

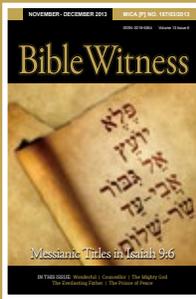
Bible Witness



פֶּלֶא
וְדֹמָם
אֵל מְבֹרָךְ
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אֵל שְׁלָמִים

Messianic Titles in Isaiah 9:6

IN THIS ISSUE: Wonderful | Counsellor | The Mighty God
The Everlasting Father | The Prince of Peace



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Cover Image

Messianic titles from the Hebrew Text of Isaiah 9:6 —

פֶּלֶא *pele'* (Wonderful); יוֹעֵץ *yô'ets* (Counsellor);
אֵל גִּבּוֹר *'el gibbôr* (Mighty God);
אָבִי-עַד *'ābî 'ād* (Everlasting Father);
שַׂר-שָׁלוֹם *sār shā-lôm* (Prince of Peace).

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“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.”

ISAIAH 9:6

HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED:

Of the titles of Christ mentioned in Isaiah 9:6, let us consider the very first – “Wonderful”. The word “wonderful” is often used as an expression to describe something that is beyond the common or the ordinary. It speaks of something that is altogether unlike anything else. It describes something or someone too marvellous even to comprehend, and is synonymous with words like magnificent, amazing, fantastic and astonishing. Indeed, everything about Him is wonderful!

Let us briefly consider a few wonderful truths about Him:

1. WONDERFUL IN HIS PERSON

The truth about Christ’s nature being 100% God and 100% Man is a thing beyond comprehension. It is simply amazing that He that is to be born a “child” and to be given as a “son”, is also “The mighty God” and “The everlasting Father”. In His being “a child” and “a son”, Christ’s perfect humanity is portrayed; and in His being “The mighty

God” and “The everlasting Father”, His absolute deity, complete with His omnipotence and eternity, is manifested.

Another aspect of His person to take note of is the wonderful truth about His birth, which is His virgin birth. Isaiah 7:14 declares: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (cf. Matthew 1:23). Even Mary herself, when she was told by the angel Gabriel, “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS”, could only say, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” (Luke 1:30-31, 34). Simply, His birth is too wonderful and beyond comprehension!

2. WONDERFUL IN HIS PROPHESED COMING

Shortly after the Fall, we are given a glimpse of the Messiah’s coming when God said to

the serpent in Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” The woman and her seed were further revealed in Isaiah 7:14, where the woman was identified as “a virgin” and her seed “a son” whose name shall be called Immanuel (whom we would know more about as revealed in Isaiah 9:6!).

tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11); “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). All the wonderful prophecies of the coming Messiah were fulfilled in this “child”!



These, as with all other Old Testament prophecies of Christ’s coming, were plainly proclaimed in the following New Testament passages: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:21-23); “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good

3. WONDERFUL IN HIS PREACHING AND TEACHING

During His earthly ministry, we often find the Lord Jesus engaged in the ministry of teaching and preaching that always left His listeners in awe. We read in Mark 6:1-2 – “And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is

given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?” (cf. Matthew 7:28-29; Luke 4:31-32).

Even when He was young, at the age of twelve, Jesus was found in the temple having a discussion with the experts of the Law as recorded in Luke 2:46-47 – “And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst

All His listeners were held in awe, being astonished at His teaching and amazed by His preaching.

4. WONDERFUL IN HIS POWER

While He was on earth, Jesus performed many miracles, signs and wonders that would authenticate His Messiahship and, in a way, affirm His omnipotence. In the



of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.”

In John’s Gospel, we read of the chief priests and Pharisees sending officers to arrest Jesus. Instead of taking Him captive, they were captivated by His words as they paused to listen to His preaching (John 7:32-44)! When the officers were asked why they had not brought Jesus with them, they replied, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46).

gospels, we read of His power to heal sickness and diseases, even bringing the dead to life again; His power over nature (walking on water, calming the winds and the waves, etc.); and His power over unclean and evil spirits. We read in Matthew 4:23-24 – “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those

which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them” (cf. Matthew 12:22; Mark 1:25-27, 32-34; Luke 4:40). John the beloved apostle, attesting to the great and mighty works of His Master, wrote in John 21:25 – “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”

Above all, Jesus has the power to forgive sins! In one account, we read of one paralytic brought to Jesus by his four friends: “When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee” (Mark 2:5; cf. Matthew 9:2; Luke 5:20).

