TO US A SON IS GIVEN

Isaiah 9:1-7

Key Verse 9:6

Merry Christmas! Christmas is the one holiday which is celebrated, pretty well, all around the world. Typically People celebrate, give gifts to their loved ones and serve them with a feast. In Canada songs and carols are played in shopping malls, on the radio and television about Jesus coming as a baby in a manger whether people want to hear it or not. The calendar of the whole world is based on this event. It is written that before Jesus returns “…the gospel must first be preached to all nations.” Mark 13:10 “signs” of the end of the age. If it has then that’s an important sign. Revelations 12:1 says “A great and wondrous “sign” appeared in heaven : a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant…” While preparing for bible study on Revelations 12 I learned that in 2016, Jupiter the king planet, entered the constellation of Virgo and stayed there 9 months, while Saturn and Venus added 2 extra stars to form a crown of twelve, with the moon under her feet and the sun clothing from above. Many Christians saw this as a “sign” Jesus' return is near. Some of you may have heard that the biggest river in west Asia, flow is radically decreased, the Euphrates river, is drying up. Revelations 16:12 says this will happen. Another “sign”? Perhaps. Today's message is based on a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah written more than 700 BC. The words are unchanged throughout the millennia as proven by the discovery of the near complete Isaiah scroll, found at Qumran and dated to at least 150 BC, before Christ and by far the oldest existing OT manuscripts. There are 456 Old Testament verses referring to the Messiah. 300 of these were fulfilled in whole or in part by Jesus. These prophecies paint 2 radically different and seemingly irreconcilable portraits of the messiah. One is of the suffering servant, a man of sorrow familiar with suffering. The other is a conquering warrior King. Isaiah 7:14b says, “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.” The sign of Immanuel is the most important sign. In the bible a sign is an extraordinary spectacle or event that points beyond itself. If a virgin was with child, who and what then would the child be ? Immanuel means God with us. The prophecy of this sign came at a dark time for Israel when the Assyrian empire was threatening to wipe them out. Verse 2 says “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” Another version says “The **people** who walked in **darkness have seen** a **great light**; **those** who **dwell** in the land of the shadow of death, upon them the **light has** shone.” Our hearts also can become dark when we dwell on our problems. On the contrary if we lift up our heads and dwell on Jesus we are filled with penetrating light that can shine out on people suffering under the power of darkness. Let's consider the sign of Immanuel, who and what the child would be.

**Part I For Unto Us**

Look at verse 6a. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given....” For unto us,” Who is “Us”? Here Us means us. Us means me and Us means you. God gave his Son, his one and only Son Jesus, to us… to me. What God has given each of us must personally receive. To God, his Son is most precious. God gave his most precious One to us. It is not easy to give our most precious things to others. I have a one and only son I love very much. He is so precious to me. Why did God do so? It is because God loves us. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” We must deeply realise that God loves us. God has given us the most treasured possession, the very source of life. God gave his Son, not to thankful and noble people, but to terrible sinners. Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Ro 5:8). The Son is God’s one-sided grace toward sinners. The Son is God’s best gift to mankind.

Verse 6 says, “To us a child is born.” God sent his one and only Son as a child, as baby Jesus in a manger. Luke 2:7 says, “...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” A baby in a manger is helpless and weak. Why did Jesus come to us as a baby in a manger? Why not as a full grown man with a horse and spear and weapons of mass destruction? Jesus was born in a manger to identify with the average Joe: the poor, the fatalistic, the sorrowful. It is startling that the Almighty God became a little baby in a manger. He is worthy of all honour and glory, but he humbled himself to the lowest place. It was to embrace “us” in our weakness and to be the friend of sinners.

Verse 6 says, “...and the government will be on his shoulders.” Though Jesus was born a little baby, he was not an ordinary child; he is a ruler. Mark 1:14 says “After John was put in prison Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God .”The time has come” he said” the kingdom of God is near, Repent and believe the Good News.” The king had come. The Kingdom was near. So where is it ? It's not on the map. Luke 17:20-21 says “Once, when being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.” As the hymn says “Born to reign **“in us”** forever, born a child and yet a king.” However, this is not the end of the story. One day, maybe soon, Jesus will return. Revelations 19:11-12 “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.” Jesus will return in great power and glory. As King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Counting the years in the bible chronology there has been about 6000 years of human history. The bible tells us Jesus will rule right here on earth in a millennial kingdom of 1000 years. Could it be that It corresponds to the six days of creation in Genesis 1 followed by a day of rest? Wow, 1000 years of Sabbath rest with Jesus ruling the whole world. When Immanuel Jesus first came he said “My kingdom is not of this world.” and when people tried to make him King by force he withdrew to the mountains but… when he returns he will take back the title deed from the prince of this world and the government will be upon his shoulders.

