

Tremendous Titles of a Tremendous Saviour

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[0 : 00] I want to turn back to that chapter we read. It's a well-known chapter where there is a prophecy about the coming and the birth of the Messiah, Jesus.

It's in chapter 9 of Isaiah, page 692. And I want us to look for a moment at verse 6, the well-known words in which Jesus is promised.

Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, for to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

And it's the second part of that verse I want us to look at this morning. And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

I hope that because we have a children's talk in the morning, that doesn't mean that the children stop listening when it comes on to the service.

[1 : 14] And I hope that today there will be enough in what I have to say this morning about Jesus and his names, and the names that are given to us here in this verse, for us to be able to learn some, all ages, not just the older ones.

Sermons are not just for older people, they're for everyone. And I'm amazed, it always amazes me, at how much children pick up and discern and understand of what is going, sometimes the most difficult things.

There's always something in it for them. So let me begin by saying that it's quite wrong to think that there were no Christians in the Old Testament. Some people think there were no Christians in the Old Testament.

That's quite wrong. Not only were there Christians in the Old Testament, but they believed in the same Jesus as you and I believe in and trust in today, I hope.

The only difference was that he hadn't come. They believed in the Messiah that was still to come, that was promised. They believed in the promise of a Messiah. And they didn't know what exactly would happen and when exactly he would be born.

[2 : 25] But to say that they didn't know a lot is not to say that they didn't know anything at all. They knew a lot. And they knew because God spoke to them and promised them.

And even although his promises were hidden, they were still promises from which they could derive a great deal of information.

Let me put it this for the sake of the children. Sometimes somebody gives you a present, a birthday present. And they say to you, don't open it until your birthday. It's the most annoying thing, isn't it? Especially when it's about two or three weeks before your birthday.

And they give you this package. Your mum and dad or whoever will give you this present. It's wrapped in paper. And they'll say, there you are. Don't open it. Now, I'll tell you, the one thing you want to do is to open it, isn't it? As soon as they say, don't open it, until you're looking at it and you're wondering what it is.

And you lift it up and you try feeling it in the package. If there's no box around it, you're trying to see what shape it is, how heavy it is, how big it is. And you're trying to guess what it is.

[3 : 25] And you can guess a lot, even from the shape and the package and the size. And even although you don't open it. Well, that's the way it was in the Old Testament. Because God said to his people, Israel, I am going to give you the greatest gift of all.

But it's not to be opened until the day I say. And yet, God gave his people enough information for them to look at it and for them to handle it and for them to try to work out from what God said, what kind of person this Messiah, remember Messiah is another name for Jesus, what kind of Messiah this person was going to be.

And here's one of the passages which gives us a clue, more than a clue, about what kind of person this Messiah would be. And it's amazing that we today, even knowing who Jesus was and what he was and what he did for us by dying on the cross, are still able to come back to this passage and we're still able to grow and to learn and to find out more and more information about this great person that Jesus, that God sent into the world, the second person of the Godhead who became a man for us.

And I want us to try and to look together this morning as we come to focus our attention on Jesus, to do so by looking at the four titles that are given to us here in this verse 700 years before Jesus was born.

Four titles. And we're going to do so by rearranging them ever so slightly. And because I'm rearranging them, but I'm not going to change their meaning.

[5 : 17] I'm going to put them in a different form whilst not taking away the meaning of the words at all. Because sometimes when we just slightly rearrange them and give them just a slightly different perspective, we're able to learn something a little bit more.

The first of these, there are four titles. First of all, he is called Wonderful Counselor. I'm going to change that to Wonder Counselor.

And I'll tell you why in a few moments' time. Wonder Counselor. And I wonder if the young people can learn these four titles because these are titles for Jesus. Wonder Counselor.

Then, the next of them, the second of them, it's given as Mighty God, but I'm going to change it to Hero God. Hero God. Because the word for Mighty is exactly the same word as the word for Hero. It can equally mean Hero as it can mean Mighty. So, we've got two already. One of them is Wonder Counselor. And the second is Hero God. The third of them is, we have it here as Everlasting Father, but I'm going to say Father Forever.

[6 : 31] Father Forever. And the fourth of these titles is given here as the Prince of Peace, which I'm going to change ever so slightly to Peace Prince.

So, we've got four already. We've got Wonder Counselor. We've got Hero God. We've got Father Forever. And we've got Peace Prince.