5. WONDERFUL IN HIS PURPOSE

We can think of many verses that tell us of the purpose of Jesus’ coming but these two verses would suffice: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21); “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). His name speaks well of the purpose of His coming, for Jesus Christ means the “Anointed Saviour”. And speaking of His name, Acts 4:12 says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

One may ask, “How did Jesus accomplish His purpose?” Jesus accomplished salvation for us by His perfect obedience as seen in His willingness to offer Himself as a sacrifice without blemish and without spot to be the propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:24-25; 1 John 2:2, 4:10; 1 Peter 3:18). Jesus sacrificed Himself for sinners like us as He is our Wonderful Saviour!

There is no other person who is willing to do it as much as there is no one else who is able to accomplish such a great purpose. Romans 5:6-8 – “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Just as He is wonderful in His person, prophecies, preaching and power, Christ is also wonderful in His purpose – for He is our Wonderful Saviour! The thought of Jesus as the Wonderful Saviour has been the favourite theme of many hymn-writers. Oh how we love to sing them! So wonderful is Jesus that the apostle Paul can only say, “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15)! Truly, everything about Jesus is wonderful, just as the prophet Isaiah has declared, “...his name shall be called Wonderful.”

■ *Reggor B. Galarpe*

HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED:

“... AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR ...”

ISAIAH 9:6

In proclaiming the coming birth of the Messiah, Isaiah the prophet announced several distinctive names whereby He will be known, the first two of which are “Wonderful” and “Counsellor”. Should these two words (without the comma in between) be taken as one name (with the former descriptive of the latter), thereby giving rise to “Wonderful Counsellor”? Or should we regard these as two separate names (retaining the comma) as in the KJV rendering? Even Bible commentators are divided over this matter.

The Puritan preacher Matthew Henry, as with many other commentators, takes the KJV rendering of two separate names, and rightly so, for Christ indeed is wonderful as He is, apart from any characteristic or office that may be attributed to Him. Yet as Matthew Henry also highlighted: “Some join these (names) together: He is the wonderful counsellor, a wonder or miracle of a counsellor; in this, as in other things, he has the pre-eminence; none teaches like him.”

In carrying the name “Wonderful” upon His person, would this not then be descriptive of His function? For indeed, who can be a Counsellor as wondrous as Christ? One can take a hint from the same prophet who announced these names. “This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working” (Isaiah 28:29).

And so unto us a Son is given, who will be the Counsellor so wondrous because of a host of reasons:

1. HIS COUNSEL IS EMINENT

“Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?” (Isaiah 40:13-14).

COUNSEL

2. HIS COUNSEL IS POWERFUL

“Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect” (Psalm 33:8-10).

3. HIS COUNSEL IS WISE

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:1-2).

4. HIS COUNSEL IS INFALLIBLE

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isaiah 46:9-10).

5. HIS COUNSEL IS ETERNAL

“The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations” (Psalm 33:11).

6. HIS COUNSEL IS IMMUTABLE

“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath” (Hebrews 6:17).

7. HIS COUNSEL IS HOLY

“But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings” (Jeremiah 23:22).

8. HIS COUNSEL IS TRUTH

“O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth” (Isaiah 25:1).

ELLOR

9. HIS COUNSEL IS GREAT

“Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 32:19).

10. HIS COUNSEL IS COMPLETE

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The counsel of the great and wonderful Counsellor is all these and more! Christ is the sum total of all knowledge, all wisdom, all guidance, all direction, all truth, all discernment and insight. He knows everything about all things and He is never wrong. All knowledge of the past, present and future belongs to Him. He even knows what is inside our hearts and minds. Indeed, the Lord, our Wonderful Counsellor, is beyond compare!

On that very first Christmas night, Christ was born in Bethlehem in a manger as God’s gift to us. “For unto us a child is

born, unto us a son is given...” This brings us right to the heart of the Gospel in John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” We only need to believe everything about Jesus and receive Him into our lives as our Lord and personal Saviour.

As we believe in His every word which is recorded for us in the Scriptures, we will have the whole counsel of God to guide us till we see Christ in glory. “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Psalm 73:24). Then let us echo that sweet melody of the psalmist, “I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons” (Psalm 16:7).

