

## Wonderful Counselor

Have you ever been in the situation where you are meeting someone that you have never met? Maybe at an airport or at Starbucks....you are given some clues....perhaps they have described themselves. They may tell you what they will be wearing....or perhaps what they look like....or a distinguishing feature...or maybe what they will be doing....or who they will be with...or what they will be carrying.

The more clues they give you the more likely it is that they don't want you to miss them or waste your time looking for someone else. I wonder how many clues it would take to identify 90% of people? Probably 4 maybe 5? Tall, White, Brown Hair, Red Shirt, carrying a squealing pet pig. That would probably do it.

Police will often put out what they call a BOLO. Be on the Look Out....and then they describe the person. White male, 30's, small build, jeans, green shirt, Christmas Sweater....usually 5 or 6 things....

But suppose the fugitive was really dangerous and they really wanted to make sure that everyone had all the clues....they may give you 20 clues to look for. Tattoo over left eye, walks with a limp, often visits cigar bars, and drinks Fresca.

That is what we have been talking about this Christmas....not drinking fresca...looking for the one that matches the clues.

We have been looking at Christmas through the eyes of Isaiah the Prophet. The Year is around 700 BC. God had given the prophets and psalmists over 350 "clues" or prophecies about the Messiah. 350!

That is an incredible number. God clearly wanted to make sure that no one missed Him when He came to us. Maybe you miss the first 10...ok 100 clues...You can still identify Him with the next....oh...250.

And these weren't wimpy clues like he will have ten toes and ten fingers and two eyes and two ears. Nothing like He will walk upright, breath air, and sneeze once in a while....No God gave the prophets real clues...Man sized clues.

Like....He will be born from a virgin woman..that alone should be enough.....He will be born in Bethlehem....He will come out of Egypt but will be from Galilee. Those are just a few...Listen while I read the other 345....just kidding.

You have to wonder....How could they have missed Him? Jesus not only had 350 prophecies spoken about Him...He fulfilled them...Still some to come, but not one wrong yet...through His life, death and resurrection...Jesus checked off over 300.

Jesus' entry into the world may have been understated a bit....but His life shouted....MESSIAH! Honestly you wonder how could they not have seen something so obvious?

Yet they would ask us....You have all that we have, plus a completed Scripture, plus 2000 years of study and human experience with the Holy Spirit....Plus most of the end time events and knowledge we didn't understand....How could we miss Him today?

So God leads Isaiah to share with us 4 names....4 Names that will tell us who the Messiah is. 4 Names that don't fit anyone else.

Remember that names were huge in Biblical times. A picture paints a thousand words, but in Scripture, a name paints a thousand words. Names described someone's character and personality. Isaac means Laughter because he brought laughter to Abraham and Sarah. Isaiah whose writings we are studying means "God is my salvation" because his prophecies point us home. Peter means rock because his faith is the bedrock of our salvation. Jesus means "Jehovah saves"

There are over 100 names given to Jesus in Scripture. Each describe part of His character... But Isaiah chooses 4 names that would tell us who this amazing child will be. Remember he is describing a child and person who would not arrive for 800 years. He is essentially saying ok a child is coming.....in the future....He will be on in several million...Here is how you will know Him.

Isaiah says....find the child that everyone calls these 4 things...and you have found the Messiah...Think about that for a moment. No other human....of all humans....can be called these four names with truth and authority.

So under the guidance of the Holy Spirit....the Prophet Isaiah...begins to write.

Isaiah 9:6 (ESV) 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His name shall be called....future tense. This child will be born and people will start talking about Him. They will see how He lives and they will attribute names to Him. Notice that Isaiah does not say....This is the name He will call Himself...or this is His family name. He will be called....People will see these things in Him....and only in Him and He will be the one human that is defined by these four titles.

Find people speaking of someone using these four names and you will have found the Messiah...

First, He shall be called Wonderful Counselor. You will hear people talk about this man who is a counselor who fills people with wonder. He counsel will cause people to stand in amazement.

