

“Mighty God” Isaiah 9:6

FCF: Troubles and problems > overwhelmed

PROPOSITION: (magnet) Because Jesus is the Mighty God,
(anchor) we are freed from fear and to follow Him.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

“How many shopping days are left?” “What do you mean you’re out of stock?” “It costs how much?” “What time did you say the guests were coming?” Ah, the joys of the holiday season. And its stresses – the busyness, the preparations, the expectations. Then there are the memories of Christmases gone by. They can buoy our spirits or they can sink them. Not to mention life itself and the struggles we face the other months of the year that rudely refuse to take a break in December. In fact, if anything, at times they just seem to get worse. It can be enough to bring out the “Bah, humbug” in any of us.

But think with me for a moment. Does not the fact we can be so stressed out in a season of celebrating the “peace” of a “silent night” point all the more to our need for the One whose birth is the occasion for all the commotion? Listen again to these words from Isaiah 9 as we continue our mini-series on the names given to this wondrous Child.

SCRIPTURE READING: [Isaiah 9:1-7](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

As a way of getting at Isaiah’s words here in chapter 9, let’s go back to chapter 7. King Ahaz of Judah was facing a crisis. But wasn’t the crisis he thought it was. The kings of Syria and Israel were seeking an alliance with Ahaz against the mighty Assyrian empire. Ahaz, not being inclined towards such an arrangement, was then told by these kings that unless he complied, they would then come after him instead. Now on the surface, this appears to be a crisis of politics. But at a deeper level, it was a crisis of faith.

Would Ahaz put his trust in the LORD or will he turn elsewhere? Would he measure his security by appearances or by the secure promises of the LORD to His people? Isaiah came to him with encouragement ([READ Isaiah 7:4](#)). The idea was this. For all their boasting and confidence, for all their armies and their might, Syria and Israel were nothing more than “*two smoldering stumps of firebrands*.” That’s it. However much they may have thought of themselves, however much they were feared by Ahaz, they were in essence dead and spent. Or, as Isaiah goes on to say, they are but men. And the LORD is God. So, Ahaz, why are you so afraid? This then becomes the context for the famous sign given in verse 14. Ahaz was told to ask for a sign of the LORD’s concern and control. He presumptuously refused. We then read ([READ Isaiah 7:13-14](#)).

Now, let me ask you, what are your “smoldering stumps of firebrands?” This can mean different things to each of us. Younger ones may think of a bully. Older ones may think of an intimidating boss, an abusive spouse, financial trouble, a threatening disease, a “besetting sin” (some area of disobedience to God’s commands we continually struggle with and cannot get a handle on). Such stumps are anything that threaten us but are really nothing compared to the true and living God. That’s the first question – what are they?

The second question follow that. Ahaz, failing the test of faith, turned not to the LORD but to the King of Assyria. All he saw was a crisis of politics and so he sought a political solution. What is your “King of Assyria?” What false saviors do you hope in? Is it more money, another relationship (one that looks so much more satisfying than the one you see yourself stuck in), doctors and medicine, drugs or alcohol, gurus and books?

It could be anything or anyone that beckons for our attention and affection but is but nothing compared to the true and living God. Who or what is your “King of Assyria?”

Now, back over to Isaiah 9. The issues are parallel because here too it was a crisis of faith. Within just few years, the Assyrian army turned its sights on the northern tribes of Israel. The exile had begun. And so had the fear of the southern tribes. Again, a crisis of faith. There was a threat. Where was their hope? And into all this comes this blazing news – a birth announcement (**READ Isaiah 9:6**). Last week we looked at the first of these glorious names – “Wonderful Counselor.” His wisdom is beyond our grasping or exceeding. And it is well worth our heeding. But He is more than that for with His wisdom comes power as well. Isaiah tells us this Child is the “mighty God.”