Indeed, as the hymn-writer William H. Clark puts it:

*His name shall be the Counsellor,
the mighty Prince of peace,
of all earth’s kingdoms conqueror,
whose reign shall never cease.*

Truly, “Blessed be the name of the Lord!”

■ Richard Tiu

God revealed to Isaiah the hope of the nation of Israel, their Saviour, who would ultimately free the nation from her oppressors. He would be the mighty God in their midst; the great light which would shine in darkness (Isaiah 9:2).

Isaiah 9:6 lists the titles of the coming Messiah, which depict His roles. They are the most accurate description of who Christ is. The title “The mighty God” declares that Christ is mighty and Christ is God. In this article, we shall consider how these truths are demonstrated in Him.

Christ is Mighty

1. MIGHTY TO SAVE

Isaiah prophesied in chapter 53 that Christ in His first coming would be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter” (v. 7). He would take upon Himself the sins of His people as God’s sacrificial lamb and suffer for their transgressions and iniquities. By His suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ would earn the forgiveness of the sins of His people. So Christ is mighty to save.

Now we know that His sufferings had appeased the wrath of God, and God is pleased to grant forgiveness and salvation to every sinner who puts his faith in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross (Romans 5:9-10). So every sinner who

comes to Christ for salvation can be assured that his salvation is fully guaranteed.

Hebrews 7:25 declares the power of Christ to save sinners: “Wherefore he is able

THE MIGHTY



also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him...” Jesus is mighty to save wholly all who will come to Him. He is able to change a rebellious heart into a submissive one by the power of His salvation that works in a genuine believer.

2. MIGHTY TO DEFEAT THE ENEMY

Jesus has defeated Satan, sin and death! Jesus Christ confronted Satan, man’s greatest adversary, who tried to tempt Him in the Judean wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). In this confrontation, Jesus overcame all the temptations and rebuked Satan sharply by quoting the Scriptures, and thus prevailed over His adversary. Despite Satan’s attempts to tempt Him, Jesus did not sin at all (Hebrews 4:15)! Hence, we can look to Jesus Christ as the example of how to overcome sin. Above all, He is the only worthy Person who can lead us triumphantly in the spiritual fight against Satan and sin!

Moreover, the cross of Jesus destroyed Satan! Hebrews 2:14 says, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might

destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Jesus Christ became a man, so that by dying He might deliver us who had been ensnared by the devil through fear of death. So Christ died and arose that He might crush Satan and the power of death. Satan can no longer tyrannize over those who are redeemed by Christ’s death.

man since the beginning. Death could only contain Jesus as long as He allowed. Jesus allowed Himself to undergo death because it is the only way to break the shackles of sin. Therefore, when He resurrected on the third day, He removed the sting of death which is sin. So Paul tauntingly asked, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where



Neither can he terrorise them ever again with death, for by His resurrection, Jesus demonstrated to us that He has completely rendered powerless the tyranny of Satan, sin and death. As Paul has said in 1 Corinthians 15:56-57, “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Death has been an invincible enemy of man. It is no respecter of person whether rich or poor, young or old. The Bible says that it is appointed unto men once to die (Hebrews 9:27), and that death is a reality to all men (Psalm 89:48). No ordinary man is able to defeat death and whoever can accomplish such a feat would be mightier than death. Jesus defeated death which has haunted

is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55). Soon, Christ the mighty God will cast Satan permanently into the lake of fire where he will be tormented day and night forever (Revelation 20:10).

Christ is God

Isaiah affirmed that Jesus Christ is God. The prophet addressed Him as Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14) which means “God with us”. The same title was used again in Isaiah 8:8. Isaiah pronounced Jesus Christ as God once more in Isaiah 40:3 when he declared that there would be a voice in the wilderness who would prepare “the way of the LORD”, even “a highway for our God”. In the New Testament, Matthew pointed out that the

voice in the wilderness is John the baptizer (Matthew 3:3), who himself also confirmed his God-given role as the herald of the LORD (John 1:23). John the baptizer declared Jesus as the Lamb of God while he prepared the way for Him (John 1:29-30). This Christ who would come to the world is the LORD our God as was declared by the prophet Isaiah to the people of Israel.

