

## His Name Will Be Called Wonderful Counselor

Isaiah 9.6

The Christmas story is about Jesus' birth, fulfilling prophecies throughout the Old Testament. His *character* – and His deity – are revealed by Isaiah more than 700 years before His birth. Let's travel back to some dark days in Jewish history, when a prophet foretold the coming of a great light.

Prophecy Rooted in History

- How we got here: Conquest, a kingdom, then a kingdom divided
- False security: Prophets warn, 'Don't trust nations, trust in God.'
- Faulty rulers, idolatry, adultery, oppression: Assyria is coming!
- Who will end darkness and war? "Unto us a child is born..."

The Birth of the Ideal King

- *This is no normal earthly sovereign – He is divine and human!*
- *God brings deliverance by becoming humble and vulnerable.*
- *He is a Wonderful Counselor (versus the folly of human wisdom)*



1. To know God, you need to know history. God has 'accommodated' Himself to us by revealing Himself in history. But that means that for us to accurately know God, we need to understand the historical context in which He reveals Himself. Israel's history is a goldmine of revelation of God and His character. The *Torah* (Genesis through Deuteronomy) is the foundation for the nation's history, but the rest of the Old Testament exhibits God's nature and purpose, virtually on every page. To help you understand the "canvas" on which God has "painted" His self-revelation, here are some excellent books to guide you through Israel's history: Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*; Leon Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History*; and F.F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations* (pp. 13-119).
2. Isaiah wrote some incredible prophecies of the coming Messiah over 700 years before Jesus was born! Some of the most famous are Isa. 7.14 (see Matt. 1.18-23!) and 11.1-2 (see John 1.32; Acts 13.22-23). But perhaps most revealing is our passage, Isaiah 9.2-7. What is the historical setting for this prophecy? Read Isaiah 8.1-9.1. What is the immediate judgment that threatens Israel (8.1-10)? Where is Israel's trust? Who are they fearing the most? How does Isaiah characterize Israel's need in Isa. 8.11-22 – and the futility of their wicked ways?
3. Isaiah 9.1 is the last verse of chapter 8 in the Hebrew Bible, and it fits there. The gloomy state of affairs which lies before Israel is not final! They have rebelled, but God's goodness is going to win in the end! When human efforts to bring light have failed, God graciously provides it. Ironically, the land which would be judged for evil first – Galilee – is where God's light would arise from! Hint: Where was Jesus born?
4. Isaiah 9.2-6 is expressed as having already occurred, even though it is in the future. When did the people of Israel see a great light (see John 1.4-5, 9; 8.12)? When will Jesus fulfill the ultimate deliverance of Israel described in Isa. 9.3-5? When will "the government... be on His shoulders"? How is Jesus a 'wonderful counselor' for the world today? How is He that for you?