

**Isaiah 9: 6 and 7; “The Government on Christ’s Shoulder”, A Sermon
for the Christmas season, Delivered on December 21st, 2014, by
Pastor Paul Rendall in the Morning Worship Service.**

I would like to have us think this morning of the way that this passage depicts the Messiah; the One who is spoken of as the great promised Ruler of the Jewish people. The verses which I just read to you use prophetic language which is mighty and sublime in relation to the One who would come and fulfill the description. The language is so awe inspiringly beautiful; it uses words of such high importance and value; that we find ourselves believing that the One being described for us here must be the greatest Prince and Ruler of all time. And most certainly He is. He is a Prince and a Ruler in each of the ways in which He is described for us, here in verse 6.

It says that He was born a Prince and a ruler as a Child; and He was given to us as a Prince and a Ruler, as a Son. And we now know from other portions of the Scripture, that He is given to every person who would have Him to be their Lord. He was given for all who will receive Him by faith. He has been given to all who are willing to submit to His righteous rule over their lives. These words can refer to no one else than our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only Person who can fit the description. When we take Him to be our Prince, we thereby enter in to the everlasting spiritual kingdom which He came to bring and to establish in our hearts.

Christ’s righteous rule is over all people who dwell here upon the earth. All power and authority has been given to Him in heaven and earth. But when any sinner believes in Him, they are brought out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. They are a part of Christ’s eternal kingdom from that point on, and forever. They continue to be a citizen of this kingdom when they die and go to heaven. They will dwell in His house forevermore. Their spirit shall never die. There in heaven they will await the glorious climax of the work of redemption when Christ shall change their lowly body, which was placed in the grave, to be like His glorious body, on the Day that He returns; on the Day of the Resurrection. And thus glorified, they will be blessed forever.

Whether we as believers are here upon the earth, or whether we are in our last days and contemplating what it will mean to go to heaven, we should all understand that the government will be upon the shoulder of our Lord Jesus Christ, until He hands the kingdom over to the Father at the time of the end of this world. When it says, “the government”, it means the righteous administration of everything related to the salvation of all of God’s people. It means that Christ will be, to those who believe in Him, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace.

What I want to do this morning is to speak to you about the name-titles of Christ which are given to us here. And then this afternoon I would like to speak to you about the increase of His government and peace. As to His name-titles; He is given 4 of them here. We will speak of 3 of them this morning, and touch upon the last one this afternoon. But we will open that one up in the context of the increase of Christ’s government.

1st of all – Let us speak of Christ’s name-title of being called Wonderful Counselor.

“And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor; or Wonderful – Counselor. In translating the original Hebrew some translators place a comma between Wonderful and Counselor, but as you look at the other name-titles, you find that each of the other 3 name-titles are qualified by a further description: Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. So there is every reason to believe that these first two words form one name – title as well. You can see these words used again in this descriptive way in Isaiah 28, verse 29 – “This also comes from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.” It is true, however, that Christ is wonderful in His being and wonderful in all His works, and not simply wonderful in His words and what He gives to us in His teaching. He is altogether Wonderful in His glorious Person.

You can see this if you will turn back with me to the book of Judges Chapter 13. Here we find recorded the birth of Sampson, and the circumstances which attended the revelation of how great a man of strength that he would be. It says in verse 2 – “Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children.” “And the Angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, ‘Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.’” “Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean.” “For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son.” “And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” “So the woman came and told her husband, saying, ‘A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name.’”

You can see, from what she said, that this child was to be an extraordinary person. According to the word of the Angel of the Lord which He gave to her, Sampson would be great, and he would be type of the Christ in his strength (his physical strength being a type of the spiritual strength of the Messiah). Sampson would be a great deliverer of Israel from the Philistines. (In this he would be a type of Christ, as He would deliver His people from their sins.) Sampson’s birth would involve God’s miraculous working and power being exercised upon Manoah’s wife who was barren and had no children. (His miraculous conception would be a type of the miraculous conception of the Lord Jesus in the womb of Mary his mother; she who had never known a man.