1. CHRIST HAS ALWAYS BEEN GOD

Jesus Christ is our eternal God and He has always been together with God the Father even before time began. He has existed before the creation of the world. He was involved in the creation of the foundation of the world and all that is therein, because all things were made by Him (John 1:3). His eternal nature proves His deity.

Likewise, Jesus Christ has existed before His incarnation. In Isaiah 6:1-5, the prophet in a vision saw the mighty Lord in His full splendour and glory. He was sitting on His throne and seraphims were flying above Him. The seraphims addressed Him as the thrice holy LORD of hosts. In the New Testament, John identified Jesus Christ as the King whom Isaiah saw (John 12:41).

2. CHRIST, AS GOD, FORGIVES SINS

All sins are committed against God. Sin is rebellion against God's

authority (Isaiah 30:9). God is the judge of all who sin and rebel against Him (Isaiah 26:21). Thus, only God, being the offended One and the judge, can forgive a sinner. God spoke through the prophet Isaiah, saying, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25).

Jesus Christ, while He was on earth, declared the forgiveness of sins to certain men. When He was in Capernaum, He declared the pardon of the sins of the paralyzed man (Mark 2:1-12). The scribes accused Christ of blasphemy because to them, He was acting as God by forgiving sins. They reasoned in their hearts, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7). They were correct to affirm that only God can forgive sins. In fact, the authority that Jesus Christ exercised to forgive sins confirms His deity.

Conclusion

The truth that Christ is "The mighty God" is demonstrated in His deliverance of men from their invincible enemies – sin, death and the devil. However, they are all utterly defeated and rendered powerless by Christ, the mighty God. Man has no capability to triumph over them, but through Christ they can overcome and be more than conquerors. Because of the works of Christ, our mighty God, we can prevail over Satan, sin and death.

■ *Donald dela Cruz*



THE EVERLASTING FATHER

“The everlasting Father” in Isaiah 9:6 portrays the distinguishing divine nature of Jesus Christ the Messiah who would be the real comfort and tranquility of the people of Israel. Jesus Christ is called “The everlasting Father” despite the fact that it has just been said about Him in the same verse: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given”. How could Jesus Christ the Son of God be referred to as “The everlasting Father”? As far as the Godhead is concerned, Jesus Christ is not the Father but the Son. It is important that we note that Isaiah 9:6 is not about the position of Jesus Christ in the Trinity but His relationship with His people who have come to trust Him.

The historical context of this passage in Isaiah was set in the time when Ahaz was the king of Judah. He was not a good king,

unlike his father Jotham and grandfather Uzziah (Isaiah 1:1). He had no fear for God. During his reign, when Israel was facing serious threats from the Assyrian Empire (Isaiah 8:1-22), the people were full of sadness and filled with fear. Furthermore, because of the irreparable damage caused by King Ahaz, the future of Judah seemed doomed and uncertain. It was at that very moment of great national despair, that the prophet Isaiah prophesied the coming Messiah’s birth, which rekindled hope for the people.

So when Isaiah the prophet called Jesus “The everlasting Father”, it gave God’s people a great hope and help in time of trouble (Psalm 46:1-2). The portrayal of Jesus Christ as the everlasting Father could refer to: first, He being the Eternal King will come to lead and care for His

people; second, He being the father of eternity knows all things from eternity past to eternity future; and third, He being the father of the great work of redemption saves sinners.

CHRIST THE KING, AS A FATHER WHO LOVES AND CARES

In His relationship with His people, Christ is like a father who is tender and caring towards His children. He not only provides them with eternal life but also constantly nurtures them. Isaiah speaks of Christ as a father of His people in Isaiah 53:10 when he said, “He shall see his seed.” They need not ever fear that they will be without His care. His people will never be anywhere without His presence, provision and protection. He is an everlasting father to His people.

This truth about Christ the Messiah would have been a very consoling message to His people who had suffered under the ungodly and cruel kingship of Ahaz. Earthly kings may fail in their responsibilities to their people, but Christ, the King shall always be a faithful father unto His people. He will never fail to redeem them and tend to them in accordance to all His covenantal promises.

According to the Old Testament Scriptures, one who provided tender care for those who were poor and needy was referred to as “father”. Job spoke of himself, “I was a father to the poor” (Job 29:16). God is called “the father of the fatherless” (Psalm 68:5). Hence, it is not farfetched at all to say that Christ, being God, cares for all His people and is unto them “The everlasting Father”.