What is the most incredible thing you have ever seen? Think back to a time...when you just stood in awe....where you watched something and just said "How could this be?" You see something happening but you clearly don't understand....it is too incredible for you to wrap your mind around....You are watching...it is real....but too incredible to really embrace. Have you experienced those moments?

The birth of a child.....a healing that seemed impossible.....a coincidence that had to be more than just that.....there are moments in life that are just too wonderful for us

Certainly the Christmas story is full of these moments..... An immaculate conception.....A virgin birth....Announcements by angels....A chorus of angels....signs in the heavens....the Creator now in creation. It was absolutely an incredible night....and it happened just like the Prophets said it would. But Isaiah tells us to fast forward to his adult life on earth...people would talk about Him....

This man will be called Wonderful Counselor. Not so much focused on what He would do or where He would go...but rather what He would say, how He would say it, and how people would respond..Now there were lots of people giving counsel...even wise counsel....but Isaiah says....this man...when He teaches...When He speaks...will make people stand back in stunned wonder.

He will be a counselor....When we hear the term counselor, we think of one who gives counsel or advice. This person will bring us advice, teach us what we don't know, and guide us in the way we should go. There are many very smart people on earth even teachers, even counselors...but Messiah will be known as the Counselor who brings Wonder

When our world falls apart and we don't know or understand what is happening, we want a counselor that is always available, one who gives undivided attention because He cares, is able to provide comfort while remaining confidential, and can tell us the truth about ourselves while giving us what we need to make changes. Someone has said, "When life caves in, you do not need reasons, you need comfort. You don't need some answers, you need someone. And Jesus does not [always] come to us with an explanation – He comes to us with His presence"

Whenever we see something of God...angels, miracles, truths.....our response is always fear and wonder. So many times we find ourselves asking How can this be?

When the Scriptures refer to Jesus as a "wonderful" counselor, it doesn't just mean that he's good at giving advice. It tells us that when He speaks....we see God. Our response to His teaching is to be filled with wonder because we realize that we are in the presence of God. He exceeds that which humans can know.

It means that he understands things which are beyond the ability of our finite minds to comprehend. He knows things which only God can know. He knows the ways of God; He understands God's plans and purposes. His knowledge, and intelligence, and wisdom, and insight far exceed that of any man who ever lived.

Isaiah 11:2 (ESV) — 2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD

So in Jesus Christ, we have someone who, by virtue of his great knowledge and understanding, is abundantly qualified to guide and direct our lives, Someone who is never confused or mistaken, Someone who always knows exactly what to do, Someone who will never lead us astray."

How does He counsel us? 1. Through Prayer Phil 4:6 teaches us that through prayer He guards our hearts and our minds and bring to us a supernatural peace. 2. Through His Spirit John 14 26 tells us that the Counselor, the Spirit, sent in Jesus' name will teach us all things.... 3. Through His Word 2 Tim tells us that all Scripture is useful for counsel, teaching, correcting and training. 4. Through His Servants Colossians 2 reminds us all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are held in Christ and we are to encourage and unite one another in love.

He shall be called Wonderful Counselor **IMAGE 1**

This title literally means "a wonder of a counselor." The adjective "wonderful" refers to actions that are beyond the bounds of human power and can also be translated as "astonishing" or "amazing" or "extraordinary He will cause us to look at Him with amazement....to be surprised and at the same time awestruck....We will marvel...everything about Him will cause us to challenge what we thought we knew. The Supernatural always s brings a sense of wonder to those who are just "natural"

Wonder makes us ask How could this be? How did that happen? How is this possible? Why is this happening? Where did this come from? Often people around Jesus muttered...."How could this be?" The interactions between Jesus and the people....Jesus and the Pharisees....and even Jesus and His disciples...often left them scratching their heads trying to figure Him out. That is what happens when humans are faced with the supernatural....We are awestruck with wonder...we are excited...yet scared....intrigued yet afraid....drawn to understand but often just confused.

