

# Day Sixteen

## **Scripture:**

Isaiah 9:6-7

## **Reflection:**

In this week of the Jesse Tree, we will be turning from Old Testament stories about people and events to some of the great prophecies about the coming of Jesus. It is no wonder we start this part of the Jesse Tree with the promise that God is going to send someone into the world who will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

We know that names are important. We put them on birth certificates and on gravestones. We write them on diplomas and on marriage certificates. But, there are times when titles (labels you attach to a name) are also important. If you ever have to testify in a law court, "Your honor" is much better than, "Hey, you there wearing the robe." When George Washington was first asked how he should be addressed, some people thought it should be something like, "Your Excellency," or "Your Electoral Highness." Washington helped them settle on the simple, "Mister President." There are even times when titles can save lives, such as when someone in a theater suddenly shouts out, "Hey, we need some help here. Is anyone in here a doctor?"

When Isaiah says that someone is coming who will hold all the power of governments under his authority, that is startling. But, when he goes on with the rest of the titles,

there is no way to overstate how shocking it must have sounded to the ancient Jews. There was only one God. Although some ancient Kingdoms might refer to their kings as some kind of god, the Jews would have none of it. But, right here in the Old Testament, the baffling and frankly shocking prediction that someone is coming who will be given the title “Almighty God” and “Everlasting Father.” Since we’ve grown up with these phrases and with the idea that Jesus was God in human flesh (“incarnate”), it is easy to skip over how unthinkable this must have been to the ancient Jews.

Remember, it was Jesus himself who told the Devil that God, and only God, should be worshipped (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8). This is not surprising since God makes that clear from the Ten Commandments onward (Exodus 20:3). What is more surprising than we usually realize are passages like Thomas falling to his knees in front of the resurrected Jesus and proclaiming, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28)

More than seven centuries before Jesus would say, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father,” (John 14:9) Isaiah had already prophesied that the One who was coming would be, among other things, none other than God, Himself. For Jews that were only waiting for a new version of King David, this will end up being the biggest Christmas surprise of all time.

## **Family:**

Materials: Some blindfolds for the children. Remember to make sure they really do work, as kids have been known to sneak peeks out of the bottom. Some large pieces of blank paper (poster size would work best, but regular letter size is

OK). Some markers or crayons (you might want to use washable markers, just in case.)

We are getting closer and closer to Christmas. You can already imagine what it is going to be like on Christmas morning. What do you think the tree will look like (especially what might be piled up under the tree)? What do you think the weather will be like that day? Of course, we're not so sure about the weather. But we are pretty sure about the tree.

So, just imagine you are back before the very first Christmas, the one where Jesus was born in Bethlehem. What if you had to guess what Jesus would be like before he was ever born. Let's see how that might work. First, take a big piece of paper and a marker (or crayon). Now, think of baby Jesus lying in a manger (you might want to show them a picture or a nativity set). But, since you are pretending to do this before Jesus is ever born, we need to make it a little harder. So, to imagine you have to think of something that hasn't happened yet, we are going to blindfold you. Now, you can still reach out and feel where the paper is. And you have a picture in your head. So, OK, let's take just a minute or two to see how well you can draw a picture of baby Jesus in a manger.

(After they have all tried, have them take off their blindfolds). Well, that was pretty hard. If somebody saw these drawings who just walked into the room, do you think they would look down and say, "My, these are drawings of baby Jesus." (No, they would have no idea what these were).

Many years before Jesus was born or his mother was born or even his great-great-grandmother was born, Isaiah told us about Jesus. He did not try to draw a picture, but he told

everybody what Jesus would be like. (read Isaiah 9:6-7) And that is exactly who Jesus is. Isn't it amazing that Isaiah could have known that? How do you think Isaiah knew that? (God told him!) That's right.

Just like we think about Jesus long after that first Christmas, other people were thinking about Jesus hundreds of years before that first Christmas. It's like Jesus is right at the very center of all history – because he actually is.

### **Prayer:**

In your prayer time focus on how each of the names given to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6-7 are meaningful for you: He is born as a little baby boy. The governments of the world will be under his authority. He is a Wonderful Counselor. He is the Almighty God. He is the Everlasting Father. He is the Prince of Peace.

In your own praises, can you pray out loud and have everyone think of another title you would like to add to those that Isaiah listed? (things like Savior, or my friend, or the King, or the Great Physician, etc.)