

Isaiah 9:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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 called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Analysis

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 called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

This prophetic verse, written 700 years before Christ's birth, stands as one of Scripture's most stunning messianic prophecies. Isaiah announces both the Incarnation ("a child is born") and the divine nature of the Messiah through five extraordinary titles.

The duality "child is born...son is given" captures the mystery of the Incarnation. As human, Christ was born of Mary in time; as God's eternal Son, He was given from eternity. The passive voice "is given" indicates divine initiative—the Father sent the Son as humanity's greatest gift (John 3:16). "Unto us" emphasizes the beneficiaries: not just Israel but all who receive Him.

"The government shall be upon his shoulder" prophesies Messiah's kingly authority. In ancient times, the key to a city or palace was carried on the shoulder as a symbol of administrative authority (Isaiah 22:22). Christ bears the weight of cosmic governance—He upholds all things by His powerful word (Hebrews 1:3).

The five names are progressively astonishing:

1. Pele-Yo'etz (Wonderful Counselor)—He embodies wisdom that surpasses human understanding
2. El Gibbor (Mighty God)—divine warrior who defeats all enemies
3. Avi'ad (Everlasting Father)—eternal source of life and care
4. Sar-Shalom (Prince of Peace)—establisher of ultimate peace between God and humanity.

These titles demand deity.

No mere human could be called "Mighty God" or "Everlasting Father." Isaiah's prophecy requires the Incarnation—God becoming man to save His people. This prophecy refutes Arianism, Unitarianism, and all Christologies that deny Christ's full deity and humanity.

Historical Context

Isaiah prophesied during tumultuous times (740-681 BC) when the Assyrian Empire threatened to destroy Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria in 722 BC, and Judah faced constant danger. Against this backdrop of military threat and political instability, Isaiah proclaimed hope in a coming divine King who would establish eternal peace.

The immediate context of Isaiah 9:6 follows the promise that people walking in darkness would see great light (9:2)—fulfilled in Jesus' Galilean ministry (Matthew 4:13-16). The prophecy contrasts sharply with failed human kings who brought war, oppression, and exile. Where Ahaz and other kings failed to protect and shepherd God's people, the promised Child-King would succeed perfectly.

Ancient Near Eastern royal ideology provides important background. Kings bore grandiose titles claiming divine authority and eternal rule. Egyptian pharaohs were called "mighty god," and Mesopotamian rulers claimed eternal kingship. However, these were empty boasts by mortal men. Isaiah's prophecy, by contrast, announces a King who genuinely possesses divine attributes—not hyperbole but

literal truth.

For first-century Jews suffering under Roman occupation, Isaiah 9:6 fueled messianic expectations of a warrior-king who would overthrow oppressors and establish Israel's kingdom. Yet Jesus fulfilled the prophecy in unexpected ways—not through military conquest but through sacrificial death and resurrection, establishing a spiritual kingdom that transcends all earthly powers.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does each of the five titles (Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace) address a specific human need or longing?
2. What does it mean that "the government shall be upon his shoulder"? In what areas of your life do you struggle to let Christ's government rest on His shoulders rather than your own?
3. How does recognizing Christ as "Mighty God" change the way you approach difficulties, spiritual warfare, or overwhelming circumstances?
4. What does it mean practically that Christ is the "Prince of Peace"? What false sources of peace compete with Him in your life?
5. How should the truth that Christ is both "a child born" (fully human) and "Mighty God" (fully divine) shape your worship and prayer life?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	לֹא	יִלְאָת	לֹא	יִלְאָת	בְּ	נָתָן	לֹא	יִתְהַנֵּה
H3588	For unto us a child	is born	H0	unto us a son	is given	H0		H1961
	H3206	H3205		H1121	H5414			
וְ	הַמִּשְׁבֵּחַ	עַל	שְׁכָמָן	אֵלֶיךָ	שְׁמָן			
and the government	H4951	H5921	shall be upon his shoulder	shall be called	and his name			
			H7926	H7121	H8034			
פֶּן	וְיַעַצְתָּ	אֵל	בָּבָרְאֵל	אָבִי	עָד	שָׁרֵךְ		
Wonderful	Counsellor	God	The mighty	Father	The everlasting	The Prince		
H6382	H3289	H410	H1368	H1	H5703	H8269		
שָׁלוֹם:								
of Peace								
	H7965							

Additional Cross-References

Luke 2:11 (Parallel theme): For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Matthew 28:18 (Parallel theme): And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Isaiah 7:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23 (References God): Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Revelation 19:16 (Parallel theme): And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

1 John 5:20 (Eternal Life): And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

1 Timothy 3:16 (References God): And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Isaiah 53:5 (Peace): But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 28:29 (Parallel theme): This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

Romans 8:32 (Parallel theme): He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?