partnership. It is a blessing to all of us.

During this season of celebrating the Child born for us, I encourage you to rejoice that our Savior is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

Merry Christmas!

Mark M. Yarbrough, PhD

President

NOVEMBER 30

— ISAIAH 9:6-7 —

The Predicted Messiah

Isaiah, transfixed by the Spirit of God on the time in the future when the Messiah would become flesh and blood, gives us His names. What names they are! They are all descriptions of God's character. Let's consider each one.

Wonderful Counselor. "Wonderful" is a word used to describe something or someone out of the ordinary and remarkable in nature. The emphasis here is on God's counsel. It is a remarkable, extraordinary kind of counsel. He will be effective in planning and in executing His plan. The plan that goes all the way back to eternity past ran its course during Christ's life on earth, and it will continue to do so during His ultimate reign in the Kingdom that is yet to come. His plan is comprehensive and effective. Furthermore, the counsel that He gives is always right. You will never get weak or faulty counsel from the Lord. You will read His Word and find promises that you can bank on. You can trust Him.

Mighty God. Not only is this Messiah someone whose counsel is always right, but He is also strong enough to overcome all opposition. He's not only a wonder of a planner, but He is also a powerful implementer. He is superior to all others in strength. Think of the power He has over all the things that try to destroy us—Satan, sin, disease, death. None of them intimidate the Messiah.

Everlasting Father. The Messiah is the kind of father who cares for those who can't take care of themselves and disciplines those who need to be reproved. He is tender, faithful, a guardian, a provider, a loyal presence. All these things we want in a father. God is everlastingly that kind of father, full of tender mercies.

Prince of Peace. Christ conquers and removes all of the things that take away peace. When He serves as King above all who may call themselves king now, peace will reign, and there will be no end to it. We cannot pull that off.... How foolish to think that men and women can make peace happen.

Peace among human beings is only possible because the Prince of Peace has made the way for our peace with God. . . .

He made peace possible at the Cross. He came, He died, He picked up the entire amount of our debts—centuries of sin—and He paid the complete penalty that we deserved. He took the nails we should have gotten. He wore the thorns that should have crushed down on us. With His blood we are healed. He leaves us with nothing to do but accept the gift. He is our peace.



DR. CHARLES R. SWINDOLL Chancellor Emeritus

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For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.

— ISAIAH 9:6 NLT —

A Father's Generosity

I love my dad. He has lived an amazing life that took him from head chef of a seafood restaurant on Cape Cod to taxi driver in New York City to Airman First Class in the US Air Force stationed in Korea and Vietnam to distinguished attorney through a career spanning Washington, California, and Texas. Along the way, my dad consistently, generously, and sacrificially has loved my mom, my sister, and me.

Turning 83 years old this year, Dad has seen his physical capabilities progressively decline. In a very natural sense, his ability to give of his strength, resources, and self to his family has limits that are becoming more and more apparent as the years go by.

Our God experiences no such decline and has no such limits. In fact, Jesus Christ said our heavenly Father perfectly *knows all our needs* (Matthew 6:32) and perfectly *gives good gifts* to all of His children (7:11).

Our heavenly Father has no beginning and no end. He has *infinite resources* from which to give to His children, and He is *infinitely generous* in gifting His resources to His children. How do we know this?

Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? (Romans 8:32)

The mystery of the Trinity shows up here in such a special way. We cannot fully comprehend someone having infinite resources AND being willing to give from a position of infinite generosity.

During this Christmas season, as we meditate on the description of the Messiah in the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6 as "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," consider the full implication that, out of His infinite generosity, our heavenly Father sacrificially gave to us His Son, Jesus Christ. Praise God!



DR. ERIK SALWEN
Associate Professor of Counseling Ministries

Monderful COUNSELOR

This also comes from the LORD of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.

— ISAIAH 28:29 FSV —

The Wonderful Baby of Bethlehem

One of the four identifications of the Child to come found in Isaiah 9:6 is "Wonderful Counselor." This is such a comforting, significant, perfect name for our Jesus.

The Hebrew noun "counselor," as used in the Old Testament, is not used in the way we might employ it today for a person trained to give insights on personal, social, or psychological problems. Rather, the term speaks of one who advises and advocates certain directions of actions and thought. This guidance is for the good of the person willing to listen. "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). And Jesus is just such a counselor—one who gives insight and direction for life to those who listen to Him.

Isaiah 9:6 describes the quality of the Messiah's counsel as "wonderful"—that which causes awe. This noun is translated in most versions as an adjective to characterize the counselor (as are the nouns "mighty," "everlasting," and "peace," which are translated as adjectives, too). While Jesus is wonderful in so many ways (the miraculous nature of His birth, His teachings, His miracles, and His ultimate sacrifice and resurrection), here the word is being used specifically to describe His counsel. This word should be seen as far more substantial than how it is popularly used today, where everything is said to be wonderful. When speaking of the Son's counsel, the use of the term "wonderful" expresses that which is always wise and perfect for those who listen. Isaiah 28:29 states, "This also comes from the LORD of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom." Jesus showed that He is "wonderful" in His counsel; He taught so many wonderful things that are counterintuitive to the human mind and even more that He is the only way to God. Jesus said, "I am the true and living way" (John 14:6 BBE).

At Christmas, as we are reminded of the coming of Jesus to earth, we recognize that His teaching and direction is perfect for us. He knows exactly what we need, and so we can trust Him to lead and guide us each day as we listen to Him (Proverbs 3:5–6).



DR. STEPHEN BRAMER

Department Chair and Senior Professor of Bible Exposition

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

— Luke 2:8–12 nlt —

Wonderful

My wife woke me at 3:00 a.m. one morning and said, "It's time." When this happens, it is enough to put anyone on highest alert in seconds. That morning something wonderful was about to happen, and three hours later our son Bradley was born in Nairobi, Kenya. We were so thrilled, we couldn't wait to call all our friends, long distance, and tell them the good news.

