

# He Shall Be Called



A Glad Tidings Church  
Family Ministry Resource

# HE SHALL BE CALLED

In the classic Christmas movie, “Charlie Brown’s Christmas,” Charles Schulz paints us a picture of young Charlie Brown wrestling inwardly with the true meaning of Christmas. Everywhere he looks, he sees a “Christmas” focused on lights and trees, presents and consumerism, all of which leaves him feeling empty. Over time he continues to wonder if there isn’t something more. In the pivotal moment of the feature, Charlie Brown yells, “Isn’t there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?” to which his friend Linus replies, “Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about.” Then Linus proceeds to tell him the story of Jesus’ birth from the Gospel of Luke.

Though a kid’s cartoon, the reality of what is happening in this scene is so true today. For many, Christmas has lost its meaning, and the reason behind the season is being drowned out in homes all across this world. The celebration and remembrance that God Himself came in the form of a baby, born to a virgin, to live a sinless life, and coming with the purpose to save all of humanity can get lost in the wrapping paper, tape, tinsel, and bows if we are not careful.

This resource is designed to reorient our families to the true meaning of Christmas. As we focus on who Jesus is and what He came to accomplish, we will look at the names given to Him throughout scripture.


The devotion is designed to teach you the name of Jesus and why He was given it and then will end in a time of prayer. There is one devotion per day starting on December 1, and taking your family through Christmas Eve.

Along with this devotional guide, we encourage you to buy 24 ornaments from Amazon, Hobby Lobby, or any local crafting store, that you can paint. Each day decorate one of them as a family with the names included in this resource. Each night as you gather to read the devotion, hang the correlating ornament with that name of Jesus on your Christmas tree.

We hope that this will become a permanent addition to your family each year as we orient our families back to the true meaning of Christmas and fix our hearts on worshiping the Savior sent to rescue us all. We pray that you and your family would have a very Merry Christmas!



IMMANUEL



"All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us')"

Isaiah 7:14

"As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

"Look! The virgin will conceive a child!  
She will give birth to a son,  
and they will call him Immanuel,  
which means 'God is with us.'"

Matthew 1:20-23

There are many times in our lives where we will feel pain, sorrow, fear, sadness, and sometimes we will go through things that feel unbearable. In moments like these, we have questions like: “Why is this happening, why did I have to go through that, does God really love me, does God even care, and does He even know what I am going through?”

Isaiah prophesied almost 700 years before the birth of Jesus that there would be a coming Messiah and that He would be born of a virgin and given the name Immanuel which means, “God with us.” He writes to people experiencing those feelings who had those same questions, and who felt like we do today. They were enduring oppression, bondage, and slavery and were experiencing the consequences of their sins and poor choices. In facing their situation, they cried out to God for help, just like we do today.

This name “Immanuel” is one of the most beautiful and essential names of Jesus because it perfectly describes God’s heart towards us. Not everything we face will be fixed, not every problem will be solved, and we will face loss in this life. God’s answer wasn’t just a quick fix or a ten-step solution; instead, He promised us something far more significant. He promised us Himself! Out of His great love for us, God sent Jesus to become like us. He rejected His privileges as God and chose to humble Himself and enter into humanity by being born as an infant. God becoming flesh is God’s answer to our pain and questions.


The answer was not, "I will always fix everything;" the answer was a promise, "I will always be WITH YOU!" Jesus became human to face what we face, experience what we experience, and feel what we feel. He encountered: sadness, loss, betrayal, and hatred; people talked behind His back and even plotted His death. Jesus chose to experience all of this so that when we experience the pain that life brings, we are never alone, God is with us, and our King has felt it too! No matter what we experience or face, we have a God who loves us so much He has promised never to leave us, and we do not have to face it alone. We have a God who is with us even in the pain that we face.

*Prayer: God, thank you for sending Jesus to feel what we feel and experience the same type of things we go through. Thank you that we know we have a God who loves us, cares for us, and wants to be with us when we face and feel the pain that life sometimes brings. Thank you that we can always go to you at any moment, and know that you hear us and care. Thank you for being Immanuel, "God WITH US!"*



PRINCE OF  
PEACE





"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.  
The government will rest on his  
shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful  
Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9:6 NLT

"Then you will experience God's peace, which  
exceeds anything we can understand. His  
peace will guard your hearts and minds as  
you live in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:7 NLT

If there is anything the last few years have revealed, it most certainly would be that all of humanity yearns for peace. Commercials attempt to convince us that if we just buy their product, do their 5-step process, or possess their miracle pill, we can have peace. People search for it desperately in politics, having more things, relationships, eating, working out, working more, working less, and in time alone in nature. Yet, it so often seems the more we do, the more we spend, and the more we try, that we have even less peace than we did before. This is because peace can't be found in empty things; it can be found only in Jesus!

