

What's in a name? Isaiah 9:1-7

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Batman bin Supaman

Cardinal Sin "The greatest sin of all: Cardinal Sin", Own pun of "Welcome to the house of Sin" that he said to guests at his official residence of Villa San Miguel.

Christmas Evans

Names can mean something. Names can tell us a lot about somebody, or sometimes about their parents who named them. Sometimes they can be funny, sometimes disturbing, sometimes significant.

The Son of God is given names and titles who tell us much about Him and what He came to do. The titles prophesied in Isaiah 9 have been applied to Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the one that was being prophesied 700 years before His birth.

VERSE

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 Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Why was the Messiah given these titles? Because they tell us about Him. They tell us who He was and what His purpose was. So in the few moments I have this morning I'm going to give you a whistle-stop tour of these four titles of Jesus: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR

So what's a Wonderful Counsellor or more literally, the wonder of a Counsellor? The word English Bibles translate as Counsellor is used in Hebrew to describe the counsel and direction the a King gives to his people in times of trouble. When a country goes through a difficult period, like a war, people look for leadership, inspiration, hope. He would have the plan to take them forward. They want to have confidence in their leaders that they will see them through the difficult period safely.

The Son came because the human race needed rescuing. It had gone its own way. It was disconnected from God. But God had a plan. He was going to send a chosen one, a Messiah, a Christ. Someone who would give counsel and direction. Who would give them hope, who would give them life. That's why He's a Wonderful Counsellor, because He's amazing, extraordinary, wonderful. I'm not sure how significant Jesus is to you this morning. But for those who have decided to follow Him, we find Him amazing, extraordinary, because He brings life and hope. Whether you know Jesus or not, Christmas is a time when we can be given that reminder that Jesus is amazing. He's crushed the power that sin has over us and he brings forgiveness, purpose, hope and God's presence to all who follow Him. This Christmas season, let's pray that we may be amazed by Jesus in a fresh way.

THE MIGHTY GOD

The Mighty God. The word mighty is an interesting one here. We often think of mighty in terms of sheer power. But this word was also used in another context in Hebrew as well. We often hear of mighty men. David had a number of mighty men. What distinguished them was not just their ability as people, but the risks and selfless service that they were prepared to take in the service of the king and the nation. They were heroes.

We have already considered who Jesus is this morning in song and verse. God dealt with the problem of our sin by becoming one of us. But He's the Mighty God, the Hero God. He's the One who loved us so much that did not think of His own safety but willingly gave His own life to rescue us, to make us His people. How do we respond to heroes? We're grateful to the. Then there's hero worship. Then there's trying to emulate the, however imperfect that may be. All those things apply to Jesus, the Hero God whom we follow.

EVERLASTING FATHER

If you've read up about this you'll find that theologians can tie themselves in knots about this title. How can the One known as the Son have the title everlasting Father? The explanation of this title that appeals to me most is the way the Hebrew for father can be used of a parent, but it can also be used to describe an ancestor who was a clan head from whose name your family was derived. Jewish people have always described themselves as sons of Abraham. Or more precisely they describe themselves as sons of Israel, or even more precisely, sons of Judah.

The same is true of the Messiah. We know from later in the passage that he's David's son - He is of the family of David. Yet He is a clan head in His own right. From Him proceeds a distinct family that only identify with Him and His name, Jesus.

There's another thing I can say about family names. They change over time. Our own Queen is of the House of Windsor. Where did that come from. During the First World War, King George V of the House of Saxe-Coburg Gotha decided to change the name of Windsor to sound more patriotic. He is the originator of that name. All born into that family from that time have been Windsors.

But the other thing about family names, is that you can be adopted into a family. And when you do, your family name changes.

For each of us who have joined the family of God, who have decided to follow Jesus, we are adopted into the family of God, but actually the name we own, the name we use, the authority who we come under is Jesus. What's more, unlike a human ancestor who dies, He rose from the dead so He is alive for ever. He's everlasting. That means that no-one down the line can supersede Him.

And today, you can become part of Jesus' family and own His name too.

PRINCE OF PEACE

He's the Prince of Peace and as we read in verse 7, His rule will never end. But what does peace mean? It can mean peace on Earth and we do have the promise that ultimately Jesus will bring peace on Earth. If you were here last Sunday you'll see the significance of that. If not, it will be on the website shortly.

But there's one kind of peace that Jesus has already brought. Peace with God. The term prince is also an interesting one. In times past, kings usually used their own family to administer their kingdoms. Arab kings still do. They are the only people they can truly trust to administer their affairs. Jesus is the Prince of peace. He administers peace. He brings peace between people and God. In Him is the means of peace. When Jesus died on the cross, the whole issue of our sin was dealt with. What kept us apart from God has been dealt with. Jesus has brought us peace with God, all we have to do is make that peace with God by accepting and following Jesus, finding that forgiveness and hope.

Appeal.

Prayer:

- that we might realise the plan God has for each of us through Jesus
- that we may be amazed by Him because of what He's done
- that we may recognise more fully how much He is our hero and desire to worship and follow Him
- that we may own His name truly and act like a member of His family
- that we may have peace with God and we may act to bring God's peace to others.

*Preached by Mark Reid
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