

Matthew 22-12-18a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a privilege to be assembled this morning. We're going to depart from our usual study in the Gospel of Matthew to do a Christmas special.

Not that I don't find myself partial to treating every day alike, but it's fun to take a break sometimes and look at something that interests me. I hope it interests you as much as it has me, tracking this down. But we're going to do a little special.

We're going to be centered in Isaiah chapter 9, if you want to be flipping to that page. Let's be asking, or let's ask. I've been thinking about participles, and I can't quit letting them transfer from my brain to my mouth.

Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our study, and we'll begin. Father, we know that it is not by might nor by power, but by your Spirit that we are able to have fellowship with you, to enjoy the blessings that you have granted to us through the Lord Jesus, to live the life to which we have been called, to have the opportunity to experience your presence and reflect your glory. We pray this morning as we look at these portions of your Word that address the birth and the identity of your Son, the Lord Jesus, that you will bless your Word to each heart, help us not only to gain a better understanding of what your Word says, but also what it means to us as we seek to live the time that remains to us in a way that is pleasing in your sight, and that glorifies our Savior.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. If you have found your way to Isaiah chapter 9, we're going to be looking at verses 6 and 7 during this season of the year.

This may not be one of the most prominent, but it's certainly one of the pertinent passages that anticipates in the Old Testament the coming of the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of David, as the deliverer and more for the nation of Israel. We generally in the Christian world certainly can rehearse these verses by heart because of the treatment they receive in Handel's Messiah. The verses as you find them in the New King James, actually I'm going to read them to you in the King James because I like it.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be Khaled, wonderful Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will, upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. He will, upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform it. We're most familiar with verse 6. However, there is great consternation as to how to translate this verse. We think it's rock solid, graven in stone.

We wonder why the Jews don't look at Isaiah 9-6 and realize that the Messiah would be both God and man because he is called the mighty God and the everlasting Father. And yet he is born as a son to us. It seems transparent and inescapably unavoidable that there are at least strong clues here that he would be God incarnate.

There are three passages in Isaiah that lead to this conclusion. The chapters in which this is mostly contained are chapter 7, chapter 9, and chapter 11. You're well familiar with Isaiah 7-14.

When Isaiah says in verse 13, Hear now, O house of David, is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God as well? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Emmanuel. Emmanuel, God with us.

That's Isaiah 7-14. We have our passage, Isaiah 9-6. And then we have Isaiah chapter 11, verse 1. There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

Verse 2. The spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. This will make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. So chapter 7, chapter 9, chapter 11.

These are anticipations of Messiah, very clearly so. So twice we are told the name that Messiah will be given. In Isaiah 7-14, his name shall be called Emmanuel.

She will call his name, Emmanuel, God with us. In our passage, Isaiah 9-6, his name will be called, depending on how you punctuate it, there are multiple names, wonderful, comma, counselor, comma. If you continue to put commas in, you have quite a few names.

But I want to give you some idea of the difficulty in translating this. The syntax in Hebrew for Isaiah 9-6 is vexed. Therefore, some people say his name shall be called Wonderful, number one, Counselor, number two, Mighty, number three, God, number four, Everlasting, number five, Father, number six, Prince of Peace.

Almost everybody figures that has to be a dual, but you can put commas between those.

Because if he is mighty, he can be peace or peaceful. So let me read you how the Jews themselves in the Tanakh translate Isaiah 9-6.

I'll start in verse 5. A child has been born to us, a son has been given to us, and authority has settled on his shoulders. He has been named, the mighty God is planning grace. The eternal father, a peaceable ruler.

Basically taking that collection of words and dividing it into two phrases. In token of abundant authority and of peace without limit upon David's throne and kingdom, that it may be firmly established in justice and equity now and evermore, the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall bring this to pass. Peace without limit upon David's throne and kingdom.

Disconnecting, in a sense, the individual so named from the throne. He may be a means by which the throne obtains peace. So let me give you a defense of why they translate it this way and how they understand it.

This is a website called Jews for Judaism. Why do Jews say Isaiah 9-6 does not refer to Jesus? What is the reason behind this? Let's find out. Answer.

Christian theologians argue that the name, a wonderful counselor, is the mighty God, the everlasting father, the ruler of peace, refers to Jesus, who they allege combined human and divine qualities. They mistakenly believe that such a name can only be applied to God himself. Moreover, the Christians incorrectly translate the verbs in verse 5 in the future tense instead of the past as the Hebrew original reads.

You will notice a child has been born, a son has been given authority, has settled on his shoulders. This would be the normal reading of those Hebrew verbs. They would be rendered in the past.

Thus, Christians render verse 5 as, A child will be born to us, a son will be given to us, and the government will rest on his shoulders, and his name will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. Four names. This has come to be the standard understanding that the wonderful comma counselor, the comma ought to be removed, and it is wonderful counselor.