I remember singing part of the verse listed above in a Christmas song a few years ago. This verse is a prophecy of Isaiah that foretells who Jesus would be and declares His very nature. I remember that as I was singing it and I got to the part, "Prince of Peace," I was left a little puzzled.

My problem was that our modern concept of the word "Prince" is too weak. I think of princes that are found in Disney movies or of the British royal line. When I think of them, I see that term describing someone handsome but weak; they hold a ceremonial title but have no authority or power. And as I thought of this image, it bugged me that Jesus would be described this way in scripture.

The word "Prince" in Prince of Peace is not that! It is a Hebrew word that means: leader, captain, general, official, head, and overseer. It was the word given to someone who had power and great authority. When


Isaiah describes the coming Messiah (Jesus) as being the Prince of Peace, he is saying that Jesus will be the commander of peace, and He has power and authority over peace.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace because only in His presence can true and lasting peace be found. In Philippians 4:7, the apostle Paul describes peace this way, "Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." What Paul was telling the Philippian church and us today is the same message echoed by the prophet Isaiah, and that is only in Christ can peace be found. For all who turn to and trust in Jesus, they can find true and lasting peace! This Christmas we remember and celebrate peace coming to the world and made possible by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

*Prayer: God, we thank you for Jesus. Thank you that true peace can be found. It is not in presents, people, or things; it is only in You, Jesus. Thank you for providing a way for us to be at peace with God and that we know in Your presence is a peace that goes beyond anything we can understand. We love you Jesus, thank you for being the Prince of Peace!*



LIGHT OF  
THE WORLD



"Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

John 8:12 NLT

"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

John 1:4-12 NLT

There is something about light that captivates us. Whether sitting around a campfire roasting marshmallows or sitting comfortably in a chair and watching the twinkling lights on the Christmas tree, light seems to draw us in and brings warmth and comfort. Darkness, on the other hand, has the opposite effect. One of the first fears that we experience as children is being afraid of the dark. We seem to think that the darkness veils hidden secrets, crouching monsters, and its presence keeps us in fear of the unknown. It lacks warmth, comfort, and feels cold. There is nothing worse than feeling lost, alone, and without light in utter darkness.

I remember as a child visiting a friend who had just moved into a new house. After traveling all day, we arrived late at night, and I fell asleep in their living room. When I awoke in the middle of the night, I was in a pitch-black basement, and I had no idea where I was. I was terrified! I slowly moved around, searching for a light switch. It took about 15 minutes, but when I found it and flipped the switch, everything changed in a moment! I have never wanted light more than in that moment. With the emergence of the light, darkness was pushed back, the fear subsided, and I felt at peace at once.

Here in John chapter 8, Jesus describes Himself as being "The Light of the world." This is a name that provides us with some imagery. Jesus tells us that His presence is the true and most excellent light this world has ever seen. On that night that I was lost and afraid, I was desperately searching for light. I longed to find it

because I needed it to show me where I was and needed to go; when I saw it, I had hope. Jesus does that for us as well! Jesus is not just a light; He is THE LIGHT and the only light to the spiritual darkness of this world. Our sin causes spiritual darkness, and in our sin, we want to hide because of the wrong we have done and the wounds we have made. The great thing about Jesus is that He meets us in our darkness with His Light! Jesus calls us to step back into the light. He invites us to confess our sins and to live in the power of His Spirit living inside of us. Because Jesus is the light, He is the only one who can expose not just the darkness that surrounds us but also the darkness within us caused by our sin. As we welcome Him into our lives to speak and bring conviction to sin, we step into the light, and Jesus guides us towards a life that is in Him. For all who come to Him and follow Him, He brings light into their spiritual darkness, and His light leads them to true and everlasting life! Just like that night when I finally found the light switch and was filled with hope and peace, all who see Jesus as “The Light of the World” are filled with hope and peace.