God, our heavenly Father, sent an angel to shepherds to tell them the most wonderful news ever announced: The Messiah had arrived. Isn't it interesting that the angels weren't sent to the kings and rulers of the land? In fact, we know what Herod did to the babies in Bethlehem when he heard the good news (Matthew 2:13–18). Instead, the angels were sent to shepherds in the fields who wondered about what they had seen.

Wonderful describes something or someone out of the ordinary and remarkable in nature. God sent the Messiah to His people with an extraordinary kind of counsel. This was always part of God's plan. It is the good news; it always has been and always will be.

Christmas is a time when we remember Christ's birth; we may buy gifts for each other and gather together with family to share meals. When children are born, our hope is always for them to wonder about who the Wonderful Counselor is and desire to get to know Him. Take some time this Christmas to wonder about this good news and share it with your family and others.



DR. RODNEY ORR
Professor of Missiology & Intercultural Ministries

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

— COLOSSIANS 1:16 NASB —

The Counselor Who Holds Our Future

We are stepping into an era shaped by artificial intelligence, where nearly 90 percent of organizations now use AI in at least one area. This technology seems to propel us toward greater creativity, broader choices, and more efficient results. Yet, at the same time, AI systems can amplify human biases, threaten individual privacy, and erode our capacity for ethical reasoning. AI raises concerns about safety, superficial understanding, and the diminishing of true wisdom.

In a world changing at such a rapid speed, filled with endless channels of distraction, temptation, and threats, how can we discern the right path for our lives and decisions?

This Christmas season, the Scriptures remind us of the birth of a child who holds the power to govern our fast-shifting world. He is the One who holds our future in His sovereign hands. As the Creator of the visible and invisible realms, He possesses all authority over every force with visible or hidden influence (Colossians 1:16). The One who rules the universe is also the One who cares deeply for our well-being and protects us from all threats.

He is called *Wonderful Counselor* (Isaiah 9:6). This Hebrew term (*yâ'ats*) refers not merely to a comforter or an understanding adviser but to One with divine moral and spiritual wisdom, who guides, counsels, and mentors us so that our plans will succeed according to what is spiritually and morally right.

Earthly counselors, who can provide insightful and encouraging guidance, are still limited by their personality, skills, experiences, and assumptions. Our Lord is the divine Counselor who created and redeemed us. He is our Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. He not only guides our next steps in this complex and confused world, but He also strengthens and protects us to accomplish His purposes, bringing peace and rest into our hearts.

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, may we place our trust in the One who created us and knows us deeply. May we quiet our hearts each day to hear His gentle counsel and walk closely with His Spirit.



DR. RICHARD HON
Assistant Director of DTS-Chinese;
Associate Professor of Bible Exposition

This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

— HEBREWS 4:15 NLT —

The Counsel of Our Savior

Hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah prophesied that one day a child would come who would be not only their Messiah but also a Wonderful Counselor: "For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. . . . And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor" (Isaiah 9:6 NLT). The Israelites really needed to hear this because they faced a huge problem (the Assyrian Empire) with no apparent solution. Even though their Messiah was years away, they had access to the "Lord of Heaven's Armies." He, in the words of Isaiah, "has made His counsel wonderful and His wisdom great" (Isaiah 28:29 NASB). Imagine that! They had access to the wonderful counsel of the Lord when they needed it most!

And so do we.

But what does it mean that our Savior and King, born in Bethlehem, is our Wonderful Counselor?

First, **He knows the issues we face, and He is the solution to all of them.** As our Wonderful Counselor, He understands everything about us. "This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15 NLT).

Second, as our Counselor, **He will always show us the best way forward.** "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:6 NASB).

Third, **we can trust our Counselor.** Jesus said, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. . . . He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me." (John 16:13–14 NLT).

Fourth, **our Wonderful Counselor is our safe place.** Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 NLT). The Psalmist tells us, "The LORD is a safe place for the oppressed—a safe place in difficult times" (Psalm 9:9 CEB).

Fifth, we are always welcome in the presence of our Wonderful Counselor. "The one who comes to me I will never send away" (John 6:37 NET).

How awesome it is to be able to go to the Wonderful Counselor! This Christmas, seek your Wonderful Counselor and let Him guide you!



DR. PHIL HUMPHRIES

Professor of Educational Ministries & Leadership

[Christ], in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

— Colossians 2:3 ESV —

Jesus as Sage-The Consummate Counselor

The offices traditionally said to be fulfilled and occupied by Jesus are those of prophet, priest, and king. However, a passage recording the evil plots against the prophet Jeremiah mentions another type of leader who evidently held critical importance and influence in the nation of Israel. "Then they said, 'Come, let us make plots against Jeremiah, for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, let us strike him with the tongue, and let us not pay attention to any of his words" (Jeremiah 18:18). It appears the role of the wise sage was a recognizable influencer among the people of Israel.

In Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 9:6), one of the titles ascribed to the coming Messiah was "Wonderful Counselor." The term *wonderful* is a word that means extraordinary to a level beyond comprehension. When Paul writes to the Colossians in refutation of those claiming unusual spiritual insight, he counters with the superiority of Jesus Christ—the ultimate Sage.

Paul writes so that the Colossians' "hearts may be encouraged . . . to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ" (Colossians 2:2). At the center of Christianity is Jesus, and in Him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (2:3). Paul argues throughout the Book of Colossians that believers can have such rich experiences with Christ that supersede any promised by a person or group that promotes an alternative, false Christianity. As Paul stated elsewhere, "And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). We do well to take the lead from God the Father, who said of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" (Mark 9:7). His counsel will always be wonderful and right for every occasion or need.