But it is the name of this Angel of the Lord that I want you to see. Verse 17 of this chapter says, “Then Manoah said to the Angel of the Lord, ‘What is your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor you?’” “And the angel of the Lord said to him, ‘Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?’” “The word “wonderful”, here in the original language, signifies “miracle”, a work past the reach of the creature’s power and skill, or knowledge; and so it is most applicable to God alone.” (Thus says Thomas Boston)

In Exodus 15: 11 it says – “Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods?” “Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Psalm 77: 11-14 – “Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.” “I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds.” “Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?” “You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the people.” “You have with Your arm (That is with Jesus Christ Your Son) redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.”

We need to understand from this that our Lord Jesus Christ is a miraculous wonderful Person. He is not only miraculous and wonderful in that He is a Divine Person; but He is a miraculous wonderful Person in that He is also a human person; He is the God-Man. He is, as it says in Hebrews 1: 3, “The brightness of His Father’s glory, and the express image of His person.” “He upholds all things by the word of his power,” and “by Himself He has purged our sins, and He has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” He was wondrous in the miracles that He did when He was upon the earth; and He was wondrous in the words which He spoke.

This is why He is called the Wonderful Counselor. His words give us the best counsel on how we should live, and how we should think, and what we should do to be saved from our sins; and how we can glorify God. His words are the words of eternal life. Turn with me to John Chapter 6, and we will let the Lord Jesus explain Himself in this regard. In verse 57 Jesus says to those who thought that they would become His disciples, “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on me will live because of Me.” “This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead.” He who eats this bread will live forever.”

Verse 60 says, “Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, ‘This is a hard saying; who can understand it?’” “When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, ‘Does this offend you?’” “What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?” “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.” “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” But there are some of you who do not believe.” You see, Jesus is giving Wonderful counsel here; counsel of how the Father sent Him into the world to be the bread of eternal life to them. If they would spiritually partake of Him; eat His flesh and drink His blood; the wondrous work that He would do for sinners at the cross; then they would have eternal life. The words were wondrous and the One who spoke them was wondrous.

Look now at how many responded. Verse 66 – “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.” But then look at the faith of Simon Peter. Verse 67 – “Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’” “But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go?’” “You have the words of eternal life.” “Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” You see; this is the kind of faith that if we do not have it now, we need very much to come to it. Have you come to believe and know, for yourself, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God? If you truly have; you have also come to know that He has the words of eternal life, and you will hold fast to them; you will cling to them; you will live by them because His counsel is wonderful.

This wonderful counsel will lead you through this life and on to glory if you follow it. Let me ask; are you by faith willing to follow Jesus’ words where they will lead you? Will you build your life upon them? Turn with me over to Matthew Chapter 7, verse 24. “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell.” “And great was its fall.” I pray that each of you will build the house of your life on the words of Jesus Christ. They are the most wonderful counsel; and He is the most wonderful of counselors. He is worthy of your trust.

2nd – Let’s think about the Lord Jesus Christ as the Mighty God.

This name-description tells us that in becoming a man that our Lord Jesus Christ did not lose any of the power of His deity when He became man. Rather He voluntarily chose to limit that power in its demonstration before men, to the works which the Father had given Him to do. His limiting the use of His power to these particular works was an integral part of His submission to His Father as a man; a man who would render a perfect obedience to His Father on our behalf. Turn with me to John Chapter 5 and you will see an example of this. In verse 16 we find that Jesus was being persecuted by the Jews because He had healed a man who had been lame for 38 years. And they were seeking to kill Him because He had done these things on the Sabbath. “But Jesus answered them, ‘My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.’” “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”

Well, how does Jesus answer that? If He truly is God, He must tell them the truth. This is what He says. Verse 19 – “Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.’” “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.” When He says that the Son can do nothing of Himself, He does not mean that He could not do anything of

Himself; it simply means that He was choosing not to do anything of Himself. The Father, since He loved the Son, would show Him all the things that He would have the Lord Jesus to do.

Verse 22 goes on to say, "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father." "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." Let's stop and apply this to ourselves. Do we honor the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as we honor the Father? Do we worship Him? Do we obey Him? Do we serve Him as our Master? Do we bow down and worship Him on our knees and pray to Him; seeing ourselves as His servants? He is the Mighty God. All power and authority has been given to Him in heaven and earth. There is nothing too difficult for Him to do, if your request is according to the Father's will, for He is God.

