

ADVENT

Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
& the mountains in reply echoing their
joyous strains: Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

O holy night! the stars
are brightly shining: It
is the night of the dear
Son's birth, long for the
world to see and ever
praising: Hail He appeared
and the world's light to bring.
A child of
the weary world
rejoices, for wonder
breaks a new & glorious
morning: Fall now your
burden O Son of the song!
voiced O night divine,
O night divine!

advent! Led by the
light of faith ardently
beaming, With glowing
hearts for His cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly
gleaming, Here came the Wise
Men from Orient land, The King
of Kings lay thus in lowly manger.
In all our trials born to be our
Friend: He knows our need to
our weakness is no stranger.
Behold your King before Him
lovely born! Behold your King,
before Him lovely born! Hail
He taught us to love one
another! His love is love to
His gospel is peace.

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song
of old, from angels bending near the earth to
touch their happy harp of gold
on the earth, good
will to men, from
heaven's all glorious King. The world
no longer suffers but to hear the
angels sing. Still through the
clouds down they come with
powerful wings unfurled
and call their heavenly
music floats over
all the weary
world.

Joy to the world, the Lord
is come! Let earth receive
her King! Let every heart
prepare him room, and
heaven and nature sing,
& heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and heaven
and nature sing.
In the earth,
the Saviour reigns:
Let men their songs
employ, while fields to
flocks, rocks, lily, & plants,
repeat the sounding joy:
He rules the world with
truth and grace.

O little town of
Bethlehem, how
still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and
dreamless sleep the silent
stars go by: Be it in thy dark
severed slumber the overhanging
light, the hopes & fears of all
the years are met in thee:
tonght! For Christ is born
of Mary: & gathered all
above, while mortals sleep,
the angels keep their watch
of wondering
at God the King, peace to
man on earth.

Love
O morning stars,
together proclaim the
glad tidings,
hail him, & praise him
who comes in the
world to save.

Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the
sight, Christ born now
here on earth, heavenly
host sing, All-hail
Christ
the Son of God!

"and His name shall be"

Soli Deo Gloria

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You're Invited to Join Us

Christmas Family Fun Night

December 12th | 6-8pm

Christmas Eve Services

December 24th | 4:30pm and 6pm



Scan QR code for the most up to date Christmas schedule.
Visit: 2riverschurch.org/christmas2025

AD VEN T

Advent is a time of preparation in the four weeks before we celebrate the birth of Christ. The word *Advent* is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning *coming*, which is a translation of the Greek word *parousia* from verses such as:

*Now may the God of peace
himself sanctify you
completely, and may your
whole spirit and soul and
body be kept blameless at
the coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 5:23

This year we invite you to study Isaiah 9:6 *and his name shall be . . .*



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.

Isaiah 9:6 | ESV





ISAIAH

The prophet Isaiah ministered during a dark and uncertain time in Israel's history. Isaiah ministered from 755–700 BC, speaking to the people of the southern kingdom of Judah, calling them back to faithfulness even as chaos swirled around them. By this point, the once unified nation of Israel had long been divided, Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

While a few righteous kings arose in Judah, there was not even one that could be found in Israel. Sin flourished as the people and their leaders continually turned away from God. Instead of trusting in the Lord, they leaned on foreign alliances and political schemes. The empire of Assyria began to cast a long and fearful shadow across the land.

In 722 BC, the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria. Its people were scattered, its strength broken. Judah, though not exiled, still suffered deeply.

They were spared only because they made a large tribute payment to Assyria. Parts of northern Judah were destroyed and depopulated. Later, Assyrian leaders would return to destroy and deport citizens from the various city in Judah. In fact, when King Hezekiah later rebels, Sennacherib destroys most of Judah. Only Jerusalem is spared through Yahweh's intervention (Isaiah 36-38).

In the midst of this fear and instability, God raised up Isaiah to speak a word not only of warning but of hope. Isaiah reminded the people of Judah that God's covenant promises still stood. Even in the face of rebellion and judgment, God had not forgotten His people.