I wonder how many of the younger people can learn these. It's very easy, I hope, especially if you've got a good memory. Wonder Counselor. Hero God. Father Forever.

and Peace Prince. Let's look at what these all mean in turn. Beginning with the first one, which of course is Wonder Counselor.

There are two words there. Both of those describe something of Jesus who was to come. The first of these words is Wonder. Now, why did I make a difference between the word Wonder and Wonderful that is a difference?

[7 : 37] For example, if you have a, you can have a wonderful football player. There are many of them. Skilled, able to play football in a wonderful way.

But there's a difference between saying that and saying he's a wonder of a football. Somebody who's a wonder is somebody who is absolutely unique.

He stands on his own. Let's take, for example, a musician. Somebody who's a pianist. You can get a wonderful pianist. Somebody who plays a piano. But you can also get a wonder of a pianist.

Somebody who is absolutely unique and stands on their own. There's nobody like this person. And that's the difference between wonderful and wonder.

Because whilst there might be many wonderful counselors in the world, people who are wise, for example, there were people like Solomon in the Old Testament who was so wise that everybody was amazed at what he was able to say.

[8 : 45] But Jesus stood on his own. He was completely apart from everyone. There was no one like Jesus. Absolutely nobody.

If you look at the whole of the history of the world, you'll never find anyone like Jesus Christ was. And that means he is a wonder. He's somebody you can't compare him to anybody in the world before or after him.

He is a wonder. There's another reason why I'm choosing the word wonder. Because it's a word that's used elsewhere in the Bible to describe particularly where God does something special.

For example, in Psalm 78, we sang it just now. You probably didn't notice this word occurring when we sang it. If you look at verse 12, you'll find that the following, let me read it for you, is describing how God set his people free from Egypt and he brought them through the Red Sea.

And here's what it says, in the sight of their fathers, he performed wonders. Now that doesn't just mean unusually great things. It means things which only he could have done as God.

[10:04] That word wonder, it describes the kind of work that only God is able to do. Only God was able to part the Red Sea.

Only God was able to send hail. Only God was able to do the amazing things by which he was able to take his people out of Egypt and into the promised land.

That's why he chooses a special word to describe what he did. Now there's something else as well. If you go to the story of Samson and Judges, you'll find that word and it's used in a slightly different way.

In verse 18, you remember how Samson's birth was announced by an angel to his parents before he was conceived. And at one point, the parents asked the angel, what is your name?

This is the angel's reply. Why do you ask my name seeing it is wonderful? Same word again. What did he mean by that?

[11:05] He meant that his name reflected the God who he represented. And many people believe, of course, that this angel was none other than the Lord himself.

wonderful. So God is actually announcing to the parents of Samuel that this is my name. My name is wonder or wonderful. And so when we read that Jesus will be wonder counselor, this is a name which clearly spells out that Jesus, Messiah, the Son of God will be nothing less than God himself in the flesh.

but there's another word that's tied to this word wonder and that is counselor. Counselor is a person who speaks. A counselor is someone who helps you by telling you things that you need to know that will help you to make the right kind of decision.

Someone who will teach you and guide you. People in the Old Testament, for example, the kings in the Old Testament, they needed even though they were the rulers and they were the kings, they needed other people to give them advice.

Counselors who you called and said, I've got a difficult problem here, will you please tell me what I should do? And these advisors would come in and they would guide him and they would tell him what he should do.

[12:25] In other words, they were men who spoke and who did their job by speaking and their advice could change the course of history. Now when it comes to Jesus, do you remember what they said about the teaching of Jesus?

Not just this is an interesting man, not just we've really yet to hear someone who's as fluent and who's as good a preacher as this man.

You know what they said? Nobody has spoken like this man. There's another part when we read that they were astonished touched at his teaching.

In other words, as they listened to his teaching, you know what happened? Their lives were changed. As they listened to his teaching, they found that his teaching was so powerful people.

That it got right through to who they were. It told the truth about who they were. They had never heard anything like this. And as they sat and listened to them, they knew that God was speaking to them.

[13:36] That this man was no ordinary man, that there was an authority about this man which rocked them to the very core. They were astonished. They went to home exhausted.

They went home gobsmacked. They went home silenced. They couldn't even speak because they knew that they had met their match. They could not answer. Some of them went deliberately to deceive him.

