

Associate Pastor: *Able to leap short buildings in a single bound. As powerful as a switch engine. Just as fast as a speeding bullet. Walks on water when the sea is calm. Talks with God.*

Minister of Music: *Leaps short buildings with a running start. Almost as powerful as a switch engine. Faster than a speeding bullet. Is occasionally addressed by God. Walks on water if she knows where the rocks are.*

Minister of Youth: *Runs into small buildings. Recognizes locomotive two out of three times. Uses a squirt gun. Knows how to use the water fountain. Mumbles to himself.*

Church Secretary: *Lifts building to walk under them. Kicks locomotives off the track. Catches speeding bullets in her teeth. Freezes water with a single glance. When God speaks, she says, "May I ask who is calling?"*

In the Gospels we see and hear Jesus' counsel. We see him stooping to write in the dust on the ground while those who believe themselves to be righteous wait for him to condemn a woman caught in the act of adultery. When he speaks, it is to say the accusers, **Let anyone without sin be the first to throw a stone.** To the woman he says, **Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.** We do not know what Jesus actually said to miserable, little Zacchaeus but we know from his changed life he had received wise and godly counsel.

A man's sight left him. He sought the counsel of a trusted medical friend who prescribed a medicine for him. The man took the medicine regularly for four days, and his sight returned to him, but he could no longer remember anything. His friend suggested a remedy for that, too. After a few days his memory came back to him, but he went blind again. This continued for sometime. Eventually his friend said, "It looks like you have to decide which you want—your sight or your memory." The man thought for a moment and then said, "I believe I would prefer my sight. I would rather see where I am going than remember where I have been!"

The Wonderful Counselor shows us the way to go.

CONCLUSION

These words, these names and titles, first given to a nation in peril and fear were signs of hope. Since the days of the early church, Christians have heard this promise and seen it fulfilled in Jesus. As, once again, we approach the time when we proclaim and celebrate the birth of Jesus we see these words fulfilled in Him. That helps us to understand the meaning of Christmas.

NAMES OF THE MESSIAH 1. WONDERFUL COUNSELOR Isaiah 9:2-7

INTRODUCTION

Wonderful Counselor, Jesus:
search me, know me, Jesus;
lead me, guide me, Jesus –

Wonderful Counselor, Jesus. (*Bill Yarger*)

Ahaz, king of Judah, was being threatened by the kings of Israel and Aram to join a coalition to stand against the Assyrian empire. Ahaz is uncertain and thinks he can make a separate peace with Assyria. Isaiah has already assured him and given the sign of Immanuel – God is with us. God's people are to have more than human help. This is true not just for the alarming and dangerous situation in Judah in 722 BC, but is true for all time. These may be the names and descriptions of a prince born in the royal palace at Jerusalem. They are even more true and applicable to the One who will indeed be **God with us**, Jesus the Messiah.

Isa 4:2 ²On that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel.

WONDERFUL

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., began a lecture by saying, "I feel like a mosquito in a nudist colony. I look around and I know it's wonderful to be here, but I don't know where to begin."

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah, father of Samson, he asked his name and was told it was wonderful. It was a name full of wonder.

This is the first of the names or titles of the one whom Isaiah prophesies. The child born for us, the son given to us will have authority and his name is Wonderful.

Wonderful means supernatural. **For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;** *born* tells of his humanity; *given* of his deity. He is given by God. Who Jesus is, the divine Son of God, eternal, pre-existing, the agent of creation is indeed *wonderful*. When the angel visited Mary and told her she was going to conceive and bear a son, she was amazed and perplexed. The angel told her how wonderful this

¹ CCC Advent Sunday, November 27, 2011

child would be. He used words like **great** and said he would be the **Son of the Most High**. An ordinary girl from Nazareth would have a son who would be King – even greater than David, the greatest king of Israel. *How? Why? What?* said Mary.

Luke 1:35 ³⁵And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

Jesus’ words and deed amazed those who heard him and saw him. No one had ever spoken the way he did. The people were amazed at the way Jesus taught. They had never heard anything like it. It was so different from the way the rabbis taught. In the synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit. Jesus commanded the spirit to come out of the man. It cried with a loud voice and came out. Again the people were amazed. This was not the only occasion. Whenever Jesus commanded unclean spirits they had to obey him. If this were not enough, he died, bearing the sins of the world and gloriously rose from the dead, victorious over sin and death and the grave. He was seen; he ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of the Father. From there, one day, he will come as conqueror and judge, King of kings and Lord of lords. Until then then he intercedes for us. Through him, our prayers reach the Throne. By his Spirit he guides and empowers his church so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Although in heaven, Jesus is also with us all the time. We can know him to be near helping in and sharing in our most demanding moments. He truly is, **WONDERFUL**.

He was only a nine-year-old boy who started to cry when they turned out the cabin lights the first night at camp. “Was he afraid of the dark?” they asked. “No,” the boy replied; “he just didn’t want to be attacked by the ‘killer rabbits.’ ” Some older kids at home had told him that there were “killer rabbits” who would come out at night and attack the campers.

How often Jesus reassured his disciples with the words, “Fear not.” Right through the Bible one of man’s constant needs is to be reassured of the presence and comfort of God. We can draw on this presence to find comfort and destroy our fears. Isn’t that **WONDERFUL**?

During the Christmas season when she was three years old, the number of presents under the tree slowly increased as the day approached. Caught up in the spirit and excitement of gifts and giving as only three-year-olds can be, one morning she was picking up, examining, shaking, and guessing what was inside of every package. Then, in a burst of inspiration, she picked up a big red bow that had fallen off one present and held it on top of her head.

“Look at me, Daddy! I’m a present!” To help us understand the kind of God we have, he sent his own Son...the most wonderful present of all!

COUNSELOR

Cheri, a first grader, was having trouble adjusting to school. The counselor called her into her office for a chat, confident that her many years of training as a guidance counselor had more than prepared her to handle the situation. “Cheri,” she said, “I want to be your friend. I will never tell your mommy or your daddy or your teacher anything we talk about if you don’t want me to. I want you to know that you can always trust me.” With tearful eyes, she looked up and replied, “Gee, Mrs. Edwards, you’re just like my dog.”

A counselor is a wise guide.

Prov 8:14 ¹⁴ I have good advice and sound wisdom; I have insight, I have strength.

These names and titles come in what is, in the first place, a birth announcement. Probably it is the birth of a royal prince who will one day sit on David’s throne. That place is now occupied by the worthless Ahaz. But it will not always be so. Here is a message of hope. He will be called **Counselor**. A counselor is someone who is able to make wise plans because his wisdom is from God. Down through the years this celebration and these names would be applied to other kings until they came to be ideal names for the expected Messiah. It is right that we see them as the names and titles of Jesus. In dark days God sent a ray of hope for the future. When the world was at its darkest and the night its coldest that hope was fully realized when a **Wonderful Counselor** was born.

Isa 28:29 ²⁹ This also comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom.

John tells us that the Logos, Jesus, was **the true light which enlightens everyone**. Our intelligence, reason, conscience, comes from him. In this way he counsels us and counsels us aright. As the Word and the Truth he counsels us from within. By raising up and inspiring leaders: prophets, apostles, pastors and teachers he also provides us with counsel to live and to act aright.

CHURCH STAFF JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Pastor: *Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. More powerful than a locomotive. Faster than a speeding bullet. Walks on water. Gives counsel to God.*