CHRIST, THE FATHER OF ETERNITY

Another important fact about the Lord Jesus Christ is that He is the Father of eternity. It reflects the very nature of God, that He is immortal, invisible, eternal, God Almighty, the Creator of all things and source of all life. He has all the attributes of God the Father, “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). He has the very nature of God (Philippians 2:6). As He has said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30) and “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). This reveals the eternality of the Lord Jesus Christ. The angel of the Lord declared to Mary concerning the Holy Child she was about to conceive, “And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:33).

Jesus Christ knows all things from eternity past to eternity future, for He is the Creator of the universe. “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-17). He was with God the Father from eternity (Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1-3) and yet the same God humbled Himself, leaving heaven’s glory to take the form of man and to live among sinful men like us, that we might be called His people (Philippians 2:5-9). It was because of His love for His people that He came to be their eternal Saviour (John 3:16).

In Revelation 1:8, He is also called Alpha and Omega (cf. Revelation 4:8; Isaiah 41:4),

revealing His nature as the unchanging God for ever and ever. Although people and everything keep on changing, the everlasting Father, not being confined by time and space, is unchangeable. He is in control of everything in the world, for He “laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands” (Hebrews 1:10).

Jesus Christ was sent to be our everlasting Father to care for us, despite our spiritual destitution and unworthiness. He who is the eternal God, who is always with the Father, who is from everlasting to everlasting, and the author of everlasting life, came to be with men to bring eternal life. The Lord Jesus Christ is not a dead but an eternally living Saviour (Revelation 1:18). Being the possessor of eternity, Jesus Christ is totally trustworthy, though the whole world may be against us. The everlasting father is the same yesterday and today and for ever (Hebrews 13:8).

CHRIST, THE FATHER OF THE GREAT WORK OF REDEMPTION

Jesus Christ came in fulfilment of what God the Father had promised when our first father Adam failed to obey perfectly the given commandments. Adam was the physical father of the human race. Jesus Christ as the second Adam was a representative of the human race in His obedience to the law in order to merit eternal life for sinners. This was declared by Paul in his writing, “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under law, to redeem them that were under the law...” (Galatians 4:4-5). This is the great work of redemption that Christ had done on the cross in order to obtain

the righteousness of God in Him, that His righteousness might be imputed to those who believe in Him. Paul further explained, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:3-4; cf. 10:3-4). Jesus had perfectly obeyed God, which the first Adam failed to do.

God did not choose an angel to execute what He required of man but appointed His own Son to be the Redeemer of the world by becoming man (Philippians 2:5-9) and living among men (John 1:11, 14). His coming was so determined that the eternal love of God for the human race might be manifested. Christ’s work of redemption has merited the eternal salvation of those who gladly receive and believe in Him. He is our everlasting Redeemer who had willingly and sacrificially offered Himself to be crucified on the cross, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13). What a Redeemer we have! He took the curse on Himself in order to save sinful and wretched men like us.

Now we have the hope and anticipation of the return of the great Saviour – “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). What a wonderful and blessed joy we will have when we see the return of “The everlasting Father” of the great work of our redemption. Amen.

■ *Samson Hutagalung*

THE PRINCE OF PEACE



The title “The Prince of Peace” is the last in the list of five titles of Christ in Isaiah 9:6. What peace it must have brought to God’s people who had been violated and devastated by godless princes that reigned over them, when Isaiah prophesied to them the coming of the Prince of Peace! It was not only to them, but is also to the people of our time who have been marred by the tyranny of Satan and sin, that this title of Christ brings great consolation.

Christ alone is worthy of the title “The Prince of Peace”! The reasons being...

CHRIST IS THE GIVER OF PEACE

At His birth, the angels announced, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). Christ is the only One who can ultimately bring lasting peace on earth. While Christ was ministering to His disciples, He said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27). Observe His absolute claim about peace: “My peace”! Notice also His claim that He is the giver of peace. True peace belongs to Him. He is the source of peace.

To all those who come to Christ in repentance and faith, and subject themselves in obedience to Him as their King, He will give peace. But, there is no peace to the wicked and rebellious ones (Isaiah 48:22; cf. Isaiah 57:21). Only those who follow Christ with yielded hearts and minds shall have the joyous experience of His peace.

