

Considering Christ at Christmas Pt. 2

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, December 18, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us! Whether you are here in person or joining via the livestream you are most welcome! Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes as you like. We have much to cover in a rather short space of time. Before we dismiss the volunteers and children...

NOTE – The 2022 ABM will take place on Sunday, January 22, 2023, following the Sunday Morning Service (January 29 in case of inclement weather). Nomination forms necessary to nominate individuals for the elected offices of Deacon and Trustee on our Church Board—whose terms expire at the Annual Meeting—must be submitted today. Please place your completed form(s) in the designated box located on the front foyer table. Lastly, the deadline for the submission of Ministry Leader Reports is Sunday, January 1, 2023.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

NOTE 1 – As was noted last Sunday, the elite of the world had little regard for Christ during His earthly ministry. Why was this the case? Simply, Christ did not possess those characteristics normally associated with greatness. Consider again...

- 1) Jesus was not born into a position of privilege or influence
- 2) Jesus was not educated at a regarded institution of higher learning
- 3) Jesus was not a man of sizeable prosperity or wealth – not a man of means
- 4) Jesus was not connected with the great of His era. In fact, He alienated them habit.
- 5) Jesus did not occupy a pos. of earthly influence, rank or station (i.e., no earthly authority)

NOTE 2 – He did not possess the parentage, pedigree, prosperity, power or prestige associated with greatness. Thus, the great of His age deemed Him little more than the poor, uneducated and illegitimate son of a lowly carpenter who functioned as a thorn in their side fit only for (violent) removal.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

NOTE 1 – Yet we must be wary in evaluating Christ Jesus from a purely carnal perspective...

NOTE 2 – In fact, the apostle Paul touches upon this sentiment in his writings to the church at Corinth...

2 Corinthians 5:16b (NIV)

16 . . . from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

NOTE 3 – We must learn to consider Christ from a spiritually informed and heavenly perspective...

Q1. What is the nature and work of Christ Jesus?

Q2. How are we to regard the Christ of the Christmas Season?

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 3

There are many ways to address such queries. I could touch upon numerous texts that offer inspired insight! However, I have chosen to address a selection from the Book of Isaiah, penned some seven-hundred-years before the Birth and Advent of Christ. Let us note the following Isaianic and messianic oracle...

Isaiah 9:6–7

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.
 7 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.

Q1. What can we learn of the Christ from this prophetic word?

Q2. What does this text reveal concerning His nature and work?

ALL HAIL THE KING PT. 1

To begin, this passage speaks to the kingship of Christ (i.e., that the Christ would rule and reign as King)...

NOTE 1 – Please note the following once again...

Isaiah 9:6a (Emphasis Mine)

6 For to us a child is born,
 to us a son is given,
 and the **government** will be on his shoulders.

Isaiah 9:7b (Emphasis Mine)

7 . . . He will **reign** on **David's throne**
 and **over his kingdom** . . .

NOTE 2 – Isaiah 9:7b reveals that Christ would be of the house and lineage of David, in fulfillment of the promise made centuries beforehand to David (cf. 2 Sam. 7). As David had ushered in a golden age for the people of God in antiquity, so the Messiah would usher in an even greater and more enduring glory—i.e., a glory that would be without end. Note...

Isaiah 9:7a–b (Emphasis Mine)

7 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**.

ALL HAIL THE KING PT. 2

NOTE – The enduring nature of the rule of the Christ (Messiah) is affirmed beautifully by in the Book of Daniel, as is the universality of His reign. That is, Christ would not simply rule over the nation of Israel, but all nations...

Daniel 7:13–14

13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Q. And what shall be the hallmarks of such an everlasting reign?

A. Isaiah speaks to the character of the King and His administration:

Isaiah 9:7a–b (Emphasis Mine)

7 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.

ALL HAIL THE KING PT. 3

Of course, you may counter: "This cannot be applied to Christ. He is not such a King and He is not yet reigning!"

