

The Most Important Birth Ever

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[0 : 00] A very well-known verse, verse 6, it's one that's often quoted, one that's often preached from, Isaiah 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 his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Well, as we know, Isaiah had a way of grabbing people's attention, because quite often when you come to his writings, you find him going, Hi, ho, don't find really the other writers doing that, because if you want to grab somebody's attention, you will often shout at them or shout to them, and you often give a hi across the street to somebody, hi there, well that's kind of what Isaiah was doing, because you will find that you'll have these kind of shouts to grab our attention.

And even when he comes here, as he announces this, it's really quite dramatic, because he is saying to us, A child has been born, and not just any child, and not just to anybody, but a child has been born to us.

And that's quite an amazing statement. A child has been born to us. And it's like Isaiah is making an announcement. You know, sometimes when, maybe when a royal child has been born, people are waiting outside the hospital, and then eventually somebody will come out, maybe the father will come out, and he will eventually make a statement, and he'll tell about the baby that's been born. Well, it's almost like Isaiah is doing that. You can almost see, well, they wouldn't have been born in a hospital then, but it's like, as if you're putting it into today's thinking, that here's Isaiah on the hospital steps, and he's making the announcement, a baby has just been born to us, a son.

[2 : 13] But the thing is, that when Isaiah said this, it was hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years, before Jesus Christ was actually born.

And he's making this declaration, as if Jesus had just been born just now. And that is part of the amazing, the amazing wonder of the Bible.

Now, as we know, the birth of a baby is a very special event. And it's normally a very wonderful thing for a family. We know, and I'm sure there are some in, and I know there are some in here who know, the pain that can sometimes happen when things don't go the way that's expected, and it can become a very painful moment.

But in the normal, in the ordinary course of life, it is a very joyous occasion. It's a great, great experience. And very often when a baby is born, people will wonder, well, I wonder how he will turn out, I wonder how she will turn out, I wonder what they'll do in life.

And some babies have been born who have had a huge influence in this world, sometimes for good, sometimes for bad. You've got to remember that Hitler's mother would have looked on this little baby and said to herself, I wonder what he will do.

[3 : 38] And when you think of the devastation, the death, the bloodshed, the havoc, so sometimes little babies turn out to be monsters. But many turn out to do great things in this world.

Well, no baby that was ever born into this world, ever, that had the greatest influence and the greatest impact, a greater impact than the baby that is spoken about here.

And as we said, it's amazing that this baby is born, this baby, this son, is born to us, to you, to me. Now that's incredible.

People say, you know, the Bible's not personal. Well, you know, I can't think of anything more personal than that. The Lord is saying, in his word, it's to you, it's to me.

Can't get more personal than that. Now, as we know, at this time of year, it's a time of gifts, time of presents. Maybe some of the young people, you've already got your list.

[4 : 40] Maybe your list is way, way too long. I remember when Marie was wee, she used to sit with a catalogue, and she'd be turning around, I want that and that and that, and I would be singing your

dreams, you know.

But that's what young people do. They want this and that and the next thing. But it's a time, it's a great time, and you're looking, you're hoping that you'll get this and you'll get that, at Christmas time.

And some people, for presents, they give what we would term an experience. They'll give somebody something that they can do, that they can go to, an event.

That they might say, well, I got your tickets to go to such and such a thing. Or I got your tickets to go to such and such a place. Quite a lot of people do that. They buy something for somebody so that it works out as an experience for them.

And I remember the very first time when we were in Muir of Ford, we were given, as a family, we got two nights in Dunblane Hydro.

[5 : 45] And I'd never witnessed it since we were married. We'd never stayed in a hotel. And I felt we were going to the roots. I thought it was wonderful. But it was an experience that I never forgot.

That was way, way back, long time back. But that was an experience. And the wonderful thing about this gift of Jesus is that he is a gift you get and an experience that you have.

Now, the experiences, as I said, these two nights. That was years and years and years ago. And all I have is a memory of it. It was great at the time. Great memories.