If you have not seen Him in this way, the way of His power and greatness, will you not begin to do so now? Will you not consider Him in the way that He is described for us in Colossians Chapter 2, verses 8 and 9? "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." Christ is not some inferior deity to the Father. He is one with the Father. And in His incarnation, He the Divine Word, assumed human nature to Himself. He raised human nature up to a greater dignity, and a greater height, than it ever had in Adam in the garden.

No, this is reason for great joy on the part of all men; that God through Christ should cause it to be so. This is what gives the greater value to all of Christ's words. He is not a mere man; He is God. This is what gives a merit to all His works, in His obedience to the Father, and in His laying down His life for us, His friends. All the fullness of God dwells in Him bodily. That cannot be said of any other man who has ever lived. Will you not rejoice today, that Jesus Christ is the Mighty God? Will you cease thinking of Him as just another man? He is your Lord and your God; to reverence, to worship, and to adore.

Let no man rob you or cheat you of this; so that you think of Him in merely a humanistic way, to be imitated in the things that He did in His goodness? You will want to do that, but that should not be the primary consideration in your mind and heart; that you want to do good. You want to do good because you are serving Christ, your King and your God. And you know that you are receiving power from Him moment by moment, to do whatever good that you can do, because your faith, your love, your goodness, is not from yourself; it is from the Lord Jesus who is God.

Now 3rd – Let us speak of Christ as the Everlasting Father.

This really confuses some people, I think. The obvious reason being, that this name – title seems to infringe upon the Person of the Father in the Godhead. And really, they are 2 distinct Persons. But perhaps it will help if we conceive of it in the sense that the Hebrew mind would receive it. He is Himself the Father of eternity. Albert Barnes says, "The Chaldee renders this expression, "The man abiding forever." "Bishop Lowth renders it, "The Father of the everlasting age." Literally, it is "the Father of eternity." He says: "The word rendered everlasting properly denotes eternity, and is used to express forever; it is speaking in reference to the idea of forever and ever. The Word has always existed in Eternity past with the Father, and He always will exist forever and ever as the Only-Begotten of the Father.

But in the Incarnation, the Father and the Son undertook the fulfillment of their plans which they had formed in eternity past. They took the amazing step, at the proper time; the fullness of time, of having our Lord Jesus Christ become the Father of eternity to a vast number of people whom God calls, "His Elect". If you turn over to Micah Chapter 5, you will see how the Lord Jesus Christ became the Father of eternity. Verse 2 says, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the

One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” There it is; the Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, and His goings forth were from old, from everlasting. He would be the One who would become Ruler in Israel. And the way that He would rule would be, “in the midst of His enemies.”

Listen to what it says of Christ in Psalm 110, verse 1: “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” “The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion” “Rule in the midst of your enemies!” This is the way that Christ Jesus the Messiah took up the government of His kingdom upon His shoulders. He did so, “in the midst of His enemies. When His time came to be born at Bethlehem, He was already a King. And king Herod, who was ruling over Judah and Jerusalem at that time, did not want any rivals. He pretended to want to worship the Lord Jesus, and when the wise men did not return to tell him where the baby King was, he became very angry. And he sent and slew all the children from 3 years old and younger in all that vicinity.

This was the fulfillment of the verses in Jeremiah 31: 15 and following. “Thus says the Lord: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for children, because they are no more.’” The Lord Jesus had enemies from His birth, but He was still ruling in the midst of them. Then as he grew up and assumed His ministry at the age of 30, His enemies tried to take His life at many points. But He would fulfill the 4th verse of Micah Chapter 5, where it says: “And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and this One shall be peace. He would feed His flock; His believing people, with the wonderful counsel of His Word.

He would, by the strength of His grace, and by the Almighty power of His Spirit, bring to them every good thing related to their salvation from sin, and free them from their oppression due to Satan’s trying to harm them everlastingly. He would deliver them so that they might serve Him, and the Father, without fear. Because of His mighty power and the working of His grace, His flock would abide in Him, and live to His glory as their Savior, and Shepherd and King. But notice the wording of verse 4b. “He shall be great to the ends of the earth; and this One shall be peace.” Or, as it says in the New American Standard translation – “This One shall be our peace.” Indeed He shall be the Prince of Peace. And we will speak more about the increase of Christ’s government and peace this afternoon.