

# **When God Comes Down**

**And His Name Shall Be Called . . .**

*Isaiah 9:6b*

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December 24, 2008

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## Introduction

During the 1960's, a phenomenon called "Peanuts" was born. The comic strip began appearing in newspapers all over America. The simple characters and modest storylines became the perfect placebo for millions looking for a daily dose of innocence.

And none of that was lost on Madison Avenue.

CBS first approached Charles Schulz, creator of the Peanuts comic strip, with the idea of an animated television Christmas Special featuring Charlie, Lucy, Linus, and the whole gang. Schulz agreed, the work began, and CBS was quick to review the script.

Schultz titled the special, "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

CBS approved.

The opening scene placed Charlie Brown on his tiptoes peeking into his snow-covered mailbox hoping to find a Christmas card, but to no avail . . . again.

Feeling dejected, he stopped by Lucy's psychiatric booth to mourn the commercialism of Christmas.

Lucy agreed, adding her own lament, "Christmas is nothing but a lot of stupid toys. What I really want is real estate!"

CBS loved it.

In the next scene Charlie became further disillusioned as Snoopy was decorating his doghouse with strings of lights and gaudy decorations in hopes of winning a neighborhood contest.

"Good grief!" said Charlie Brown.

"That's great!" said CBS.

Even Sally, Charlie's sister, was caught in the Christmas trappings. She recruited him to take a dictation for a letter to Santa. "Dear Santa. Just send money, preferably tens and twenties."

More laughter from CBS.

As the story progressed, Lucy sent Charlie to pick out a Christmas tree for their neighborhood pageant, with instructions to

find “a big, shiny aluminum tree . . . maybe painted pink.”

But Charlie couldn't do it. Instead, he brought back a real, albeit small, pathetic, lifeless tree . . . and the kids hated it.

“You blockhead, Charlie Brown!” they shouted.

“That's good, really good!” CBS drooled.

Frustrated, Charlie said, “What is Christmas about, anyway?”

Then Linus stepped into the spotlight and answered Charlie Brown's question:

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.” (Luke 2:8-14)

“Hold everything!” demanded CBS. “You can't recite Bible verses on national television . . . and especially not the *King James Version!* You'll alienate our viewers and chase away our advertisers. The tree can stay, but the Bible has to go.”

Schulz stood firm. “If I can't tell the Christmas story, you can't have the Peanuts cast. If the Bible reading goes, so do they!”

CBS looked at the fast-approaching deadline . . . and gulped. “Okay, it stays. But we're going to pay a terrible price for this.”

And, sure enough, on the night of the Charlie Brown Christmas special, the CBS switchboard was flooded with calls from around the country. Everyone asked the same question, “When can we have more Charlie Brown Christmas specials?”

“Soon,” CBS promised. “Very soon!”

That night a TV tradition was born. 50% of America tuned in

to watch “A Charlie Brown Christmas.”

It won an Emmy award and a Peabody award.

*TV Guide* claimed that Linus’ Bible reading was one of the top 35 moments in television history. And “A Charlie Brown Christmas” became the longest running Christmas special on CBS.

You see, the story of Jesus’ birth was never meant to be a secret. Indeed, as the angel said, the birth of Jesus is “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people” (Luke 2:10).

Jesus’ birth was actually foretold hundreds of years before he was born. The Prophet Isaiah told us about Jesus’ birth 700 years before he was born. And in one of the best-known Old Testament prophecies, Isaiah told us what Jesus would be called. He said in Isaiah 9:6b:

**And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6b)**

### **Lesson**

Isaiah gave us four names that Jesus would be called. Each name gives us a description of what Jesus would do.

#### **I. Because Jesus Shall Be Called Wonderful Counselor, There Will Be No Confusion**

First, Isaiah said, “**And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor.**” Because Jesus shall be called **Wonderful Counselor**, there will be no confusion.

During his first advent, Jesus demonstrated his wisdom as a counselor. The New Testament descriptions of Jesus’ encounters with people who came to him for counsel show that in a wonderful way he always knew what to say, when to reach out, and when to rebuke. The testimony of those who heard him was, “No one ever spoke like this man!” (John 7:46).

Jesus is the source of all truth. He said, “I am the way, and

the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). It is to him we must ultimately turn to make sense of life’s confusion.

Unfortunately, most people turn everywhere *else* for counsel. They go to advisors, counselors, astrologers, religious leaders, and even pastors. But the most critical truth of all—the only really life-changing truth—is the truth that is found in Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate and only answer to all of life’s confusion.