Therefore the Lord himself will give
you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall
conceive and bear a son, and shall call
his name Immanuel.

Then, in Isaiah 9, the vision expands.

The spiritual condition of the people is described as one of deep darkness, but God responds not with vengeance, but with light:

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.

Isaiah 9:2

And then comes the promise at the heart of our Advent reflection:

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.

Isaiah 9:6

Isaiah promises that there will be deliverance and it will come in the form of a child, a Son, in fulfillment of Psalm 2:

*I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
Ask of me, and I will make the nations
your heritage, and the ends of the earth
your possession.'*

Psalms 2:7-8

New Testament writers also recognize that Jesus' birth is a fulfillment of this promise.

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you:
you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.*

Luke 2:11-12

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Luke 2:21

This is the wonder of Christmas: the long-awaited promise has come, not in power or prestige, but in the fragile form of a newborn child. The Messiah foretold by Isaiah, declared in the psalms and revealed to shepherds in the fields, is Jesus, our

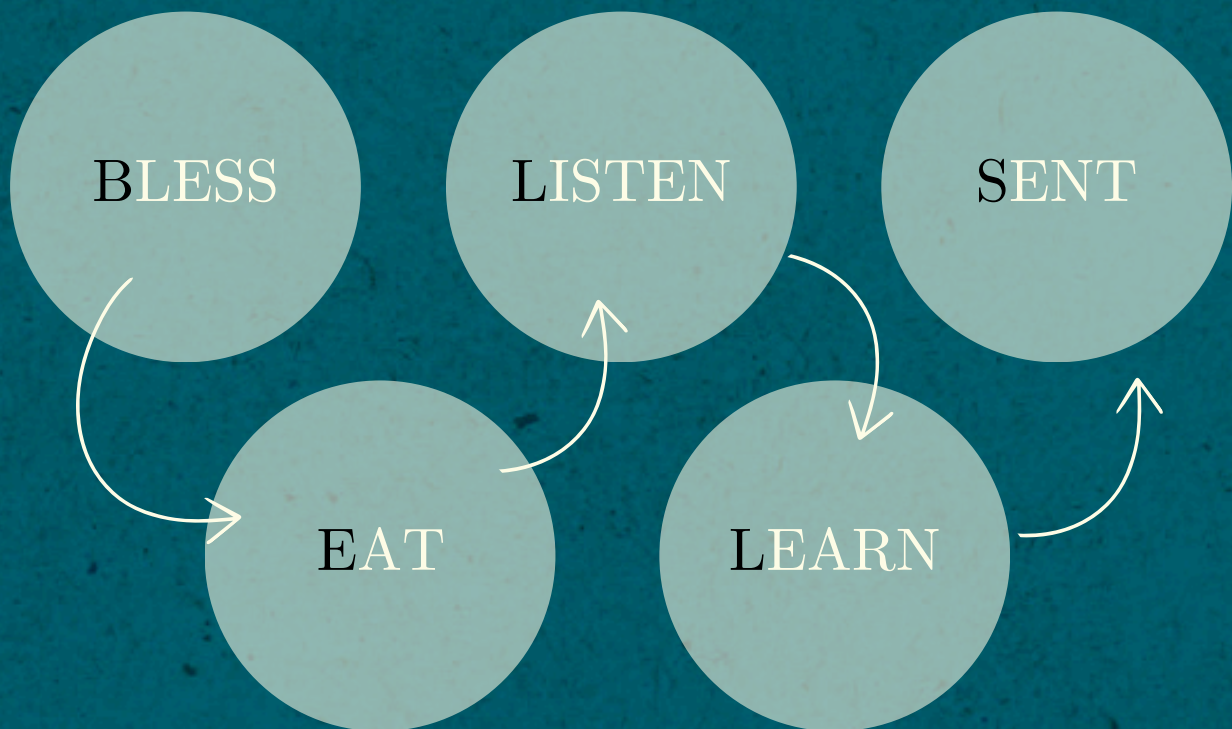
*Wonderful Counselor
Mighty God
Everlasting Father
Prince of Peace*

His birth is not just a fulfillment of prophecy, but the arrival of hope itself. In Him, God's promises stand secure, and His name declares what He has come to be for us.