As far as that argument goes, I would agree with it. I think the one good way to translate these is four double names. While admitting, this is the Jews for Judaism argument, admitting wonderful counselor and ruler of peace can be applied to a man, Christian theologians argue that the phrases mighty God and everlasting father cannot be incorporated as part of a man's name.

Thus, they contend Isaiah teaches the Messiah has to be not only a man, but God as well. This entire reasoning is incorrect, and it may be seen from the name Elihu. Remember the fourth friend of Job, Elihu? His name means, my God is he, or he is my God.

Eli, my God, as in Jesus' words on the cross. Hu, who is he in Hebrew. So Elihu, my God, is he, which refers to an ordinary human being.

This, of course, is Job 32, verse 1. There are other individuals with this name in the Old Testament. Obviously, we don't think that the Elihu who spoke around the fire in Job's council of friends was, in fact, God. You can look at other names that incorporate a theophanic element or a theophoric element.

Think of Joshua. Yehoshua, the Lord, Yahweh delivers. Joshua, of course, is not the Lord.

He's a man. He's the son of none and had a human birth and human death, and we don't consider him to be hypostatic union or divine. So people would bear a name that said something about God without assigning those attributes to the person himself.

This makes sense, right? Yitzra'el, Israel, the name God gives to Jacob. It means Prince of God. Yetzar, Prince, and El, God.

Prince of God. Here we have the phrase Prince of Peace, but as we're going to see, the word here is not Yetzar, translated Prince. Similar Christian misunderstanding of Scripture may be seen in their claims revolving around the name Emmanuel, God is with us, our Isaiah 714 passage.

The simple fact is, the Jews say, it is quite common in the Bible for human beings to be given names that have the purpose of declaring or reflecting a particular attribute of God. For example, Eliab, this is one of David's brothers, Eliab, my God is Father, Eliada, Elzaphan, Eliakim, Elisha, Eliezer, Tavel, Gedaliah, and so on. All of these that have divine elements, we don't consider the person holding the name to somehow be God.

The fact remains that Jesus, this is where I find the argument to be even more interesting. The fact remains, Jesus did not literally or figuratively fulfill any of Isaiah's words. A wonderful counselor does not advise his followers that if they have faith, they can be agents of destruction.

And then he cites Matthew 21, 19 through 21, Mark 11, 14, Mark 11, 20 through 23, and so on. Agents of destruction. When you turn to Matthew chapter 21, you might just keep your finger in Isaiah and flip over there.

What on earth is he talking about? That by faith we become agents of destruction. Well, we saw this just a few chapters back in our Matthew study. 21, 19 of Matthew, Jesus sees the fig tree and says, let no fruit grow on you ever again.

Immediately the fig tree withers away. The disciples marvel. And Jesus says, assuredly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you can do what was done to this fig tree and say to this mountain, be removed and cast into the sea.

So by faith you can destroy trees and mountains is the Jewish view. Same thing when you go to Mark chapter 11, verse 14, Jesus says to the tree, let no one eat fruit from you ever again. And when the disciples see the tree later on, verses 20 through 23, they've had to look hard to find a way to make people of faith, an agent of destruction.

So the Mark passage is the parallel to the Matthew passage. If Jesus name is the mighty God, the Jews argue a mighty God does not take orders from anyone. And yet in Luke 2, 51 and Hebrews 5, 8, where Jesus is obedient and, you know, follows instructions given by others.

This somehow makes it impossible for him to be the mighty God. No one is greater than he is. Moreover, he does not ask or need to be saved by anyone.

And this is Matthew 26, 39, where we will soon be looking at the Lord Jesus in the garden. Oh, my father, if it is possible at this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. The mighty God cannot die by any means.

And so the death of Jesus precludes him being God. He who is called the son of God, or he who is called the son of God, the father cannot himself be called everlasting father. Now, this has been a conundrum for me.

It seems like confusion to call the son, the father. You can sort of explain it by John 1, 18. Jesus reveals the father.

Jesus says in John 16 to Thomas and to Philip, if you've seen me, you've seen the father, but that's kind of a fair objection. He who is called the son of God, the father cannot himself be called everlasting father. One cannot play simultaneously the role of the son and the father.

It is an obvious self-contradiction. He who advocates family strife. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword in Matthew 10, 34 and 35 and killing enemies Luke 19, 27 cannot be called a ruler of peace.

Luke 19, 27, by the way, is the conclusion of the story where the man goes away to receive a kingdom. And when he comes back, the wicked servant that fails to use what has been entrusted to him. In verse 26, everyone who has more will be given from him who does not have even what he has will be taken away.

Bring here. Those enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them and slay them before me. How can he be the prince of peace? When he says, slay my enemies.