NOTE 1 – There is both a now and not yet nature to the kingship of Christ and of His kingdom. Christ currently rules and reigns over those who believe (though many yet reject). However, the day will come when He returns to fully establish His universal and eternal kingdom, fulfilling the whole of Isaiah 9, Daniel 7, etc.

NOTE 2 – To what degree do you revere Christ as King? To what degree is His authority evident in this community (i.e., both individually and collectively)? To what degree do you consider His Word to be settled law that is to be obeyed? These are not light questions and Christianity is no light faith! What do you think you signed on for when you received Him as Savior by confessing Him as Lord (cf. Rom. 10:9)?

DELVING DEEPER

As we delve deeper into our selection from Isaiah 9, we see something profound in the latter portions of v. 6. Namely, the Messiah or Christ bears four descriptive titles that speak to His person and purpose. Please consider the following...

Isaiah 9:6 (Emphasis Mine)

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.**

Q. What do these titles reveal concerning the nature and work of Christ Jesus?

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

Let us consider Christ as our Wonderful Counselor...

Q1. What is the meaning of “Wonderful”?

A. The term means incomprehensible. The word is much weightier than our casual usage suggests! When we say that something is wonderful, we mean that it is pleasant, lovable or likable. However, Christ is wonderful in a way that “boggles the mind.” In His ministry as Counselor, He is awe-inspiring and superior to all others.

Q2. What is the meaning of “Counselor”?

A. A counselor is one who offers sound guidance and insight; a trusted voice who directs by speaking truth and wisdom to the issues of life. In the offering of such elements, Christ is Wonderful in that He is unrivaled and unequalled. When He speaks, He does so as the very fount of all knowledge, wisdom, truth and more.

NOTE 1 – It is in the Wonderful Counselor that we find the A’s to all of life’s Q’s. Think of the Q’s that plague humanity (i.e., Q’s re: origin, meaning, morality, eternity, etc.). Who better to heed than Christ?

NOTE 2 – It is in the Wonderful Counselor that we find the guidance and direction we need to navigate this life. It is through the insight He gives in His Word or in response to prayer that we find direction.

Q. Why give ourselves to less trustworthy voices (e.g., the world, flesh and devil)?

MIGHTY GOD

Let us consider Christ as the Mighty God...

NOTE 1 – Some have suggested that this term meant that the Christ or Messiah would be god-like or part. heroic. However, Isaiah—affirmed by the whole of Scripture—foresaw that the Christ would be God Incarnate; Immanuel, meaning “God with us” (cf. Isa. 7:14).

NOTE 2 – Scripture speaks plainly to the Deity of Christ...

John 1:1, 14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Colossians 2:9a

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form . . .

Q. What is the significance of this truth and aspect to the nature of Christ Jesus?

A. It means that God is not some distant, disinterested aloof or impersonal force or being. Rather, He took it upon Himself, in love, to become a man that man might find restoration to God! This is the mystery and the wonder of the Christmas Story: the majesty of God Himself wrapped in human flesh (cf. Phil. 2)!

NOTE 3 – Ultimately, the might of the God-Man was evident throughout Jesus’ earthly life and ministry (e.g., Jesus’ miraculous works over nature, sickness, demons, death itself, etc.). And His power is yet at work...

Q. To what degree are you reliant upon the might of the God you serve?

Mark 16:15–18

15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

EVERLASTING FATHER

Let us consider Christ as our Everlasting Father...

FYI – This is a title that puzzles a great many because Scripture so often presents Christ as the Son of God. We almost never consider Christ through a paternal lens, yet this is precisely how Isaiah identified Him. What does it mean that Christ is our Everlasting Father? In what way(s) is this true?