SURPRISE THE WORLD WITH BELLS

During this Advent season, we encourage you to share the real reason for Christmas with those the Lord has placed in your life. Here at Two Rivers, we are intentional about sharing the Gospel with others by using the BELLS model.

Each week of Advent, you will be prompted to think about how you can use what you are learning in our study of Isaiah 9:6 to complete BELLS in your life. Let's surprise a world that feels hopeless with the hope that is found in Jesus Christ.



*Scan here to watch Pastor Tom's
Sermon Series on BELLS*





make Jesus the reason for the season 🔍



Week One



November 30



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.

Isaiah 9:6 | ESV





WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

The Hebrew word translated *wonderful* in Isaiah 9:6 is deeply tied to the idea of the miraculous. It conveys something marvelous, astonishing, and beyond human comprehension. This isn't the ordinary word for *good* or *helpful*. It points to the divine.

Remarkably, this word is rare in the Old Testament, appearing only 13 times, clustered in three main themes. Firstly, we find this word in the Exodus tradition where God reveals His power through miraculous acts of deliverance.

*Who is like you, O Lord, among the
gods? Who is like you, majestic in
holiness, awesome in glorious deeds,
doing wonders?*

Exodus 15:11

Lament and historical psalms also use *wonderful* to describe His mighty works as His people long for Him to act again.

*You are the God who works wonders;
you have made known your might
among the peoples.*

Psalms 77:14

Finally, the Prophets and Writings focused on hope and judgment use *wonderful*, just like in Isaiah 9:6, where *wonderful* describes the coming Messiah and His astonishing rule.

In Scripture, a counselor was someone who gave good advice, someone like a king or trusted advisor. But Isaiah describes the coming Messiah not merely as a Counselor but as a Wonderful Counselor.

This counselor would work in wonders such as the ones described in Exodus or in the Psalms.

*Let the heavens praise your
wonders, O Lord,
your faithfulness in the
assembly of the holy ones!*

Psalms 89:5

God's ways are not our ways. His wisdom exceeds ours in every possible measure. That's what makes Isaiah's title *Wonderful Counselor* so significant. It isn't just that the Messiah will give good advice. It's that His wisdom is divine in origin and miraculous in nature.

*Such knowledge is too wonderful
for me; it is high;
I cannot attain it.
Psalm 139:6*

In Christ, we meet the One who fulfills this name. Colossians 2:3 tells us that it is Christ *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Jesus doesn't merely possess wisdom, He is wisdom incarnate. When He speaks, heaven's logic enters human history.

In Exodus 15:11, the wonders described are not simply random displays of power done by God, but intentional covenant acts that demonstrate His holiness, teach fear of the Lord, and elicit praise. Every other wonderful occurrence afterwards is a demonstration of God and His redemptive plan.

When Isaiah describes the Messiah as a Wonderful Counselor, He is describing a person who surpasses every previous act of marvel in human history.

Jesus' birth, ministry, resurrection, and His future return are the greatest demonstration of the marvelous works of God.

Indeed, those who had walked in darkness would see a great light.