Jesus' readiness to dispense His peace to those who trust Him had been seen several times.

Jesus promised peace to a sinful woman who demonstrated faith and devotion to Him – “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke 7:50).

After healing a woman who suffered from an issue of blood for 12 years, Jesus said to her, “Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace” (Luke 8:48; cf. Mark 5:34).

He assured His disciples, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace” (John 16:33).

After His resurrection, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of His disciples and said unto them, “Peace be unto you” (Luke 24:36; cf. John 20:19, 21, 26).

In fact, throughout the New Testament, Christ is declared as the dispenser of divine peace.

In Acts 10:36, Peter says, “The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all).”

2 Thessalonians 3:16 – “Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.”

CHRIST SECURED OUR PEACE WITH GOD

Christ came to this world that by His death He might reconcile to God those who come to Him by faith. Man's sins have alienated him from God. In Colossians 1:20-22, Paul wrote: “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.”

Romans 5:1 tells us: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” When we genuinely believe on Christ, we are declared righteous by God. All rebellion, upheaval and war cease, and our sins are forgiven. Thus we have peace with God. Romans 5:10 also tells us: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death

of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Though once estranged from God, we are now brought by Christ to be at peace with God.

CHRIST SECURED OUR PEACE WITH ONE ANOTHER

When men are reconciled to God, all sorts of divisions which have existed among them also cease, and they come together in peace to worship God. Thus, Christ becomes our peace. This wonderful truth is taught in Ephesians 2:13-17 – “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

Before coming to Christ, they were alienated and separated from one another because of their diverse social and religious backgrounds. They worshipped different gods, practised different religious rites and held different views and feelings. The Jews regarded the Gentiles with hatred, and the Gentiles the Jews with scorn. But now in Christ, they are at peace with each other.

They have the same Saviour. They are both guided by His Spirit. They have the same hope. They belong to the same redeemed family. Reconciliation has taken place not only with God, but also with each other. In Christ, there is peace with God and peace among men.

CHRIST IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Prince of Peace (sar-shalom) is a Hebrew expression which denotes that Christ is a peaceful prince. Christ is truly the King of Peace, as His pre-figure Melchisedec symbolized (Hebrews 7:2). He possesses true, imperishable, indestructible and enduring peace. Nothing can sabotage His peace. While the disciples were frightened by the violent storm and waves, He was seen sleeping in the hinder part of the boat. Amidst the great storm, He was in perfect peace! Behold, the Prince of Peace! He rides the great storm! Then He hushed the tempest with His royal decree: “Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39).

His royalty as the Prince of Peace was on full display when He was surrounded by heartless traitors, cruel mockers, and murderous religious and political leaders. While they taunted Him relentlessly, He exuded a glorious calmness and peace that could not be disturbed. His peace confounded His enemies. The Roman governor, Pilate, was greatly annoyed that Christ was undaunted by all the threatenings

and aggressiveness of His accusers and prosecutors. It was just as Isaiah had foretold about the Prince of Peace: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).

What blessed quietness! What peace! It is that perfect peace which Christ so wondrously manifested in His life and death that He offers to all who trust Him – “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). The peace that Christ, the Prince of Peace, bequeaths is perfect peace. It is the same peace that He Himself enjoys, that kept His soul tranquil in the midst of all His sorrows, and into which He has now entered in His Father’s kingdom above.

The world’s offer of peace is far inferior to that of the Prince of Peace. While the world’s peace is superficial, Christ gives us His peace that is supreme and sublime. The world gives partially while Christ gives perfectly. The world gives temporarily but Christ gives eternally. The Scriptures assure us in Isaiah 26:3 – “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.” Likewise, Philippians 4:7 affirms: “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

CONCLUSION

Is your life very troubled? Come to Jesus in believing prayer and commit yourself to follow Him. He will quieten your heart and keep it in the beauty of His peace. When Christ reigns in our soul, He shall restore and perpetuate His peace. This is a blessing which none but Christ can give, and none but His redeemed people can receive. Others may seek it and perhaps mistake what they have found for the real peace. But until a man’s heart is reconciled to God through Christ, he will remain as far off from true peace as he is from God.