*Prayer: Jesus, thank you for being the Light of the World! Thank you that you met us in our sin and darkness with your marvelous light. You did not leave us in our brokenness; instead, you love us and direct us towards hope, peace, and life. Thank you for being The Light of The World!*



THE GOOD  
SHEPHERD





“I am the good shepherd; I know my own  
sheep, and they know me”

John 10:14 NLT

What would you do if you spent your entire day out in an open field, without a phone or a computer? No YouTube or Netflix, and nobody else to talk to or play with – but what you do have with you is dozens of sheep!

Now, these sheep are cute, but they need a LOT of help! They are easy prey for predators: they have no sharp claws or fangs, they cannot run very fast, and wolves, lions, and bears love the taste of mutton! If a sheep falls over on its back, it is not even able to stand back up on its own. Their eyesight is poor, so they do not know if they are wandering away from the flock. These sheep are valuable, but they definitely need someone to take care of them, and that someone is a shepherd.

If you were that shepherd, you would get to know these sheep very well. You would be watching them all throughout the day. You would be leading them to fields with lush grass for grazing, and you would show them to gentle streams where they could get a refreshing drink of water. You would protect them from all the vicious animals that seek to attack. You would probably name each of the sheep. You would know everything about each one. Maybe Baaab is constantly prone to wander off away from safety. Maybe Baaarbaraaa needs special care for a wound that needs to be treated. Perhaps Laaambert likes to cuddle, and Baaanie is very playful. After spending so much time with the sheep, they would learn to trust you to keep them safe, to lead them to the best pastures, and to care for them. A real shepherd loves the sheep.

Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd, who knows and cares for His sheep. That's right – we are His sheep! Without the Good Shepherd to fight for us, we are vulnerable to the devil's attacks. Without the Good Shepherd to lead us, we are prone to wander from the best life God has for us. Without the Good Shepherd to feed us, we would go hungry. Without the Good Shepherd to soothe us, our hurts and sorrows would overwhelm us. Sounds like a lot of work to care for sheep, doesn't it? But for the Good Shepherd, it is not a bother, because He knows us by name, and He loves us dearly.


If the sheep had a baaad attitude, though, it could get upset with the shepherd for not allowing it to go wherever it pleases. It might resent the hard wooden rod and staff that is gently thrust out to keep the sheep in the fold. But the more time the sheep spends with the shepherd, the more it realizes that the shepherd loves it, and is devoted to keeping it safe, fed, and happy. The shepherd sees dangers and blessings that the sheep cannot, and the shepherd is able to fight off dangers that threaten his sheep.

The more time you spend with Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the more you know Him. The more you know Him, the more you trust Him. The more you trust Him, the happier and more blessed you will be, because you know He is giving you life to the fullest (John 10:10)!

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for loving us and caring for us. Thank you for knowing us. We want to spend more time with you so that we can know you better. Please help us to follow you always, trusting that no matter what happens in our lives, you are leading us toward a full and satisfying life. Amen.*



SAVIOR OF  
THE WORLD



"Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

John 4:42 NLT

With a large stone pitcher hoisted upon her shoulder, she walked as quickly as she could through the street on her way to the common well past the town border. Her head hung downward as she avoided eye contact whenever possible. The noonday sun was beating down upon her, causing drops of sweat to drip off of her forehead to the ground. The rest of the town's women had good reason to draw water from the well early in the morning, while the temperatures are cooler and the sun is still low in the sky. But this woman had equally good reason to wait until noon, after the others had finished; she could not deal with the sideways glances, the hushed whispers, or the calloused manner in which the other women regularly dismissed her. She was, by necessity, a loner. Haunted by past mistakes and stuck in a never-ending cycle of failures, she had pushed away everybody that ever cared for her. So, she walked alone to the well in order to draw the life-giving water that was necessary to daily life.

As she approached the well, she saw a strange sight: a man was sitting there alone. Although she did not want to talk to anyone, she had come this far and decided she might as well get what she came for and then make a quick departure. Men didn't generally address women in public anyway, so she could just draw her water and go. But then He surprised her by talking to her. As He spoke, she recognized that not only was He a man, but a Jew! As a Samaritan woman, she knew of the hatred between the two races, and so she was doubly shocked that this man was talking to her. When she responded in a snide manner, He continued to treat her with dignity and respect. He clearly saw value in her person, which made her uncomfortable. She tried changing the subject to

divisive topics, yet He continued to bring the subject of the conversation back to her. This man seemed to be able to peer deeply into her very soul to call out all of her failures and shortcomings, yet still He valued her. He offered to give to her living water that would forever quench her thirst and give her eternal life. Excited by the Good News this Jesus was offering, the woman ran back to the townspeople to urge them to meet this man who “told me everything I ever did (John 4:29)!” Her testimony prompted them to go to the well and hear Jesus for themselves. As He doubtless told them of their sins, and His mission to forgive all those who trust in Him as Messiah, they believed in Jesus and said to the woman the words in our text verse.