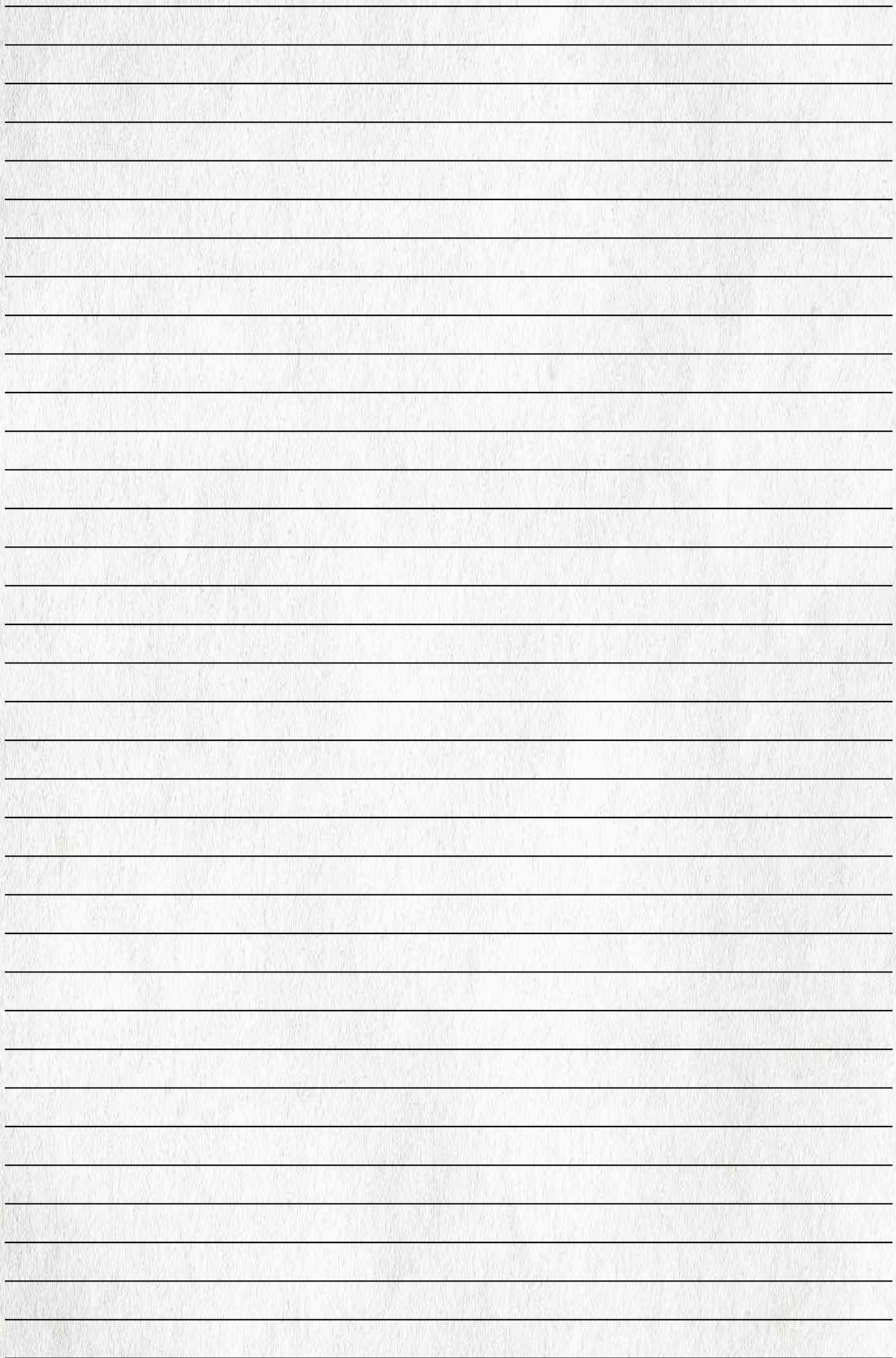
*But you are a chosen race, a royal
priesthood, a holy nation, a people for
God's own possession, so that you may
proclaim the excellencies of Him who has
called you out of darkness into His
marvelous light.
1 Peter 2:9*

For Jesus is, in every way, the best and most trustworthy teacher. And unlike earthly counselors, He knows us fully and loves us perfectly. He does not guess or speculate. He sees into our hearts. He leads with truth and grace.

Reflection: How is Jesus your wonderful counselor?

Reflection: What areas do you need to go to Him for counsel?