**Part II His Name Shall Be Called**

Look at Verse 6b , “And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

First, Jesus is Wonderful Counselor. The Hebrew here can also be translated as “miraculous counsellor”. The best our leader Justin Trudeau can hope to accomplish is to avoid an economic recession and possibly provide some good social programming. The council and plans of Jesus are about the miraculous… and about the spiritual world. Following his counsel results in the miraculous. We have problems that no one can understand. Even if they wanted to, they could not help us. But Jesus came down to earth to fully understand us. Jesus counsels us with the wisdom of God that solves our life problem, no matter how difficult. Isaiah 11:2 says, “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord....” Once, a rich Jewish leader named Nicodemus, whom everyone envied, came to Jesus at night. Jesus knew his agony and said, “You must be born again” (Jn 3:3). These words led Nicodemus to recognize his real problem and to seek God’s grace. A Samaritan woman met Jesus when she came to draw water at Jacob’s well. She had had five husbands. She was wounded and sensitive and thirsty. Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:13,14). Jesus knows each person’s need. Jesus gives each one the words of life that lead us into God’s deep grace.

Jesus is a Wonderful Counsellor. A guidance counsellor at school is there to help students navigate the difficulties of important life decisions, goals and practical challenges of campus life. However only Jesus counsels us miraculously from within through the Holy Spirit. John 14:16-17 says “...I will ask the father and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-the Spirit of truth…and verse 20 ”On that day you will realise that I am in my father, and you are in me, and I am in you.” The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, correcting us when we go astray so that we may live sanctified lives in deeper counsel with Jesus giving us a deeper, richer and sweeter blessed assurance. Just prior to Jesus promising to send the Holy Spirit John 14:5 says “If you love me you will obey what I command.” If we are willing to obey, the Holy Spirit can lead us in the miraculous soul saving work of world mission. I was a bit surprised when missionary Sarah told me she had thought about going to Africa because that was where the Holy Spirit was working powerfully these days. She wants to follow the Holy Spirit when she makes plans. However, without the wonderful counsellor people take counsel with themselves, their political leaders, captains of Industry like Elon Musk and organizations like the United Nations. Psalm :1-2 says “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against his anointed.” Satan uses all his craftiness in his counsel of lies. I always look for opportunities to open up a conversation about Jesus. I'm surprised at how most people these days believe they are little gods based on the “New Age Movement.” In recent years “the Ancient Alien astronaut Theory” has exploded in popularity. They claim aliens created us and diabolically interpret the bible replacing God with aliens. Interestingly, the people who claim to have been repeatedly visited by aliens and become born again Christians testify that it stops when they rebuke them in Jesus name. How can it be unless it is demonic. Without the Holy Spirit we could be consumed by doubts and led astray. But no one can explain away the Holy Spirit, the counsellor whose power and anointing gives us absolute assurance that the bible and all of its promises are the truth. We must allow Jesus the wonderful counsellor to be our guide throughout the pilgrimage of our lives.

Second, Jesus is Mighty God. Jesus is the Almighty Creator. John 1:3 says, “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” Jesus creates matter out of nothing, and a living personality out of mere matter. Jesus also rose from the dead and triumphed over the power of death. Before Jesus’ coming, the power of death had defeated everyone, including all the great generals and kings. However, Jesus said in John 11:25,26, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” Jesus’ resurrection power defeated the power of death. Jesus is Mighty God.

The Hebrew for Mighty God is the same word which describes King David as a warrior. It is a seemingly contradictory image describing a baby boy as a warrior God King. Jesus seems meek but he is a spiritual warrior King. Whenever he spoke all the demons awoke and trembled with fear crying out for mercy. Look at Isaiah 11:4-5 “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. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.” Can anyone else ever fulfil this messianic prophecy like Jesus? The bible is by far the most published book in human history and Jesus said before he returns the gospel must first be preached to all nations. I heard that this has happened now because not one island or remote jungle location remains undiscovered and the internet is reaching a global scale as the population has now reached 8 billion people. The mystery of the baby warrior king is that he strikes the world with the rod of his mouth. There are so many con artists trying to contact and talk people into their schemes for personal gain these days. This makes people jaded and sceptical and they might assume we are selling something or tricking them when we try to preach the gospel. An automatic assumption mechanism. But Jesus' words have the power to strike the rock encrusted hearts of sinful people until they can repent and be born again with a heart of flesh just like his words did for us. Ephesians 6:10 says “be strong in the lord and in his mighty power.” We are called to be more than conscientious observers but soldiers in the army of Jesus by humbly serving others with bible study. We do this not because we are brainwashed or deluded but because we have marching orders from Jesus our commander and chief and we know peoples eternal destiny is at stake. Let's pick up the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