Jesus is the Savior of the world. It does not matter who you are or what you have done; if you are willing to make a break from your past and commit your life to Jesus, He will save you from your sins and give you a new and glorious life that will never end!

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me even when I least deserved your favor. Thank you for coming to this world to die on a cross to pay the penalty of my sins, and for the sins of all the people in the world who will commit to you as Lord and Savior. Help me to see value in every human being, and give me the courage to take this Good News to all the people in my life, so that they too may live with you for eternity. Amen.*

A white Christmas ornament with a green wreath and the word 'MESSIAH' in green. The ornament is circular with a small square tab at the top containing a hole. The word 'MESSIAH' is written in a green, serif font across the center of the ornament. Two white, four-pointed starburst shapes are positioned on the left and right sides of the ornament, partially overlapping the wreath. The entire design is set against a solid red background.

MESSIAH





“The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—  
has been born today in Bethlehem, the  
city of David!”

Luke 2:11 NLT

What a thrilling proclamation that was given by the angel to the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks at night! After centuries of hoping and waiting, Israel's Messiah had finally stepped onto the scene!

The name "messiah" held many important implications for ancient Israelis. It is a Hebrew word which literally means, "anointed one," and is not a name so much as it is a title. In Greek, the word is translated as, "Christ," and holds identical meaning. In Scripture, people were anointed with oil as a sign that God had appointed them for a particular office, and there were three offices for which people were anointed: prophet, priest, and king. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of them all. As Prophet, Jesus preached the Good News of God's plan for humankind. As Priest, Jesus provided the perfect sacrifice for the cleansing of our sins. As King, Jesus would reign over a kingdom with no end. For the Jews, the term Messiah became associated with the king from the line of David who would win Israel's independence from the Roman Empire and set up a never-ending kingdom over all the world. By the time Jesus was born, Judea had been under foreign rule for nearly six full centuries, and the people were desperate for Messiah to be revealed.

However, in their zeal for freedom and national pride, most Jews had some misconceptions of what Messiah would accomplish. He was a conqueror; not of military forces, but of sin, death, and Satan. He was a champion; not of Israel alone, but for all the people of the earth. He came to free the masses; not from an oppressive government, but from the penalty of their own sin. And

the kingdom that He set up on this earth was not a typical one with borders and royal offices, but one that stretches across the globe, superseding the nations of our world.

The book of Hebrews begins with a powerful presentation of Jesus as Messiah in each of the anointed offices:

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.” Hebrews 1:1-3 NIV

As Messiah, Jesus is the Prophet, “spoken unto us by His Son”; the Priest, “he had provided purification for sins”; and the King, “his Son [is] appointed heir of all things” and now sits “at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven”. And so we rejoice with the angels: “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased!” Luke 2:14

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, we praise you as our Messiah. Thank you for conquering sin and death so that we can have eternal life with you. Help us to live our lives in grateful obedience to your loving rule, knowing that our best life is always found in you. Amen.*



THE WORD  
OF GOD

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:1,14

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.”

Revelation 19:11-13

John, the brother of James and son of Zebedee, had a very close relationship with Jesus. He self describes as “the disciple that Jesus loved” and is seen leaning on Jesus as He shares His final meal with His disciples (John 13:23). When John wrote his three letters, he described his relationship with Jesus this way—“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life...” (I John 1:1). Note the descriptions —“heard,” “seen with our eyes,” “looked upon,” “our hands have handled.” These are descriptions of closeness and intimacy that are unmatched elsewhere. John enjoyed an intimate connection with the carpenter from Nazareth, the Christ, and Lamb of God.

His closeness to Jesus, however, never led him to take Christ’s mystery and majesty for granted. It was John who used the name for Jesus, The “Word of God.” The two texts above use that powerful name. The “Word of God” reveals Jesus as the One who personifies the written and spoken wisdom of God and that communicates to humanity God’s nature. That is why Jesus said “He who has seen Me has seen the Father...” (John 14:9) and the author of Hebrews wrote that Jesus was the “brightness of His (God’s) glory and the express image of His (God’s) person” (Hebrews 1:3).