DR. MARK L. BAILEY Chancellor; Senior Professor of Bible Exposition

MIGHTY COD

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

— ROMANS 10:9 NIV —

Yahweh and Jesus

Deep within this well-known gospel passage is a powerful declaration, not only of Jesus's role as Savior and Lord but of His full divinity, His status as "Mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6).

To understand what Paul is doing in Romans 10, we first need to go back to the Old Testament. At the burning bush (Exodus 3:13–15), God revealed His name to Moses as "Yahweh," a word that appears more than six thousand times in the Hebrew Bible. However, the ancient Israelites revered God's name so highly that they decided never to say it aloud. Instead, whenever a reader came across the name "Yahweh," the person would say the word "Lord" instead. Our English translations attempt to parallel this by translating Yahweh as LORD (notice the small capital letters).

Here's why this matters. First, the name Jesus has the divine name "Yahweh" built into it. The English name "Jesus" comes from the Greek name *I&ous*, which comes from the Hebrew name *Yeshua* (or *Yehoshua*) and means "Yahweh saves." So when Gabriel told Mary to call her baby "Jesus" (Luke 1:31), Mary knew that this was no ordinary boy!

Paul helps us take the connection between Jesus and Yahweh a step further. A few verses later in Romans 10:13 he quotes Joel 2:32: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." If we look at the original text of Joel, we'll see the parallels jump out:

"If you declare with your mouth,

'Jesus is Lord' . . .

you will be saved" (Romans 10:9)

"Everyone who calls on
the name of the LORD
will be saved" (Joel 2:32)

What Paul is doing here is pushing us to see that the God-Man Jesus, whose name means "Yahweh saves," is nothing less than Yahweh Himself, a fully divine person of the triune God. This means that when we declare, "Jesus is Lord," we're not just saying we'll follow Him as master and we're not just asking for salvation. We're saying Jesus of Nazareth, the baby born in Bethlehem on the first Christmas, is the Mighty God who was and is and is to come!



DR. JOHN C. DYER
Vice President for Enrollment Services
& Educational Technologies;
Assistant Professor of Theological Studies

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

— MATTHEW 28:18 FSV —

No Ordinary Child

At Christmas, we often are drawn to the humble setting of Jesus's birth: a baby in a manger, a young virgin mother, a quiet town called Bethlehem. The scene is simple and serene. But behind that simplicity lies a remarkable theological reality. The child in the manger is not just a baby but the One to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given.

In Matthew 28, the risen Christ makes one of the most astonishing declarations in all of Scripture. He makes the divine proclamation that everything belonging to mighty God the Father from eternity past has been entrusted to Him. The authority that spoke the universe into being, that parted seas and stilled storms, that healed the broken and raised the dead, that very authority is fully under Jesus's dominion. And yet, on that first Christmas, this supreme authority did not come with great fanfare but rather quietly in the form of a newborn who was wrapped in cloth and laid in a manger. Christ came not to impress but to redeem.

So, this Christmas, as you gaze upon a nativity scene, remember that the baby in the manger represents no ordinary child. Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God, clothed in humility yet carrying the full weight of divine authority. His presence in that lowly stable is not just the start of a story, but the unveiling of God's sovereign rule breaking into human history. The nativity scene at Christmas reminds us of the miraculous revelation of the One who rules over all things, in all places, and at all times. And, through that authority, He likewise commissions us as He did His followers to make disciples of all peoples in all places with a final encouraging promise: *I am with you always* (Matthew 28:20).

Christmas is not only a celebration of Christ's coming but a call to live with bold faith in His authority and empowering presence. Glory to the newborn King who reigns, who is with us, and who sends us forth in His mighty name.



DR. MICHAEL A. ORTIZ

Vice President for Global Ministries;

Professor of Missiology & Intercultural Ministries

A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!"

Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this?

Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

— MARK 4:37-41 NIV —

Mighty to Save

The winds of our times shift, my friends, on the choppy seas before us. Strong headwinds and sudden gusts beckon us to set our sails accordingly. The horizon sky, once bright, darkens, and gray clouds swirl almost as much as the chaotic oceans below.

We are all trying to figure out how to adjust to this new ebb and flow—how to navigate it, how to reset our sails. It is an all-hands-on-deck moment for understanding our times, these new patterns, and the arduous task it takes to harness and tame the shifting winds on these wild and unpredictable seas. We certainly cannot navigate these unsteady times alone! Who can help us?

Look! There in the manger next to Mary and Joseph, the swaddled newborn rests fast asleep as divinely summoned shepherds greet their long-awaited Messiah. But a helpless babe for a hopeless world—really?

It's true, the Child radiates perfect peace. And the stories whispered of prophecies, miracles, visions, and angelic hosts celebrate baby Jesus as indeed the Christ. Yet could He ever be mighty enough to dissipate the darkness, to calm the storm, to quiet the raging waters? Could He speak with such power that even the wind and the waves would obey Him?

Yes. Of course. Then rest my soul. Be still. For Jesus, God incarnate, is right here with us, and He is mighty to save.



Dr. D. Scott Barfoot

Associate Professor of Educational Ministries & Leadership; Senior Advisor for Doctor of Ministry Studies

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. . . .

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things.

— COLOSSIANS 1:15, 19–20 NIV —

Miraculous Mirror

Christ, the miraculous mirror, is both the mirror and the image seen in it. When the eternal Son of God took on flesh and blood, He became the miraculous mirror in two significant ways. First, He became the visible reflecting the invisible. All the fullness of God dwelt in Christ and was miraculously reflected in Christ. In Christ, we see the character of God. Second, He became the mirror that miraculously transforms those who fix their gaze upon Him. As we grow in beholding Christ, we grow in our love of Christ and progressively and miraculously in our mirroring of Christ.