Third, Jesus is our Everlasting Father. Jesus relates to human beings as a father relates to his children. Jesus is not an impersonal force, but a personal and loving Father to his people. A father is very important to his children. A father protects, provides for and disciplines his children. Under a good father, children grow strong and live fruitful lives. Without a father, children are vulnerable. Because human fathers are sinners, they fail in many ways. They can be foolish, lazy, selfish, or even violent. Children suffer because of this. To them, the word “father” evokes disappointment and pain. Tragically, they think the same way about their heavenly Father. But our heavenly Father is different. God is love. This love is described in the Bible as follows: “Love is patient, love is kind. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails” (1Cor 15:4,7,8). God has already demonstrated his great love for us by sending his Son to us. God loved us before the world began; God loved us when we were born into the world; God loved us at the very lowest point of our lives; God loves us now; God will love us forevermore. We can trust the love of God more than the ground we walk on. God is faithful. When God makes a promise, he keeps his promise. God is always accessible to all of his children. God is Almighty. His children have nothing to fear and can challenge any obstacle. We can see the heart of God in the father of the prodigal son (Lk 15). When his children go astray, he waits for them, looking every day for their return. When his children come back, all dirty and smelly after committing many sins, he runs to them with open arms and embraces them. He forgives our sins, clothes us with true righteousness, and bestows on us holy dignity. We all need our heavenly Father, and we all long for our heavenly Father.

We also need an everlasting father. My mom is 93. We talk every night on the phone. She has ears to hear God's word. She talks often about her kind musical, ingenious and loving father. He was a good father and meant so very much to her but he died when she was still quite young. It was the saddest possible thing for her but because she believed in her heavenly father she was not crushed but overcame with courage venturing out as a teacher on her own at the tender young age of 17. Even a good father can never be an everlasting father, a father who will never leave. Who will always be there to protect us and care for us. Who can be such a father? Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Jesus is Everlasting Father for everyone who personally accepts him.

Accept him now.

Fourth, Jesus is the Prince of Peace. . At Jesus’ first coming , the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace to men, on whom his favour rests” (Lk 2:14). We like to imagine the manger scene as a beautiful peaceful picture. But where is peace ? The 20th century had 2 colossal world wars and many believe we are on the threshold of another global war. Covid 19 lockdowns have made many people want to hide in relative safety isolated at home. Global economic concerns and inflation are causing heightened anxiety. Once Jesus told a parable about a King with an overwhelmingly superior army coming against another. In such a case it's best to sue for peace or get annihilated. In order to have peace we must surrender our kingdom, our self will, our personal agendas and goals to the Prince of Peace Jesus. In return we have the peace of his kingdom which passes understanding. Where Jesus reigns there is peace. Jesus suffered and died as the lamb of God on the cross so that we who are by nature objects of wrath may have peace through his blood. Whenever we feel anxiety we should surrender and cast all our anxieties on the lord knowing he cares for us. Sacrifice is not easy but as Apostle Paul said “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” ( Tim.6:6) As the hymn writer says “You have longed for sweet peace and or faith to increase and have fervently earnestly prayed, but you cannot have rest or be perfectly blessed until all on the altar is laid. When he returns as the lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus will impose peace on earth. Then every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is lord. There will be no need for weapons of war and all such things will be burned up in a fire as true peace, both internal and geopolitical peace comes to the whole world. Jesus is Prince of Peace.

Finally the last verse tells us about Jesus’ reign. Verse 7 says, “Of the increase 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.” Jesus’ kingdom is forever. All other governments have been temporary. In the end, they imploded due to injustice and corruption. But Jesus’ kingdom is established on justice and righteousness. These solid pillars are the foundation for peace and prosperity that never ends. How is it possible? “The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this” (7b). Only in Jesus is the great mystery of the 2 great prophetic portraits of the messiah resolved. There is not, and can never be another. He is the Baby son and the warrior King. He is fully God and fully man. He is the counsellor who speaks from without and within. He is the suffering servant on whose shoulders the eternal government shall rest. He is the Lion and he is the lamb. Jesus is Holy and Jesus is love. He came to us, he will return to us Amen and Amen.