



## An Advent Devotional on the Names and Titles of Christ

By Shawn Thornton

*Above Every Name* helps you anticipate Christmas daily as you prepare to celebrate Christ's coming in the final days of this month.

Ask God to focus your heart on who Jesus is as you explore His names and titles.

**WEEK 2** | DECEMBER 8-14

# WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

*Isaiah 9:6; Colossians 2:3; Hebrews 4:15–16*

Isaiah 9:6 gives us incredible insights into the character and role of the promised Messiah. The first of the four descriptors Isaiah uses is “Wonderful Counselor.” Life can be overwhelming and confusing. Christ provides wisdom and insight into everyday life.

In Christ, all knowledge and wisdom is hidden (Col. 2:3). Because of Who He is, Jesus knows how we were designed. He knows what is best for us and what we should avoid. The Book of Hebrews describes Jesus as one who *gets us* because He has walked in our shoes (4:15–16). He was born and lived among us. Because of Who He is, Jesus is a counselor for us. Because He lived in human flesh, Jesus is a counselor who can relate to us. This Counselor about whom Isaiah prophesies is “wonderful.” Today the word “wonderful” has lost its potency. We understand it to mean “nice, good, better than most.” The word in Isaiah 9:6 means “incredible, incomprehensible.” The promised, coming Messiah is mindboggling, extraordinary, and incomprehensible.

As we anticipate our celebration of Christ’s arrival as a baby in Bethlehem, it is hard to imagine that the baby in the manger was, and is, the most significant source of wisdom, guidance, and insight in the whole universe. No matter what sin or trial you wrestle with today, you can go to the Wonderful Counselor for comfort and direction. Earthly counselors add significant value to life.

Our Counselor from Heaven adds value to life and eternity!

**Ask Christ to give you wisdom, understanding,  
and insight into life as you seek to live and love like Him today!**

# MIGHTY GOD

*Isaiah 9:6; Mark 4:35–41*

There have been times in life I have felt overwhelmingly weak. Often that sense of weakness came because of challenges to my physical health. At other times it occurred because of a personal feeling of inadequacy. Even just realizing my own human limitations has left me vulnerable, uncertain, and fearful. How about you? Are there times you have felt like you were weak and life could easily destroy you? One of the four titles Isaiah gave about the coming Christ addressed our sense of inadequacy and weakness. He told us that the coming Messiah would be the “Mighty God.” He would not simply be “a god” or a “fairly powerful god.” He said He would be the “Mighty God.” That brings us comfort when we feel overwhelmed and afraid.

Mark 4 tells the story of Jesus being in a boat with His disciples on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had been ministering all day and rested in the boat. While He slept, a vast and sudden storm began to pound against the boat. Fearing the boat would soon sink, they hurriedly awakened Jesus and, gripped by fear, told Him of their maritime trials. Jesus responded by saying to the wind and the waves, “Peace, be still!” As soon as He spoke, everything went calm. His words were powerful. The disciples talked among themselves about who this man could be, seeing that “even the wind and the waves obeyed Him.” They determined what Isaiah had prophesied nearly 800 years earlier. Jesus is the “Mighty God.”

What variables in life that are outside of your control worry you today? Have you discovered Jesus to be the source of your strength or are you still relying on your own power?

**List 3–4 ways Christ has shown Himself  
mighty in your life in 2018**

DECEMBER 10

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# PRINCE OF PEACE

*Isaiah 9:6; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:6-7*

At any time in the day, you can go to any news source and see many stories about wars between countries. We live in a world with conflict and tension daily in the lives of people through domestic violence, bullying, and verbal and emotional abuse. Since Cain killed Abel, there has been constant agitation and strife. The trials and tribulations of life often rob us of a sense of peace. God initiated His redemptive plan to provide us with peace in our relationship with Him, with others, and in our life circumstances. Romans 5:1 says the only way to peace with God comes through faith in the finished work of Jesus. As Christ transforms our lives, the peace we have with God begins to infuse His peace into our relationships with others. If we want peace in the trials and storms of life, Philippians 4:6-7 indicates we need to share them with Jesus in prayer. As we do, He gives us the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding.

When Jesus left Heaven's glory to arrive in Bethlehem, He was on a peace mission. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be known as the "Prince of Peace." As Prince, He graciously and judiciously reigns in the realm of peace. Life can easily be lived in constant tension. God has a different plan for us as His children. He wants us to experience peace that comes only from Him. He wants us to share that peace with others. Do the people in your life see evidence that you walk with the Prince of Peace? Do you bring agitation and worry into their world or do you bring a sense of calm wherever you go?

**Can others see the evidence of your peace with God,  
or that you have the peace of God?**

## EVERLASTING FATHER

*Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 11:28–29; Revelation 1:5–8*

We live in a world where seemingly everything is disposable. Even critical relationships have often become temporary and transactional. Add to that how broken and fractured our relationships with family and friends can be, and we are people with a great need for something more. When Isaiah prophesied that God's son would arrive as the "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, and the Prince of Peace," he concluded by calling Christ the "Everlasting Father." Referencing God the Son as the Everlasting Father can seem confusing and can imply He usurps God the Father's role. But, the emphasis here has less to do with His position or role and more to do with the style of His relationship with us. He is the eternal nurturer of our souls!