I. THE CHILD IS MIGHTY

Now, as we did last week, we need to think carefully about the terms we see here. What did Isaiah mean? And how would his hearers have understood him? This child is said to be “mighty” – a word implying strength. It’s used in Proverbs to describe a lion, in Genesis to describe a hunter. In a military context, it describes seasoned warriors, David’s bodyguard, elite troops. And it is used of God as well – the hero of His people.

A) A Hero in Battle

This is an image we see repeatedly through the Scriptures – the LORD as the hero of His people, a powerful warrior engaging in battle on their behalf.

1. Outer strength

To speak of Him as “mighty God” was to speak of His strength (**READ Psalm 24:7-8**).

2. Deeper strength

To speak of Him as “mighty God” was to speak of a deeper strength as well. The word has a sense of the heroic to it – a “coming to save the day.” That is part of how this Child is described – as a heroic figure, one looked to and longed for. And who comes.

Illustration:

You think of the heroes of today and you get a glimpse of this. Not those called heroes because of celebrity status or raw talents but those worth admiring and emulating in some way. One of the hottest selling DVD’s right now is “Spider-Man 2” – a movie not just about a man with the ability to climb walls and spray webs but a man who uses His power not for selfish gain and makes painful sacrifices for the sake of others. Now I’m not saying Spider-Man is a Christ figure. But I am saying there’s something heroic about those qualities. And it’s part of what it means to be truly “mighty.”

B) Fighting for His People

Going a little further, another part of the “mightiness” of this One Isaiah speaks of is not just His strength but His willingness to engage in battle for the sake His people. As the psalmist says, the LORD is “mighty in battle.” And we see this as history unfolds.

1. Conquering

The LORD, in His might, is described as the conqueror of His people’s enemies. Listen to these words taken from the opening of “The Song of Moses” following the exodus (**READ Exodus 15:1-3, 11**). This continues on as His people begin to move into the Promised Land in Joshua and Judges. Sometimes God uses the forces of nature. Sometimes the host of heaven. And sometimes the armies of Israel. But throughout, it is the LORD who is the warrior, the One who wins the battle. And to Him is due the praise.

2. Defending

Not just in conquering but in defending as well. After giving them over into exile, there then came promises of a restoration, of a return to the land. Here again we see mention of this word in this sweet passage from Zephaniah ([READ Zephaniah 3:17](#)).

These words then set the stage for the coming of this One Isaiah spoke of years before. And they set the stage for the songs we hear surrounding His birth, recorded for us in Luke – Mary ([READ Luke 1:46-49](#)) and Zechariah ([READ Luke 1:68-71](#)).

Application:

The themes of these songs are the themes we see in Isaiah’s prophecies as well – the Lord Jesus coming in might as the Mighty One to save His people. Now think with me. Over 700 years before His birth, we see this preview of the great coming attraction – not just foretelling of His coming but telling us things about this One who was to come as well. If this is who was sent then there must be a reason for sending Him. At minimum, it must be that we need a hero. We need someone to come to take on the enemies of our soul, to defend us, to protect us. And we need wait no more. For He has come.

And it all of His initiative, this coming forth. Now, let me ask you – what’s “massing on your borders?” What threatens you? I have to tell you, sometimes it is good to feel threatened because the response that comes forth reveals the focus of our trust. But what is the deep darkness in your land? Is it uncertainty – a fear of a loss of control? Or is it certainty – you know where you are and you resent it. It’s no good to say “it’s no big deal.” It is a big deal. But the Mighty One is a bigger deal. And He has come.

II. THE CHILD IS GOD

But Isaiah goes on in this title and so must we. For it’s not enough just to speak of this One as “mighty.” We need to know how mighty He is. And here it is. He is “Mighty God.” Listen to how Isaiah brings this together in chapter 10 ([READ Isaiah 10:20-21](#)). The “mighty God” is equated with “the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.” They are one and the same. And so is this child. Don’t move too quickly over that.

Think about it. Now, certainly this word for “God (*El*)” in the Hebrew is used in different ways in the Old Testament – mighty ones, angels, even false gods. But not in Isaiah. Whenever he uses this word it’s always as a reference to Yahweh – the true and living God, the LORD of Israel. And when combined with “mighty,” it’s then used in every case as a title of this same God, fighting on behalf of His people. And so it is here.

