

# HONOR THE STABLE-BORN KING

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*Isaiah 9:6-7*

## Introduction

History Shaped in Cradles

The year was 1809. The international scene was tumultuous. Napoleon was sweeping through Austria; blood was flowing freely. Nobody then cared about babies. But the world was overlooking some terribly significant births.

For example, William Gladstone was born that year. He was destined to become one of England's finest statesmen. That same year, Alfred Tennyson was born to an obscure minister and his wife. The child would one day greatly affect the literary world in a marked manner.

On the American continent, Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And not far away in Boston, Edgar Allan Poe began his eventful, albeit tragic, life. It was also in that same year that a physician named Darwin and his wife named their child Charles Robert. And that same year produced the cries of a newborn infant in a rugged log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky. The baby's name? Abraham Lincoln.

If there had been news broadcasts at that time, I'm certain these words would have been heard: "The destiny of the world is being shaped on an Austrian battlefield today." But history was actually being shaped in the cradles of England and America. Similarly, everyone thought taxation was the big news—when Jesus was born. But a young Jewish woman cradled the biggest news of all: the birth of the Saviour.

(Adapted from Charles Swindoll – Source unknown)

It was also the birth of a King. What a paradox – a king born in a stable. This morning we are continuing the theme of "Making Christmas Meaningful – *How to Transform Trivial Pursuits into Memorable Celebrations.*"

Today we are going to consider how we can make the activities of Christmas more meaningful by bringing honor to the King of kings. At the time he was born, most people missed the significance of his birth, and today, very little has changed. Most people still miss the wonder of worshipping the King.

We will be looking at the OT prophecy of the Messiah's birth that is found in Isaiah 9:6-7.

## The Birth of the King – v. 6a

A child is born – this was no ordinary child, and certainly no ordinary birth – a miraculous human event.

A Son is given – God so loved the world ... He gave His one and only Son – an incredible divine gift.

Note the different terms – born (a child), given (the Son)

This is the fulfillment of the promise that goes right back to Gen when God spoke to the serpent in the garden –

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."* (Genesis 3:15 ESV)

This was the seed (offspring) of the woman, a descendant who would crush Satan's head – he would destroy the works of Satan.

But there is another statement here about the birth of this child – he was to be a king – "the government shall be on his shoulders."

JFB Commentary says, "The ensign of office used to be worn *on the shoulder*, in token of *sustaining* the government. Here *the government on Messiah's shoulder* is in marked contrast to the "yoke and staff" of the oppressor on Israel's "shoulder". He shall receive the kingdom of the earth from the Father."

We will speak more about that kingdom in a moment, but first...

## The Character and Nature of the King – v. 6b

In the second part of v. 6 we have a description of this king in the names he was given. Names were important descriptions of the nature and character of people – often a person's name was changed to reflect a specific meaning.

The Messiah, God's Anointed One was given many names. Here we have a few titles that tell us something of what this child was to be.

Wonderful – carries the idea of miraculous – extraordinary – to make great – exalted above the ordinary. Something which produces wonder and amazement.

Counsellor – an advisor – one who gives counsel. Implied is the idea of a very wise individual. Some have linked these two words together – wonderful counselor – *discuss the implications of this*. He is the all wise, all-knowing one – omniscient.

Mighty God – the Messiah, Jesus Christ is called God – denotes a divine nature. He is the mighty God. It speaks of power. He is the all-powerful one – omnipotent.

Everlasting Father – “father of eternity” – this is not a reference to persons of the Trinity. It means literally, “the man abiding forever” – a reference to Christ’s eternal nature.

Prince of Peace – he will be a peaceful prince. The purpose of his administration is to restore and to perpetuate peace. His reign will be characterized by peace, in stark contrast to the bloody conquest of so many kingdoms and rulers.

That is the nature of the Messiah-King, described by the names he is given. Notice the attributes of God in those descriptions – omniscient, omnipotent, eternal.

## The Reign of the King – v. 7

There are two aspects of this kingdom that we want to consider there this morning – Its extent and its nature.

### A. The extent of his rule – v.7a

Clearly he is to have an eternal kingdom. It is to be an increasing rule and reign, until all things are under his feet. JFB — His princely rule shall perpetually increase and be unlimited.

*Daniel 2:44 – “And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,”*

### B. The nature of his rule – v. 7b

There is a twofold aspect to this kingdom.

- Literal earthly kingdom – the millennium
- A spiritual kingdom – within you

*Luke 17:21 – “...nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” (Luke 17:21 ESV)*

He wants to rule and reign in your heart. But what are the characteristics of His kingdom? What is life like when we are under the rule and the reign of Jesus Christ? There are three characteristics given to us in this passage.

### 1. Peace – v. 6,7

Jesus’ rule in our hearts is characterized by peace. This is obviously something that is needed in our world today.

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (John 14:27 ESV)*

*“As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all),” (Acts 10:36 ESV)*

*“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.” (Colossians 3:15 ESV)*

Where Jesus rules, there is peace, even though the world all around us may be in turmoil, because He rules within the heart. And inner peace is really what people need and are looking for.

### 2. Justice – v. 7

The Messiah’s kingdom will be destined to extend justice forever. We often complain about the lack of justice in our society today. But what Christ wants of us is to rule in us with justice.

*“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8 ESV)*

### 3. Righteousness – v. 7

The kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of righteousness. Listen to these verses from the Psalmist.

*“...and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness (NIV – justice).” (Psalms 9:8 ESV)*

*“He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.” (Psalms 33:5 ESV)*

Righteousness and justice are always closely aligned in the scripture. The rule of this king is characterized by peace, justice and righteousness.

*Romans 14:17 – “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*

## **Conclusion**

So how are we to apply this to us today? How does our understanding of these truths help us to make Christmas more meaningful?

I believe that only as we honor this king who was born in a simple stable in Bethlehem, will we truly be able to experience Christmas as it ought to be experienced.

He still promises to enter in and rule in the hearts of those who will receive Him – to bring peace to the unruly, justice to the hurting and oppressed, and righteousness to the sinful.

Are you prepared to let the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God come in and rule in your heart today? If you do, you will find this to be the best Christmas ever.