Every time Jesus opened His mouth...he challenged us to rethink what we thought was truth. He opened our eyes to things we have not seen. There are too many Scriptures to quote here- probably over a hundred.

Matthew 15:30–31 (ESV) — 31 so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

Matthew 8:27 (ESV) — 27 And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

Mark 1:27 (ESV) — 27 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

Mark 2:12 (ESV) — 12 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

How will you recognize this gift? He will be called a counselor....but not just any counselor....People will wonder at His teachings.

More Specifically..... Everything about Jesus makes us wonder Life is filled with decisions, details, and disasters. That's why we need a wonderful counselor. The mystery of His deity The reality of His humanity The wisdom of His teachings The wonder of His works The challenge of His teachings The puzzle of His conduct

The intensity of His walk The tenderness of His love The meaning of His death The power of His resurrection The presence of the Holy Spirit The peace of His relationship with us His return and eternal promises

When this man comes, He will reveal to us wonderful things about the past, the present and the future.

Jesus is full of wonder in our Past

Now think about Jesus....the eternal One. He has literally seen it all...even before there were things to see. Think about what Jesus has seen in the past. Think about how wonderful He is looking back over time.

In my job I often get to meet people who are over 100 years old...I am often amazed at what they have seen in their lifetime....Huge advances like the automobile, air travel, radio, television, color television, space travel, telephones, cellular phones, internet, computers, personal computers, laptops, smart phones.

Think about the world events that they have experienced...Lindberg's flight....WW II...Organ transplants...Antibiotics...Nuclear War....Pearl Harbor...Polio.....The Holocaust....The treatment of TB....The automobile...The Moon Walk....Pet Rocks....The Space Shuttle...9/11....AIDS Epidemic....The bottling and selling of water....COVID-19... Think about all that they have seen in their lives....incredible right? Think of all the stories that they can tell us that happened in the last 100 years.....but then you turn to Jesus.

He could tell the story of the time when "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the earth. And we would listen with wonder as He reveals the details of the creation of every animal, every mountain, every ocean, every insect and then Jesus could tell of the day....He created you and me.

He could tell us about the mystery and history of the Universe...everything about the stars, planets, Sun and moon. He could explain every constellation and every mystery Scientists have tried to explain or haven't even thought of yet. And we would listen with wonder.

He could tell of the experience of The Eternal of Ages, who sat on the throne in heaven, whose hair is white like wool and white as snow, and who becomes a human infant. Totally dependant upon His creation for survival. And we would listen with wonder.

How the Son of God was born of the virgin Mary and became an infant- eternal, and yet born of a woman.....Almighty dependent upon his mothers breast and yet still supporting the universe...Heir of all things and yet a poor carpenters despised son. And we would listen with wonder

He could tell us how God was manifested in the flesh and yet crucified by men...How the one true King was covered in purple and mocked by those who were looking for a King. And we would listen with wonder. He could tell us what it was like to walk out of that tomb and know that the world would be forever changed. And we would listen in wonder.

The brightest and smartest people of the world have wondered at Him. They become like little children at the foot of the cross. They stand amazed..... No matter what amazing thing we have seen....His experiences eclipse them all.

When it comes to Christ....none can say that they ever saw a greater wonder than He is. There are no mysteries equal to this mystery. No surprise equal to this surprise. No astonishment, no admiration, that will ever equal the astonishment and admiration that we feel when we embrace Jesus' past. He surpasses everything.

But Jesus is also full of wonder in our Present

Is He personally wonderful to you....today? Do you stand in awe when His Word leaps off the page and speaks directly to your heart...resonating in your Spirit? Do you stand in wonder when your world seems to be falling apart and yet you have a peace that you now doesn't come from you? Do you marvel when God provides exactly what you need.....sometimes before you even knew you needed it?

Do you stand in awe when you think about all of the coincidences in your life and see God's hand in each of them? Are you blown away when you think about the transformation that has happened in your life and the blessings that you see each day?