In the Garden of Eden, we lost the face of God. In Christ, we may again behold the face of God positionally, personally, and experientially. The face of Christ is the relational gate. The beatific vision involves beholding Christ's glory. This is more than mental assent. This is being swallowed up by the glory of God in the visible mirror of Christ through the mysterious working of the Spirit.

Paul identifies this twofold miraculous mirror effect of Christ in 2 Corinthians: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18 NASB). Paul is looking at Corinthian followers of Christ, and he explains their process and outcome. Through Christ, the Spirit of God transformed the lives of those who beheld God the Father in the miraculous mirror in which Christ the Son is beheld.

This season, when we hear the Christmas story, we may focus on what we *believe* about the story of Jesus's birth. But let us not miss our opportunity to *behold*. Let us gaze deeply into the twofold miraculous mirror of Christ revealing all the fullness of God, transforming us to mirror Christ.



DR. C. GARY BARNES

Professor of Counseling Ministries

... the surpassing greatness of His power ... in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ.

— EPHESIANS 1:19–20 NASB —

Power Source

This past summer, just as the temperature was rising, the ceiling fan in our bedroom stopped working. The only solution was to replace the fan with an entirely new one. Once the new fan was connected to the right wires and to the right power source, a nice breeze filled the room again.

Isaiah 9:6 contains the prophecy that the future Messiah (Christ) will be called "Mighty God." The title is found often in the Old Testament to refer to the power of God, His authority, and His position. The powerful hand of God created all things, and He rules by His righteousness, justice, lovingkindness, and truth (Psalm 89:13–14). God is mighty to deliver those who call upon Him (Psalm 54:1). And so the New Testament proclaims that Jesus Christ has the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:10), deliver those who trust in Him (Matthew 9:6), and give them eternal life (John 17:2).

The apostle Paul prays, in Ephesians 1:19–22, that all would know the surpassing greatness of [God's] power toward us who believe . . . with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet.

We are reminded at Christmas to connect with the all-powerful, almighty King of kings and Lord of lords, as the source of all power and authority. Just like our new ceiling fan that blows refreshing air throughout our bedroom when rightly connected to the power source of electricity in our home, so also we will function to bless all those around us when we are rightly connected to the divine source of all power. May He fill us with His presence both now and forever!



DR. DANIEL S. STEFFEN
Professor of New Testament Studies;
Interdepartmental Professor for DTS-Spanish

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

— JOHN 1:1 NIV —

Jesus Was God before Nicaea

When I take students to the Roman catacombs, they often notice that early Christian art lacks crosses and never shows Jesus as emperor. Rather, Jesus appears as the Good Shepherd. Only after Christianity emerges from underground does He begin to appear as divine. Or so the evidence suggested.

Twenty years ago, archaeologists uncovered a game-changing mosaic floor in Megiddo, northern Israel, inside a prison compound. In the center of this floor in an ancient prayer hall, we read this: "The God-loving Akeptous has offered the table to God Jesus Christ as a memorial." There it is: *God Jesus Christ*.

The Greek reveals the donor was a woman, likely offering a eucharistic table. And scholars date her words to AD 230—predating Constantine's Edict of Milan by more than eighty years and the Council of Nicaea by ninety-five.

Some claimed the absence of early imperial imagery revealed Jesus was declared divine only at Nicaea. At the council, convened by Constantine in AD 325 in what's now northern Turkey, bishops articulated their view of Christ's divinity. Isaiah had prophesied that people would call the then-coming Son "mighty God" (El Gibbor), and the New Testament shows early Christians did worship Jesus as divine. But critics with views popularized by novelists and seemingly supported by the art argued Constantine gave Jesus a promotion for the emperor's political ends.

The Megiddo mosaic debunks that narrative. It provides visual evidence that early Christians indeed worshipped Jesus as God.

So why isn't Jesus portrayed as emperor early on? Probably because representing Him as the Good Shepherd *does* communicate a political persona. It evokes Ezekiel 34, where the prophet calls corrupt leaders false shepherds, and God promises to shepherd His people Himself. Early Christians depicted Jesus as shepherd because they already saw Him as King—only one having a different *kind* of royalty.

Throughout 2025, we have marked the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. And Scripture, council, and archaeology speak with one voice: Christians have worshipped Jesus Christ as deity from the beginning. Let us join their chorus, welcoming Him as Almighty God today.



DR. SANDRA GLAHN
Professor of Media Arts & Worship

Everlasting

But Jesus called for the children, saying, "Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

— LUKE 18:16 NET —

Faith of a Child

On a beautiful winter's day, under a tall North Carolina pine, in a small, picturesque country church graveyard, I sat by my father's grave marker pouring out cries to God of lost memories from a life without a father. It was 1988.

Twenty years prior, my dad's destructive choices put him in the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong people who beat him within an inch of his life. I was five. The next time I saw him was for my thirteenth birthday. He died the next year—half a continent away. An everlasting father definitely was not my experience with my dad.

This story is unique, yet it probably resonates with many. A father's presence and impact can be monumental. His absence, even while sitting at the table, can create a cavernous void. Perhaps that's why Isaiah described the promised Child as "Everlasting Father" (Isaiah 9:6)—a father who always loves, always protects, always provides, always guides, always encourages, always welcomes, always forgives, and always, always is present. When our fathers demonstrate similar traits, they reflect the "Everlasting Father" characteristics of Jesus. When our fathers fail in these areas, we can still rest in the unfailing and everlasting character of Jesus. Jesus is the perfect image of "Everlasting Father."