But Jesus is a gift that you receive forever and an experience that you have all the time.

And that experience becomes newer and more wonderful. It isn't just an experience you have once and then that's it. Because Jesus comes to live with you and in you through the Holy Spirit so that you're able to meet with him and fellowship with him and enjoy him so that he becomes a living life experience in your own soul.

[7 : 03] So, as I say, this is the most important baby that was ever born into this world. And it's amazing. We shouldn't be amazed, but the Bible is so amazing because we read in Micah how when you go through the Bible and pick up the different parts of it, you find how when you put it all together that God has told us exactly how it's going to be.

And in Micah, he tells us where the baby's going to be born, where this little place, Bethlehem, Ephrata. This is going to be the very place where Jesus Christ is born into this world.

And we've always got to remember that God's word is not like our word. We have a tendency to tend to think that God's word is kind of like our word.

And our word can often be open to debate and questioning. And sometimes we say something and people say, ah, I don't think that's right. And sometimes what we say isn't right.

So, people can debate what we say and question what we say. Well, we can't with this word. This word is authoritative. This word is absolutely true.

[8 : 18] Every word of it is true. Every promise of the Lord will be fulfilled. Every threat of the Lord will be fulfilled. God tells us that the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

And that means all of us. But he also tells us that he has sent his son into the world that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. So, this word is absolutely true. So, we're told here, for to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

And if we go to the New Testament and I think last year we were looking at the birth of Jesus and the announcement of that birth. Remember how they sang. The angels made the great declaration. unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour who is Christ the Lord. It's become very specific.

[9 : 19] Unto you. Again, remember the language. Here we have it. To us a child is born. The announcement in Luke was to you a child is born. It's amazing.

And so, let's not turn away from how personal this is. How direct it is to us. Because it's too easy to turn away. Now, it doesn't matter how old you are or how young you are in here today.

This is what the Lord is saying. To you, to you, this child has been born. This saviour has been born. And that means that you have to stop and you say to yourself, to me, yes.

What does a saviour do? A saviour saves. And do you know something? It's one thing you can't. Do for yourself. There's lots of specialist people in this world that do loads of things.

For instance, you have your joiners and your brickies and your sparkies and your plumbers and all the different tradesmen. And it's great that you have people who specialise in these things.

[10 : 27] And so that if something goes wrong with your wiring or something you're able to call a spark, if something goes wrong with your plumbing system you can call in a plumber. If your car conks out you can get a mechanic.

If you fall ill you can get a doctor. There's all these people who are specialised in doing different things for us. But you know, as long as we're able to do things for ourselves, that's what we want to do.

We're independent. We like to do things for ourselves. But you know, here's one thing. the greatest, most powerful, strongest, cleverest person in the whole world can't do for themselves.

They can't save themselves. Not one person. Not the person with the greatest IQ. Not the person with the greatest strength. Not the person with the biggest bank account.

Nobody, nobody, nobody in the whole wide world can save themselves. And there's no point in even trying. you can't make yourself right with God.

[11 : 31] That's why Jesus came. That's why God says, I'm sending my son into this world so that you can be made right with me. That's wonderful.

And that's what the whole gospel is about. That Jesus Christ, that's what he is. He's the saviour who has come to save. Now, we know that it's a great mystery and this is what we can't understand. Is how the second person in the Godhead, remember there's three persons, there's Father, Son, Holy Spirit, how the second person in the Godhead, who has always been, who was involved in the creation of this world, the sun, the moon, the stars, of everything, nothing was made without him, and yet he took human nature, he came into this world to become one just like us, born, so that he has two natures in the one person.

And you might say to yourself, you know, I can't get my head around that. Well, let me tell you something, you're not alone. I don't think there's anybody in here who can get their head around that.

We know it, we believe it, we accept it, but our full understanding of it, we cannot because the Bible tells us it's actually a mystery.

[12 : 59] That's what it says, great is the mystery of godliness, Christ revealed or manifested or come to us in the flesh. But this is what has happened and it's true.