Do you stand in wonder when your Spirit connects to His in prayer and you sense His presence and comfort and love? Are you stunned when you realize that the trials in your life, no matter how hard, make you stronger and better than before?

So Jesus is full of wonder in our past...in our present....and also in our future.

The time will come when the things that are made must disappear...The time will come when all that we know will cease and new will come. Do you wonder of the day...when the trumpet blows....and Jesus returns? When He completes what He promises....and brings all things in alignment

We stand in wonder when we realize that Jesus Christ will be fully revealed to every person who has ever lived.....and they will bow and acknowledge that He is God Almost too much to comprehend when we think about how He will stand by our side on the day of Judgment....When we will be free from the penalty of sin. Do you marvel when you think of your place....alongside millions...who will stand in front of the throne of Jesus....and know that we belong. Can you see everyone gathering? Robed in white.....surrounding the throne?....Do you hear them singing?...

Jesus is a man full of wonder....That is what they said about Him...Of all the people who have ever been born....He is the One who to this day....show us the wonder of God.

Even those who missed Him as Messiah, call him the most influential and greatest teacher of all time. They try to convince us that He was just some kind of enlightened human....they can't get themselves to call Him God...but they come as close as they can....because they too see Him and His teaching as full of wonder.

But it is the wonder that keeps them away from Jesus. Everyone recognizes it. There have been billions of people living on this planet. Yet only one causes people to walk away. Only one causes heated arguments about religion. Only one name divides families Spiritually. Not Horatio from the 5th century, Not Gaden from the 2nd century, no.....throughout the last 2000 years...only one name raises someone's ire. That name is Jesus Christ.

Have you ever wondered (pun intended) why? Why Jesus? Why not Mohammed, Buddah, or L Ron Hubbard? What is different about Jesus?

Simple....its Wonder. No one other than Jesus has caused mankind to wonder. Jesus claimed to be God and then He did what God would do. He calmed the storm, He spoke and the blind danced around in light, He touched and the lame grabbed their mat and ran, He spoke into death and said arise, and He died and then walked into new life like He had taken a nap.

John the Baptist and his Disciples saw Jesus and were full of wonder. John is in prison. He is going to be executed. He sent his disciples, one of which was Andrew who would later be Jesus' disciple and another that is not named, they asked Jesus....are you the One? Is John dying for the Messiah? And implied, Why haven't you saved Him?

Matthew 11:2–6 (ESV) 2 Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 4 And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

Jesus tells John 2 things. First, yes I am the fulfillment of Isaiah

Isaiah 35:5–6 (ESV) 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6 then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

Isaiah 29:18–19 (ESV) 18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. 19 The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

So John is told...Yes I am the Messiah.

But it is the second thing Jesus says that pierces John's heart. John is asking....are you going to save me?

Matthew 11:2–6 (ESV) 6 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

Jesus telling John the Baptist....I am the One...You have done your mission....Don't fall away from your faith in me. Translated. Hold Strong death is coming.

The Jesus tells His disciples how great John is....

Matthew 11:11–15 (ESV) 11 Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

John and His disciples saw the wonder in Jesus. He did things only God could do. He did things that were beyond this world....not natural....supernatural.

It is His wonder that forces us to make a decision about Him. He came to earth, claimed to be God and backed it up.

Most people can't deny it...they can't get over it...so they try to get around it. Jesus brought the wonder of God to the world...in His teachings....He is the only Wonderful Counselor to ever breath air on earth.

When people are faced with a decision about Jesus....they have to wrestle with His wonder. No one can discount that He actually did what people said He did....there were thousands of witnesses....He really did command the storms, He really did raise several people from the grave, He really did give sight to the blind, ambulation to the lame and music to ears of the deaf....And He could have spent His own life insurance policy because He came back to life.....No one could deny the miracles.

Buddah, Mohamed, L Ron Hubbard...they never did God stuff. They never did the supernatural...over and over again.

Jesus forces every person to deal with the wonder. The supernatural. The things of God. It is their wonder of Him that forces a response. He is either God or He is not.

