

On the 15th of February 1921, there was a doctor who performed an appendectomy. The doctor performing the surgery was Dr. Evan Kane who over his 37-year medical career had performed nearly 4,000 appendectomies – so this surgery was not at all unusual, except for two things.

First of all, this was the first time that local anesthesia had ever been used in major surgery. Dr. Kane believed that local anesthesia was safer than putting a patient completely to sleep. Most of his colleagues agreed with him in principle, but they wanted to see first if it would actually work.

So, Dr. Kane searched for a volunteer – a patient who would be willing to undergo surgery while under local anesthesia, and as you might imagine, it wasn't easy to find one. Most people were squeamish at the thought of being awake during their own surgery, and others are fearful that the anesthesia might wear off too soon.

Finally, Dr. Kane found a volunteer, and on Tuesday morning, February 15th, the surgery began. The patient was prepped and wheeled into the operating room. A local anesthetic was applied, and as Dr. Kane had done thousands of times before, he cut open the tissues and removed the appendix. The patient had only minor discomfort and recovered quickly – discharged from the hospital two days later.

Dr. Kane had proven his theory. Thanks to the willingness of a brave volunteer, Dr. Kane demonstrated that local anesthesia was an alternative – even a preferred alternative. Now, I said there were two facts that made this surgery unusual. I've told you the first – that being the use of local anesthesia. The second unusual thing was the patient – the patient was none other than Dr. Kane. You see, in order to prove his point, Dr. Kane operated on himself. The doctor became a patient in order to convince the patients to trust the doctor.

In a roundabout way, Jesus did the same for us on Christmas, where He left the glories of heaven and entered into humanity – the Son of God became like us in order to convince us to trust the Son of God. That's what Christmas is all about.

This morning we are going to continue in the book of Isaiah, so if you have your Bible, turn to **Isaiah 9**, and before we begin, I will need to set this up.

If you recall from **Isaiah 7** last week, sometime around 735 B.C., the armies of Syria and Israel were gathered together to come against Judah. So, upon the Lord's command, the prophet Isaiah was sent to the wicked king of Judah – to King Ahaz to give him some assurance that his enemies would not prevail, and to

convince him to trust God despite his dire circumstances. Isaiah told the king to ask God for a sign to prove he could take God at His word, but Ahaz refused because his misplaced hope was in the Assyrian Empire.

Since King Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, God gave him one anyway, and Isaiah gave a prophetic promise to the king and to the house of David that a son would be born of a virgin and his symbolic name would be Immanuel which means *God with us*. If you remember, I explained this was a dual prophecy that would be partially fulfilled in the days of Isaiah, and ultimately and literally fulfilled some 700 years later in the little town of Bethlehem.

Well after that prophecy, Isaiah then warned Israel about the coming invasion by the Assyrian Empire. In judgment, they were coming, and the invasion would be devastating for God's people. The land would be filled with doom and gloom – it would be a time of despair and spiritual darkness, but out of the darkness, Isaiah promised there would come a ray of light, a glimmer of hope, a reason to turn grief into gladness, and with that I want to share what Isaiah promised in **verse 6**.

**For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**

Here the prophet Isaiah gives a birth announcement of the Messiah in advance – some 700 years in advance. He tells us that **a child will be born, a son will be given** and at first glance that phrase seems somewhat repetitive; however, I don't think that is the case. When Isaiah says **a child will be born** – he speaks of the Lord's humanity. Jesus was human – born of real flesh and blood. He felt like us, He hurt like us, He became tired and hungry and thirsty like us, and in all points, He was tempted just like us and yet – He did not sin.

On the other side of the coin, so to speak, Isaiah says **a son will be given** – not only born, but also given for He preexisted. This speaks of the Lord's eternal side – His deity as the Son of God. So, this Son is not only human but He is also divine. This Son will be born of a virgin – the divine will take on flesh – the form of a child, all of which prompts a really good Christmas question – **why a child?**

If you think about it, Jesus could have come as a mighty angel, or not as dramatic, He could have come as a fully grown man like Adam. **Why did Jesus have to come in the flesh as a weak and helpless child?**

When God entered humanity in the Person of Jesus Christ, He wanted to fully identify and sympathize and relate and connect with us. He wanted to experience humanity as we experience it, and for us being born as a child is the starting point. Jesus had to become like us and live among us, yet without sin, in order to convince us to trust Him. It had to be this way – for if not, Jesus could not later stand in the place of sinful man, or said in another way, only a sinless man could die in the place of sinful man. **A child will be born, a son will be given to us.**

Isaiah then tells us that **the government will rest on His shoulders**, and we might be asking – **when did that happen?** If you recall during the Lord's earthly ministry, those who believed that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah expected that He would kick the Romans to the curb and set up His own earthly kingdom right then and there, but that did not happen, and it hasn't happened just yet, but it will. Here Isaiah looks well past the first coming of Jesus to His second coming after the Tribulation period where Jesus will then establish His earthly kingdom. As the King of Kings, Jesus will righteously govern the nations as promised – the weight of the world will be on His shoulders, and His kingdom will have no end.

So, Isaiah delivered the birth announcement of the Messiah, now we come to the name – a name that describes who Jesus is and what He has come to do.

