

Wonderful Counselor

Message 1 of 4 in the series: "What a Wonderful Name!"

A. More than 700 years in advance, the OT Prophet Isaiah foretold the birth of the Messiah who would make darkness and despair a thing of the past and who could be recognized by four wonderful names that described His character and what He came to do.

"Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. **The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.** For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine... For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:1-2 & 6 (NLT)

"When Jesus heard that John (the Baptist) had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. **This fulfilled what God said through the prophet Isaiah:** 'In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River, in Galilee where so many Gentiles live, **the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light.** And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has shined.'" Matthew 4:12-16 (NLT)

Life Application: If we follow Jesus, we don't have to walk in darkness and despair.

"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12b (NLT)

B. The first name Isaiah used to describe Jesus' character is Wonderful Counselor.

Wonderful = pele' (ancient Hebrew) = amazing, beyond comprehension or explanation, extraordinary. "Who is like you among the gods, O Lord—glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?" Exodus 15:11 (NLT)

1. Jesus is the wonderful counselor because He knows everything about everything.

"In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone." John 1:1-4 (NLT)

2. Jesus is the wonderful counselor because He knows everything about me.

"O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!**" Psalm 139:1-6 (NLT)

3. Jesus is the wonderful counselor because He understands every struggle I go through.

"So the Word became human and made his home among us." John 1:14a (NLT)

"For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize *and* understand our weaknesses *and* temptations, but One who has been tempted [**knowing exactly how it feels to be human**] in every respect as *we are*, yet without [committing any] sin." Hebrews 4:15 (AMP)

4. Jesus is the wonderful counselor because He loves me unconditionally.

"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But **God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.**" Romans 5:6-8 (NLT)

"For **he knows how weak we are**; he remembers we are only dust." Psalm 103:14 (NLT)

5. Jesus is the wonderful counselor because He is available 24/7.

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**” Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate (Comforter, Encourager, Counselor) who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.”

John 14:16-18 (NLT)

6. Jesus is the wonderful counselor because He wants what's best for me more than I do.

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You *are* with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Psalm 23 (NKJV)

“I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. **I am the good shepherd.**”

John 10:10b-11a (NIV)

7. Jesus is the wonderful counselor because He gives me the ability to follow Him.

“I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of **God’s power for us who believe him.** This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 1:19-20 (NLT)

Life Application: We should bring all of our cares and concerns to the Wonderful Counselor.

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:28-29 (NLT)

“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” 1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Matthew 4:12-16 & Isaiah 9:1-2 & 6. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus’ birth was foretold more than 700 years in advance?
2. Read John 8:12. What does it look like when people walk in darkness? What does it look like when we walk in the light that leads to life?
3. Isaiah said Jesus would be called “Wonderful Counselor.” Do a little detective work and discover how the word “wonderful” was used elsewhere in the Old Testament (see Exodus 15:11, Judges 13:17-18, Psalm 139:6). On the basis of your findings, what kind of counsel does Jesus give?
4. Discuss the following 7 reasons why Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor:
 - Jesus knows everything about everything. (John 1:1-3)
 - Jesus knows everything about me. (Psalm 139:1-5)
 - Jesus understands every struggle I go through. (John 1:14, Hebrews 4:15)
 - Jesus loves me unconditionally. (Romans 5:6-11, Psalm 103:14)
 - Jesus is available 24/7. (Matthew 28:20, John 14:16-18)
 - Jesus wants what’s best for me more than I do. (Psalm 23, John 10:10-11)
 - Jesus gives me the ability to follow Him. (Ephesians 1:19-20)

Which of these reasons means the most to you? Why?

5. If Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor, what keeps us from bringing all of our cares and concerns to Him? (Matthew 11:28-29, 1 Peter 5:7)

6. Share a care/concern you have this Christmas season, and then spend some time as a group praying for each other.

7. Consider the following quotations:

“It was by a Counselor that this world was ruined. Did not Satan mask himself in the serpent, and counsel the woman with exceeding craftiness, that she should take unto herself of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the hope that thereby she should be as God? Was it not that evil counsel which provoked our mother to rebel against her Maker, and did it not as the effect of sin, bring death into this world with all its train of woe? Ah! beloved, it was necessary that the world should have a Counselor to restore it, if it had a Counselor to destroy it.” Charles Spurgeon

“There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.” Jesus to His disciples in John 16:12-13a