It's interesting to me that, that the Jews themselves have read and studied the new Testament and realize that this parable is a case of Jesus referring to himself in parabolic form. And yet they reject the conclusion that the parable evidently teaches. So this is the Jewish perspective.

And this is why I think you have something of a, a stretched translation in the Tanakh. A child has been born to us. A son has been given to us.

Authority has settled on his shoulders. He has been named two names and this you will actually find. If you look at the Aramaic Bible in plain English, they transliterate these and it's, it's kind of cool.

Actually not the Aramaic Bible in plain English. It is the JPS Tanakh from 1917. Jewish Publication Society Tanakh published in 1917.

A child is born to us. A son is given to us. The government is upon his shoulder and his name is called Pele Yoez El Givur Avi Ad Sar Shalom.

And as we're going to see, there is actually some traction for this view. The Douay Rheims Bible. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.

The Brenton Septuagint. The Septuagint really changes this around a lot. The Septuagint translated into English by Brenton says, A child is born to us.

A son is given to us whose government is upon his shoulder and his name is called the Messenger of Great Counsel for I will bring peace upon the princes and health to him. The New American Bible translates this. They name him Wonder Counselor, God Hero, Father forever, Prince of Peace.

So let's look at this and see what it actually says. There is a great observation. I think that looking at our three Isaiah passages from 714, we have the idea that the Messiah is coming.

In chapter nine, verses six and seven, he is born and named. And then in Isaiah chapter 11, one and following, he is on the throne ruling. And there is a forward movement of the revelation of the Messiah from chapter seven through chapter nine and into chapter 11.

And it is a fair argument to make that someone can bear a name without being invested with the personal qualities of that name. Yeshua, Joshua, who leads Israel into the promised land is not in fact Jesus or the pre-incarnate Lord or the angel of the Lord per se. He is a man with a lineage and a history.

It's given in Chronicles. But his name says something about the Lord and bearing that name is significant because the role he plays is an adumbration. And an anticipation and a resonance with the coming Yeshua who will fulfill this shadow, this anticipation.

So what is going on in Isaiah chapter nine, verse six. If we look at it in Hebrew, here is what it says. After the non-disputed parts, a child is or has been born to us, a son is or has been given unto us, the government will be upon his shoulder.

I've always had mild curiosity about that particular expression to begin with. If you remember Paul McCartney's song, Hey Jude, at one point in that song when he's telling Jude, you know, take a sad song, make it better and so on. And you have found her, go out and get her.

The movement you need is on your shoulder. The movement you need is on your shoulder. People have puzzled over that lyric and they went and asked Sir Paul, what on earth did you mean by that? And he said, I don't know.

I just needed words to fill in the phrase. And I just, it just, I don't know. He doesn't know.

If he doesn't know, I sure don't know. And similarly here, what does it mean for the government to be on his, if you were just starting with a blank slate and recognizing that there is a child born and a son given, and he is going to have a ruling role. Okay.

Is he going to sit on the throne of his father, David? He'll be king in that sense. Not a prince, but a king. The prince is not the king, right? More about that shortly.

But if, if even under divine inspiration, you're going to say something about this son that is born. Okay. This is harking back to second Samuel chapter seven and the Davidic covenant.

And you will not lack a man to sit on the throne. Your son is, is going to rule after you and his kingdom is going to last forever. It'll be established.

So the son and the child in this context with the house of David coming up in the next verse, you think, okay, I get the son and the child. He'll be a descendant of David, but the government, the, the ruling structure is going to be on his shoulder. Why on his shoulder? I don't remember anything mentioned ever about David's shoulder.

The question is, if the Messiah is the mighty God and the everlasting father, how is governing a burden? Is it just figurative? But, but it seems an odd thing to say if you're going to focus on deity and divinity and all powerful identity. And the first thing you say is when the child is born and the son is given, the government is going to be the burden on his shoulder. You don't even see, you can hear David in the Psalms talking about the burden of, of opposition and some of the problems that he had, but you don't typically see the kings of Israel pictured as bearing the administration of the nation or the ruling responsibility as a burden.

That's the first thing that is said here about the, the child and the son. When he comes, you think, Oh, he's the son of David. He's going to sit on the throne.

And the first thing is said is that rule is going to be a burden on his shoulders. Very interesting. And from our perspective, this is my, this is my thought.

We recognize that there is a distinction between the millennial kingdom, the kingdom of the son and the kingdom of the father, right? During the millennial kingdom, an iron rod is required. Shattering like Potter's vessels is needed. And there is gradually intensifying and growing hostility, opposition, dissatisfaction, and the need for that effort to rule.

It is a human government. It is a human rule. So I think that view that this kingdom that is being spoken of this child and this son is focusing on humanity and the kingdom that he is going to rule is a human kingdom.

And it is a burden of responsibility. It takes work to get it done. It isn't an effortless divine decree from the throne and things instantly happen.