In both of these texts, the Word of God steps down from Heaven to rescue humanity. John’s Gospel records the Incarnation. God became flesh as an infant in Bethlehem, lived a sinless life among humankind with the express intention of giving His life for our sin—becoming sin for us, so that we might become the


righteousness of God. In this coming He rescued us from our sin. On the island of Patmos, John wrote Revelation and described what the Word of God will one day do. The Word of God, the great rescuer of humanity, will again step out of Heaven to rescue those who are about to be destroyed by the evil forces of Satan. The Word of God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, with His robe dipped in the blood of redemption, will defeat the enemy and make ready the way to life eternal.

The Word of God never changes; He is the same “yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). He is never too busy to step down from Heaven and rescue you from those which torment or from the trials that threaten. He lives to be our rescuer.

*Prayer: Father, thank you for your Son, the Word of the Living God. Allow us, like John, to see, hear, and handle the Word, and live in the shelter of His arms.*







“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Matthew 1:21 NKJV

“Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:9-11 NKJV

Great are the many names for Christ that fill the pages of the ancient scriptures and fall from the lips of prophets and apostles alike. Who is not comforted by the sweet reminder that He is Immanuel—God with us, or Redeemer—the One who paid the price for our freedom, or Light of the World—the One who turns our darkest of nights into glory and provides hope in the midst of our gloom and despair? But no other name is sweeter and none is more soothing to the anxious heart than the name—Jesus.

Jesus is the name we learned in Sunday school. It is the name of the little child who was born in the crowded stable outside of Bethlehem because there was no room in the inn. It is the name given to Him by His parents when He was just eight days old as they presented Him in the Jerusalem temple. It is the name that makes demons flee, sickness bow, and hopeless hearts take courage. It is, as the apostle Paul declared, the “name that is above every name,” and the name that will one day cause every knee to bow and elicit a confession of praise from every man, woman, boy, and girl.

The origin of this name goes back to the Old Testament days and the ancient Hebrews. Yehoshua was the name given to many Hebrew boys and our transliteration of that name, points us to Joshua, one of the great figures in ancient Israelite history. His name, later written in Aramaic, (Yeshua) means “Yahweh saves.” Joshua, who led Israel into Canaan was the prototype of the One who would come and save humanity not just from earthly foes, but from the power of sin. Later, in the Greek, the name further


evolved when the Romans and Greeks simply had no sound that would say Yeshua. Through the Greek transliteration process, the name became Iesous and pronounced (yay-soos) or Jesus. That name, meaning "God saves" has continued to be spoken, worshipped, and called upon throughout the centuries.

It is such a comfort to know that we don't always have to have every answer and that we do not struggle alone through every trial. Enemies may seek to discourage and bring fear into the life of the believer but the name of Jesus is a strong tower to which we can run and find safety (Proverbs 18:10). The One, whose very name means "Yahweh is our salvation" stands ready to drive away our fears and conquer the forces that seek to overcome us. More than all of this, Jesus saves us from our sins. He saved us through His death and lives now to make a way for us in our pain. His name is beautiful, His power is great, and His sweet name is to be cherished, exalted, and provide hope to all who simply whisper, "Jesus!"

*Prayer: Father, thank You for giving us hope through the precious name of Jesus. May every mouth be stopped and every enemy forced to retreat when His name is declared. May we together cherish, honor, and find safety in the arms of the One we call Jesus.*



WONDERFUL  
COUNSELOR



“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son  
is given; And the government will be upon  
His shoulder. And His name will be called  
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Isaiah 9:6 NKJV

The title Wonderful Counselor was the first of several included in Isaiah's prophecy, and it appears only here in Scripture. This prophecy came to Israel amid the Assyrian invasion in 740 B.C. as a word of hope that a Messiah would come and rescue them and establish His kingdom. Though it would be seven centuries later that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, this prophetic word inspired hope then and continues to give assurance and evoke a godly optimism in all who follow Christ today.

What is it about this title, Wonderful Counselor, that arouses such a sense of anticipation and expectation? What about these words calm our anxious fears and settle our desperate hearts? Today's culture is quite familiar with the role of counselors. It is not unusual for a person to have a personal therapist or to seek professional counseling, but even the best is bound by human limitations and incomplete knowledge. Their words, though often helpful, provide no certainty or guaranteed efficacy. Jesus is different. The word wonderful in Hebrew is *pele* and it carries the sense of extraordinary or beyond comprehension. It means marvelous and incomparable. The word counselor in Hebrew is *yaas* and means to advise, devise a plan, or provide purpose. Together we come to understand that the counsel of Jesus, His very word, is incomparable in its ability to give direction, provide purpose, or extend meaningful advice. Why then is He declared to be Wonderful Counselor?