A) Not Merely a Man

Clearly, this Child is no ordinary child. He would become no ordinary man.

1. Born

We know He will be born. We see it here and in the Gospel accounts.

2. But more

But there is a hint even that will be unusual. For He will be “given.”

B) But Somehow More

He is a man but not merely a man. He is that but somehow more as well. Think of these names. We talked about this a bit last week.

1. Not bombast

It was common in the Ancient Near East for kings to take to themselves great lofty titles and names to describe themselves and their accomplishments. There’s a parallel to that here. Except that these go way beyond those titles and would be just ridiculous bombast if they weren’t true. Who else could be described in this way but the King of Kings?

In some way, these titles, these names, are connected not only to this Child to come but to the God of Israel – descriptions of both. Which means, despite the evasion of Jewish scholars and the embarrassment of so many others, He is God – not “a mighty God” but “the one and only mighty God,” not “mighty like God” but “the mighty God Himself.”

2. But bombshell

This is not bombast. This is a bombshell. This One to come (having now come) is – unlike even the best of Israel’s kings – unlimited in His capabilities. He is omniscient (all knowing). He is omnipotent (all powerful). And – unlike the worst of their kings – He is unfallen. He is holy, righteous, merciful, and just in all His ends and all His means.

Yes, He is the Mighty One. But even more, He is the Mighty God.

Illustration:

He is truly larger than life. Back to our own heroes again. Think of Spider-Man for a moment. One of the things that has made him and so many characters like him so popular and enduring through the years is the reader’s ability to identify with their hero’s flaws and weaknesses. Yes, Spider-Man has great powers but he is vulnerable as well. Physically – he can get sick. He bleeds. Emotionally – he is burdened, haunted by his past and unsure at times of his future. We identify with such heroes. They are like us.

But think with me. What kind of hero do we really need? Not what do we want but what do we need? We need this Child. We need Him. We need the mighty God.

Application:

We need One who is fully able to do what He has determined to do. And He has come. Listen to this description of the LORD – a description applicable to this Child – as we find in Isaiah 14 (**READ Isaiah 14:26-27**). What He determines to do He will do – both because He is faithful and powerful. Now, think with me. What has He determined to do for us? To forgive us, cleanse us, wash us of our sins. To free us, redeem us, change us, restore us in ways far beyond our deserving. To indwell us, guide us, empower us in ways far beyond our imagining. But perhaps you hear all that and think, “That all sounds so good. And I do want it. But it just seems too much.” And it is – for you. For me. But not for the Mighty God. Listen to the words the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary in explaining how all this was to come to pass (**READ Luke 1:35-37**). Do you hear? Nothing, nothing is impossible with God. It may be with us. But not with Him.

CONCLUSION:

Back to Isaiah 7 for a moment. Remember the name given this Child? (**READ Isaiah 7:14**) “Immanuel,” “God with us” – let these words find soft soil in your heart. What do they mean? Certainly that He is with us in the sense of His presence. But do these names in Isaiah 9 not tell us even more? He is with us, yes, because He is for us. Our Hero. He is the mighty God come to save us – for us in whatever we face, for us in working out His purposes, purposes that can no more be defeated than He can.

(**READ Isaiah 7:4**) Dear ones, who are the “smoldering stumps of firebrands” in your life this morning? You need to see them for what they are. Where is the LORD calling you to put teeth in your faith and to trust Him? Who is the “King of Assyria” that beckons to you with promises of safety and security? You need to see him for what he is as well. He cannot help you. If anything, in time he will turn on you. Turn not to him.

Turn to this Child, this One Isaiah spoke of to hearten his countrymen, to hearten us. The “Mighty God” has come. His name is Jesus. And He has come for us.

PROPOSITION: (magnet) Because Jesus is the Mighty God,
(anchor) we are freed from fear and to follow Him.