Since 1988, God has given me the grace to forgive my father for what we both lost. I have learned to treasure the man he was and the family he gave me. He was my father. The only reason that it is possible for me to forgive is because the "Everlasting Father," Jesus, filled the God-shaped vacuum in my heart—the same longing present in us all.

"Everlasting Father" is not just some poetic "opium of the people"; it's a picture of an eternally consistent, loving Savior who came as a child to meet the deepest longings of our hearts. This child grew up and instructed, "Let the little children come to me." In response, we gladly run to our Everlasting Father with the faith of a child. By the way, this Everlasting Father is not in the grave. But we can save that part of the story until Easter.



DR. SCOTT HARRIS

Director of Doctor of Education Studies;

Associate Professor of Educational Ministries & Leadership

God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.

— Herrews 1:1–2 esv.—

Perfect Patriarch

For believers, Christmas centers on the Son.

Our songs of startled shepherds, exulting angels, and traversing magi focus on Jesus. In any nativity, the faces of Mary, Joseph, and the wise men fixate on that swaddled babe lying in a manger. And if we zoom out from the story of Christmas, we realize all Scripture centers on the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44).

The Son embodies peace on earth, extends joy to the world, and exemplifies hope for humanity. But He also fulfills the deepest desires and eager expectations of the lost since Adam plunged us into sin and death. The Son answers the most confounding questions, solves the most impossible problems, and fulfills the most profound promises. God spoke in various ways to the ancient patriarchs (Hebrews 1:1), pointing those ancient fathers through prophecies, types, and shadows to an ultimate Son who would be born to reveal God's ultimate plan.

As the center of Christmas and of God's grand story, the Son also exemplifies all Old Testament offices and titles. He's not just any prophet like Elijah; He's the Prophet Moses foresaw (Deuteronomy 18:15). He's not just any priest like Aaron; He's our heavenly High Priest (Hebrews 3:1). He's not just any king like David; He's the King of kings (Revelation 19:16). He's not just any judge like Gideon; He's Judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42). And He's not just any patriarch like father Abraham; He's the Everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6).

This doesn't mean the babe in the manger is God the Father in the flesh. No, the Father sent the Son; He didn't send Himself (1 John 4:14). As "Everlasting Father," Jesus stands forever as the *perfect patriarch*. He'll never waver like Abraham, never deceive like Isaac, never swindle like Jacob, and never cheat like Judah. God spoke to all those fathers, but with the coming of the Son into the world, God speaks to us through the ultimate patriarch—the "Everlasting Father."

For believers, everything should center on the Son, who is the perfect patriarch. Does everything in your life center on Him, too?



DR. MICHAEL J. SVIGEL

Department Chair and Professor of Theological Studies

"Truly, I say to you, the one who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." — JOHN 5:24 NASB —

Jesus: The Everlasting Father?

Have you ever had a specific role or responsibility, whether at work, at church, or even within your family setting, and someone does something that is your responsibility?

When we think about the roles we find in the Trinity, we associate distinct functions with their names: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is unusual for Jesus to have the title father. Yet that is precisely what happens in verse six of Isaiah chapter nine, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (ESV). Several names are given to Jesus in this prophetic verse, including Everlasting Father, but is Jesus usurping the role of God the Father in this verse? Or if not, how do we interpret it?

It is difficult for our finite minds to fully understand the roles of the Trinity, especially with the affirmation that God is one. However, it could be said that what the prophet is affirming in this verse is that Jesus will offer eternal life as the Everlasting Father. John 5:24 specifically mentions that Jesus is the one through whom eternal life is given. By believing in Him, we can pass from death to life. In other words, Jesus is the doorway to everlasting life. Because we believe in Him, He's our Savior; also, we can say that Jesus is our Everlasting Father.

So then, Jesus is not usurping the role of God the Father; in the broadest sense of the word "father," Jesus is our Everlasting Father. As we remember the birth of Jesus, it's a good time to thank Him for giving us eternal life, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy by allowing us to call Him our Everlasting Father.



DR. WILLIAMS TRIGUEROS
Director of DTS-Spanish;
Adjunct Professor of Educational Ministries & Leadership

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the solemn truth, before Abraham came into existence, I am!"

— JOHN 8:58 NET —

Jesus, the Great TAM

Who is this Jesus celebrated at Christmas? For some, Jesus is simply a character in stories told during the holidays. For others, He is nothing more than a decoration. Yet for believers, He is the divine Christ-child whose arrival marks a turning point in God's work in history.

The question of Jesus's identity is not new. In fact, it was the central question facing Israel at Christ's First Advent. Throughout the Old Testament, God revealed many things about Christ's person and work. Revelation about His coming created a portrait for the nation, a template to both fuel its hope in anticipation and to identify Him at His arrival. To identify Christ, the generation that received Him needed to know what to expect.

As we read the Gospel accounts, we quickly realize that Israel, at the time of Christ's First Advent, had not understood the complete portrait given to them by God. Characteristics the prophets celebrated seemed to lack the force of even distant memory.

One account in the Gospel of John depicted Jesus debating His identity with the Jews. In this account, the Jews challenged Jesus, who claimed to be greater than Abraham. "Your father Abraham was overjoyed to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' Then the Judeans replied, 'You are not yet fifty years old! Have you seen Abraham?' Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the solemn truth, before Abraham came into existence, I am!" (John 8:56–58).

Why did these Jews reject Jesus? Had they failed to understand what Jesus meant? No, they sought to kill Him because they understood. Jesus claimed to be something more than they anticipated. Jesus claimed to be Yahweh Himself, the covenant God of Israel, the eternal One with no beginning or end. Israel's failure to understand what the Scriptures had prophesied led them into rejection. When it was their turn to answer the question, "Who is this Jesus?" they concluded He was not I AM.

