

## Jesus, Our Wonderful Counselor

## Isaiah 9:6

Today, we begin a new sermon series for Christmas that we will call "A.K.A. JESUS." This series title originated when I asked our pastors to think of a title for a series on the Names of the Savior. Pastor Frank, who worked in a prison for many years came up with the idea. "In prison, inmates are known by their many aliases. We use the abbreviation, A.K.A. as a short cut for *also known as*." I thought that this would be a great theme to use for the month of December.

Names are very important. We give careful thought to the meaning of names that we give to our children. But even with the best of intentions, sometimes we come up with nick names. Kim's cousin's name is Matthew, but ever since he was a child, he's been called "Chub." He's in his 40's and still called "Chub." The strange thing is that he has never been overweight! The nick name was given to him when he was little and used to love go to the creek and chase the little bait fish called chubs!

If you have ever been called by a nick name, you will appreciate the following anonymous poem.

*My aunt calls me "Elizabeth."  
My grandma calls me "Liz."  
My sister calls me "Lisa,"  
and the baby calls me "Wiz."*

*My uncle calls me "Betty,"  
while my grandpa calls me "Beth."  
My brother calls me "Dizzy Liz"  
or sometimes "Lizard Breath."*

*My teacher calls me "Betsy,"  
and my friends all call me "Bess."  
I find these nicknames more annoying  
than you'd ever guess.*

*I wish that they would call me  
by my real name instead.  
I simply hate those nicknames;  
see, my real name is Fred.*

The first NAME that we will study is from Isaiah 9:6

The name is WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, and it refers to JESUS is the one whom we

must trust!

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

The question that each one of us need to answer today is "Who will you TRUST at Christmas?"

This verse is ONE of the MOUNTAINTOPS of Isaiah. These are passages that we know well and bring us great comfort. Many of these mountaintops are Messianic verses that we think of at Christmas.

Isaiah 7:14 *"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."*

Isaiah 53:3-4 *"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted."*

We find the name WONDERFUL COUNSELOR in Isaiah 9:6 given in the CONTEXT of a TROUBLED NATION that was trusting in EVERYONE ELSE but GOD!

## INTRODUCTION to ISAIAH

The TIME that Isaiah wrote was 740-680 BC. His prophecies were written to JUDAH, the southern kingdom. This was a time when Judah faced great trouble. The Assyrians were on a military quest to conquer the world. A predominant king of Assyria was Tiglath Pileaser (745-727 BC). Assyria was a powerful nation that no one could stop. They captured the ten northern tribes in 722 BC.

Isaiah's prophetic ministry occurs over the reign of three kings:

1. JOTHAM. He reigned during a time of transition from greatness to decline.
2. AHAZ. He is the King that we will study today. During his reign, Israel Falls.
3. HEZEKIAH. He followed Ahaz and was the king when Assyria surrounded Jerusalem. Only the direct intervention of God kept Judah from being conquered at that time.

Isaiah preached to Judah and warned them that they should trust in the LORD in the middle of this troubling time. Their trust was in their own strength, and sometimes in the armies of other nations. In the Introduction to Isaiah by Celenden (NAC), we read: *"The prophet Isaiah speaks with clarity and emotions against the proud people of his day that arrogantly thought they were in full control of their world."* (E. Ray Clendenen, New

American Commentary: Isaiah 1-39 (B & H Publishing Group, 2007), 8.  
Isaiah preached a message of HOPE in the midst of TROUBLE

In this context, we are examining the name “WONDERFUL COUNSELOR”  
It is one of the eight names of the Messiah given in Isaiah 9:6

This passage contains four sets of compound names. Compound names were common:

- a. Immanuel - “God with us”
- b. Isaiah - “God saves”
- c. Shear-Jashub (Isaiah’s son, Isa 7:3) - “A remnant will return”

The first part is the name Wonderful. In Hebrew it is *Pele*- a word play on “Tiglath Pileaser,” the Assyrian King. It means “extraordinary, hard to be understood, God’s dealings with His people” (Brown, Driver and Briggs, “Hebrew and English Lexicon,” 810.) We find this word used in Isaiah 25:1 *“O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.”*

The second part is the name Counselor. It means “Advise, counsel, plan, decide” Holladay, William Lee, Ludwig Koehler and Ludwig Koehler. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 2000. This word is first used in Exodus 18:19, Jethro advises Moses. Exodus 18:19 *“Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you!”*

Combined, both names meant that A DELIVER would come. He would be  
WONDERFUL - performing the wonderful works of God  
He would GIVE ADVICE - by following what He says, we will be blessed

These words were spoken to AHAZ and the people of JUDAH. This is a prophesy that Jesus would be a WONDERFUL COUNSELOR when we face TROUBLE.

King Ahaz faced trouble in three key areas: His CIRCUMSTANCES, his FAMILY, and his INNER LIFE.