So now we see something about him, and we're going to run through this very quickly. Unto us a child is born, unto a son is given, and the government shall be up on a shoulder. Well, I'll tell you one thing, I would not like to be in government, and we're very glad that there are people who are up for that work.

But I can't even begin to imagine the pressure that must be on, for instance, the Prime Minister, and those who are in Cabinet. There's huge decisions to be made for everybody, and you wonder how they're going all the time, they seem to see before the election, they seem to be on the go night and day.

And then as soon as the election is over, they're straight into the world. It's a huge amount of work, a huge responsibility. But Jesus, it's not just the government at Westminster, or the government in Holyrood, or not local government here.

It's a government of the whole world. we use the expression, he's got the whole world in his hand. Well, the Bible tells us here he's got the whole world on his shoulders. The government of the whole world, but particularly the government of his church, of his people, he has on his own shoulders.

[14 : 34] And this is one of the wonderful things, that God, as he is governing, the Lord, as he is governing, he's working everything for your good.

That's what he does. You know, the MPs, MSPs, they have what we would term surgeries, or they have their offices where you can go, and at particular times you can go and meet with them.

If you had a really big problem, you could ask, you could say, could I meet with you, because I need to tell you, I need to see, see what you can do. Now the thing is, you have only, there's only limited times that you can meet with them, because they won't be here all the time, they're away a lot of the time, but here is the one whose government, the government on the shoulder, and you can meet with them any time, and you can pour out your heart, and you can go to them any time and say, Lord, I'm in trouble.

I don't know what to do. Lord, I'm not coping. Everything has got on top of me. I feel utterly weighed down. Lord, my life isn't working the way, Lord, there was a day when I felt in control of my life.

I no longer do. What do I do? Well, he is the one who will listen to you all the time. And you know what he has promised?

[16:05] That for you, who trust in him, that he's going to work everything for good. That doesn't mean that everything is going to be good in your life all the time, but that he's going to work it ultimately so that at the end, it's going to be for your good.

And that's the most amazing thing. And we're told then that his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor. Now, it's actually one word, wonder.

wonder. This is a word which is, we could almost say it's incomprehensible to us. It's beyond our understanding.

It's like, it's the same word that when the angel of the covenant who was the Lord Jesus Christ, when he appeared to Manoah announcing the birth of Samson. And Manoah asked, what's your name?

And he said, why do you ask my name? It is secret. My name is wonder. It's this, it's awesome, it is beyond what we can understand.

[17:08] Well, that's who this baby is. And he's this awesome, most wonderful counselor. Now, the thing about Jesus is that everything about him was wonderful.

His birth was wonderful. The angel sang in heaven announcing his birth. His life was wonderful. If you followed Jesus around for the three years in his public ministry, and you saw all the healing, and listened to all the teaching, even his critics said, nobody has ever taught like this.

And everybody was amazed at what he said and what he did, even raised the dead. And his death was wonderful. We know what it achieved, but even when he died, do you remember, midday, the land was plunged into darkness.

The rocks split, the earth trembled, the graves opened. It was like the very sun was hiding its face from what was happening. His burial was amazing, was wonderful because he was only in the tomb for three days, and then he rose.

On the third day, he rose. Death couldn't hold him, the grave couldn't hold him, and he ascended up into glory. Everything was wonderful. And you know, the wonderful thing is this, that when we have Jesus as our Savior, the wonder of all that becomes ours.

[18:41] Death won't hold us, the grave won't hold us, we'll go into it, but it won't hold us, and we will rise to be with him forever and ever. But we see that he's a counselor.

Now, again, your prime minister have lots of them, and all these people, they have advisors, they have counselors, people who are advising them and telling them, you should do this, you should do that.

People often go to counselors at particular times, maybe to get help. Well, here is the great counselor, and he always knows what is right. He knows the way to go.

He says, this is the way, walk in it. And he tells us what he wants us to do. He says, if you trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding, he says, and you acknowledge me in all your ways, I will direct your paths.

