

“Unto Us a Child is Born, Unto Us a Son is Given”

Isaiah 7:14; 9:2, 6-7

December 2016

Hardly a Christmas goes by that we don't read out of Isaiah 9, and when we read these verses, we recognize them immediately. As a matter of fact, in Handel's Messiah, I enjoy a couple of the choruses. We all recognize the Hallelujah Chorus, right? But the chorus I wait for and love to hear comes right from the word of God, here in Isaiah 9.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ³ You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

⁴ For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

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.

⁷ Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

700 years before the Lord Jesus Christ was born physically into this world, the prophet Isaiah spoke of the coming of Christ. And I believe what Isaiah said so long ago is very pertinent and powerful this morning.

I. MYSTERY OF HIS HUMANITY

There are three major thoughts here in Isaiah 9:6-7 that I want us to focus on this morning, and the first is what I want to call the Mystery of His Humanity. Verse 6a says: “For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given” So how was this child born? How was that Son given? Well turn back to Isaiah 7:14. “A virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel.” And Matthew, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, quotes this very verse in 1:23 but he adds the meaning of Immanuel, which is “God with us.”

But how did God come to be with us? Well the Bible teaches that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. That is the mystery of His humanity. Fully human, but without the old Adamic nature marked by sin, and yet fully divine. As much man as though he were not God at all, and as much God as though he were not man at all. Fully God and fully man.

But how did it happen? I mean what about the actual event where life was formed in Mary's womb, how did that happen? Only God knows. It was miraculous. In fact, Mary asked the same question: "How will this be since I'm a virgin?" And the angel answered, "The Holy Spirit

will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God."

Both Luke and Matthew speak of the Holy Spirit's role in the conception (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26-27) and that's what insured that Jesus would have a sinless nature. And when that embryo grew to fetal form, and then on to term, there was just a natural process of birth, again guaranteeing that he is truly human. One theologian writes: "From the production of the egg in Mary's ovary to the actual birth, the fetal state in Mary's womb was entirely under the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit. And under such superintendence, there was perfect protection from any impulse of sin."

You say: "Kenyn, do you believe that? I mean in this enlightened age of empirical, scientific evidence, do you believe in the virgin birth?" Yes I do! I believe in the virgin birth. In fact, I'm amazed at all the so called theologians who don't believe in it. We had one such at the liberal college I attended, he argued in our Theology class that the virgin birth was a non-essential doctrine. That only two of the Gospel writers even refer to it, even though it is strongly implied in the other two. Well these unfortunate folk don't know how vitally important this teaching is.

First of all when you dismiss it as fable or myth or a later church add on, you're going to have problems with the veracity of the word of God, for the word of God teaches clearly, plainly, unmistakably, and unshakably that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. So if you say that Jesus was not virgin born, you've just said something very strong about the word of God, that the word of God is untrue. And not only will you have difficulty with the character of the word of God but you're going to have trouble with the character of Mary. If Jesus Christ was not virgin born, Mary was little more than a harlot and a liar. And worse than that, God's character is then called into question because His Angel Gabriel said that she was favored of God.

But not only will you have difficulty with the character of the Bible, the character of Mary, and the character of God, you're especially going to have difficulty with the character of Jesus. If Jesus was not conceived of the Spirit and born of a virgin, then not only was he born of an illicit sexual union, but he was a child of Adam, a sinner like the rest of us. And the Bible says in Romans 5:12: "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." So if that is true, Jesus was a sinner like everybody else and He was not the spotless, sinless Son of God, therefore he could not offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin. And because he could not have been God, He could not save us from sin. So don't say that the virgin birth is not important. In fact, I am convinced that our faith stands or falls on the truth of it. If Jesus is not the sinless, pure Savior, then He is the sinful, impure Savior and therefore no Savior at all. But thank God the Bible says: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV.

Listen. Take away the virgin birth and you take away your hope of heaven. No miraculous conception and virgin birth, no Deity. No deity, no sinless nature. No sinless nature, no substitutionary death. He couldn't have died for your sin, if he were a sinner, he would have had to die for his own sins. Listen. No virgin birth, no deity. No deity, no sinless nature. No sinless

nature, no substitutionary atonement for sin. No atonement for sin, no new birth. No new birth, no hope of heaven. The only thing that remains is the judgment of God and the horror of hell. Its just like Paul said in 1 Cor. 15 concerning the resurrection. If it is not true, we who believe in the virgin birth are of all men most miserable. But if it is true, and it is. If it is true, then we have a Savior. And His name is Jesus!

He came as He did to be what He was: Sinless.

He was what He was to do what he did: Die for us.

He did what He did that we might be who we are: Redeemed Sinners!

He was born of a virgin, that I might be born again!

He became a Son of man, that I might become a Son of God! He came to earth, that I might go to heaven!

Unto us a child is born. That is His humanity.