The peace that Christ offers to us is His own – the supreme and surpassing peace which, as a man, He had enjoyed. He had secured it for His people by His death. It was purchased by His atonement, and wrought in our hearts by His Spirit (Galatians 5:22). His offer of peace to us is the most adequate support we need in facing all the difficulties and struggles of this earthly life. His peace will help us to live above all circumstances, just as He did while He was on earth. To those who have received the peace of Christ, they can truly say, “Do not be troubled and do not be afraid.” Is such a peace yours because Jesus Christ is yours? If so, then there is no reason for us to be troubled or to dread the future. When Christ rules our hearts, His peace fills our days.

■ Prabhudas Koshy

BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 16

Sarah Yong

After crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites journeyed for three days but found no water. They came to Marah but could not drink of the bitter water. The LORD heard their cry and made the water sweet. Then He led them to Elim where they encamped by twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees.

Read the chapter from your Bible and fill in the missing words to complete each statement.

1. The Israelites came to the _____ of Sin on the fifteenth day of the _____ month after leaving Egypt.

3. The LORD promised to send bread from _____ which the people were to gather every morning, and _____ would cover the camp at even.

2. They were hungry and _____ against Moses, remembering the _____ and bread they had been given.

4. On the morning of the sixth day, they were to take _____ as much bread because the next day was the _____ in which they were to rest from work to worship God.

5. The people wondered what it was, and so they called this provision _____. It was a small _____ thing like a coriander seed, which tasted like _____ made with honey. (See also Numbers 11:7, 8.)

The LORD provided the Israelites with this bread for forty years until they reached the borders of the Promised Land. Going about daily to gather it, they would have to constantly exercise their faith and also be obedient to the voice of the LORD their God. Likewise, may we as His children obey His Word and trust Him to provide for our every need according to His will and good pleasure.

ANSWERS TO VOLUME 13 ISSUE 5: BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 14-15 (PP.22-23)

Section 1: sea; king; hundred; afraid; Moses; wind; children; morning; Egypt; believed.

Section 2: strength, salvation; father's; war; power; praises; redeemed; reign; pieces; hear; sorrow; melt; fear; still; habitation; Sanctuary.

What Really Matters

THE STORY OF A GIRL WITH A CHANGED PERSPECTIVE OF CHRISTMAS

Written by Ruth Low and illustrated by Linus Kok

Born into the wealthy Jenson family, 10-year-old Jenna had everything she wanted and more. Her father was the senior manager in a reputable company, and her mother was an accomplished pianist who gave singing and piano lessons. Both parents constantly doted on their precious little daughter, their only child, doing all they could to provide her with a happy and comfortable life in which she often received the best gifts any girl would desire. Talented and fortunate, Jenna also had the opportunity to cultivate her talents by attending art and music classes. She loved what she did and was good at it. In her social life, she was well-received and well-liked by friends at school and elsewhere, often playing with them and being invited to their birthday parties. Truly, Jenna had much to enjoy!





Sandy Sanders was Jenna's classmate. Unlike Jenna, Sandy had neither riches nor even a complete family. She had lost her mother a year ago, and was now living alone with her father in a small apartment in a quiet area of town. But Sandy was a pleasant girl contented with the little she had, living on simple meals everyday and not being able to go out to play with other children often, as she had to help her father at home or simply accompany him. Mr Sanders had no intention of remarrying, except to work hard in his construction job to support little Sandy in school. The father-daughter pair was close, especially after the passing of Mrs Sanders. Now that Christmas was coming, Sandy, with her warm, hospitable nature, was planning to invite some of her friends like Jenna and their parents to her humble home for a small Christmas gathering. Her father was happy to have guests over in celebration of the joyous occasion.

Jenna herself was attending many Christmas parties organised by her relatives and parents' friends. Her own family had others come to their home too. Their house was well-decorated with a tall Christmas tree and

beautiful lights. New and clean curtains draped impressively against the long glass windows. Red, green and gold-coloured cushions neatly lined the long comfy sofa. The fireplace was swept and cleaned, and fancifully-wrapped gifts piled on top of one another on the floor near the tree, an alluring sight to any young pair of eyes. Almost everything about that house contributed to the cosy, Christmas atmosphere Jenna loved. Jenna



exchanged and received many presents at the various parties, ate many dinners of roast turkey, and had lots of fun running around, laughing and playing. The day then came for her to go to Sandy's home, but she was not quite excited about this particular gathering, for what was there in a tiny, unattractive home? "Was there anything good to eat? What was there to play with? What Christmas gift would I get?" She thought. Little did she know what was in store for her...