Isn't that wonderful? Every day, the Lord will be a light to our path, and a lamp to show us the way to go. So, this is the kind of person, he's this wonderful counselor.

[19:52] So, Jesus knows exactly what you need, what you want today. And then he's called the mighty God, the God who is all-powerful.

There's a lot of powerful things in this world, a lot of loads of powerful things. I'm always amazed when you see, for instance, a plane, a jet, full of people, full of heavy baggage, and you hear these great engines roar, power, and then it just runs along and pulls up into the sky, and you say, whoa, what power in these engines.

But then you go and you might see the huge mushroom of the, like the bomb, the atomic bomb, and there's a nuclear bomb, and you say, whoa, the impact from that power would be just frightening. Well, these powers are nothing in comparison to the power of this mighty God. He's called omnipotent, which means all power belongs to him.

All power. Take all the powers of this world. Think about it. It would take a long time to try and work out all the different forces and powers of this world. Harness them all together, and he's greater than all that.

[21:11] All power is his. You remember that he just by speaking the word. He brought this blazing sun into being. The moon, all the stars, this great universe.

He brought this world into being. You tell me that's not power? That's great. There's no power that you can compare to that power. And that is our God.

He, this is the one who is for us. This is the one who is to you. This is the one who was born to you and for you. And he wants us to come to him and to pray to him.

Sometimes, I'll say this to the young folk, we've said this before, but it always helps. You sometimes say to yourself, you know, I don't know what to pray for.

Remember the hand? We've said it before. People say, I can't remember, what all do I pray for?

Well, when you look at your hand, your thumb, your thumb is closest to you.

[22 : 18] And that should remind you that you should pray for your family, for your mum, your dad, your uncles, your aunties, your grannies, your grandpas, your brothers, your sisters, your friends.

Pray for them. Wonderful thing to pray for them. Then the next finger is, we're told, that would be your pointing finger, we're going to point to things. Teachers would be pointing to the board.

So, that reminds us to pray for those who teach you. That would be your Sunday school teachers, and your teachers in school, and your ministers, all the people who teach you.

Remember to pray for them. Then the next finger is the biggest finger. And that reminds us to pray for all those who are over us, those who have authority.

That means we pray for the Queen, we're told to, we're to pray for the Prime Minister, we're told to, we're to pray for those in Westminster, in Holyrood, here in the local council, we pray for them.

[23 : 27] We pray for our police, we pray for all those who have authority over us. Then we're told that the next finger, well so I'm told, is the weakest finger. People will say that if they're playing the piano, that fourth one here is the weakest.

So that reminds us to pray for those who are weak, those who are in hospital, babies, people who can't do for themselves. Then you come to the weave and the pinky, that's you, don't forget yourself.

Because the problem is that if we start with ourselves, we often don't get any, we won't get past that. And that's why it's so important in prayer that we begin elsewhere and then work in to ourselves.

So, remember that when you pray. But we're also told here that he is the everlasting father. Now again, that's a wonderful expression.

And we've got to remember that the psalm tells us that as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him. And he always works in our interest as the best father could in this world.

[24 : 43] He wants to provide for us. He wants to protect us. He wants to be close to us. He wants to do for us. How often?

We're told everlasting. In other words, all the time. Not just like a nursery father will provide when he gets up, provides when he can, provides with whatever resources he has, but here is the everlasting father who has all resources.

So all the time he is providing for us. And that is absolutely wonderful. And then finally he's called the prince of peace.

We live in a very troubled world. There's so much sorrow and sadness and anger and angst and there's so much that's troubling us on all fronts.

And there's so many people say, oh, I just, you know what I would love to have in my life? I would love to have real peace where I could just feel a calmness, feel a peace.

[25 : 50] Well, Jesus is called the prince of peace. And Jesus, that's what it says here, the prince of peace, peace. And Jesus wants to give us peace.

When he was leaving this world, he said to the disciples, I'm going to give you something that the world can't give. Now the world can give a wee bit of peace, but it can't give the peace that Jesus gives. And you know one of the wonderful things about Jesus' peace is it's very different to the peace that might come after a war.