II. MAJESTY OF HIS DEITY

But not only that, look again at v 6: Unto us a Son is given. That speaks of His deity. That speaks of His pre-existence. And we've been assuming that all along, but here it is stated explicitly. Jesus was not just the result of a miraculous conception and birth. Jesus was not only a man who was born sinless and who lived a sinless life and who died as a sinless and therefore acceptable sacrifice. Jesus was and is the eternal Son of God! The Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). A Son is given. So when God sent His indescribable gift as Paul says of Jesus, He sent the gift of Himself. Deity wrapped in humanity. In other words, the Lord Jesus is the earthly child of a Heavenly Father, but he was also the heavenly child of an earthly mother. Fully man, a child is born, and yet fully divine, a Son is given.

So when you think of the Lord Jesus, don't just think of the miraculous conception in Mary's womb as the beginning, don't think of His birth in Bethlehem as the starting point, but go back to eternity past and you find that there never was a time when Jesus was not. The Bible speaks of Jesus in John 1:1--In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Renowned Pastor Adrian Rodgers told about how he shared his faith with Muhammad Ali, who is a Muslim. Well Mohammed Ali thought he was pretty clever, and he said to Adrian Rodgers: "You say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God because He was born of a virgin." He said: "Adam didn't have a father or a mother, wouldn't that make Adam more of a son of God than Jesus?" Adrian Rodgers said: "Champ, Jesus wasn't the Son of God because He was born of a virgin. He was born of a virgin because He was the Son of God." See what he means. You see in eternity past God's Son existed, it was only 2,000 years ago that He was born as a child. As the Scripture says: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." The majesty of His deity.

Now notice in v 6b--and the government will be upon His shoulders. This child that is born, the Son that is given is the Sovereign. He is the Ruler. Don't you look forward to that day, when the Lord Jesus is in charge? When He is the one issuing Executive Orders? Look down at v 7.

As the old song says: "Jesus shall reign from shore to shore till moon shall wax and wane no more." He came the first time because of prophecy. And just as surely as Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled concerning His virgin birth, I want you to know that Isaiah's prophecy will be fulfilled concerning His rule and His reign upon the throne of David. You can bank on it, He's coming again. He came the first time and fulfilled part of it, but He's coming again to fulfill the rest of it!

When He came the first time, He came to a feeding trough, when he comes again, He's coming to a fabulous throne. When He came the first time, He stood before Pilate to be judged. When He comes again, Pilate will stand before Him to be judged. When He came the first time, He came to a crucifixion, but when He comes again, it will be to a coronation. When He came the first time, he came to suffer, but when He comes again, he will come in splendor! When He came the first time, He came to redeem, when He comes again, He's coming to reign! He's coming this time not as a little baby but as a Mighty Monarch, a Great King. Isaiah said: "Yes, a child is born, but also a Son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and He will rule and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!"

III. MAGNIFICENCE OF HIS PERSONALITY

Well not only did Isaiah speak of the mystery of His humanity and the majesty of His deity, but he also spoke of the magnificence of His personality. Look at v 6 again.

A. Wonderful Counselor: First of all, the Bible says that His name shall be called "Wonderful Counselor." He was wonderful in His birth, He was wonderful in His life. Wonderful in His words, wonderful in His works, wonderful in His death, wonderful in His resurrection, wonderful in His ascension, and he will be wonderful in His coming again. His name indeed is wonderful. He is not only wonderful, but he is wise. Look at it again. His name shall be called wonderful counselor. There is wisdom in His name.

Founding Father, Samuel Adams wrote: "Revelation assures us that 'Righteousness exalteth a Nation'—Communities are dealt with in this World by the wise and just Ruler of the Universe. He rewards or punishes them according to their general Character."¹ Jesus is the wise and Wonderful Counselor whom we would do well to heed. Yet the world has rejected His wisdom. They say, we don't need Him as a Counselor. We are the ones who are wise. And if you look back across the ages of human history, you see what ruin and rebellion man's wisdom has brought us.

If man is so smart, and man is so wise, then tell me why we allow one black robed bully to overturn the will of multiplied thousands, tell me why we celebrate what God calls an abomination, tell me why we kill thousands of babies in the womb every day? It is as the Bible says in Romans 1:21 "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." And again: "The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of man and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength and that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:25). Christ is the Counselor that this world needs. How great to have Him living in our hearts to give us wisdom and direction and counsel. But listen, not only is He the wonderful counselor, but He is also the mighty God.

B. Mighty God: Do you realize that we serve the God who created heaven and earth. He weighs the mountains in a scale and the hills in balance; He holds the seven seas in the palms of His hands! The Bible speaks of the Lord Jesus and says that "all things were made by Him and without Him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3). That baby in the manger, that child in Mary's arms, is the mighty God! The mighty God! Jesus made it all. Every sun, every star, every planet, every continent, every ocean, every drop of water, every blade of grass in this whole universe, Jesus made it all.

