



Here we go! Advent 2016 is here. Advent, Latin for “coming” is the season in which we count back 4 Sundays before Christmas day so we can look forward to the One we count on who was born on Christmas day! It’s a season in which we listen to the voices of anticipation from the Old Testament so that we might embrace the promises of the New Testament. Let’s begin this Advent remembering the words of Isaiah:

*For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;  
And the government will rest on His shoulders;  
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

There are 256 names given in the Bible for the Lord Jesus Christ. I imagine this is because He is infinitely beyond all that any one name can express.

Isaiah prophesied that Jesus His name shall be called Wonderful... Wonderful describes

- ☛ someone who is transcendently beyond the common...
- ☛ someone who exceeds the ordinary...
- ☛ someone who serendipitously stirs the soul with astonishment...
- ☛ someone who ineffably woos the heart, engages the mind, & ennoble the spirit...

*Is Jesus Wonderful?* Consider His birth— no other has ever occurred like it. He could have come amidst pomp and ceremony or He could have been born in a palace and rocked in a golden cradle while attended by angels. But even this would have been a great condescension for Him. Instead Jesus comes incognito yet not anonymously. The swaddling clothes wrap the Baby whose flesh wraps the glory which is His incarnation. His name shall be called Wonderful...

*Is Jesus Wonderful?* Consider His character—no other has ever approached His perfection. He is sinless but never self-righteous. Rich and poor, male and female, Jew and Gentile, legalist and hedonist, prostitute and Pharisee are equally welcomed by Him. His love is relentless, His favor is unbiased, and His example is unmatched. After living closely with Jesus for three years His closest friends esteem Him so highly that they worship Him as Messiah, Lord, and Savior. His name shall be called Wonderful...

*Is Jesus Wonderful?* Consider His life— no other has ever lived as Jesus lived. He came to bless and not to curse; to lift up and not to cast down; to save and not to destroy; to free and not to oppress. There has never been the slightest hint of selfishness or self- interest found in the testimonies of His life. He never used His authority or His power for personal gain. He had the power to turn stones into bread and yet went without food for forty days. He fed crowds, wept for cities, healed the sick, ignored barriers of gender and race, blessed His enemies, forgave His killers, and purposely gave His life as a ransom for sin. His name shall be called Wonderful...

*Is Jesus Wonderful?* Consider His teaching— no other has taught what Jesus taught. His teaching is simple and clear but never patronizing or condescending. He is original and never pedantic. His parables reflect His creativity and His exhortations manifest His authority. He came without credentials

and made claims that are humanly unbelievable. He wrote no sermons, dictated no letters, published no books, founded no school, and committed his message to uneducated fishermen. Yet His teaching has endured for 2000 years and has lifted nations and peoples out of darkness and degradation. His name shall be called Wonderful...

*Is Jesus Wonderful?* Consider this... When Jesus was born Rome ruled the world. Her invincible power and ubiquitous influence secured her an empire without rival in world history. 33 years later, in one of her least esteemed provinces, a man was crucified for sedition according to Roman law. His execution would have gone unnoticed by 99.99% of the empire. This man never launched an army nor did He ever carry a sword. On no occasion did He ever incite violence or organize a revolution. He exhorted His followers to pay their taxes, healed a centurion's servant, and taught His followers to bless their persecutors. Humanly speaking His teaching should have been completely forgotten within a generation. Neither Rome or Israel embraced it as mainstream or practical.

Within 300 years of His death the teaching of Jesus dominated Rome. By then His life and teachings had been carried further than the empire had ever reached. Today Rome is a capital but not an empire. Her power is gone, her temples lie in ruins, and her gods forgotten. Today more people call on the name of Jesus than any other name. He has overcome every barrier known to humanity— gender, class, nation, culture, race, and tongue. Oriental and occidental are within His grasp. 2000 years later the world, on the brink of a new millennium, continues to be shaken by the compelling and relevant testimony of Jesus. You have only to lift up your head and look about you to see the wonder of His presence impacting our world today. His name shall be called Wonderful...

*Is Jesus Wonderful?* O yes, He is wonderful and so much more...

He is Counselor...

He is Mighty...

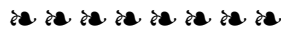
He is God...

He is Everlasting...

He is Father...

He is Prince of Peace...

Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...



This Christmas I hope you recognize that His presence and His impact will be no different and no less in your life than He has been for countless millions around the world throughout history and today.

*His Name shall*  

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**BE CALLED**  

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*Wonderful*