Every Christmas provides an opportunity for all of us to answer this same question. While there are many things we could include, be sure to remember that Jesus is the great I AM.



DR. NATHAN N. HOFF

Associate Professor of Bible Exposition

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD,
"When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;
And He will reign as king and act wisely
And do justice and righteousness in the land.
In His days Judah will be saved."

— JEREMIAH 23:5-6 NASB —

The Eternal Son as an Everlasting Father

One of the joys of teaching theology is seeing students develop a more biblical, well-rounded, and deeper view of our Triune God. As they behold the unity and diversity in the eternal Godhead, questions arise about the title of Jesus as "Everlasting Father" in Isaiah 9:6.

This verse is a messianic prophecy of the Davidic Son who will someday rule. It describes Jesus Christ: "the eternal Son of God, who is God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father," and yet distinct from the Father as the second Person of the Trinity.

So why do the inspired Scriptures speak of the eternal Son as an Everlasting Father? The answer is quite simple. In this prophecy, Isaiah describes the Messiah. He designates the Son of David, a human heir, as "Mighty God." This ruler shares the same qualities as Yahweh. So, when we come to the description "Everlasting Father," we read it as a description of a father-like monarch who will forever care for His people. In this context, the phrase "Everlasting Father" does not describe the role of Jesus in the eternal Godhead, thus confusing God the Son with God the Father. Rather, it shows how Jesus will be the eternal ruler, or father, of His people.

As you celebrate this Christmas season, may your heart be drawn not only to the humble birth of our Savior but also to His majestic reign. Let us proclaim Him in all His fullness—our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, and yes, our Everlasting Father—who rules with love, wisdom, and eternal care.



DR. SAMUEL K. LEE
Assistant Professor of Theological Studies

¹ These names for Jesus can be found in the Nicene Creed.

Prince of PEACE

Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD Is Peace.

— JUDGES 6:24 ESV —

Peace in the Winepress: Gideon and the Coming of the Prince of Peace

Turn on the news any evening, and you will hear it: political unrest, violence in the streets, economic instability, international tension, and moral confusion. Every night brings another crisis. Peace often can feel more like wishful thinking than reality. We live in a world where chaos dominates the headlines and anxiety fills the heart.

The days of the Judges described in the Old Testament were no different. Into that chaos, the angel of the LORD appeared to a fearful man named Gideon. Hiding in a winepress, threshing wheat in secret to avoid Midianite raiders, Gideon was anything but brave. Yet God called him a "mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12) and commissioned him to save Israel.

Overwhelmed, Gideon asked for a sign. The LORD responded not with rebuke, but with His presence. In awe, Gideon built an altar and named it *Yahweh-Shalom*—"The LORD Is Peace" (6:24). Before a sword was ever drawn, the LORD had already spoken peace. The LORD of peace was already with Gideon.

Centuries later, the prophet Isaiah would echo that name when he spoke of a Child to be born: "And his name shall be called . . . Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). At the birth of this Child, angels sang to shepherds: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:14). The promise of peace was no longer written on an altar—it was wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger.

This peace is not the absence of chaos or conflict. It is the presence of Christ. In a world still marked by fear and confusion, the promise remains: The LORD Is Peace. Christmas declares that the LORD does not leave us hidden in our fear-filled winepresses. He has come near in His Son, Jesus.

This Christmas, let Gideon's altar remind you: True peace does not come from calm circumstances but from the presence of Christ. May the Prince of Peace meet you this Christmas—right where you are, even in the winepress.



DR. GEORGE M. HILLMAN JR.
Vice President for Education;
Professor of Educational Ministries & Leadership

Let the peace of Christ, to which you were indeed called in one body, rule in your hearts; and be thankful.

— COLOSSIANS 3:15 NASB —

The First Christmas Gift

The first Christmas gift was Jesus: the Prince of Peace. Scripture describes peace as completeness, soundness, harmony, and health. Jesus is the Prince of Peace as He is the means of humanity's reconciliation with God through His death and resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:18). This gift is available for anyone, Jews and Gentiles alike, who chooses to accept it (Romans 3:29–30; 10:9).

Peace is highly desired in our crazy and chaotic world. Just like all Christmas gifts, peace must be opened and used to be enjoyed. Thinking about how to enjoy Jesus as the Prince of Peace reminded me of a Christmas back when I was in junior high school. Growing up in Southern California, I experienced warm and sunny Christmases. The day could be spent outside at parks, the beach, or even the pool. That year, my family celebrated the Christmas season at the pool, as my knee had developed tendonitis through my avid soccer playing. Once a day I would go to my local pool and walk back and forth in the water, "working out" the stress in my knee.

How does this make me think of peace? Well, just like "working out" my knee, we must choose to "work out" peace in our lives. After accepting Jesus's redemption, we can experience peace by doing four steps daily. Step 1: Choose to love peace and truth (Zechariah 8:19; 1 Peter 3:11). Step 2: Ask the Holy Spirit to produce peace in your heart and to let peace be your heart's ruler (Colossians 3:15; Galatians 5:22). Step 3: Engage in relational peace with others by choosing to live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:18). Finally, step 4: Fix your mind on things eternal rather than issues in this temporary world (Colossians 3:2).

God does not promise us perfect relational peace while we are here on earth. However, one day Jesus will return and bring worldwide peace (Psalm 72:7; Isaiah 2:4; 9:6–7; Revelation 21:4). By engaging in these four steps every day, you can enjoy a Christmas gift that truly is for the entire year: Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

¹Henry W. Holloman, Kregel Dictionary of the Bible and Theology (Kregel, 2005) 376.



DR. STACEY DAVIS
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There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace.