All power in heaven and on earth belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God who divided the sea for Moses. He is the God who brought down the walls for Joshua. He is the God who delivered Goliath into the hands of David, and the Hebrew children from that fiery furnace, and Daniel out of that lion's den. In human flesh, that same God commanded wind and wave, fed the hungry, healed the sick, cast out demons, and raised the dead! And he is the God to whom George Washington prayed and then who gave him victory over our oppressors. He is the God who with a mighty hand 200 years ago doused the flames and drove out the British invaders from this very city. He is the God who enabled us to prevail against Hitler's last gasp in the Battle of the Bulge 70 years ago, giving us good weather for our bombers at just the right time and that in response to a Chaplain's prayer. The Mighty God has shown Himself strong on behalf of America.

You say that was then and this is now. We're facing two more years of an Imperial President who has little regard for the rule of law. How can we prevail over that? Well I like what Founding Father John Jay said right before Christmas in 1776 and it is a good word for us going into the new year: "Unite in preparing for a vigorous defense of your country, as if all depended on your own exertions. And when you have done all things, then rely upon the good Providence of Almighty God for success, in full confidence that without his blessings, all our efforts will inevitably fail..."²

And I could go on and on, but he is not only a wonderful counselor, He is the mighty God! As President, George Washington said: "[I]t is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor."³ And that's not only true of nations, but also of individuals. Do you face some impossible circumstance? Turn to the mighty God for there is nothing impossible with Him. Over your head in your place of service? Paul says: "Faithful is he who calls you, who also will do it." (1 Thess. 5:24) Rest in the strength of the Mighty God.

C. Everlasting Father: But He is also called the Everlasting Father. And when you think of a Father, you think of a Father's love. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And the Bible calls God the Father of mercies and the God of all Comfort. And Jesus said: "I and my Father are One." (John 10:30) "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9) So the love that dwells in the bosom of the Father is the love that was displayed in the life of the Son of God. Do you feel unloved? Do you feel lonely? You know somebody has called the Christmas season the loneliest, most depressing time of the year. Because everybody is told that they're supposed to be happy, and they look around and they're not happy. And they realize that all the tinsel and trinkets and toys in the world can't make them happy. All the gifts and glitter in

the world can't make up for that one we loved and lost. But there is someone who loves you. There is someone who cares about you. There's someone who wants to wrap His arms around you, and draw you close, and that is the Everlasting Father.

D. Prince of Peace: Finally, He is the Prince of Peace. Everybody wants peace. Everybody wants one of those Calgon moments where the phone doesn't ring, the dog isn't barking, the kids aren't screaming, and people aren't demanding, a moment that you can have some peace. Did you know that everywhere Jesus is Lord, there is peace? And that everywhere Jesus is not recognized as Lord, there is no peace? Jesus is Lord in heaven, and there's peace in heaven. If Jesus is Lord in your heart, there's peace in your heart. Romans 5:1 says: "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God thru our Lord Jesus Christ." Now there is peace *with* God and there is the peace *of* God. Paul says in Phil. 4:7--and the peace *of* God which passes all understanding shall guard your hearts and minds thru Christ Jesus. Oh what peace you can know when the prince of peace reigns in your heart!

You know when Jesus was on the cross, in a sense He made a will. He willed His mother to John the beloved disciple. He willed His body to Joseph of Arimathea, at least for a few days anyway. He yielded His spirit to God the Father. But do you know what He left you in His will? He said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives." The world didn't give it to you and the world can't take it away. Do you have peace today? Not all the money, not all the popularity, not all the accolades, or accomplishments in this world can give peace. No person can give peace except Jesus. And where Jesus is Lord there is peace!

Again, while governor, Sam Adams made a Proclamation for Prayer (1797) and declared: [W]e cannot better express ourselves than by humbly supplicating the Supreme Ruler of the world that the rod of tyrants may be broken to pieces, and the oppressed made free again; that wars may cease in all the earth, and that the confusions that are and have been among nations may be overruled by promoting and speedily bringing on that holy and happy period when the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may be everywhere established, and all people everywhere willingly bow to the sceptre of Him who is Prince of Peace."⁴

That is the magnificence of His personality. Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace all wrapped up in Jesus. That's who we celebrate this Christmas.

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Dr. Kenyn Cureton, a pastor for 20 years and Vice President for Convention Relations for the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, has served as Vice President for Church Ministries with Family Research Council since 2006.

¹ Harry Alonzo Cushing, ed., *The Writings of Samuel Adams* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 3:286.

² William Jay, *Life of John Jay, with Selections from His Correspondence*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1833), 1:55-56.

³ Jared Sparks, ed., *The Writings of George Washington; being His Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and Other Papers, Official and Private, Selected and Published from the original Manuscripts*, 12 vols. (Boston: American Stationer's Company, 1837), 12:119.

⁴ William V. Wells, *The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams, Being a Narrative of His Acts and Opinions and of His Agency in Producing and Forwarding the American Revolution, with Extracts from His Correspondence State Papers and Political Essays*, 3 vols., (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1865), 3:365-66.