NOTE 1 – Firstly, Christ Jesus (i.e., as King) has a fatherly responsibility toward those under His beneficent care. In ancient times, kings were viewed as fathers to their respective nations, as it was their job to ensure provision, protection and preservation for their people. Similarly, Christ has taken it upon Himself to ensure provision, protection and preservation for His people, assuming a fatherly role in kind! Do you know His P.P.P.?

NOTE 2 – Let it be noted that upon His Return, Christ shall extend this fatherly role on a truly global scale, working to provide universal and everlasting protection, provision and preservation for the faithful.

NOTE 3 – Secondly, Christ is our Everlasting Father in that He has become the Head, Source and Founder of a new race of redeemed humanity. Please note the following (cf. Rom. 5 for more information)...

1) Adam – Adam is the earthly head and “father” of the human race. All who are biologically united with Adam inherit the following elements: a) guilt before the Lord; and b) a fallen nature inclined unto evil (i.e., depravity). Thank you, Adam (sarcasm)!

2) Christ – However, Christ is the spiritual head and “father” of redeemed race of humanity. All who are spiritually united with Christ have become new creations (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17), inheriting: a) His righteousness; and b) a new heart. Thank you, Jesus!

Q. To what degree do you know Jesus through the lens of FATHER?

Q1. To what degree do you know His protection, provision and preservation?

Q2. To what degree do you anticipate His Return and fatherly rule of the nations?

Q2. To what degree are you connected to the Head of this new and redeemed race?

PRINCE OF PEACE PT. 1

Finally, let us consider Christ as the Prince of Peace...

FYI – In a world rife with war and violence, it can be difficult to consider Christ as the One who brings peace. Please allow me to note the following as we consider the “ramifications” of Christ Jesus as the Prince of Peace...

NOTE 1 – Trust me when I say that this era of human misery will end. Upon His Return, this earth will know peace during His rule and reign. Right now, the war and violence of the earth is not the result of His faltering administration, but our rejection of it. He will ult. deal with our rebellion and establish universal peace...

Isaiah 2:2–4

2 In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple
will be established as the highest of the mountains;
it will be exalted above the hills,
and all nations will stream to it.

3 Many peoples will come and say,

...

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths.”
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
4 He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.

Isaiah 11:1–10

- 1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
- 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord—
- 3 and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

5 Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

6 The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling[a] together;
and a little child will lead them.

7 The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

8 The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.

9 They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

PRINCE OF PEACE PT. 2

But we are not there yet! This age of peace has not yet been established in the earth!

Q. Does this mean that there is no peace for us in the here-and-now?

A. Not at all! Rather, He is the Prince of Peace for all who call Him Savior and Lord!

1) Christ Offers Us Peace WITH God

Romans 5:1–2, 6–10

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

2) Christ Offers the Peace OF God

John 14:27

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Philippians 4:6–7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

3) Christ Teaches and Enables Us to Live AT Peace with Others

Matthew 5:9

9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

QUOTE – “Reconciliation with God precipitates peace with others.”

Q1. To what degree do you have peace with God in Christ?

Q2. To what degree do gen. know the peace “of” God?

Q3. To what degree are you at peace w/ others?

SUMMATIONS

Q. How should we regard the Christ of the Christmas Season?

A. Let us regard Him in the manner that Scripture presents Him: as the King of kings and Lord of lords who functions as our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace! Would you stand with me as we close our service...

KEY – We are going to close with worship. This is your opportunity to commit or recommit to such a Lord!

POST (P.W.) – Those who wish to linger or receive prayer may feel free to do so. As we depart from this place...

CONCLUSION

NOTE 1 – Feel free to give either in person or online at www.NewLifeBarre.org

NOTE 2 – Feel free to participate in our “beyond-Sunday” ministries (MM, WM, CYC, Study)

NOTE 3 – Christmas Schedule – Thursday, December 22 Service at 6:30–7:30pm (Carols and More)!

NOTE 4 – Christmas Schedule – Sunday, December 25 Christmas Service from 10:30–11:30am.

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you
and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.