Regarding his CIRCUMSTANCES, Ahaz was surrounded by enemies that wanted to destroy Israel:

- a. Trouble with ASSYRIA. Isaiah 7:1
- b. Trouble with ARAM (Syria). 2 Chronicles 28:1-5a
- c. Trouble with ISRAEL. 2 Chronicles 28:5b
- d. Trouble with EDOM. 2 Chronicles 28:16-17
- e. Judah was SURROUNDED with PROBLEMS!

You and I face difficult circumstances in life. For us, the trouble does not come in terms of an invading army, but rather through invading troubles. These troubles test our confidence. In every circumstance, we face a decision concerning the way in which we

attempt to overcome the circumstance. Our troubles take a different form from the troubles that Ahaz and Israel faced, but our tendency to trust in human sources of deliverance is the same as it was for Ahaz.

Who will we trust with finances, work, and health?

Who will trust with our numerous difficulties at Christmas?

Who do we trust when faced with the dilemma of receiving an unexpected Christmas gift when our budget is shot? Do we trust in Mastercard? Visa? Or do we trust in the Lord to guide us into a wise decision?

Who do we trust when we get an invitation to a work party where we know our testimony will be compromised?

There is great danger if we trust the wrong person! Bad advice can ruin our lives. I am mindful of the sad story of MICHAEL VICK. One of his many character problems was the problem with trusting the WRONG people. When his world was crumbling from the consequences of illegal dog fighting, he turned to a Financial planner named Mary Wong, who was recommended by an NFL friend. Vick trusted her with legal power of attorney. She stole 900,000 dollars. Vick's next manager was David Talbot. Also a crook. I'm glad to see Michael Vick making a comeback. I hope that he has learned his lessons and that he turns to the Lord, the only counselor who will never let you down!

The second source of difficulty for Ahaz was concerning his FAMILY. We see this in 2 Chronicles 26-28. From this, we learn that Jesus is A WONDERFUL COUNSELOR when we need help with our FAMILY.

His Father JOTHAM. He was a godly king (2 Chronicles 27:1-2). However, the people continued their corrupt practices. His Grandfather was UZZIAH. . He started well but ended poorly as he became proud (2 Chronicles 26:3-5, 16). Ahaz came from a good, but not perfect family. He faced the pressures of growing up as a PRINCE.

Like you and me, Ahaz came from a family that was not perfect. I can imagine that he faced many problems. Who will we turn to at CHRISTMAS when we have trouble with our FAMILY? Awkward family gatherings? Relatives that are fighting? Unsaved relatives that ridicule us?

Who will we trust when our CHILDREN want things for Christmas that we cannot afford?

Who will we trust when our children make sinful or embarrassing choices?

Who will we trust when our parents have disappointed us, or perhaps even hurt us?

Who will we trust when a brother or sister will not speak with us?

Who we will trust when our marriages are struggling, or even falling apart?

Will we turn to human counsel? Alcohol? Escape? Sports? Working overtime to avoid being at home?

The third lesson from Ahaz is in regard to his own personal issues. Ahaz was in need of a good counselor because of some of the situations in his own heart. He needed guidance, but unfortunately, he looked for it in the worst of places.

Look at the sources that Ahaz trusted:

1. Turned to ASSYRIA. 2 Chron 28:16
2. Turned to his WEALTH. 2 Chron 28:21
3. Turned to FALSE WORSHIP. 2 Chron 28:22-23
4. Turned to SELF. 2 Chron 28:24-25

To WHOM will you turn?

1. Times when we don't know our own heart
2. Times when we are trying to figure out our motives
3. Times when we are WEAK
4. Times when we can't BREAK a BAD HABBIT

Jesus, a WONDERFUL COUNSELOR. He is the one to whom we should turn when we face difficult circumstances, difficult family situations, and when we need guidance into the mysteries and contradictions of our own hearts!

Isaiah presents this as he reveals his own testimony, in light of the situation in Judah. He presents TWO CHOICES.

1. Trust in SELF. This is what Judah was doing, and Isaiah condemns them for trusting in themselves, their mediums, and their own strength. **Isaiah 8:18–22** *"Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. " "And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? " "To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. " "They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will*

*be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. " "And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness."*

2. The alternative is that we can trust in CHRIST. Here, the most beautiful messianic passage in Isaiah is explained. **Isaiah 9:1–6**  
*"But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. " "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. " "You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. " "For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. " "For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. " "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."*

Isaiah's prophecy describes the benefits and blessings of trusting in Christ.

- a. You will have LIGHT. 9:2 *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light*
- b. You will have JOY 9:3. *You have enlarged the nation, and increased their joy*
- c. You will have VICTORY. 9:4-5 *You have shattered the yoke that burdens them*
- d. Who will bring these things? A CHILD!!!! *For unto us a child is born!*

Whom will you trust at Christmas? Trust JESUS! The WONDERFUL COUNSELOR