

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah 9:6 (2016 ESV) — 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.

The word *mighty* means to be strong, to accomplish or prevail, to excel or be superior. It is usually used of people; in fact, it is never used of women. God created men and women to have different, though equally important, roles. Men were created for the attribute of mightiness. So we find that mighty means manly, vigorous, brave, valiant, a warrior, a hero. Sometimes mighty is not the word others would have used. The angel found Gideon threshing wheat in a winepress in order to hide it – and perhaps himself – from the Midianites. That angel addressed Gideon respectfully, saying, “Yahweh is with you, O mighty man of valor!” (Judges 6:12). Mighty did not always mean mighty in warfare. Ruth 2:1 says “Now Naomi had a relative of her husband’s, a worthy man – or *mighty* man – of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.” When the word is used in plural – mighty *men* – it often refers to soldiers and warriors.

GOD IS THE MIGHTY GOD

But there are a few times when *mighty* is used of the One True God. Moses says to the Hebrews in the wilderness,

Deuteronomy 10:17 (2016 ESV) — 17 For Yahweh your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, **the mighty**, and the awesome God, who is not partial and

takes no bribe.

When the people of Nehemiah's day rededicated themselves to faithfulness to the Lord, they addressed God as "our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love." (Nehemiah 9:32).

Jeremiah declares to Yahweh,

Jeremiah 32:18 (2016 ESV) — 18 You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and **mighty God**, whose name is Yahweh of hosts,

Psalm 24:8 asks and answers,

Psalm 24:8 (2016 ESV) — 8 Who is this King of glory? Yahweh, strong and **mighty**, Yahweh, **mighty** in battle!

God defends His people, Isaiah says,

Isaiah 42:13 (2016 ESV) — 13 The Lord goes out like a **mighty** man, like a man of war he stirs up his zeal; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself **mighty** against his foes.

And Zephaniah describes God using His strength to demonstrate His love and joy over His people,

Zephaniah 3:17 (2016 ESV) — 17 The Lord your God is in your midst, **a mighty one who will save**; He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing.

The Mighty God, *El-Gibbor* in Hebrew, is strong to create all things in six days, strong to create the universe with its many billions of galaxies and many trillions of stars, strong to create every living thing on the earth, strong to create man from the dust of the earth, and woman from the side of man, strong to hold all together, strong to maintain His creation every moment.

What's more, He is strong enough to show mercy and love to sinners, strong enough to provide a means to first cover their sin through the Old Covenant, and ultimately to remove their sin through the New Covenant. He is strong enough to put irrefutable revelation of His own eternal nature and divine power in creation, and then to hold every person accountable for what they did with that knowledge. He is strong enough to remain holy and righteous, unpolluted and unchanged by the immeasurable evil of this fallen universe. And He is strong enough to break through the darkness of sinful humanity with the light of His own mercy and grace.

It's often thought that God in the Old Testament was a cranky, prickly God, quick to punish His people, quick to criticize and judge, and that God in the New Testament is a sweet, gentle, calm, pleasant sort of God, patient, tolerant, with much lower standards. I hope you recognize the blasphemy in that thinking. There has always been, is, and is now, and always shall be, just One God, who is unchanging.

God is described in the Old Testament as the fortress of His people (Psalm 46:11), the

refuge and strength and very present help for His people (Psalm 46:1).

He keeps His people so perfectly that they cannot be moved (Psalm 125:1).

Even if they pass through the waters and the flames, He is with them (Isaiah 43:2-3).

In the Old Testament God reveals His steadfast love – His *chesed* – for His people. That word is more than love. It means kindness, loyalty, goodness, mercy, favor, loveliness. It is unfailing love, loyal love, covenant love. The people of Israel committed all sorts of sins, and Yahweh continued to protect them and guide them and restore them. Not many years after entering the promised land, the people committed a terrible sin against Yahweh: they turned away from Him to serve the Ba'als, the false gods of the Canaanites.

For about four hundred years God punished His people's idolatry by giving them over to various Canaanite tribes. When they repented, He sent deliverers called Judges to rescue them. This happened over and over. Once the monarchy began Yahweh began sending prophets to His people to call them to faithfulness. He sent prophets who wrote Scripture: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. He sent many more who did not write, but nevertheless preached the Scriptures to the people and called them again and again to faithfulness.

More than 800 years passed from the time of the Judges, which began around 1400 B.C., to the captivity of Judah, around 586 B.C. 800 years in which God reached out to His people, calling them to repent of their idolatry, until the fullness of time had been reached. But still, He had promised through the prophet Jeremiah that this captivity

would last only 70 years, and then He would restore His people, and that is exactly as it happened. Yahweh raised up Cyrus, who gave permission for Jews to begin to return to Israel. They rebuilt and rededicated the Temple under Ezra's leadership, and then rebuilt and rededicated the walls of the city under Nehemiah's leadership.