There are at least three reasons. First, His Word or counsel never changes. He will not give us one piece of advice one day and another the next. His counsel is not

affected by cultural changes or societal optimism. His counsel remains steadfast. The psalmist said it this way, "Forever, Oh Lord, Thy Word is settled in Heaven" (Psalm 119:89). Jesus underscored this truth when He said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). His counsel is wonderful because it can be trusted to never change, diminish, or become outdated.

Second, His counsel is wonderful because it never fails. That is, when God's Word is promised, He watches over that Word to ensure that it is carried out. When God revealed Himself to Jeremiah and then asked Jeremiah what He had seen, he responded, "I see the branch of an almond tree" (Jeremiah 1:11). God then said, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my Word is fulfilled" (Jeremiah 1:12). Earthly counselors give advice and then move on. Not the Wonderful Counselor. He watches over His Word to ensure its fulfillment. His counsel is indeed WONDERFUL.


Finally, His counsel is wonderful because it is accompanied by the intercession of the very Counselor Himself. Many have been blessed to have a doctor or a counselor pray over them on occasion but the Wonderful Counselor provides not only unchanging and unfailing counsel, He lives to make intercession for those He counsels (Hebrews 7:25). How comforting to know that Jesus gives us counsel that never changes, never fails, and is always accompanied by divine intercession!

*Prayer: Father, teach us to trust you and rest in the assurance that as our Wonderful Counselor, You have given us not only wise counsel in Your Word, but you have have given us Yourself. Amen*



BREAD OF  
LIFE





Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6:35 NLT

Jesus had just finished up performing one of the most famous miracles during His three-year ministry tour on earth. He was teaching a large crowd of followers when dinner time was approaching. He knew the crowd was getting restless because of hunger, so He instructed His disciples to bear the burden of feeding 5,000 men plus women and children.

This request seemed ludicrous. The disciples did not have near enough money to feed the masses nor the time to pull off a great feast. To appease Jesus, they went looking for options, but all they could come up with were five loaves of bread and two fish from a lunchbox that belonged to a young lad. The boy agreed to give up his lunch for the day, which led to the possibility of a miracle. Jesus took the five loaves of bread and two fish, gave thanks to God, and began distributing the food to the crowd. The disciples began providing every person present with bread and fish. All 5,000 men plus women and children were fed and fully satisfied. There were 12 baskets of food left over.

It was on the heels of this miraculous event that Jesus would enter into a discussion with the crowd regarding the bread of God offered from heaven. While Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years, God provided manna (bread) from heaven to satisfy their hungry stomachs. They could count on the manna being present each morning for collection. But Jesus changed the tone of the conversation slightly. There was another bread that was available now, the true bread that came down from Heaven and would give life to the world. The crowd was VERY interested in a bread that gave life to the world. They were hungry for

this true bread. When they requested this true bread, Jesus replied, I am the Bread of Life.


The manna in the wilderness, the bread used to feed the 5,000, and the bread we purchase from stores will only temporarily satisfy our physical hunger, but Jesus offers something greater, something more, something better that will satisfy our spiritual hunger—Himself. With this true bread, Jesus promises that we will NEVER again be hungry.

People have tried everything under the sun to find satisfaction of the soul, and they are ALWAYS left dissatisfied and empty. The advent of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, is the ONLY way to be fully satisfied. May this Advent season be a time where you stop searching for soul-satisfaction in earthly objects and instead come to Jesus for He will give you life and life more abundantly. The 5,000 men plus women and children not only walked away fully satisfied, but Jesus had plenty of food leftover. Jesus will never disappoint and never leave you empty. If you come to Him, He will fill you up and you will NEVER hunger again.

*Prayer: God, I recognize that nothing on this earth will ever fully and truly satisfy my heart. I am guilty of trying everything under the sun, only to be left dissatisfied and still wanting. Jesus, Bread of Life, I want you, and you alone. Fill me up. Satisfy my spiritual hunger. Amen.*



CHIEF  
CORNERSTONE



Therefore, this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken.

