

**Christmas Day      25-Dec-21**

**Unto Us a Child is Born**

**Isaiah 9:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> 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 Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
will accomplish this.

**Luke 2:1-21**

**The Birth of Jesus**

**2** In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.

<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

<sup>21</sup> On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

## Sermon: For unto Us a Child is Born

Please have your **Bibles opened** up at **Isaiah 9** – verses 6 and 7 to begin with.

Let me pray for God's guidance and understanding

Let's pray...

### Intro

Suppose you saw a **large ant hill in your yard**, and **you knew the pest control man was coming tomorrow** to spray, bomb and kill all such pests. **And let's say you have first-hand knowledge that this colony-of-ants is in imminent danger** of doom and destruction, yet the **ants have absolutely no idea**. And say some of the **smarter ants** in the colony have **warned the other ants** about this possible danger, but none of the **other ants have ever taken it seriously or really listened**. So how could you communicate this real danger to these poor little ants?

The only real way to help **save the ants** would be to come to them as an ant yourself, as a member of their own colony – and tell them. Some would listen and heed your warning and seek a new life, a new way of thinking, and a new place to live, while **others** would scoff at the idea and not understand nor agree with all the odd descriptions and concepts you were teaching, preaching, and warning.

Whether or not they listened, at least you would have **done all you can to save them while still preserving their freedom of choice**.

That's a **picture of** what's being going on with **God & His people in the Old Testament**. **God** had been warning His people in the Old Testament – year after year – that they were **in danger of judgment and destruction** – because of their **repeated disobedience** towards Him. He **told them** to turn back to Him and stop worshipping false gods; stop sinning and start to obey Him.

**God warned His people** in the Old Testament – through His Word – given to His prophets – who then **told the people** what God wanted them to do

But the people didn't listen.

So, **God already had a plan** in place - that He Himself - would come and **fix the problem**. It would mean **God becoming like human beings** – in the flesh – to achieve this.

So, God told His prophets – **He will send a special someone**.

This special someone – has the title of - **Messiah** – in **Hebrew** – which means God's Chosen Anointed One – in **Greek** – the word for Messiah is the **Christ**

Last Sunday, we heard that **God foretold through a prophet called Isaiah** [Isaiah 7:14] - – way before it happened [**735 years before**]– that this special someone - would be a **special baby boy - born of a virgin** called **Mary** – and the child would have the title - **Immanuel** – which means **God with us** – and **His name would be Jesus**

This child to be born would be “**God in the flesh**”

Today as we celebrate Jesus' birth – some 2020 years ago

We discover in our **Old Testament passage** – again from the **prophet Isaiah** – that God even **described what Jesus** - the Messiah – the Christ - **would be like** – 700 years before He's born– and we see - Jesus has **some amazing descriptions...**

[\[So please turn to Isaiah 9 – verses 6 and 7\]](#)

### **The Messiah is Promised (Isaiah 9:6-7)**

- First, we see that **Jesus is GIVEN** – He is a **gift from God**
- The best gift we could possibly receive

[\[PowerPoint 1-Isaiah 9:6\]](#)



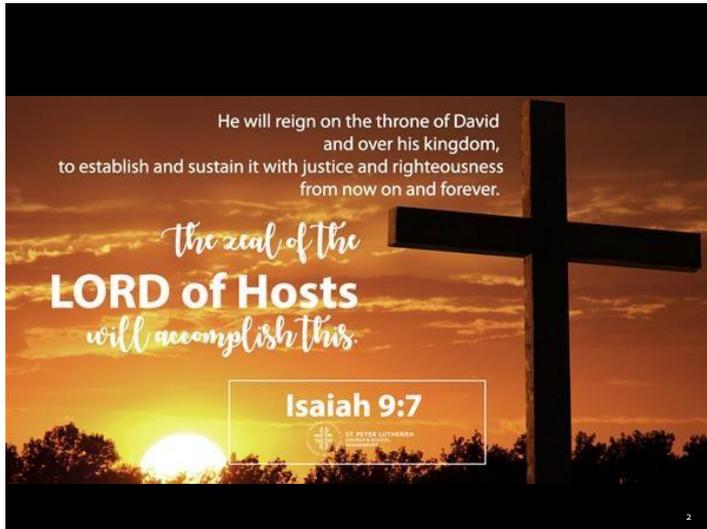
- Next, we see the **government will be on his shoulders...**
- It literally means **He has the rule and dominion over the whole world**
- Forget G20's and G8's or the idea of a **World Government**
- **Jesus is the ruler of the whole Earth**
- Then we see some **really important names** - given to Jesus, the Messiah
- He is a **wonderful counsellor...**
- It literally means a **wonder of a counsellor** – the nearest word we have in Hebrew to a supernatural counsellor
- This baby **Jesus will grow up to show wisdom** - way beyond any other person's wisdom
- We only have to read the **Gospels** – to see **how wise Jesus was** –
- He **outsmarted the Pharisees** and the **teachers and experts of the Law** –
- He **answered their questions** – with his own questions –
- He **taught amazing things** – like - to go the **extra mile** – to **turn the other cheek** – to **forgive 70 x 7 times** – to **love your neighbour as yourself** – to **love your enemies** and **pray for those who persecute you** – he taught that there was **no greater love than laying down your life for your friends** – and went ahead and did it – to prove it!

