



MIGHTY GOD

— 2018 Advent Devotional —

Awana®

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

— Isaiah 9:6, ESV —

In the midst of Israel's exile from the Promised Land, the prophet Isaiah acted as a mouthpiece for God, delivering an important message: the rejection Israel has faced will end. Throughout several chapters in the book of Isaiah we read about the promise God made, not just to Israel, but to all who confess Jesus as Lord. It is a promise to fulfill the plan of eternity, constructed in the imagination of God because of His deep and true love for His beloved creation. It is in these chapters, as Isaiah describes the arrival of Jesus, that he talks about the name of this child to come:

*"...His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
(Isaiah 9:6, ESV)*

Mighty God?! Is this true? Can it be?

From Scripture, as well as from the standpoint of history, we understand that God the Father is mighty. After all, He spoke all creation into being.

He crafted Adam from dust and breathed life into his form. God sent the cosmos into orbit, placed each and every star and planet. He crafted the heights of the heavens and the depths of the deep. According to the book of Job, God the Father laid the very foundations of the Earth into place. There is no question about the strength of God in our minds—or those of Israel in the time of Isaiah.

Sometimes it's easier to say something than to actually mean it. After all, it's one thing to understand something to be true; it's quite another to believe truth, especially in a way that affects our behaviors and actions. This might have been especially true for Israel.

In the days of the prophet Isaiah, Israel was a small nation held captive by Babylon, a world superpower. They were subject to foreign rule, pagan customs, and unholy beliefs. Israel's ability to follow their God in their way according to their convictions and customs all but vanished under the seemingly all-

powerful fist of the strong Babylonian superpower. Would they ever be free again to worship and live according to the truth of the One True Living God?

The answer, of course, was and is "Yes!" The Mighty One would come and we would know Him as Jesus. Yet Jesus doesn't arrive in a mighty way. Surely this mighty Messiah from God would come in the storm clouds or amongst a huge army. He might appear in full power as a conquering king or at least born into a powerful legacy.

But that wasn't what God had planned.

The Mighty One was born a small, helpless baby in a backwater town called Bethlehem. He wasn't of great fame or wealth; His parents couldn't even get a decent room for His birth. Yet in a lowly stable, to a young mother and a confused but faithful blue-collar carpenter father, was born the promised Mighty One, the Messiah Jesus.

Perhaps He would be like Samson and become mighty and physically strong? No. Perhaps like Solomon, Jesus' might would come from His wealth? No, there is no mention of earthly wealth or even a physical home for this son of a carpenter. Maybe, just maybe, He would be like David and slay a giant, or lead an army, or even prove Himself by killing a bear or lion? That wasn't what God had in mind either.

Jesus, our Mighty One, never took on an army, commanded a band of soldiers, or held political office. Jesus, the Mighty One, left His heavenly home along with its power and perfection to come to our lowly place in order that through surrender, our Messiah, our Promised One, might show His ultimate strength.

Perhaps this is best summed up in Paul's letter to the Philippians:

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:4-11, ESV)

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Michael Handler
VP of Brand and Messaging



Questions for You:

- God's version of mighty didn't look like the world's version. What other ways in your life or in Scripture has God's version of things (power, wealth, leadership, etc.) not resembled our expectations?
- What are some ways Jesus demonstrated His might that would be in line with the Philippians 2 passage above?

Questions for Kids:

- What is the mightiest or strongest thing you can think of? What makes it so strong or mighty?
- Is Jesus mightier than those things? Why and how do we know?
- What is one good surprise that has happened in your life? Describe to someone how it made you feel. Think about the good surprise Jesus was and is to the people of God.