I hope with all my heart that you see that Yahweh in the Old Testament was extraordinarily patient, kind, gentle, merciful, loving, and POWERFUL toward His people, in spite of their sin and rebellion. For about 1,400 years the people were under the Law of God. The Law excelled at showing the sinfulness of man, but was unable to transform rebellious idolators into loyal lovers of God. That came through the Mightiness of God, exercised in His lovingkindness and holiness.

TRANSITION: It is the light of both the promises of the Law, and the weakness of our own flesh regarding the Law, that the promise is made in Isaiah 9:6. Jesus would be Mighty God.

JESUS IS THE MIGHTY GOD: THE DEITY OF CHRIST

This is not a sermon about the deity of Christ, but it's important to be reminded of His identity as Creator, Lord, Savior, and Judge. Everything that God has done, is doing, and will do, Jesus has done, is doing, and will do. He possessed divine glory in eternity past. He is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. He possesses the full authority of God to save and to condemn. What we see *God* do in the Scripture is exactly what we see the *Son* do in the Scripture. Jesus Christ, as Isaiah 9:6 says, is *Mighty God*.

TRANSITION: What's more – if it's appropriate to say what's more regarding the nature of the Son of God – Jesus Christ is Mighty God for His people.

JESUS IS MIGHTY FOR US: HOW WE BENEFIT FROM JESUS BEING MIGHTY GOD

Everything that is true of God in Scripture is true of Jesus Christ. Every blessing and promise of the Old Testament Scriptures is fulfilled in the Son of God.

But the New Testament reveals even more about the power, promises, and presence of God to save sinners.

Jesus did not come to show us how to live in order to please God. He did not come to give us a better moral standard; there IS no better moral standard than the Law of God. Jesus did not come to make us feel good about ourselves, or to give us excuses for our sin.

Let's remember, that's why Jesus came:

Luke 19:10 (2016 ESV) — 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save **the lost.**”

1 Timothy 1:15 (2016 ESV) — 15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners**, of whom I am the foremost.

He came to seek and save the lost. He came into the world to save sinners. I would

argue with Paul that HE was the foremost of sinners; I'm pretty sure I am the chief of sinners. But I think that genuine salvation convinces every Christian that *he* or *she* is the foremost of sinners, the worst sinner of all time. After all, I can only see your *outward behavior*, but I see my *heart*, and *my heart* is so much worse than *your outward behavior*.

Jesus Christ is Mighty God, Mighty to save sinners (Isaiah 63:1).

When we come to Him in faith, He gives us rest:

Matthew 11:28 (2016 ESV) — 28 Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you **rest**.

When we come to Him in faith, He promises that we will never hunger and thirst for eternal life ever again:

John 4:14 (2016 ESV) — 14 “but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will **never be thirsty** [for life] again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

When we come to Him in faith He promises us everlasting life:

John 5:24 (2016 ESV) — 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me **has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.**

When we follow Jesus in faith He gives us eternal light:

John 8:12 (2016 ESV) — 12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. **Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.**”

None of these promises are fulfilled only in the future. They all have at least a partial fulfillment now. Our rest is not the rest that comes with death, but rest from the burden of sin, and that begins now. The satisfaction that Jesus gives, so that we no longer hunger and thirst for eternal life, begins now. Our deliverance from the judgment of God begins now. Having the light of life begins now.

BRINGING IT HOME

Oh, so much more is said in Scripture! Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep. He knows His own, and no one can snatch them out of His hand. Jesus intercedes for us before the Father without ceasing; the names of His own are constantly on His lips. Because of His love and His intercession, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ: not tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, sword, death, life, angels, rulers, things present, things to come, powers, heights, depths, nor anything else in all creation. Some fear that sin can separate a Christian from God, but sin exists within creation, and nothing in creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Why is all of this true? Why is all of this possible? Why can we trust in these promises? Why can we be assured that nothing promised to us will fail?

Because, Jesus Christ is Mighty God of Isaiah 9:6. Because He is fully God, the Second Person of the Trinity, and no mere man. Because all authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth. Because in Him all things hold together. He is the Mighty God.

All who are under the judgment of God should fear Jesus Christ. He will not take their side against the righteousness of God. He is a friend of sinners, but He is such a good friend that He will not let them remain sinners. The man or woman who thinks that saving faith means *saying* they believe, and living any way they choose, is deceived. Saving faith is transforming faith. The sinner who is not transformed, is not saved.

And all those whom the Father loves, Jesus loves, and redeems, and together the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit for our regeneration and restoration. He uses His power for our good and our blessing.

He is a Mighty God for us!