Reflection: Does the title *Wonderful Counselor* challenge the way we sometimes think about advice, wisdom, or help from others?





It was by a Counsellor that this world was ruined. Did not Satan mask himself in the serpent, and counsel the woman with exceeding craftiness, that she should take unto herself of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the hope that thereby she should be as God? Was it not that evil counsel which provoked our mother to rebel against her Maker, and did it not as the effect of sin, bring death into this world with all its train of woe? Ah! beloved, it was meet that the world should have a Counsellor to restore it, if it had a Counsellor to destroy it. It was by counsel that it fell and certainly, without counsel it never could have arisen. But mark the difficulties that surrounded such a Counsellor. 'Tis easy to counsel mischief; but how hard to counsel wisely! To cast down is easy, but to build up how hard! To confuse this world, and bring upon it all its train of ills was, an easy thing. A woman plucked the fruit and it was done; but to restore order to this confusion, to sweep away the evils which brooded over this fair earth, this was work indeed, and "Wonderful" was that Christ who came forward to attempt the work, and who in the plentitude of his wisdom hath certainly accomplished it, to his own honor and glory, and to our comfort and safety.

Charles Spurgeon | His Name – The Counsellor, September 26, 1858

Surprise the World with Bells

BLESS | I WILL BLESS THREE PEOPLE THIS WEEK, AT LEAST ONE OF WHOM IS NOT A MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH.

What 3 people do I want to bless this week, and how will I bless each one?

EAT | I WILL EAT WITH THREE PEOPLE THIS WEEK, AT LEAST ONE OF WHICH IS NOT A MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH.

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LISTEN | I WILL SPEND AT LEAST ONE PERIOD OF THE WEEK LISTENING FOR THE SPIRIT'S VOICE.

What did I hear from the Holy Spirit this week?

LEARN | I WILL SPEND ONE PERIOD OF THE WEEK LEARNING CHRIST.

What did I learn or re-learn about Christ this week?

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THROUGH CHRIST.

[illegible]

Week Two



December 7



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.

Isaiah 9:6 | ESV





MIGHTY GOD

While the Hebrew word we translate as *mighty* is used over 150 times in the New Testament, the phrase *Mighty God* is found only here in Isaiah 9:6, referring to the Messiah, and in Isaiah 10:21, referring to Yahweh:

*A remnant will return,
the remnant of Jacob,
to the mighty God.*

In using the same phrase to describe both Yahweh and the Messiah, a child to be born, Isaiah is making a bold claim regarding the deity of the Messiah. This child is not simply anointed by God, **He is God**.

Throughout the Old Testament, God is depicted as a warrior who fights for His people.

*The LORD is a warrior...
Exodus 15:3*

*Who is this King of glory? The
LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle.
Psalm 24:8*

*The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save.
Zephaniah 3:17*

Jesus demonstrates that He is Mighty God in the Gospels. He exercised authority over creation by calming the storm in Mark 4:39; His authority over disease by healing the leper without ritual in Mark 1:40-42; His authority over demons by commanding spirits to leave in Luke 4:33-36; His authority over death by raising Lazarus from the dead in John 11:43-44; and His authority to forgive sins which only God can do (Mark 2:5-12).

While Jesus was not a political leader, He was certainly a mighty warrior for His people. He was going to win the battle for His people by conquering death.

And His battlefield? The cross.

As our Mighty God, Jesus stepped on to the battlefield, not with a sword, but with nail-pierced hands.

*He disarmed the rulers and authorities
and put them to open shame, by
triumphing over
them in Him.*

Colossians 2:15

His birth was the arrival of the Mighty One who would face our enemies for us. His death was the decisive battle. His resurrection was the victory celebration. And His promised return will be the final mopping-up operation, when every enemy is put under His feet.

*For he must reign until he has put all
his enemies under his feet.*

1 Corinthians 15:25

Reflection: Where do you most need to experience the strength of the Mighty God in this season.

Reflection: What would it look like to live today confident that the Mighty God is fighting for you?