In His name, Jesus will be called **Wonderful Counselor**. Think back to His earthly ministry and the thoughtful and penetrating insight and guidance He gave. For example, Jesus was the Wonderful Counselor to the lonely and hopeless woman at the well in Samaria. He was the Wonderful Counselor to the woman caught in the very act of adultery, and He was the Wonderful Counselor to the rich young ruler struggling with self-righteousness. Jesus loved to step into our chaos, He gave wonderful counsel – sometimes counsel beyond our comprehension, but He always pointed to truth and to life.

Now, when I think of a counselor, I am also reminded of His legal role where Jesus serves as our Advocate – something we talked about in **1 John**. Because God's justice must be satisfied – sin must be punished, Jesus serves our counselor, our defense attorney who pleads our case before the Judge, but not only that – He absorbs the wrath of God that was legally meant for us.

Isaiah also says He is the **Mighty God**. Not only does Jesus provide wonderful counsel to us, but because He is the Mighty God, He also has the power to bring order to our chaos. Jesus is the **Mighty God**, which reminds me of something we all need to hear over and over again, and it is this – He is God and we are not.

In the movie “Rudy,” there is a scene where the young man despairs of ever making the Notre Dame football team. He is too small, too slow, too weak, and in every way fails to meet the challenge. Totally discouraged, he goes to a priest and asks if he will ever make the team. The priest smiles and says that in 35 years, he has learned only two things for certain: “First, there is a God, and second, I’m not Him.”

In our adult Sunday School class, we have been talking about our chief purpose to bring praise and honor and glory to God. Of course, God is worthy of it all, and our worship is a natural response to who He is and what He has done, but the question was asked – *Is our worship more for Him or is it more for us?* I suspect there are several ways we might answer that, but I must say that when we worship Him, we are reminded that God is in heaven and we are not Him, and in many respects that is very comforting and freeing. Instead of trying to run our own lives and master our own little worlds – and yes, we try – we can surrender it all to Him for He is the **Mighty God** and He has the power to accomplish His plans – plans that even include you and me.

Next, Isaiah calls Him the **Everlasting Father**, or a better translation would be the “*Father of eternity.*” Now, let me say this does not mean that Jesus is the Father – the First Person in the Trinity. The Son is not the Father – for each Person in the Trinity is distinct. In this context, the word **Father** means “*source*” or “*originator.*” For example, Satan is the “*father*” or the source of lies. So, in regards to Jesus, He is the source of eternal life, and to possess and to experience eternal life, all who believe may freely receive it from Him – and Him alone. The Apostle Paul, when speaking of Jesus, tells us,

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

Jesus is the Father of eternity – the source – the only source of eternal life.

Lastly, Isaiah calls Jesus the **Prince of Peace** – a phrase that literally means “*the prince who’s coming brings peace.*” Now, we all desire peace, *but what is it and did Jesus bring it?* I think many in this world would define *peace* as being a sense of calmness and contentment that one might feel when everything seems to be going their way, and as long as everything seems to be going their way, there is peace – but when it’s not – then poof – peace is gone. *Is that the peace that Jesus brings – a fleeting peace that only comes from a trouble-free life?* I don’t think so, in fact, if you consider the Lord’s birth, His life, His death, and His resurrection,

there wasn't, and there still isn't peace as the world might define it. **So, what kind of peace did Jesus bring?**

The Bible is clear – that for all of us, in our default human condition, we are naturally at odds with God – more accurately we are hostile against Him. We are born with a sin nature that attempts to rule over us and causes us to rebel against God – and that goes for all of us. Everyone one of us has sinned against God, and as a consequence, our sin has separated us *from* Him and, therefore, there is no peace *with* Him. And if that's not bad enough, there is punishment for our sin – death and the eternal separation from God – the everlasting absence of peace.

Our greatest need is to have peace restored with God, and God desires peace with us, but we cannot reach that condition of peace on our own – we need a “peace offering” and Jesus is that peace offering for us – a sacrifice for sin on our behalf. Jesus is the peace offering, the Lamb of God, lying in a feeding trough, wrapped in swaddling cloth – sent by God in the flesh, to live among us, and to pay for the sins of the world by later going to the cross, so that, peace with God can be restored. Jesus is the **Prince of Peace**.

Jesus was named some 700 years before He was born and given to us, and His name describes who He is and what He has come to do for you and me, even now.

Is Jesus your Wonderful Counselor? If you need guidance, do you go to Him first? How about before talking to others, before jumping on the web, how about spend some time in His Word. How about first learning what He has to say. **Is Jesus your Mighty God?** He is God and you are not, and therefore, the heavy burdens you carry and the battles you fight can be laid before Him. He is mighty and powerful, and He can do what you cannot. **Is Jesus your Eternal Father?** When trouble comes on this side of heaven – and it will, can you look forward to the other side of heaven – to your eternal inheritance which Jesus has prepared for you? And lastly, is Jesus your **Prince of Peace?** Do you have confidence that everything is right between you and God even though your circumstances may seem wrong? Do you have peace knowing that your sins are completely forgiven and that you are a beloved child of God?

You see, there is no need to wait for His return. You can experience Jesus right now.

Source Material:

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