

Jesus, Mighty God – Isaiah 9:6-7
Sermon – Pastor Joe Davis
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INTRODUCTION

Roughly 2,700 years ago, during a time of great rebellion against God and a time of great anxiety and fear as God began allowing foreign nations to bring his discipline on the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, God was still *speaking* to his people. Through prophets like Isaiah the very *words of God* were being audibly spoken and written down...words that called people over and over again to turn away from their rebellion and come back to the good life with God. The loving heart of God that desires good and life for the people he's created is expressed in these words of God given through the prophet Ezekiel: ***"...I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; SO turn and live"*** (Ezekiel 18:32). That's God's desire for every person he's created: *Turn from your rebellion against me and LIVE! I want to give you life and perfect love with me!*

Well sadly, as we know from history, despite some brief periods of repentance and a small remnant of people who continued to seek after God, the Israelites as a whole rejected God's invitation to turn and live, and as a result God allowed other nations to conquer them and carry out his discipline and judgment on his rebellious people. But that's not at all what God desired for his people. He desired LIFE for them, just as he does for all the people he's created. And in the days of the prophet Isaiah, while his people were still rebelling against him, God revealed what he was going to do to change everything...to make the way for rebellious, sinful people to receive complete forgiveness and begin a NEW LIFE at peace with Almighty God and filled up with his presence, power and love.

What would make this kind of life possible? Well, perhaps the question should not be what but WHO? Who could make this kind of life with God possible? We're going to need some kind of a superhero to make a way for sinful people to enter the very presence of a holy, awesome and majestic God. Well, listen to how Isaiah, speaking the very words of God, describes the coming person who would change everything:

6 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. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This was going to be SOME child!...a human boy whose name would be Mighty God?! Everlasting Father?! Wonderful Counselor?! Prince of Peace?! Superman, step aside for God-man. You don't stand a chance!

Don't you know that Jewish teachers spent a lot of time contemplating what God really meant in this passage? A human boy called Mighty God? I can just hear the lively debates as rabbis tried to grapple with these verses. And they were still struggling to grapple with them when he actually arrived: our Savior, Jesus Christ. In fact they were ready to stone him for claiming to be God in human flesh. Evidently this passage had not sunk in to their understanding of Messiah's true identity. They did not have a complete picture of this coming child who would change everything.

Well, sometimes you and I can also have an incomplete picture of who Jesus is. When we think of Jesus we tend to picture him as he appeared while he walked this earth. In other words, we focus almost entirely on the 33 years during which he took **"...the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men"** (see Philippians 2:7). This is natural of course, because Jesus as an ordinary human being like you and I is easiest for us to relate to and understand, and we have 4 books of the Bible devoted to telling us about those 33 amazing years when he was walking among us. But if you think about it, those 33 years are just a drop in the ocean of Jesus' eternal existence. And how much more do you think we would see him as he is and appreciate the privilege of walking through life with him as his disciple if we took some time to consider the glimpses we see of him in Scripture from other time periods, past, present and future, and if we took time to reflect on the significance of each of these names given to Jesus in Isaiah chapter 9?

Well, that's what I'd like to guide us to do over the next 4 messages during this season of reflecting on the amazing miracle of the child born to us...the Son given to us...whose name would be called Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace. This week, I'd like to focus on Jesus as Mighty God and journey with you through 4 different time periods of history where Jesus as Mighty God is revealed. Then in the next 3 messages we'll consider Jesus as Everlasting Father, Jesus as Wonderful Counselor, and finally, Jesus as Prince of Peace.

But before we begin our time travel today, we need to briefly define a word; the word translated from Hebrew to English as, "Mighty." The Hebrew word is *gibbor*, and *Vine's Expository Dictionary* defines it as: "**hero.**" The word is associated with warriors and warfare and indicates the strength and might of the hero. "The *gibbor* is the proven warrior" who leads his troops in victorious battle. The picture we get is that of a mighty warrior hero God. That's Jesus! Is that part of the picture you have of him right now? It should be! And remember that a hero by definition is always fighting for your good...fighting to rescue and save you. Hero God...that's Jesus!

FROM ETERNITY PAST TO CREATION

Well, let's head back in time now as we seek to better understand Jesus as Mighty God. The first period we'll journey to is at least 6,000 years in the past and goes back forever from there. Let's look at what we see of Jesus *From Eternity Past to Creation*. John 1, verses 1:1-2 describes Jesus the Word before the creation of the universe:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.

In the beginning, before creation, when only our Three-in-One God existed, Jesus, Mighty God, was there with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In the words of Jesus himself: "***...before Abraham was, I am***" (John 8:58). This was a claim of eternal existence, no beginning, no end; something only true of God himself. And that claim was so clear that the Jews picked up stones to stone him for claiming to be God.

But do you know what else was there in the beginning with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? LOVE...perfect love! In praying to the Father in John 17:34, Jesus says to the Father: **“you loved me before the foundation of the world.”** He was thinking back to this time period of eternity past and what he saw there was LOVE...the perfect love communion of the Father, Son and Spirit. **“...God is love”** (see 1 John 4:8, 16). Aren't you glad that Jesus isn't just mighty warrior hero God with no love? That would be frightening! That's what the god of Islam is like: power and might with no love. But the astounding truth that we'll see even more clearly in the next few weeks is that Jesus is not only Mighty, Awesome God, he's also perfect love. His incredible might is combined with perfect love. That's why he's “hero” God. A hero rescues and saves. That's Jesus!