[illegible]

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Week Three

[illegible]

December 14



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and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, *Everlasting Father*, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6 | ESV





EVERLASTING FATHER

Isaiah 9:6 demonstrates the amazing complexity of our Savior. How can He be described as a child yet also a mighty warrior or a prince? It should cause us to marvel.

But it is perhaps *Everlasting Father* that most perplexes us in this verse. How can Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, the Son, be called *Father*? The simplest answer is that Isaiah is not speaking of the Messiah's role within the Godhead, but of an aspect of His character. The promised Messiah will act toward His people with the fatherly care, protection, and provision of God Himself:

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.
Psalms 103:13

The Hebrew word for *everlasting* carries the idea of in perpetuity or without end. Jesus Himself is everlasting:

And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
Colossians 1:17

Because He is everlasting, His fatherly care is unending. When paired with *Father*, this name means the Messiah's care will never fade, expire, or fail. He will be a Father to His people forever.

In the New Testament, we see Jesus living out His fatherly heart:

Let the children come to me; do not hinder them... And he took them in his arms and blessed them.
Mark 10:14–16

I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction.
John 17:12

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.
John 14:18

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Week Four



December 21



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and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, *Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6 | ESV





PRINCE OF PEACE

Isaiah 9:6–7 gives us a vision of a King unlike any other. Twice, Isaiah uses the rare Hebrew word *misrah* (government), a term found only here in the Old Testament. This word connotes royalty and the idea of rule, dominion, and authority. This not merely civil administration but the reign of a kingdom.

To understand the weight of this promise, remember the political turmoil in Isaiah's day. Assyria is looming over both Israel and Judah. The human kings, who were meant to be a representation of Yahweh, had failed over and over again. Instead of drawing people closer to the one true God, they continually lead people away from Him into injustice and idolatry.

Where human kings had failed, Isaiah foretells a new kind of leader; one who would have an everlasting rule of righteousness and justice. His reign would not be marked by oppression or instability but by peace.

Many of us are very familiar with the Hebrew term *shalom*. Shalom is not merely peace in a general, abstract sense, but the fullness of well-being, wholeness, and harmony between people.

Shalom is not merely an absence of war or conflict. In his book *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, Cornelius Plantinga Jr. describes shalom as *the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight*. Furthermore, *God hates sin not just because it violates his law but, more substantively, because it violates shalom, because it breaks the peace, because it interferes with the way things are supposed to be*.

When Jesus was born, the angels proclaimed:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom

He is pleased!

Luke 2:14

Throughout His life and ministry, Jesus brought peace to storms, restored outcasts, and healed the sick. But His ultimate act of peacemaking came at the cross as He reconciled sinners to God.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
Colossians 1:19-20

Through Christ, the relationship that was once broken by sin is now healed and restored. As we walk in restored relationship with the Father, we see things as they were meant to be. Peace with God restores not just relationship, but purpose. We get a glimpse of the abundant life God intended for humanity from the beginning when:

God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it . . .'
Genesis 1:28

Jesus put it clearly when he said:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly
John 10:10

The reign of our Prince of Peace has begun but we wait for its fullness at His future return. Isaiah's promise looks forward to the day when justice and righteousness will fill the earth and there will be no end to His peace.

