

**Isaiah 9: 6 and 7; “Christ the Wonderful”, A Sermon for the Christmas Season,  
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017,  
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Surely, in these two verses, is found one of the most significant and descriptive passages concerning Christ in the whole word of God. Christ, it says here, is the Child born to us, and the Son given to us. His name is a name made up of many glorious titles, as we find it here; titles which describe the glory of His Person, and what a relationship with Him will come to mean for the person trusting in Him. It will mean that if you believe in the Christ you will be counseled and ruled over by Him in a very wise and wonderful way. It is only the first word of description of Christ, which we will be looking at today, the fact that Christ is Wonderful. Christ is declared here to be the most wonderful of all beings, as He is both God and Man. He is the One who has brought us to God, as our Savior, Mediator, and Friend.

Many aspects of truth could be opened up from this particular spiritual vantage point, but I want to give you just 3 observations of just how wonderful our Lord Jesus Christ really is. In opening these truths up to you, I pray that you will be struck with awe and wonder at the greatness of His Person and the greatness of His condescending love in volunteering to come down into this fallen world of sinners so that God the Father could redeem a people to Himself. I want to 1<sup>st</sup> of all, take you in the word of God to behold how wonderful He was as a Person even from the womb of Mary. And then 2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to take you to behold how wonderful Christ was as a Person from the moment of His birth. And then 3<sup>rd</sup> – I want to take you to behold how wonderful He has been and is, as a Person now that He is risen and ascended.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Let me take you in the word of God to behold how wonderful Christ was as a Person, even from the womb of Mary.**

Turn with me over to Isaiah chapter 49, verses 1-7. “Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar!” “The Lord has called Me from the womb; from the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.” “And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me.” “And He said to me, ‘You are My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’” “Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work is with my God.’” “And the Lord says, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength, indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’” “Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him who the nation abhors, to the servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen You.”

So, here we find the prophetic words of the Triune God which begin with Christ speaking prophetically about His own Incarnation, and His being formed even in the womb for the work that He would do. He was called as a Man to His wonderful work of righteousness and proclamation of the truth, even from the womb. As the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Divine Trinity, He voluntarily submitted Himself, in the counsels of eternity, in the covenant of redemption, to be made a Man; to at a certain time in human history, He would take to Himself a true human nature which would be free from all sin because it would be totally uncontaminated by Adam’s sin. Joseph would not be Jesus’ father, but God the Father and God the Holy Spirit would jointly purpose and cooperate together in the glorious act of weaving the Divine and human natures together in this one glorious Person of the Lord Jesus, so that He would be a “polished shaft”. He would be the finest of arrows in the quiver of Jehovah. And the Lord Jesus would be brought forth in the fullness of time to obey God’s holy law in every particular and to overcome sin, and the world, and the Devil, and all of God’s enemies, on behalf of all needy and seeking sinners; and more particularly on behalf of all of God’s elect.

All the isles and the coastlands to the far reaches of the world need to take heed to Christ's Incarnation, for even from the womb, Jesus' name was mentioned; that He would save His people from their sins. Even from the matrix of His mother, it was purposed by the Triune God that His mouth, and the words that would proceed from His holy lips, would convict people of their sins, even as a sharp sword, and they would feed many needy sinners like you and like me, the doctrines of truth and grace. These truth He personified and they were and are intrinsically found in Him. Josiah Porter in the Self-Interpreting Bible says: "This highly figurative passage was designed to be descriptive of the Messiah." "His mouth was like a sharp sword, able to give utterance to words of convincing and powerful eloquence, which would penetrate the heart." "The figure is carried on into the second member of the verse." "The shadow of God's hand is there represented as covering or concealing the sword." "It is preserved by divine power, hidden from the eye of the enemy, until the moment comes for action: then it is suddenly drawn forth, and wielded with skill and power." "The last clause sets forth the same idea under another figure; an arrow preserved in the quiver until the moment for shooting it arrives." (end of quote)

The Lord Jesus was appointed to all of His holy work of righteousness from eternity, but even there, before He was even born into the world he was able to see what He would learn by hard experience, that the Jewish people and nation that He was first sent to, would not for the most part, receive Him to believe in Him for salvation. He even complains of it prophetically in a holy sense in verse 4 where He says: "Then I said, 'I have labored in vain; yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God.'" So, the Lord Jesus, from all eternity past, knew that even though He had been appointed by the Father to His holy work of being God's servant, to bring Israel (that is the Jews) back to God, that from the time that He commenced that earthly ministry until the end of His earthly ministry and His ascension to heaven, there would not be great numbers of Jews (of Israel after the flesh) converted. He was formed by God to be His servant so that Israel would be gathered to Him, and He was glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and God was His strength. He would prevail in righteousness and by His sufferings purchase all the elect people among the Jews by fulfilling all righteousness and doing the Father's will perfectly. And yet the numbers would not be great during the time of His earthly ministry.

The Father perceiving that this would be the case, that many of the Jews of Jesus' day would be a stubborn and stiff-necked people and oppose His wonders, not only during the time of His earthly ministry, but also the ministry of the apostles and prophets that followed after Him, the Father would sovereignly appoint in the Decrees of God, that the Lord Jesus would not only be His servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel, but that He would also give Christ to be as a light to the Gentiles, and that He should be His salvation to the ends of the earth. He appointed that the man whom they despised, their Holy One and their Redeemer, the One whom the nation abhorred who was the Servant of rulers in terms of bringing salvation to the elect among all nations, He appointed that eventually many Kings of many nations would see and arise to help further the kingdom of Christ, and Princes of those kingdoms would come to worship the Triune God through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ whose name is Wonderful. Let us now reflect upon the great love of Christ to sinners; how wonderful He has been from all eternity and in the Incarnation how much everlasting good and blessing has been purposed and poured forth upon unworthy, undeserving mankind sinners.