You remember? Some of them, they set out deliberately to deceive him and they were silenced. Because it didn't matter who you were. Jesus had an answer. And it wasn't just cleverness on his part.

It wasn't just smartness. They were made to see that this was none other than the Son of God himself. Have you listened to him? Do you listen to him?

Do you come to him? Who is your counsellor? Who is your lifestyle coach? Remember Cherie Blair had a lifestyle coach?

[14:31] He kind of set the trend for others perhaps to employ people that they knew who could give them a wee bit of advice here and there asked how to make the best of themselves.

What kind of clothes to wear? What kind of hairstyle to have? What kind of people to be seen amongst? Is that how you think you're going to get the best out of life?

Surely the very very best lifestyle coach is the Son of God himself. Surely only he can tell me the truth about myself and maybe that's the reason why not many people go to him as their lifestyle coach.

Because the first thing he's going to tell you is you need to be saved. You need my blood. You need to be renewed and raised to newness of life. But I'll tell you this, when you are, you have never, ever started living life like the kind of life that I can give you.

I hope today that Jesus is your lifestyle coach, your wonder counselor. That's the first of these titles for Jesus.

[15 : 45] The next of them is, remember, hero God. Because this word might can also be translated into hero. In actual fact, that's what it means.

It's a hero. A hero. And yet, it's tied up with this word God. This is the only place where you ever find this title for God.

Hero God. You can translate it hero of a God. Or you can translate it God of a hero. It doesn't really matter.

The idea is of someone who's going to be born one day into the world, born of a woman, and who's going to be born as a human being who is going to be hero God.

Now, I'm not surprised that the people in the Old Testament perhaps couldn't understand fully what that means. It takes us all our time to understand what the incarnation means for God to become a man.

[16 : 49] I challenge anyone to tell me exactly what that means with full understanding. Some of us have been studying the Bible for years. Some of the older gentlemen here, they won't be able to tell you fully what that means.

And yet, that's the truth of the gospel. Because the gospel is incomprehensible. It is inexplicable. It's absolutely marvelous that God, that God himself, who knows the end from the beginning, everlasting to everlasting, the creator of the universe in all its vastness and glory, should condescend to come and to lie in his mother's arms, dependent on his mother's milk.

Now, a hero is not just somebody who is skilled. Many heroes are skilled. A hero is not just somebody who is strong, but a hero is somebody who is prepared to go perhaps where no one else is prepared to go.

A hero is someone who in a battle is prepared to risk his life and even lay down his life. There are many brave people in armies today. Last Sunday was remembrance Sunday, a very important occasion, and I hope one which is important in all our calendars.

Never lose sight, never forget that the benefits, the life we live today is a life that was purchased for us by the death. There were other people, there were people 60, 70 years ago who were prepared to die so that we could have the things we enjoy today.

[18 : 30] Now, that to me is a hero, a person, who dies and who's prepared to die and who's prepared to lay down his life for the sake of others.

And of course, you know where this is going, don't you? The greatest hero of all was the one who came into the world and was who came in with the express purpose of dying. I guess that there are not many heroes in the world who actually know they're going to die.

They're prepared to die, but they hope that by some way that they'll manage to escape. Well, Jesus came into the world to die. There was no other way. There was no other way to save us from our sins, but by becoming a sacrifice for our sins and by going to the cross because of his love for his people.

With all the agony and the shame and all the torture and the misery and the pain which the cross included, he was prepared to do that as our hero and as our God.

The third title is Father Forever. Father Forever. Father.

[19 : 58] Not the Father, by the way. Perhaps you'll read to that and you'll think, well, this is talking about the Father, God, the Father, as opposed to the Son and the Holy Spirit.

That's not what it's talking about. It's talking about Messiah. It's talking about Jesus. And this is the promise that to those who know him, that relationship is so precious.

It is like the relationship between a good father and his children. I know that there are people whose experience of a father has not been a good one. And sometimes it's difficult for us to come to the

Bible that talks about the father.

It's difficult for such a person to read Luke chapter 15 for example about the prodigal son and to think about the father waiting for the son returning and to throw his arms around him and say and to forgive him and accept him back into his family.

Some people find great difficulty if their experience has been one of abuse. But nevertheless we have to believe that God's word is powerful and God's word does set us right.

[21 : 05] And where our thinking has gone wrong and where our experiences have been bad ones, God's word is able to heal those experiences. And here we're presented with an absolutely unique relationship in which God the son is to his people like a father carefully guarding them and keeping them and working out the best for them and doing whatever is necessary for their well-being.