Sandy and her father prepared for their guests a simple meal and small gifts of interestingly-shaped cakes of soap tied around with pretty red bows. Two small families including Jenna's, and a respectable-looking man in his sixties, showed up at the small but quaint apartment. Though the dinner

served was probably not the best, nor the home most beautiful, the presents fascinating, the small group of adults and children actually enjoyed their time together, eating, talking and getting to know one another – except perhaps Jenna who was pouting. To her, it was a waste of time to come to a so-called party that was dull and boring. Sitting fixedly at her seat, she barely smiled or looked up at her young friends who tried asking her to

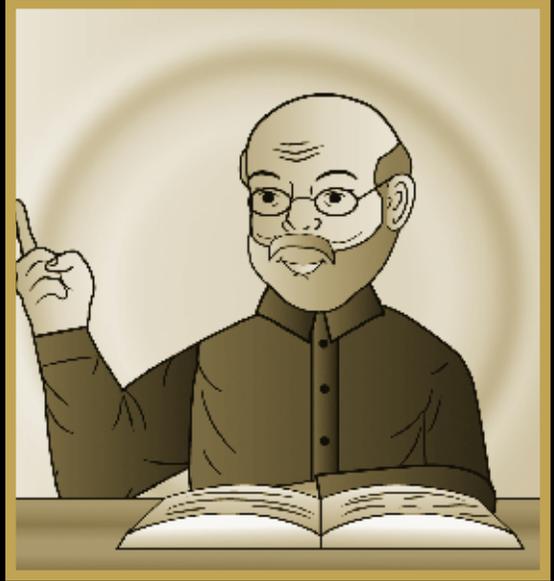


fix a jigsaw puzzle with them, but mindlessly played with the bracelet on her wrist. This she did almost the whole time until one of the adults said something that caught her attention. It was the man in his sixties.

“So, as I was saying, Jesus the Lord is the reason for Christmas. He does not care about Christmas gifts or parties or sumptuous food or brightly-lit Christmas trees. He cares for you.”

What is he talking about? Why does this person, Jesus, not care for presents? Jenna wondered. “It takes faith to believe this,” the man continued, “that He cares enough to save you. He as God was born as man to save you from your sins and hell. He lived that He might die, to pay the punishment

of your sins, which you should rightfully pay yourself.” Jenna gasped at the thought of someone dying for another. “But He is alive again! Jesus the Saviour rose from the dead, having been nailed to the cross, and lives forever, even today. His birth, His death, His life are so that we may all live. When we celebrate Christmas every year, it is to remember His birth into this world.”



“His birth, death and life are so that we may all live?” One of the children asked. “That’s right – live forever in heaven without the pain and consequence of sin.”

“What is sin?” Asked little Jenna softly, who suddenly felt prompted to ask that question. “Oh, little girl, sin is anything that goes against what God commands in the Bible. It can be a bad thought in your mind, a rude word you speak to your parents or something naughty done against your friend. There are so many sins we commit in this world.”



Jenna then recalled some of the disobedient acts she had done at home that week, and felt bad. “You need not feel guilty anymore,” the man seemed to know what she was thinking, “but turn to Jesus and believe on Him who died for you. Your sins

will be washed away by His blood. The Bible says in 1 John 1:7, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The man talked on, with a keen ability to impart and explain more to his hearers the wonderful Gospel of Christ. He was Mr Edwards, Sandy's pastor at church. Pastor Edwards finally ended by saying, "To receive Jesus as your Saviour is to receive the greatest gift ever. Jesus is what really matters in Christmas, dear friends."

As she left the Sanders, oh, how differently Jenna felt about Christmas and about herself! What she had been enjoying was of no true value. She had everything externally, but was lacking so much internally. As she thought about Sandy her friend, and how Sandy was happy with the little she had, Jenna desired to be a more contented and obedient child, especially when she had so much more in life. New toys and clothes no longer mattered to her; she now wanted the greatest gift she could receive this Christmas, and God granted it to her by faith.

Will you not, like Jenna, receive the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ too?



Acts 16:31 – "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."



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