- The **people marvelled** at his teaching –
  - Why? Because it was **Heavenly** teaching not earthly teaching – after all – Jesus did say His kingdom was not of this world –
  - Where do we find this supernatural counselling of Jesus, today?
  - Simple – in **His Word** –
  - And supernaturally - through the Holy Spirit – who makes God’s Word come alive and have meaning in our lives?
  - What a wonderful counsellor Jesus is!
  - But how often do we rely on our own wisdom and experience instead of His?
- 
- He is also described as - **Mighty God...**
  - Mighty here means strong and brave – like any ruler or king should be
  - But **no ruler** can be God (they might claim they are)
  - Here Isaiah states clearly Jesus the Messiah is God Himself – this should put paid to any idea that Jesus was just a good bloke with great teaching
  - But His might and strength – is **not military strength** – but strength and power from His Word – which is God’s Word
  - God’s Word changes people’s hearts and minds and transforms people – like Saul to Paul (Hebrews 4:12)
- 
- He is also described as **Everlasting Father...**
  - The idea in these Hebrew words is that **Jesus is the source or author of all eternity**, that **He is the Creator Himself and has existed from the beginning**. It does not mean that Jesus Himself is the Person of the Father in the Trinity.

- He is described as the **Prince of Peace**...
- He is **the One that brings about peace between God and humans**
- When He grows up, He **takes the sin of the world on His shoulders** – and **takes the punishment for sin off people** and on to Himself on the cross– to make peace with God
- **Jesus is the one who calls people out of the darkness of their sins** – and calls them into His glorious light - to make peace
- That peace can only happen by Jesus being born in the first place on that first Christmas Day
- That's what we must hold on to this morning – that **Jesus brings peace** – a peace that surpasses all understanding
- So great is His birth – that on Christmas Day in 1914 – His birth – **brought a cease fire in the trenches in the Western Front** – as soldiers from both sides stopped fighting – and acknowledged the Prince of Peace
- That Christmas Day in 1914 gives some idea of what is possible - if people make Jesus a priority – and allow His peace to enter their hearts
- Sadly, many today – don't acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah – God's Chosen One – the **Wonderful Counsellor** – **Mighty God** – **Everlasting Father** and **Prince of Peace**
- Instead, they've sidelined Jesus – and **made themselves King of their lives** instead of Jesus – **they forget that humans are finite and temporary** – whereas King Jesus is infinite and permanent
- And as Isaiah goes on to say in v7 – **Jesus rules over a permanent forever kingdom**
- And He is **the only one who is able to rule with true righteousness** (truly right with God and fully approved by God)

- And He is the only one who is **able to judge** people's behaviour

[PowerPoint 2-Isaiah 9:7]

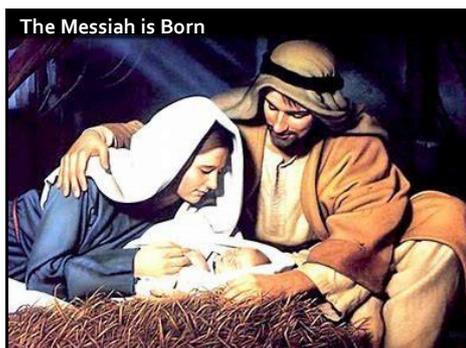


- How is this possible?
- As the end of v7 says - **Because of the Lord Almighty's zeal** – literally because of God's jealousy for His people – His desires to have a proper faithful relationship with His people – **compels Him** – **to send Jesus to fix sin in the world** – and bring about peace between God and humankind
- And so - we fast forward 700 years from Isaiah's day - to 4 or 5 BC – to our NT passage from Luke 2 and Jesus' birth

[Please turn there]

