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Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:6

**For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** (NIV 84)

Theme: A Child is Born for Us. He is...

1. Wonderful Counselor
2. Mighty God
3. Everlasting Father
4. Prince of Peace

Have you ever been disappointed when you opened a Christmas gift? Or were you ever jealous that someone got something that you wanted and didn't get? It may happen from time to time that we are disappointed with the gifts we receive. But that is not the case for the gifts that God gives us. For today we see that a child, named Jesus, was born for us. This is a gift for all people.

Today's service is based on the prophecies of Isaiah. Isaiah lived about 700 years before Christ. During Isaiah's lifetime, God's people were in turmoil. The land was ravaged by war. Most of the kings had led the people away from the one true God. The majority of the people themselves had rejected God. Because they rebelled against God, Isaiah prophesied that they will be punished. They will have to endure war, deportation, and oppression.

We too act like the Israelites. From time to time we rebel against God. We allow ourselves to be led astray by others. Or, we may be the ones leading others astray. All people, from all over the world, were born as enemies of God. From the time Adam and Eve rebelled against him in the Garden of Eden, we were hostile to the one who made us. This causes us to sin against him by not obeying what he commands. There is nothing that we could ever do to please God. And because of this, God said that we deserve to be punished. Just like the Jews, we deserve to suffer for our sins.

But a message of punishment wasn't the only message of Isaiah. He is often referred to as the gospel writer of the Old Testament. As we will

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see tonight, his book is filled with promises of forgiveness through a Savior. For instance, Isaiah told the war torn nation that they will have peace, joy, and deliverance. How? **For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.** A son is going to be born for us. And that son is none other than Jesus Christ. Born not just for the Israelites of Isaiah's time. But born for all people of all time.

The baby, whose birth we celebrate tonight was born for you and me. Everything that baby would grow up to do, is for us. He would grow up to pay the price of the sins of the whole world. The reason why we celebrate the birth of someone who was born over 2000 years ago was because of what that baby would do. He would save us through his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

Isaiah prophesies that this child will be called **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.** These names are not names that people actually called Jesus. Rather they describe who Jesus is, and what he does. The first name for Jesus is **Wonderful Counselor.** A counselor is one who makes a plan. He determines the best plan of action and makes sure that it is followed through an.

And Jesus is called a **Wonderful Counselor.** Why wonderful? Because his plan that he determined is his plan of saving us. And his plan is so spectacular that he is the only one who could carry it out. We cannot contribute in anyway to our eternal life. Even if we wanted to, there is nothing we could do to save ourselves. It has to be done by God, and only God. His plan was to be born of a virgin. Live a perfect life for over 30 years. And even though he would do no wrong, he let himself be mocked, scorned, ridiculed, spit upon, flogged, and eventually murdered on the cross. It was his plan to take all our sins upon himself and become guilty of what we have done wrong. It was his plan to suffer through hell so we wouldn't have to. And finally to rise from the dead so we could too. The wonder of this plan, is that it doesn't include any work by us.

It is all about God. In order to fulfill this plan, God had to be born as a man. And that is why the second name that Isaiah calls Jesus is, **Mighty God.** For this baby, whose birth we are celebrating tonight, is not just a normal baby. This baby is God's son. This baby is God

himself. The Almighty, all powerful, eternal God, lowered himself to be born as a baby. God made himself helpless. He gave up the glories of heaven to live in a world for pain, toil, and sin. Born of Mary, and yet called Mighty God. Jesus was true man and true God at the same time.

He had to be God in order to save us. For no man can save another. He had to be God so that he could keep the law perfectly. So that he could give us credit for his perfect life. If Jesus isn't God than he wouldn't be our Savior. If Jesus isn't God than we wouldn't be hear tonight to celebrate his birthday. But Jesus is God. And he did what only God can do. He saved us from our sins. He gave up his life so we wouldn't have to suffer with the devil for eternity.

Isaiah also calls Jesus, **Everlasting Father**. Although Jesus is God, and so is God the Father, this is not saying that Jesus is the same as the Father. Rather, Isaiah is saying that Jesus is like a father. He loves us just like a father loves his children. He cares for us. He provides us with everything we need. He guards and protects us from all harm and danger. The devil cannot snatch us out of his arms. Like a father would give up anything for his son, so did Christ. He gave up his life for us all.

And he is not just a father; he is our **Everlasting Father**. Since Jesus is God, we know that he is also eternal. He never changes. He loves us now and he will always love us. He protects us now and he will until he takes us to live with him forever. He never gets tired. He never grows old of doing what he was born to do. He always strives to take us all to heaven.

Finally, Isaiah calls Jesus, the **Prince of Peace**. Jesus is our prince. He is the one who rules over the whole world. From his throne up in heaven he has absolute power over all things. Earlier in our verse Isaiah prophesies that **the government will be upon his shoulders**. Jesus is the ruler of the world. He is the king of kings and Lord of Lords.

And his rule is one peace. We are reminded everyday by newscasts, papers, or websites that this world is not one of peace. And yet we say that Jesus came with peace. And the angels announced to the shepherds **peace on earth**. Jesus is the prince of peace because he brings the peace of forgiveness. It is peace knowing that our sins are

not counted against us. It is peace that we will not suffer with the devil. But that through Christ we will live in heaven forever. Christ is called the prince of peace because we now have peace with God. Through faith in Christ we are received the forgiveness of sins that brings peace.

Remember what Isaiah said about Jesus at the beginning of this verse? **To us a child is born, to us a son is given.** Jesus was born for all of us. This child, the **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace** has been given for all of us for free. This is one gift we don't have to jealous about or disappointed that you didn't receive. For today, Jesus has been born for you. Today, your Savior comes who gives you the free gifts of forgiveness and eternal life. Amen.