You know when two nations are at war, and then leaders eventually come to a place where they agree to a ceasefire and the war is over. There might be peace instead of war, but there's still a lot of anger and resentment and hatred and all sort of things going on in people's hearts.

But this is different, because at first we're at enmity with God, we're away from God, we don't want God, but when God comes to us, when Jesus takes us to himself, he takes away that enmity, he breaks the war, he brings an end to the war, and he brings the peace so that we become friends with him.

He becomes our great friend. We get engaged to him, in fact we're going to have a marriage. And this is what he does, and he gives us peace.

[27 : 21] Underneath all that might be going on in our lives, underneath it all, there's a settled peace can only be found in him. And you know when Jesus is at the head of our life, when he's over everything, everything fits into place.

It's like the wee girl, you probably heard before, a wee girl, she came home from Sunday school, she wanted to tell her dad, she wanted to tell her dad all that she had heard. He was reading the paper, he wasn't interested.

I said I didn't want to listen to that. But she was determined to try and tell him. And he couldn't get peace. And there was a, he saw over on the table, there was a map there of the world.

So he got scissors and he cut it into bits. He said, there you are, go and make a map of the world, put it all together. And he thought, that'll keep her for the next hour, I'll get peace. peace. She came back just in a very short time and it was on a tree.

He said, how on earth do you do that? Or she said, on the other side, there's a picture, a painting of Jesus. And she said, I fitted that together, turned it round, and when Jesus was in place, then the world was in place.

[28 : 36] And you know, that is true. if Jesus is in his right place in this world, this world would be just such a different place. And it's equally true in your own life.

If Jesus is in place, in the right place in your heart, then your world will be right, because you will be right with God.

Remember this Jesus, he came for you. That's what it tells us, to you, whom is born the Son. And to us is born the Saviour.

What are you going to do? Ignore? Or are you going to say, Jesus, come into my heart? Let us pray. Lord, we pray to bless us, and we give thanks for your word.

And we pray that we might take it to heart, that we might receive it and believe it. We pray that Jesus will become very precious to us, and that you will feed our souls, that you will do us good.

[29 : 38] We pray to take us all home safely. We pray to bless the cup of tea, coffee in the hall after. We give thanks, Lord, for every gift that you give to us, and all the different things that you do for us.

We give thanks, Lord, for the willingness of so many people in this congregation to work and to serve and to do. We pray to bless them. Watch over us and take away our sin, in Jesus' name. Amen. We conclude singing in Psalm 23, because this child that was born, this baby that was born into this world, of course, is the great shepherd, the good shepherd, the shepherd of our souls. The prayer is that he will be your shepherd and that he will take you eventually to his house forever. And it's in the Sing Psalms version, and we're going to sing to the tune Jehovah Sid Kenya, Psalm 23, from Sing Psalms, which is on page 28, The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know. He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. To the last verse, so surely your covenant mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways.

[30 : 59] I will dwell in the house of the Lord all my days. Psalm 23, the whole psalm, the tune Jehovah Sid. The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know.

He He makes me lie down where the pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow.

He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps As He brings life to His way, And strength of righteousness And making me stay, I'm blessed He has done His Great name to display.

I'm blessed He has done His Great name to display. Though I walk in this valley Where darkness is near, Because You are with me, No evil I fear.

Your wrath and Your suffering Be comfort and cheer. Your wrath and Your suffering Be comfort and cheer.

[32 : 49] In the sight of my enemy At table You spread. The eye of rejoicing In more of my head.

My cup overflows and I'm graciously fed. My cup overflows and I'm graciously fed.

So surely Your covenant And mercy and grace Will follow me closely In all of my ways I'm well in the house of the Lord All my days I'm well in the house Of the Lord All my days Now may the grace, Mercy and peace of God The Father, Son and Holy Spirit Rest and abide upon each one of you

Now and forevermore.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.