— ISAIAH 9:7 NASB —

Wage Peace

The past century shattered hopes of lasting global peace despite centuries of longing. Geopolitical rivalries and societal discord continue to thwart this dream, turning H. G. Wells's optimistic "war to end war" into a bitter irony. Even today, "peace" is waged through paradoxical war, as Elie Wiesel observed, revealing the limits of human solutions. Who, then, can bring genuine, lasting peace to a world dominated by rivalry, insecurity, and scarcity?

Enter the Prince of Peace.

Only one figure in all human history has ever borne the title "Prince of Peace." That unique title isn't a mere label. Instead, it indicates Jesus's unmatched authority and ability to personally enact genuine peace.

No leader or government has ever met this uniquely human desire for global peace. Only God can provide permanent and universal peace. Isaiah 9:6 prophetically promises peace of every kind and at every layer—personally, relationally, locally, and globally—through a human being endowed with divine titles. As Wonderful Counselor, this person provides wisdom to resolve local and personal conflicts. As Mighty God, He holds the power to foster and ensure permanent peace. As Eternal Father, He will tenderly restore and renew a fractured world. Most importantly, as Prince of Peace, He addresses humanity's deepest and broadest yearning: worldwide peace.

Isaiah connects a future divinely given Son-child named "Prince of Peace" to a divine signal of a son-child named "Immanuel," God-with-us (Isaiah 7:14). We notice Matthew explicitly applying the Immanuel name to Jesus (Matthew 1:23). Luke's angelic announcement of Jesus's birth includes peace on earth (Luke 2:14) with joy to all the people (2:10). Thus, the Prince of Peace intervenes in the affairs of the world. God-with-us brings His personal gift of spiritual peace (John 14:27), anchored by His death and resurrection.

The Prince of Peace will enact global peace when He sets up His kingdom on earth at His second coming. The prophet declares that nations will "beat their swords into plowshares" (Isaiah 2:4), ceasing war entirely. Further, the earth will overflow with "the knowledge of the LORD" (11:9), establishing peace on earth not just theoretically but tangibly and eternally.

Jesus, then, can wage peace on behalf of a war-filled world. Embodying divine justice and righteousness, He will achieve the impossible peace humanity desires. "There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or **of peace**" (9:7, emphasis added). Best of all, Isaiah 9:7 ends with the guarantee of this vision becoming true: "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this." Signed, God!



DR. RAMESH RICHARD

Professor of Global Theological Engagement
and Pastoral Ministries

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." — JOHN 14:27 NASB —

The Promise of Peace through the Prince of Peace

"Peace! peace! wonderful peace, coming down from the Father above" expresses the longings of all of us. Peace has proven to be elusive between nations, in our homes, and within our hearts. While Jesus told us that "in the world you have tribulation" (John 16:33), peace is found in Him, the One greater than ourselves whose character and accomplishments are worthy of trust, whose power and love abound.

The prophets of the Lord found peace in God's promise of the Anointed One. This promised One would be unique: a son, a child, and a prince who would bring peace. It is interesting that the denomination of prince, a term suggesting royalty, is used, indicating one who would someday inherit the throne of his father. The promise of a reigning, righteous figure sustained Old Testament believers. Peace to the ancient people of God was rooted in "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Temporal fears were ameliorated by their trust in the character and promises of God.

A monumental moment in human history arrived when Jesus came to us. The angels celebrated the significance of the event saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace" (Luke 2:14). The peace that He brought was through His sufferings, as Isaiah foretold (Isaiah 53:11). Peter said, "[you] put to death the Prince of life" (Acts 3:15). Jesus's triumph for us was sealed by His victory over death.

The "Prince of Peace" spoke, saying, "Peace I leave with you" (John 14:27). Although the fruit of God's redemptive purposes were fully expressed in Christ, inward peace can be elusive as we cling to promises not fully explained and yet to be fully experienced. When Christ returns, we will experience the ultimate of peace. The Prince of Peace will inherit from His Father the right to rule in the eternal kingdom as the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16).

In the Hebrew Scriptures, peace was promised; in the coming of Christ, peace was secured; and in our Lord's return, it will be fully experienced forever! As we await that day, we walk by faith!

¹ From the hymn "Wonderful Peace" written by Warren D. Cornell.



DR. JOHN D. HANNAH
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"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." — LUKE 2:14 NIV —

Peace on Earth

When Jesus was born, an angel of the Lord announced His birth to a group of shepherds: "I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10–11). The birth of the Messiah is good news for all people, and those shepherds were the first to hear the news. This angel was then joined by a host of angels who declared to the shepherds, "peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).

This message from God to the shepherds was astonishing and even a bit confusing. The favor of God rested on shepherds? The blessing of peace could be theirs, too? The angels declared the truth—the baby the shepherds would find in Bethlehem is indeed the Prince of Peace—so the shepherds set out to see this Child. After they saw Him, they "returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told" (Luke 2:20). But the reality is that the world in which they lived hadn't changed. The peace which this Child brings is ultimately a future peace, to be realized on earth in fullness when the Prince of Peace returns to the earth to establish a kingdom that never ends.

While we wait for the promised peace on earth, followers of Jesus have a sure and certain hope that the Messiah will establish His kingdom. In the meantime, our world is not at peace. The adult son of Mary told His disciples, "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). Because Jesus was not describing the eternal state, He did not contradict the pronouncement of peace the heavenly messengers gave at His birth. Rather, His disciples need not be surprised at family disunity, political turmoil, and other results of sin and depravity. Those who trust in Him can have peace amidst conflict, confidence amidst uncertainty, and hope amidst chaos because He is the Prince of Peace. The Messiah is more than the author of peace; He is peace incarnate. He is Himself our peace (Ephesians 2:14). He will one day make everything new.