**The Messiah is Born (Luke 2:1-7)**

[PowerPoint 3-Manger]



- And we read that baby **Jesus** is born at a time when Israel is being ruled and oppressed by the Romans
- Times were difficult and uncertain – back then. Everyone was uncertain of what lay ahead
- A bit like today with this pandemic we're all living through
- **But God's timing and plans were perfect back then – and God's timing and plans are perfect today**
- And we see that this baby Jesus – the Messiah is born of Mary - a virgin – as God said He would be (Isaiah 7:14)
- And **He's born in Bethlehem** as God said He would be (Micah 5:2)
- All because – what God says will happen - always happens!
- **Nothing is impossible for God**
- And we also see that **His birth is in humble surroundings**
- Jesus is born in a **manger** – an animal **feeding trough**
- Hardly the place for King Jesus to be born
- But it shows He's humble – and He will remain humble – and it shows that He came to call ALL people to humble themselves and come to God and repent of their sins

### The Messiah Announced (Luke 2:8-14)

- Meanwhile in another part of Bethlehem

[PowerPoint 4-Shepherds]



- An **angel** – God’s messenger - **appears to shepherds** – see v8-10
- The angel announces to the shepherds – that he brings **good news** that will **bring great joy** for all people
- The angel says **this baby will be a Saviour** – and He is the Messiah that Isaiah announced 700 years before Jesus was born
- And it’s **good news** because:
- **God in flesh** – is living with His people – to **teach His people** and then **save His people from being punished for their sins** – by His death on a cruel Roman Cross
- Why would God allow this?
- Because He loves us – and **wants a relationship with us** – and **He is prepared to step into Human history** – to fix that broken relationship between His people

### **The Response to the Messiah (Luke 2:15-21)**

- The story of the Messiah Jesus’ birth is **truly amazing** - in how **God** arranges **events** (some of which are miraculous) – and how **God** uses **people** in **His own perfect way** - to accomplish His purposes in sending Jesus, His Son
- So - I want to focus on **the response to the Messiah** to finish up
- We’ll look at the response of the **shepherds**, the response of **Mary**, the response of **Mary and Joseph**, and then work out what our response should be

## The Shepherds' Response

- First the **shepherds' response**
- Once the angels left the shepherds – v15 –

[PowerPoint 5-Shepherds visit]



- The shepherds believed the Good News and went looking for Jesus immediately
- When the shepherds found baby Jesus
- See v17 – they **spread the word of Jesus' birth** – they told everyone they came across
- I wonder - If the angel had appeared to a King or to the religious leaders – would they have shared this Good News - or kept it to themselves?
- The shepherds shared the Good News – and then praised and glorified God for all the things they had seen and heard – see v20

## Mary's Response

- Second, there's **Mary's response** – see v19

[PowerPoint 6-Mary]

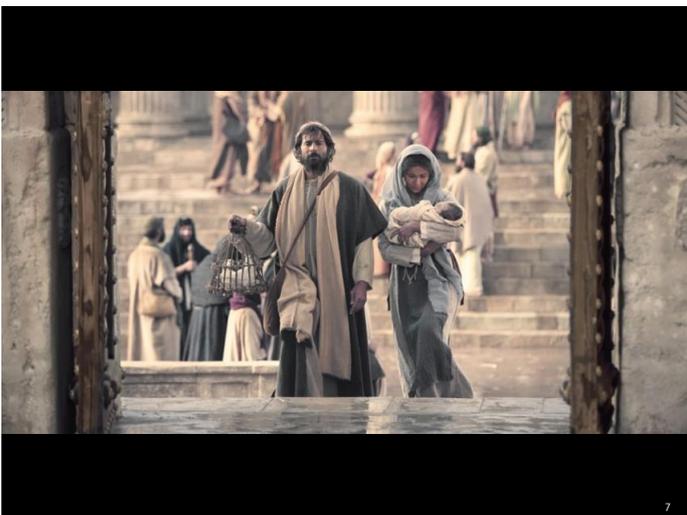


- She **treasured everything** - she'd experienced in her childbirth and everything that the angel had told her – it literally means she kept it safe – like keeping it safe in a treasure chest - so **it's preserved and never lost**
- And **Mary pondered everything in her heart** – it literally means she brought everything together in her heart and mind - to understand what had happened and what God had done!