**2<sup>nd</sup> - I want to take you to behold how wonderful Christ was as a Person from the moment of His birth.**

Turn with me over to Luke chapter 2, verses 8-20. "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered." "This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria." "So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child." "So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered." "And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night." "And behold, an angel of the

Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.” “Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.’ “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” “And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” “So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ “And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.” “Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.” “And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.” “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.” “Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.”

Now you can see how wonderful this gift of the Christ child was, when you think of the way that the Father appointed all of these good things which happened at just after His birth. How wonderful it was that the Father ordered the circumstances such that Joseph and Mary were forced to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem at the time of this census, and that that would be the very time in which Mary would deliver her child. In this good way, He showed forth the fact that the prophecy from Micah 5: 2, concerning Messiah’s birth, would be precisely fulfilled. “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 going forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” You see how wonderful it was that Christ had to be laid in a manger, in a cow’s feeding trough, to picture that He had come for poor sinners to feed upon by faith. You can see how wonderful it was that the Father had appointed a whole host of angels to come and share the good news of His birth with the certain poor shepherds; reflecting the importance that God placed on caring for sheep. All we like sheep have gone astray, and we needed a Good and Great Shepherd such as Christ would be, to save us and to defend us and to watch over us. How important to picture all of this in a typical format so that it would be seen; the importance God places upon pastors shepherding their respective flocks, spiritually speaking, in the churches of His appointment.

How wonderful is Christ that the angels declared that glory ought to be given to God because a Divine Person was now to be seen on earth in human form as a little Child. And in this Child would be found everything good and right and true and pure and lovely, so that God being satisfied with His Son’s righteousness and goodness could proclaim peace and good will towards all men in the preaching of the gospel because of what His Son would do and accomplish on behalf of sinners, as He grew older. The shepherds came with haste to Bethlehem to see the thing which had come to pass, and when they had seen this Wonderful One, in whom the salvation of the world resided, it says that they marveled at how wonderful this was, and everyone who heard the shepherds tell of these things marveled as well. It is well if we ourselves are filled with wonder, that God would purpose and bring to pass such wonderful things for sinners; ordain such mercy and grace be shown to sinful men. Let us rejoice this Christmas at all that we have been given in Christ who most surely is wonderful!

**And then 3<sup>rd</sup> – I want to take you, in the word of God, to behold how wonderful He has been and is, as a Person now that He is risen and ascended.**

Turn with me over to Judges chapter 13, verses 1-7. I want to show you how Christ’s wonderful name is mentioned in relation to the birth of the strongest man who ever lived, physically speaking. I mean Sampson. “Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.” “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 any unclean thing.” “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.’” “And He said to me, ‘Behold you shall conceive and bear a son.’” “Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite from the womb to the day of his death.”

I hope that you can see that there are definite parallels in this account of the birth of Sampson and the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of Sampson’s great strength and His ability to deliver the people of God from their enemies. In this sense Sampson was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born to deliver God’s people from their sins and from the power and kingdom of Satan. And by His spiritual great strength, He saved them from all of their sins and all of their enemies. In the announcement of their births there is great similarity. “Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son,” this lady is told. She had been barren, but she would be no longer. Mary was a virgin, but she too would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit without a man. Sampson was to be raised as a Nazirite, as one who was to be sanctified to God from the womb, and a person who was supposed to lead a life of separation unto God. In this he was a type of Christ, who was also sanctified by the Lord, separated from sinners, and called a Nazarene. John Gill says that Sampson was to be a perpetual Nazirite; some were only Nazirites for a time, for so many days or months, according to their vow; but his son was to be a Nazirite all of his days, by the appointment of God. Even so, Christ was sanctified (set apart to God’s holy purpose that He would be the Savior of sinners and the Lord of all men; and that for all time. Jesus would be the spiritual Strong Man who would bind the Devil, and bear all of our sins, and carry away the gates of the city of death on His strong shoulders in His resurrection. In this our Lord Jesus was most wonderful.

I will not read verses 8-16, but Manoah, the woman’s husband was not there when she met the Angel of the Lord who told her these things. But when he did meet Him and was told about the need of their raising this boy as a Nazirite, Manoah wanted to prepare a burnt offering for the Angel as a response. And in verse 17, he asked 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?’” “So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord.” “And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on: as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar, it happened that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar.” In other words, the Angel of the Lord made use of the smoke as a vehicle in which he openly went up to heaven. In other words this Angel of the Lord was none other than a Pre-Incarnate manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ whose name is Wonderful. And when He ascended on high, He gave gifts to men.

In Psalm 68: 18 it says: “You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell there.” “Blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation; and to God the Lord belong escapes from death.” Manoah and wife did see the Angel of the Lord ascend in the flame. And it says – “it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar – the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar!” “When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground.” “When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the Angel of the LORD. And Manoah said to his wife, ‘We shall surely die, because we have seen God!’” “But his wife said to him, ‘If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have told us such things as these at this time.’”

This is a good application and thought for us to consider as I close this message: The reason that God revealed all of these good things to Manoah and his wife, concerning their son, was not to kill them, but to bless them. Even so, the revelation of what God revealed to men in the birth of Jesus Christ is not meant to terrify you, but it has been given so that you might believe in Christ and find out for yourself just how wonderful a Savior and Lord He is. May it be so with you this Christmas, that you rejoice greatly at the birth of Christ. For unto you He is born; born out of the goodwill and love of God; born to

set His people free. He is Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth and the desire of every nation, He is the joy of every longing heart.