Let there be peace. And there was peace. Let there be prosperity.

And there was prosperity. This governing role is a burden to be shouldered for the duration. And like our own age, I think there is going to be a hockey stick increase toward the end where it is going to exponentially multiply and reach a boiling point and a breaking point at which time God is going to release Satan to lead the forces of that opposition.

But it will have been simmering and heating up and increasing throughout the 10 centuries of that reign. So the government on his shoulder means something. These words are here for a reason.

And it anticipates that there will be trouble and opposition and crime and punishment, even in the millennial kingdom, because it is not yet the perfected kingdom of the father. Well, this brings us back to the naming. He will be called.

This is the verb to call out and then his name. Shame is the name S H E M. And this is which is his name. So it will be called his name.

Then we have Pele P E L E. This is translated wonderful or a wonder. But I think these, this is a combined phrase. It is Pele Yoetz.

Pele Yoetz. And the next word here is a word that means Yoetz. You see that O E infix.

It means an ongoing role or a, an I N G word. This is a continuing function of counsel. Yaatz is the verb.

Y A A T S. And it means anything from to strategize, to consult, to conspire, to give counsel, to decide, to plan, to purpose. It means to anticipate circumstances and form a plan, decide what needs to be done. You can tell, you can look at a situation on behalf of someone else and advise them.

These are your circumstances. Here's what you should do. So counsel like Ahithophel and in David's day, what kind of counsel are you going to receive? What's the plan?

Here's the problem.

What's the solution? Here's the circumstance. What action should be taken? What steps should be followed? All of this is bound up in Yaatz. So Yaatz, this is someone who is always thinking about the situation and deciding what to do.

Forming a plan, having a strategy, adopting tactics, sharing those with those who need to know. And he is extraordinary in this regard. Pele, wonderful, is a word that means to be extraordinary, mysterious, inscrutable, or unfathomable.

This is amazing, hard to figure out what's going on. Why are you doing it this way? This is a brilliant plan. I would have never thought of it.

I don't see where it's coming from. It is a fulfillment of when God says, my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts. God's ways are past finding out in some cases.

And yet the passage that says, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love him. And we say, well, we just got to wait to the future to see. But the very next verse says, but God has revealed them to us by his spirit.

So they are no longer inscrutable, and mysterious, and unfathomable. If you read the next verse, you don't have to wait to glory to get it all figured out. God has revealed them to us, Paul says, by his spirit.

What I can't see, ear hasn't heard, what people can't imagine, hasn't entered into their hearts, that God has prepared, God has planned, God has, for those who love him, the spirit reveals it to us. There is an earthly revelation that gives us an anticipation, a hope, an expectation. Certainly the fulfillment is going to be greater than any revelation we could manage to grasp in this life.

But there is a revelation by the spirit. In the same way, the roles that Jesus fulfills in his incarnation, in revealing the father, and the fullness of deity dwelling in him in bodily form. If you've seen me, you've seen the father.

There is a revelation of the father, certainly. But in its fullness, there has to be a new day, a new capacity. If Jesus had actually revealed the fullness of the father, in his incarnation, everyone would have died instantly.

It would have incinerated everybody, starting in their brain. Because it is too wondrous. God had to protect Moses, and he could only look at the departing presence of God's glory.

If he looked at it full on, he could not have survived. So, this revelation of the Lord Jesus,

the coming Messiah in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6 and verse 7, begins with identifying him coming in human form. You can speculate, why didn't Jesus just walk into Jerusalem one day, without, like Melchizedek, without mother, without father, without an origin story, without a nativity scene, without a Christmas backdrop, just walk in at the age of 30, and begin his ministry.

Why is he born? Why is there a nativity? This idea that he is a child that is born, and a son that is given, incontrovertibly roots him in humanity. He's not an apparition. He isn't a phantom.

He's not like the angel of the Lord that would come and go. Do you notice how the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is never born and grows up through childhood into early adulthood, and then says, well, hello there, I'm the angel of the Lord. Greetings, Manoah.

I know you've known me since I was a kid, but now I'm the angel of the Lord, and I'm here to tell you that you're going to have a son, and so on. The angel of the Lord just appears, and then disappears. Abraham, by the terebinth tree, three men, quote-unquote, appear.

One of them represents God the Father. The other two go and rescue Lot and his family. But there's no birth narrative.

You don't have any divine messengers in the Old Testament being born and growing into their ministry. Few, if any, of the prophets do we have a childhood story for. Samuel is the only one I can think of that you have any notion of what his childhood was like.

But Jesus is different. He is a child, he is a son. And that's why the incarnation is so important to establish his unique identity as the mediator between God and men, the man, Messiah Yeshua.

Christ Jesus, Messiah Yeshua. Anointed Deliverer. Well, more to say about Isaiah 9-6 when we come back from the break.