

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

# What Child is This?

One of the many important decisions confronting new parents is, **“What shall we call our baby?”** Most new parents spend hours debating this question. We all realize that names matter. Shall the new baby be named after his father, his uncle, a favourite friend? Should he be given a name that happens to be popular at the moment? Or one that simply sounds good?

## **Names are important because**

1. once you pick out a name the child will be stuck with it for a long, long time! Babies have no voice in the selection of their names. They have to live with them — to live them down or live them up.
2. Names are important because you tend to become what your name represents. So it is with Jesus. Even before his birth, he was a child with many names. The prophet Isaiah, writing 700 years before He was born, prophesied that Messiah would have four names.

This verse reveals four names for Jesus. Each one unlocks an aspect of his character. They teach who he is and how he can help us today.

One of our beloved carols is cast in a form a plaintive question: “What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?”

These four names speak to us about wisdom, power, security, and assurance

## **Name # 1: WONDERFUL COUNSELOR**

Literally this title means “a wonder of a counsellor.” It speaks of the wisdom of his plan. The word “wonderful” means “astonishing” or “extraordinary.” The writers of the Old Testament used it for acts of God which man cannot understand. The word “counsellor” means “advisor” or “ideal ruler.”

First, this means **he is a reliable counsellor**. Those who come to him will never be led astray. Many people make their living giving advice to other. But they cannot claim perfection. Psychiatrists routinely make R600-800 an hour for their counsel. Much of it is good, some not so good. But the Lord goes to no one for advice. And when anyone comes to him, he gives them the counsel they need.

First, this means **he is a decisive counsellor**. This gives us insight into his working. His plans are not our plans, his ways not our ways. He will accomplish things beyond human comprehension, and he will do it in ways we cannot fathom. He will do the greatest work ever accomplished and he will do it successfully. A violent death would not be man’s way to victory, but it was God’s plan and our Lord carried it out perfectly.

Let me apply the truth this way. As the Wonderful Counsellor, he gives wholesome direction to His people. Those who follow him will not walk in darkness but in the blazing light of day.

## **What Child is This? He is the Wonderful Counsellor**

## **Name # 2: MIGHTY GOD**

This speaks of the “Power of Accomplishment.”

**It is first of all a statement of deity.** The baby born in the manger is not just the Son of God, he is also God the Son. All the fullness of God dwells in the Lord Jesus Christ. As the ancient creeds declare, he is “very God of very God.” That can never be said of any mere human baby.

There is something else important in this title. The word translated “mighty” is the word gibor, which means “strong one” or “the powerful, valiant warrior.” **Thus, the term “mighty God is actually a military title. He is the God who fights for his people!**

At the Incarnation, God took the form of human flesh. That’s why one of his names is Immanuel—God with us.

Now take the first two titles together and what do you have?

**As the Wonderful Counsellor — He makes the Plans.  
As the Mighty God —He makes the plans Work.**

All of his wonderful plans will be carried out with all of God’s infinite might. There is in this little baby all the strength of Deity. The power of God is in those tiny fists. He has strength which is divine. The omnipotence of God is at his commands. Whatever he desires, he is able to achieve.

## **Name # 3: THE EVERLASTING FATHER**

In the Hebrew the phrase is literally **“the Father of Eternity.”** This speaks of the purpose of his coming.

He is before, above, and beyond Time. **He is the possessor of eternity..** He is eternally like a father to his people. This is not a statement about the Trinity, but about the character of our Lord. All that a good father is, Jesus is to his people.

Because **he is like a father, he cares for his people.** Because he owns eternity, he can give us eternal life. That’s so important for those of us who live on this sin-cursed planet. No one lives forever. Sooner or later, we will also find our own place in the graveyard. We are not immortal, but transitory. We’re here today, gone tomorrow. A dead Christ will do us no good. Dying men need an undying Christ.

**Here’s a key phrase: He is a father forever!** All human fathers must go. But Jesus is a father forever! He’s just what we need.

When my children need anything, I run to help them. If they cry, I go. If they want me, I will come to them. I never kick them out. They belong to me. They are my children. They bear my name. What I am in a poor way to them; Jesus is in a perfect way to all who believe in Him.

In this tiny baby we see the love of God sleeping in a stable.

**What child is this? He is the everlasting Father**

## **Name # 4: PRINCE OF PEACE**

The phrase literally means **“the prince who’s coming brings peace”** This speaks of the effect of his coming. This final title is the climax of all that has gone before. The word “prince” means something like “General of the Army.” It speaks of his high position. The word “peace” speak of his basic nature.

Recently I read that there are more wars raging right now than at any time this century. All over globe there are ethnic conflicts and tribal wars. Closer to home not a day goes by without word that someone else has been murdered in SA. We see so much killing that it no longer surprises us—or even bothers us. We’ve been immune to violence because we live in a violent world.

Isaiah 9:6 tells us that God’s plan for world peace is focused on a one person—a baby asleep in a manger in Bethlehem. He is the ultimate man of peace.

**\*In the past, his coming made peace with God**

**\*In the present, those who come to him find peace in their heart when Christ comes in.**

**\*In the future, his second coming will usher in a kingdom of peace.**

There is no peace today. So much strife and bloodshed.  
He is not a failure. We are

### **The ideal has not yet come**

Peace is a wonderful thing, but hard to find in this world. It’s worth working for and waiting for. God’s ultimate plan for peace rests not in treaties or lessons or progress, or material prosperity. God’s plan for Peace is the Maker of Peace, Jesus Christ.

In this tiny baby we see the peace of God welcomed by angels and shepherds.

## **What child is this? He is the Prince of Peace.**

In this one verse you have the four names of Jesus. This is what they mean to us today:

**If you are confused...He is the Wonderful Counsellor.**

**If you are weak.....He is the Mighty God.**

**If you are scared.....He is the Everlasting Father.**

**If you are disturbed....He is the Prince of Peace**

## **CONCLUSION**

### **“For to us”**

The most important part of our verse is the first three words.....“For to us” The gift of Christ is a personal gift from God to us. A gift requires a response. If I put a gift under your tree, you may acknowledge it, may admire it, may even thank me for it, but it isn’t yours until you open it and take it for your own.

God has a Christmas gift for you.....not wrapped in bright paper and fancy ribbon, but in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.....It is the gift of His Son. It is for you. The gift is still there. It must be personally received.