Isaiah 28:16 NLT

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family. 20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.

Ephesians 2:19-20 NLT

You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God’s temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for great honor.

1 Peter 2:4 NLT

You may not be a skilled builder, and it is likely your knowledge of construction is limited, but we would all agree that the foundation is essential to every structure. Whether your building a tower with Legos or a stone structure that will serve host to a profitable company in your community, you cannot ignore the foundation.

For centuries, builders have used and placed great value on cornerstones when constructing new structures. The cornerstone was often carefully placed in its corner position first and became the reference point for ALL other stones as they were being laid. If a worker ignores the placement of the cornerstone, then the structure will lack integrity.

In the Isaiah passage noted above, the prophet Isaiah, who spoke 700 years before the birth of Christ, is recording the words of God to the scoffers and boasters of Judah. God is announcing to the people of Judah that a precious cornerstone will be placed among them that is safe to build on. This Messianic prophecy promised a sure foundation for God's people to build their lives upon—a foundation that would be unshakable and unmovable. Paul notes to the church in Ephesus that this cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. God promised the coming cornerstone, but it was up to the people to choose whether or not they would build their life upon His promise. As Peter so eloquently stated, some have rejected this sure foundation, while others have placed their trust in Christ.

The same cornerstone that was prophesied by Isaiah and realized in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is still available this Advent season.


The world offers a myriad of “things” we can build our life on—a relationship, family heritage, wealth and position, and even fame. Yet, none of these “worldly things” provide stability and they sure are not reliable. God has given us His Son, Jesus Christ, as our chief cornerstone, but we have to make the decision regarding what or who we will build our life upon. Will it be Jesus Christ our cornerstone, OR the unstable, unpredictable, and unreliable offer from the world? Choose this day whom you will serve!

*Prayer: God, I thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, my sure foundation and chief cornerstone. Thank you for keeping your promises and making it possible to build my life on you and your Word. For those who have rejected you and your promises, Holy Spirit, may you help them to see that what the world has to offer is useless, unstable, and temporary, but what You have to offer is unshakable and reliable. Amen.*

A stylized Christmas ornament with a green wreath and the text "KING OF KINGS". The ornament is light green and has a small red dot at the top for a hanging loop. The text is in a green, serif font. There are two white starburst shapes on the ornament, one on the left and one on the right. The wreath is made of green, pointed leaves.

KING OF  
KINGS





For, At just the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

1 Timothy 6:15 NLT

On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

Revelation 19:16 NLT

It has become a common trend in our culture today to refuse to submit to authority figures. This mentality exists in all social spaces in our culture—home, workplace, education, political arena, and even the Church. The tendency is to ignore or altogether reject the authoritative voices in our life in order to do things my way without any consideration of the consequences. Children dismiss the loving instruction of their parents, employees refuse to follow the guidelines of their employer, and students fail to observe the rules of the classroom. Honoring authority, submitting to leadership, and respecting higher powers have become a practice of the past.

When we think of an earthly king, images of a powerful ruler, an authoritative figure, sitting on his throne reigning over a kingdom come to mind. An earthly king is given the responsibility of guiding his constituents and protecting his kingdom with the hope that they will submit to and respect his rule and reign. These are the expectations of any and every kingdom, but it is far from reality.

One of the many titles ascribed to Jesus Christ is King of Kings. He is unlike any earthly king and His kingdom does not compare to the unstable kingdoms of this world. The writer of Hebrews notes that Christ-followers are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable (12:28), and this King has been given ALL authority in heaven AND earth (Matthew 28:18). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is now sitting in a place of honor at the right hand of the Father, reigning as supreme and sovereign King.

This King certainly deserves our complete devotion and submission to His way is non-negotiable. His ways are higher, He is better, and His Kingdom is eternal. As we celebrate this Advent season the true King that humbly came into this world over 2,000 years ago, let us make worship of our King a priority for our families, submission to His ways our lifestyle, and let us make certain that Christ is ALWAYS the King of our hearts.

*Prayer: God, I know my tendency is to reject the instruction of others and do things my way. Submitting to authority is not the inclination of my heart, but I understand that Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, wants nothing less than my complete devotion. Holy Spirit, help me to reject these sinful tendencies and instead make Christ the King of my heart and life. May this Advent season be a turning point for me and my family as we recognize that there is only one true King, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Dethrone anything from my heart that attempts to take Jesus' rightful place as my King and Lord. Amen.*