DR. GLENN R. KREIDER
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Editor in Chief of *Bibliotheca Sacra*

[God will] give relief to you. . . . This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

— 2 THESSALONIANS 1:7 NIV —

Peace Comes When He Comes

The weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with joy and anticipation. As a child, I counted the days, impatiently asking, "How long?" For millennia, these same words have been the cry of God's people: "How long, O Lord?" Believers feel the pain of living in a broken world and the enmity of being a child of light in a world of darkness. When will the light shine forth? When will there be peace?

Years ago, as we tucked our kids into bed one evening, we sang Isaac Watts's classic hymn "Joy to the World." Reflecting upon the lyrics, I sensed that the song demanded an explanation. We sing this hymn to celebrate Christmas—the birth of Christ. But sins and sorrows still grow, and thorns infest the ground. The realities of life in this world are incongruent with the classic hymn. At least, for now.

I explained to our children that Isaac Watts wrote not of the First Advent of Christ but the Second Advent. Christ will come again! He will reign! His blessings will flow, "far as the curse is found." In childlike faith, our daughter asked, "When will the badness end and the goodness come?" She was asking, "When will there be peace?"

The apostle Paul offered encouragement to persecuted believers in 2 Thessalonians 1:7. He told the church that God will "give relief to you . . . when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven." Paul comforted the persecuted church in Thessalonica by reminding them that peace comes when Christ comes. Paul telescoped to the time when all believers find relief.

When we open the pages of the New Testament, we find a number of people who were waiting for the Christ to be born. And He was. The waiting was over! We find ourselves in a similar position. We know that the Lord Jesus will come again, and He will reign as the Prince of Peace. The joy of His second coming will be even greater than the joy of His first. Peace comes when He comes.



DR. W. SCOT KEEN
Instructor of Bible Exposition

Moses said, "The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your countrymen; to Him you shall listen regarding everything He says to you."

— ACTS 3:22 NASB —

Jesus, the Prophet like Moses

Jesus carries many titles. One can think of the list from Isaiah 9:6 that has been memorialized in music in Handel's *Messiah*. Virtually every Christmas, I find myself listening to and singing this august list of roles Jesus reflects. Other titles like Son of God or Messiah (the Christ) often dominate discussions during this special season. However, there is a title tied to Jesus that rarely makes this list . . . and yet it is an important reflection of who Jesus is. It is the title "prophet like Moses." What probably throws us off the track of its importance is that we all know Jesus is more than a prophet. In fact, when Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27–29), the prophet category was listed in contrast: "Jesus . . . questioned His disciples, saying to them, 'Who do people say that I am?' They told Him, saying, 'John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." Surely Jesus is more than a prophet; He is the Christ! Peter's confession "You are the Christ" (8:29) rings full.

However, this title is not merely that Jesus is a prophet, but that He is a certain class of prophet—a prophet *like Moses*. This raises a question to contemplate. What makes for a prophet *like Moses*? A little reflection yields the answer. Moses was a leader-deliverer prophet. He led the people during the Exodus, and his challenge of Pharoah led to the release of the people so they could journey to the Promised Land. That is also what Jesus does. Jesus leads His people and takes them to eternal life, a place of promise and fulfillment. So when Peter (Acts 3:22) or Stephen (Acts 7:37) taught about Jesus and cited Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses says God will raise up "a prophet like me," they were pointing to this special class of prophet, a prophet who not only proclaims but leads and delivers.

Deuteronomy 18:15 calls us to listen to this special prophet. Remember that Christmas is not just about the birth of a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes but the arrival of a Deliverer who shows the way to God. Let's listen to Him.



DR. DARRELL L. BOCK
Executive Director of Cultural Engagement;
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For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

— ISAIAH 9:6 NIT —

Jesus, the Greatest Gift of All

Christ's birth dawns as the glorious fulfillment of Isaiah's ancient prophecy. Centuries before this special event, Isaiah declared that a child would come who would bear divine titles and reign with unshakable authority. Today we celebrate that this promise is no longer a hope deferred—but a hope realized in Jesus Christ, the newborn Savior.

As we have seen already this season, Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor, full of wisdom and truth. In a world clouded by confusion, Jesus guides us with divine clarity and truth. He speaks words that bring life, direction, and healing to weary hearts.

He is the Mighty God. Though He lay as an infant in a manger, He came as no ordinary child. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, He entered as the eternal Son of God, the One through whom all things were made. His power would be displayed not by earthly conquest, but by defeating sin and death through His suffering, death, and resurrection.

He is the Everlasting Father, not in the role of the Father within the Trinity, but in His tender care for His children. Jesus shepherds us with compassion, provides for our needs, and has promised never to leave or forsake us. His love remains eternally steadfast and enduring.

He is the Prince of Peace. His birth was announced with angelic expressions of peace on earth. Through Him we have reconciliation with God, peace within our hearts, and the promise of peace in a restored creation to come.

This child of Bethlehem is God's ultimate gift to us. As John 3:16 declares, "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

This Christmas morning, amid the joy of family, the flurry of opening gifts, and the celebration of traditions, we acknowledge that the greatest gift is Jesus Himself. Will you believe in Him today? Receive the Savior, trust in His name, and unwrap the most lasting Christmas gift of all: eternal life.



DR. MARK M. YARBROUGH President; Professor of Bible Exposition Since 1924, more than 19,000 alumni have studied at Dallas Theological Seminary. DTS alumni serve in all 50 states and in more than 100 countries, ministering in more than 70 denominations and independent churches.

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Also, please pray for the 2,643 students currently studying at DTS. They are taking classes in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic.

FOR TO US

A CHILD IS BORN,

TO US A SON IS GIVEN,

AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ON HIS SHOULDERS.

AND HE WILL BE CALLED

Wonderful COUNSELOR

THER
Prince of DE ACE

ISAIAH 9:6 NIV



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