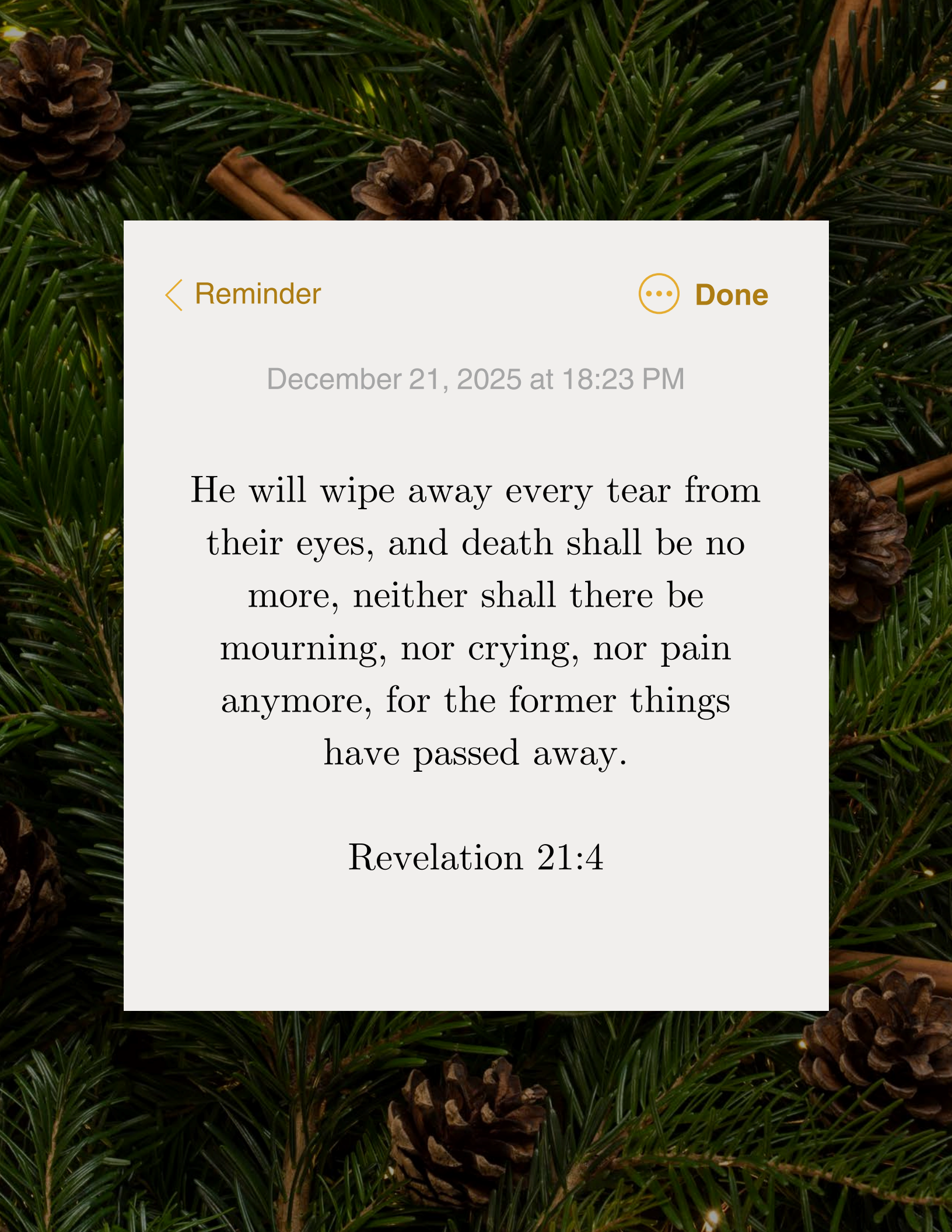
He shall be their peace
Micah 5:5

While we look to His future return in anticipation, we must also submit to His rule in the present. His government brings order to our chaos, hope to our fears, and healing to our divisions. When we come under His authority, we taste His peace even now.

In a world of constant instability political upheaval, fractured relationships, and inner anxiety, the Prince of Peace offers an unshakable kingdom:

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.
Hebrews 12:28

Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
Matthew 25:34



< Reminder

⋮ Done

December 21, 2025 at 18:23 PM

He will wipe away every tear from
their eyes, and death shall be no
more, neither shall there be
mourning, nor crying, nor pain
anymore, for the former things
have passed away.

Revelation 21:4

Reflection

What part of your life feels most shaken right now and what would it look like to place that under the unshakable rule of the Prince of Peace?

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Christmas
EVE



For a child 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.