Jesus came to this world like none other... Regardless of what you believe about Him....No one has changed Human History the way He has. Why does everyone have an opinion about this man? Because He was full of wonder....He leaves us struggling to understand....His Past....Present and Future...are all jam packed with wonder.

Many today deny anything of God that is supernatural. Have you notice that people embrace supernatural things if they are demonic? They hold seances, they visit Ghost homes, they speak to dead spirits, and some even worship Satan. Ghost tours are commonplace.

But as soon as you mention supernatural things of God....these people freak out. Apparently man can hear from dead spirits and demons but not from the Holy Spirit. Apparently demon spirits can swirl around room and destroy everything, but Jesus can't calm a storm. Apparently demons can torment someone to their death....but Jesus can't overcome death and walk us into eternal life.

You see most of the people in our world reject any mention of Jesus because they know they will be forced to deal with His wonder. His Wonder....undeniable truths....wise counsel....miraculous actions....can't be separated from who is He or Who He claimed to be.

It is God's Wonder that forces people to deny supernatural things of God....to try to remove anything Science can't explain that could have been from God. It is His Wonder than divides the world. You can't seriously study Him and not see God. And you can't truly see God and not fall in wonder and worship.

This Christmas season we can think about Shepherds.....we can think about Wise Men....we can contemplate the manger....but I think God wants us to Wonder about His Wonder.

So Isaiah tells us that this Child born....this Son given....would have the government on His shoulders and people would call Him "Wonderful Counselor" People will forever look at Jesus and know that He is Wonderful....full of wonder....and He is a Counselor who brings wonder with His truth. All of those things are incredible. Almost too amazing to comprehend....But even that is not the real question this Christmas.

The most important question for us today is this.....Is He YOUR Wonderful Counselor?

Christmas is a time of manic emotions. People when faced with the birth of Jesus....have incredible highs and incredible lows. Some hearing my voice today are desperately hurting, in desperate need of guidance, truth, advice. Jesus can be your wonderful counselor. Turn to Him...trust in Him....and you will find wonder is all that He does for you. He can be YOUR Wonderful Counselor.

Others know Jesus as their Wonderful Counselor....but we have been prioritizing other things. We miss the wonder of God in our lives because we aren't spending time with Him. Too busy to pray....too busy to study His Word....too busy to abide. Christmas is a reminder to seek His wonder once again.

Some go through Christmas without a thought about Jesus and incredibly they speak of the Wonder of Santa...The Spirit of the Season....Getting into the Christmas Spirit....The GHOST of Christmas past...present and future. It is amazing really. We want so badly to experience wonder...that we try to stir it up....pretend it exists....settle for an imposter....and try to find it in ourselves.

We substitute Santa for Jesus. The North Pole for Heaven. Elves for disciples. We give gifts and receive gifts from one another rather than embracing the gift of Jesus from God. We speak of needing a Christmas Miracle rather than a miracle of God. We stop to read stories of Frosty, Rudolph and Grinches....but not from Luke or Matthew.

If we can't accept the Wonder of God in Jesus then we will create our own idols and worship things made with human hands, stories from human minds, and worship the wonder of Man in me

People....Isaiah said ....will call Him Wonderful Counselor...people will say that He is Wonderful Counselor.....



So let me ask the question that God brought you here to answer today. Was Isaiah prophesying about you? Did Isaiah peer into the future 2800 years and see you....here this morning....in wonder of your Counselor?

Matthew 16:13–14 (ESV) 13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

And then, I believe, Jesus looks His disciples in the eyes....and asks the question for all mankind.

Matthew 16:15 (ESV) 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

It doesn't matter what I call Jesus...It doesn't matter what your friends call Jesus....It doesn't matter what your family calls Jesus....It doesn't matter what social media and scientific pundits call Jesus...The only thing that matters ...Is who do YOU call Jesus?

Matthew 16:16 (ESV) 16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And after that....we would add....and You are MY....Wonderful Counselor.....Let's Pray