Wouldn’t you like to have a counselor who knows everything? Jesus is that counselor. He knows all about you. He knows all the needs of your heart. He knows how to answer those needs. And he always is a **Wonderful Counselor** to those who will hear and obey him.

## II. **Because Jesus Shall Be Called Mighty God, There Will Be No Chaos**

Second, Isaiah said, “**And his name shall be called . . . Mighty God.**” Because Jesus shall be called **Mighty God**, there will be no chaos.

The Bible says, “For God is not a God of confusion but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Chaos is antithetical to who Jesus is. He is the **Mighty God** of order with the power to create order and the power to keep order.

Jesus loves to step into a person’s life of chaos and not only provide wonderful counsel, but also display his divine power by bringing order out of chaos. In other words, he not only tells his subjects what to do as a Wonderful Counselor, but he also enables them to do it—because he is the **Mighty God**.

Human counsel goes only so far. It stops short at the point of power because a human counselor has no ability to empower anyone to do right.

But in Jesus we have a **Mighty God** who has power. He forgives sin, defeats Satan, liberates us from the power of evil, redeems us, answers our prayers, restores our broken souls, rules over our rebuilt lives, and brings order to our chaos.

### **III. Because Jesus Shall Be Called Everlasting Father, There Will Be No Cessation**

Third, Isaiah said, “**And his name shall be called . . . Everlasting Father.**” Because Jesus shall be called **Everlasting Father**, there will be no cessation.

Jesus’ name here is in relation to time and not to his relationship with other members of the Godhead. Jesus is everlasting.

Hebrews 1:10-12 says of Jesus, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.”

Infinity and all its intricacies are nothing to Jesus who is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End—the **Everlasting Father**. He declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). That is, from the very start, he declares how everything will turn out. What a comfort to know that he is in complete and sovereign control. He sees the beginning and the end of everything. And he guarantees that he will work for the ultimate good of all his subjects (Romans 8:28), which will last forever.

### **IV. Because Jesus Shall Be Called Prince of Peace, There Will Be No Conflicts**

And finally, Isaiah said, “**And his name shall be called . . . Prince of Peace.**” Because Jesus shall be called **Prince of Peace**, there will be no conflicts.

He offers *peace from God* (Romans 1:7) to all who are the recipients of his grace. He makes *peace with God* (Romans 5:1) for those who surrender to him in faith. And he brings the *peace of God* (Philippians 4:7) to those who walk with him.

And at Christmas, we hear that the beginning of his earthly

life was heralded by angels who announced *peace on earth* (Luke 2:14).

Now, in the sense we think of it, there never has been peace on earth. Wars have characterized the entire 2,000 years since the birth of Jesus, and all the time before his birth too.

That announcement of peace on earth was a two-pronged proclamation. First, it declared the arrival of Jesus as the only One who ultimately will bring lasting peace on earth (which he will do at his second coming when he inaugurates his visible kingdom).

But second, and more important, it was a proclamation that God's peace is available to us *today*. Listen carefully to the words of Luke 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace *among those with whom he is pleased!*"

Who are those "with whom he is pleased"? The ones who have surrendered their lives to him. The Psalmist said, "The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love" (Psalm 147:11).

We fear God because we are sinners in need of forgiveness (Romans 3:23). And we hope in his steadfast love because the good tidings of great joy is that eventually Jesus gave his own sinless, guiltless life on our behalf, to die for our sins and save us from God's wrath (Romans 5:6-9). We can do nothing to earn his favor, but he promises salvation if we will turn from our sins and embrace him by faith (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23).

When the angel proclaimed peace on earth, he was speaking primarily of a very personal, individual application of God's peace that grows out of a firsthand relationship with the **Prince of Peace**.

## Conclusion

So, **his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**. Believe in Jesus this Christmas, and you will find him to be the answer to all the confusion, chaos, cessation, and conflicts of life. Amen.



## Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

To bring people to Jesus Christ  
and **membership** in his church family,  
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,  
equip them for their **ministry** in the church  
and life **mission** in the world,  
in order to **magnify** God's name.

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When God Comes Down

**PRAYER:**

O Lord our God, on this Christmas Eve we give you thanks for Jesus. We thank you that his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

May he be the answer to all our confusion, chaos, cessation, and conflicts this Christmas.

And for all of this I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**CHARGE:**

Go and glorify God in all that you think, do, and say! And as you do, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.