In Revelation 1:8, Jesus declared Himself to be the Alpha and Omega — the beginning and the end. Christ existed in eternity past and will live in eternity future. While He walked within the framework of time during His earthly ministry, He stands outside of, and above, time. He has no beginning and no end. He is not impacted by time limits, deadlines, or scheduling. As "Everlasting Father," He helps us focus on what matters in light of eternity! Moreover, the role Christ plays in our lives is that of the nurturing Father. He cares about us. In Matthew 11:28–29, He invites us to come to Him when we are weighed down and burdened in life. He wants us to experience His joy. He can't wait to see us grow spiritually. He wants us to deepen our intimacy with Him and trust in Him more. As a nurturing, patient father, Christ patiently walks with us through the most complex and challenging seasons of life!

**No matter what happens in life,  
you can trust Jesus with everything now and forever!**

DECEMBER 12

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# CREATOR

*John 1:1–3*

When the baby Jesus arrived in the stable in Bethlehem, everything about Him said this could not be the one who created all that exists. How could a tiny baby be the One Who made the sun, moon, and stars? How could a helpless infant be the One Who spoke the universe into existence by His mere words? But, the Scriptures make it clear that the baby born to Mary and Joseph made everything that was made. He created everything! In the first chapter of His Gospel, the Apostle John described Jesus as “the Word.” He uses the imagery of verbal expression, “the Word,” to portray Jesus as the living reflection of God the Father. He says that Jesus was there when everything was created. Not only that, He created everything. John makes his emphasis clear by saying that nothing that was made was made without Him.

If you are a follower of Jesus, you walk daily with the One Who made every sunset you see and every breath that you take. Everything you touch, every smell you experience, and every sound that you hear came from the creator, Jesus. Nothing in creation operates outside of the authority of its Creator. Nothing in the universe can touch your life without being Father-filtered by Christ. Anything you face can be conquered by the One Who made it.

Take the time to thank Christ for the beauty of His handiwork. Spend some time breathing in all He has made. Listen to the birds singing in the morning or the ocean waves crashing near shore. Remember that nothing you see or hear was made without Him. As a matter of fact, look in a mirror and notice you. He made you. He formed you in your mother’s womb. You are His masterpiece, made in His image!

**When you walk with Jesus, you walk with the One  
Who created you and everything around you!**

DECEMBER 13

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# SUSTAINER

*Colossians 1:15–20*

Many view God as an old tinkerer who created the universe and stood back to watch it work. They see Him as distant, detached, and powerless to intervene. If it falls apart or completely disappears, it may disappoint Him, but He would not be responsible. They theorize that He created everything, but then does little to nothing to keep it together and functioning. Colossians 1 gives us a totally different perspective. As Creator, Christ actively engages in sustaining the universe every second and in every way. He is intimately involved in what is going on. He keeps the sun coming up in the morning and makes sure it sets every night. He keeps the famed “circle of life” supplied with all it needs. Just as nothing was made without Him, nothing continues to exist without Him. He is not only the Creator of the universe, He is also the Sustainer of the universe.

How many times today did you concentrate on your heart beating or your lungs breathing? Yet, if either your heart or your lungs stopped working, so would you. Christ, your Sustainer keeps every aspect of your existence continuing. He ensures the faithful rotation of the earth around the sun, so we experience the consistency of time. As you walk with Him, you can be sure that He not only gave you new life when you came to Him, but He will continue with you throughout your spiritual journey ahead. Your Savior engages in every aspect of your being and existence. You can trust Him. Without Him, the universe would collapse. Without Him, you would cease to be. We all need Him in our lives every day. As our Sustainer, He can walk with us through anything and everything!

**Every breath you take comes from the One  
Who sustains the universe and you!**

DECEMBER 14

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# MAN OF SORROWS

*Isaiah 53:1–6*

In spite of the shepherds hearing from the angels and the Wisemen following the star, the humble arrival of the Messiah in Bethlehem went almost unnoticed. The wife of a carpenter from Nazareth giving birth to a baby boy in Bethlehem did not make the headlines. Raising Jesus in His parents' hometown of Nazareth drew little or no attention. God sent His Son into the world to live in relative obscurity until the launch of His earthly ministry at age thirty. It just doesn't make sense. Most of us would have sent the child to a palace, to fanfare and fame. God's plan, however, involved His Son leaving Heaven's glory to walk among people. It included an everyday, ordinary life and then death on a common, ordinary cross.

What most of us would not expect, and many Old Testament saints did not foresee, is that the Messiah would be a suffering servant. Isaiah 53 called the promised Messiah a "Man of Sorrows." The prophetic description that he gives speaks of Christ's appearance, His rejection, agony, pain, and horrific death. Christ had to be the "Man of Sorrows" to accomplish His substitutionary sacrifice for us. His innocence in contrast to our guilt and shame demonstrated the perfect nature of God's redemptive plan. All that Isaiah prophesied came true. Jesus was rejected and betrayed by the closest of His friends. He was whipped for our sins. He died the death of a common criminal.

My appreciation grows the more I understand the depth of His suffering for me. His willingness to feel the weight of my guilt shouts His love for me. He left Heaven for me. He became man for me. He became the Man of Sorrows for me.

**Remember the love of Christ displayed in  
His becoming the Man of Sorrows for you!**