### Mary & Joseph's Response

- Third, there's the **response of Mary and Joseph** – in v21 –

[PowerPoint 7-Mary & Joseph]

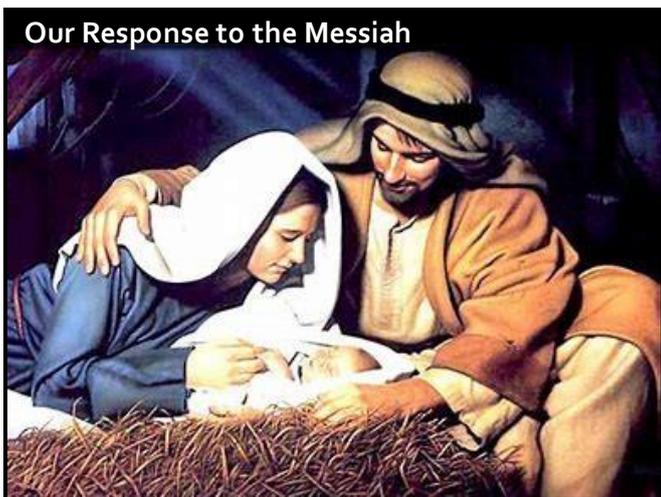


- Even though Jesus' birth was from God and miraculous – His earthly parents still obeyed the Law of Moses (Gen 17:12; Lev 12:3)– and had the child circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day - as the Law required– AND – they named the child - Jesus - as the angel had told Mary earlier - in Luke 1:31
- This shows that Jesus birth does not negate God's Law – Jesus came to fulfil the Law - NOT – do away with it!

### Our Response

- What about our response to the Messiah?

[PowerPoint 8-Our Response]



- Did we notice (in v7) - that there was no guest room available for Jesus to be born in – basically there was no room for Jesus – and that can happen today too – people get too busy at this time of year – and there' no room for Jesus – which is crazy isn't it? – because Christmas is supposed to be about Jesus Christ
- A couple of weeks ago on the ABC Radio – because Christmas was approaching - Richard Glover interviewed a Biblical professor to talk about the biblical account of Jesus' birth from the Bible – it was 7 minutes of his radio show – after the interview - the phones went on meltdown – people complained - how dare the ABC talk about Jesus at Christmas – how dare the ABC talk about the Bible

- How crazy is that – **that people complain about talking about Christ** – at Christmas? It would be like me going to my grandson’s birthday party – and no one mentioning it’s his birthday!
- **We must** - make room for Jesus in our lives – **not just at Christmas** – but all year round
- Like the shepherds - **we must believe the Good News** and then make Jesus a priority in our lives and follow Him
- Like the shepherds - **we must share the Good News of Jesus** – and that He brings peace with God – and gives us forgiveness and eternal life
- Like the shepherds – we must **praise and glorify God** for sending Jesus
- Like Mary – **we must treasure this birth of Jesus in our hearts** – so we get a sense of how important it is.
- Like Mary – **we must ponder the birth of Jesus in our hearts and minds** – and bring it together with all the Gospel story of Jesus (like reading all of Luke in December)
- Like Mary & Joseph – **we are still required to obey God’s law** – God’s law shows us how to live an obedient life – **what a great idea that would be?**
- Finally – when the Angel appeared to the Shepherds – the angel said Jesus’ birth would cause great joy (gladness) for all people
- Now it would be understandable for us to not feel too joyous – living in the times we’re living in – and perhaps missing loved ones – or separated from loved ones
- But we can have joy this morning
  - Joy – because by Jesus coming to this Earth - **sinful human** beings have an opportunity to come into the presence of a holy God and be **pronounced “not guilty”** (2 Cor 5:21)

- **Joy** – because when Jesus died on the cross, the **curtain in the temple was torn in two**, symbolizing that the **wall of separation** between God and humankind had been **eliminated** (Mark 15:38)
- **Joy** - because all who put their faith in Jesus are **forgiven** of their sin and inherit **eternal life** (John 3:16-18).
- **Joy** – because when Jesus rose from the dead, He **conquered death** for every person who trusts in Him (1 Cor 15:33-56)
- **Joy** – because Jesus then ascended into heaven to **“prepare a place”** for all **those who believe in Him** (John 14:1-2) – to live in eternity with Him

**All that - is cause for us to have great joy!**

### **Let's pray**

*Lord Jesus, we thank you for being our Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. At this Christmas season, give us grace that we may turn away from any sin and rebellion in our hearts. Father God, as you sent your messengers, the prophets, to prepare the way of salvation, so prepare our souls to meet you, and help us to pursue those things that will nurture faith in Jesus. Make us conscious of your presence with us now as we celebrate the coming of your great salvation, in Jesus' name, Amen.*