That is our assurance in Jesus Christ and never let's forget that, that we are united. If we're Christians today, we belong to him, we are united with Jesus who acts always for our good. Sometimes it doesn't seem that way. Sometimes it goes against our expectations and yet we can lay hold on this one great truth that nothing, nothing, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

You know that love, the love of a father. And I'm including the love of a mother by the way. I think a parent's love is utterly unique. And it sometimes only comes to the surface in the most extraordinary situations and sometimes in the most tragic situations.

I couldn't help noticing this week a photograph of Michael Hamilton. You see it in the Times?

[22 : 30] I don't know what paper you get. Front page of the Times, you know who Michael Hamilton is? his daughter was kidnapped 15 years ago. She was only 15 years of age and now they found her body down in Margate.

And of course he came to where the suspected perpetrator, the murderer, we don't know of course for sure, but suspected. And he came and the paper got a photograph of his face.

I don't think I'll ever forget that face. I had to stand and watch it because in that face there was utter anguish.

The anguish of a father who's lost his daughter. His daughter was murdered. Most of us will never ever understand, hopefully never understand what that is.

But one thing, it's an anguish that's produced by a unique love. love. And that's that kind of love which the father has, which the son has here as a father forever.

[23 : 44] Father forever. Isn't it great to be reminded in these words of the intensity of that love?

We need to be reminded, we need to come to church to be reminded to open up the Bible and to be reminded of who we are with relation to the Lord, what he thinks of us because the devil will creep in and say, you think that God loves you?

You've got to be joking. Look at the way you've lived your life over the past few days. Look at what you've done. Look at the extent to which you've fallen. But I'll tell you, if you're in Christ today, that's the unchanging truth because Jesus is a father forever.

Nothing, nothing can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. And the last of those, and the last of those titles is Peace Prince.

Peace Prince. What way is Messiah a prince? In that he is the son of princes, the son of the king, or the son of the queen. And here is the son of God, God the son, coming into the world, entering into our world to procure and to purchase our peace.

[25 : 04] He is our peace. Now what kind of peace is the Bible talking about here? Because many people get confused, especially at this time of year, where in the run up to Christmas, there are all these hopes and dreams of a peaceful world.

But it's no more than wishful thinking, is it? It's all so empty, isn't it? It's all just wishful thinking. And that's because the world simply doesn't understand why it was that Jesus came into the world to give us peace with God.

Because the root of all the world's problems today, all the cruelty and the deceit and the jealousy and the warfare that exists in me, you thought I was going to say in Iraq or in Darfur, but it exists in you, the root of it all exists in us because we're not right with God, because we need to be made right with God.

And that's what God, that's what Jesus came into the world to bring about, peace with God. And whatever you have in this life, whatever you're dreaming of in the days that lie ahead and aspiring to, whatever your objectives and goals are, if you don't have peace with God, you've got nothing,

absolutely nothing.

You can work as hard as you like, you can try as hard as you like, you can be as clever as you like, or as you want to be, you can be as famous as you want to be. If you don't have peace with God, you don't have peace with God.

[26 : 39] and you won't have until you discover one thing, and that is what Jesus came to do by giving his life at Calvary, and what it was that the cross achieved for sinners, for men and women who are broken, and lost, and hopeless, and helpless, and bankrupt.

Have you discovered how bankrupt your life is when it comes to God? Well, come to Jesus, and discover what Paul discovered.

Do you know what he said? And Paul was the most righteous, Saul of Tarsus as he was then, was the most righteous, hard-working, diligent, religious man in all the world, and he said he came to the point where he threw the whole thing out.

That was the day when he met the Son of God for himself. That's what we all need to do. We need to meet the Son of God for ourselves. And then Paul was able to say, therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you have that peace this morning, you have everything. You have new life, you have a new perspective, you have a promise of everlasting life, where one day Jesus will come for his people, and we shall forever be with the Lord.

[28 : 19] And where we have that promise that whoever is against us, if God is for us, who can be against us? We have that promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

What are the three names, four names? Wonder Counselor, Hero God, Father Forever, and Peace Prince.

I can think of no better way to spend a Sunday than to just reflect and to think of these four tremendous titles of a tremendous Savior.

Let's pray. Father, bless to us your word, and deal personally with us through it, we pray.

For we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.