Isaiah 9:6 | ESV

But the angel said to them, do not be afraid; for behold, I
bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the
people; for today in the city of David
there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10-11 | NASB 1995

And when eight days had passed, before His
circumcision, *His name was then called Jesus,*
the name given by the angel before
He was conceived in the womb.

Luke 2:21 | NASB 1995





CHRISTMAS EVE

Have you ever waited with anticipation for a big vacation or other important event? Imagine Mary and Joseph's anticipation for the birth of their child. But this wasn't just significant for Mary and Joseph, but for all of humanity. For this child that was born in Bethlehem was the promised Messiah from Isaiah.

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given.
Isaiah 9:6*

Isaiah told us what His character would be. Luke tells us what His name is: Jesus, the Lord saves. Every title finds its fulfillment in that one name.

As Wonderful Counselor, He saves us from confusion and shows us the way. As Mighty God, He saves us from sin, death, and the devil. As Everlasting Father, He saves us into His unending care. As Prince of Peace, He saves us from the war within and restores us to God.

This is the name the angel commanded, the name Mary and Joseph spoke over Him, the name the shepherds told everyone they met, the name we proclaim today and every day. And this is not just a name we admire, it is a name with power.

In His name, the sick are healed: *But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"*

Acts 3:6

In His name, demons flee:

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!'

Luke 10:17

And in His name, sins are forgiven:

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Acts 4:12



Now, to apply this for our own instruction, whenever any distrust arises, and all means of escape are taken away from us, whenever, in short, it appears to us that everything is in a ruinous condition, let us recall to our remembrance that Christ is called Wonderful, because he has inconceivable methods of assisting us, and because his power is far beyond what we are able to conceive. When we need counsel, let us remember that he is the Counsellor. When we need strength, let us remember that he is Mighty and Strong. When new terrors spring up suddenly every instant, and when many deaths threaten us from various quarters, let us rely on that eternity of which he is with good reason called the Father, and by the same comfort let us learn to soothe all temporal distresses. When we are inwardly tossed by various tempests, and when Satan attempts to disturb our consciences, let us remember that Christ is The Prince of Peace, and that it is easy for him quickly to allay all our uneasy feelings. Thus will these titles confirm us more and more in the faith of Christ, and fortify us against Satan and against hell itself.

Calvin, *Commentary on Isaiah*, Vol 1

MERRY
Christmas

Wonderful
COUNSELOR

Nighty
GOD

Everlasting
FATHER

Prince of
PEACE



CHRISTMAS DAY

*For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.
Isaiah 9:6*

This Christmas Day, we pause to reflect on Jesus, who took on flesh and stepped into our world as a child. This Son was given by the Father that we might be brought back into relationship with Him.

*For Christ also suffered once for sins,
the righteous for the unrighteous, that
He might bring us to God, being put to
death in the flesh but made alive in the
spirit.*

1 Peter 3:18

Christmas is a day of joy and reflection but it is also a reminder that our reflection must not end here. We do not celebrate only His birth. We celebrate His presence with us now. The child in the manger became the Savior on the cross. And the Savior is still at work today.

*And His name shall be...
And it still is.
And it always will be.*

As we turn toward a new year, consider where Jesus is at work in your life.

- How is He counseling you with wisdom?
- Where is He fighting for you with power?
- How is He fathering you with love and protection?
- Where is He reigning with peace?

Jesus Christ is still the same — still counseling, still saving, still loving, still reigning.

*He who did not spare His own Son but
gave Him up for us all, how will He
not also with Him graciously give us
all things?*

Romans 8:32

If the Father did not even spare His own Son, how much more will He give you what you truly need if only you will ask?

*If you then, who are evil, know
how to give good gifts to your children,
how much more will your Father
who is in heaven give good things
to those who ask Him!*

Matthew 7:11

Reflection

So ask Him. Go to Him.

What counsel do you need today?

What part of your life needs His rule?

Where do you long to be loved and known?

Where are you desperate for peace?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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