Colossians and Hebrews both provide us with another glimpse into Jesus from eternity to past to creation. The Jesus who walked among us on earth is described as **“...the image of the invisible God”** (Colossians 1:15); **“the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature”** (Hebrews 1:3). That's why Jesus could say to his disciples, **“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father”** (John 14:9). And, **“I and the Father are one”** (John 10:30). Not only are they completely alike in their character and their purposes and their will, they're also equally glorious and majestic. Somehow it's easier for us to imagine God the Father in his awesome glory and majesty – complete with blinding light, earthquakes, lightning and peals of thunder – than it is for us to imagine Jesus this way. But Jesus is every bit as glorious and majestic and overwhelming as God the Father, as we'll see shortly. It's just that we're used to seeing him only as he appeared in the humble form of a human being.

And consider his role in creation before we move forward in time. John 1, Colossians 1 and Hebrews 1 all identify Jesus, Mighty God, as the One through whom and by whom ALL things were created, **“in heaven and on earth, visible, and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and FOR him”** (Colossians 1:16). Can you picture the universe – earth, planets, stars, sun, people, animals, plants, trees – being created out of nothing by Jesus? And do you live each day with this awareness: that Jesus Christ himself, Mighty God, personally created you by the word of his power and he created you FOR himself? And not only you, but every other person in the universe was also personally created by Jesus for him! With this understanding

we start to see why it's such a big deal when people ignore his existence and live for anything but him.

And not only did Jesus create all things, he is also right now holding all things together and upholding the entire universe by the word of his power. That's power, my friends! With just the power of his word, Jesus does all this...no muscles needed. He speaks and it's done. Jesus, the one who invites each of us to walk through life with him and be filled up with his love and presence, is Mighty, Creator and Sustainer, God.

FROM CREATION TO INCARNATION

Let's move forward a little in time now and look at what we see of Jesus from the time of creation until the time he took on human flesh as a baby boy born to the virgin Mary: *From Creation to Incarnation*. Incarnation is a fancy word to describe the eternal Son of God taking on human flesh. He was incarnated. In other words, he took on a human body. This time period *from creation to incarnation* covers about 4,000 years and we learn about it through the Old Testament portion of the Bible. Now there could be a few of you who think it's strange that we're going to look for an appearance of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, but he does actually appear there quite a few times. We call these Old Testament appearances of Jesus, Christophanies.

I want to focus on one of the most widely recognized Christophanies, which is found in the book of Joshua, chapter 5, verses 13 to 15. Some of you may remember it from our recent study of Joshua. It happened just before the battle of Jericho:

13 When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" 14 And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, "What does my lord say to his servant?" 15 And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

Do you get a picture here of Jesus as mighty warrior? Jesus as “hero?” Jesus as commander of all the angels? Here and in many other Christophanies Jesus appears as mighty warrior with drawn sword fighting for God’s people and God’s purposes and executing judgment on God’s enemies. Joshua was right to be concerned about whether this mighty warrior was there to fight for him or against him. But the reality with Jesus, Mighty God, is that he is always fighting for God’s purposes, as he made clear to Joshua. He’s the hero warrior of the Lord’s army and he always fights powerfully for God’s purposes. But when our purposes are lined up with his purposes and focused on his glory, get ready for Jesus the mighty warrior to lead the way! And when we’re off track of God’s purposes, he’ll be fighting to bring us back where we need to be.

Psalm 45 is a passage of Scripture that’s identified by the writer of Hebrews as referring to Jesus and listen to how it describes him:

3 Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty! 4 In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; let your right hand teach you awesome deeds! 5 Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you. 6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; 7 you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions; 8 your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

Gird your sword, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty. Ride out victoriously for God’s purposes: truth, meekness and righteousness. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies. Peoples fall under you. You have hated wickedness. How often do you picture Jesus this way?! . Jesus is Mighty, Warrior, Hero God, and worthy of “on our face” worship!

And yet, Jesus, this Mighty Creator and Warrior God, did the unthinkable, something only a true hero would do: in order to save the people he loved, he humbled himself to the lowly, weak form of a human being – beginning as a baby no less. He was incarnated. This powerful hero warrior God ***“made himself nothing, 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” (see Philippians 2:7-8) – the most humiliating and painful way a person can die! And he did all of this because of his great love for the people he personally created...the perfect love that is at the core of who our Three-in-One God is. He did this because he wants to give us life and bring us into the perfect and eternal love communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

FROM INCARNATION TO ASCENSION

Well, let’s move forward now a few more years in time, to that 33 year period when the incarnated Jesus was walking among us here on earth as an ordinary carpenter’s son. This is the period *From Incarnation to Ascension*, and the time period where we most often picture Jesus. In appearance, he looked just like an ordinary person, and he lived life with all the limitations of a normal human body. He needed to eat, drink, sleep, go to the bathroom, bathe, and learn – all the ordinary things you and I do every day. But without a sin nature, Jesus always did what was right and always loved God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength and his neighbor as himself. He fully depended on God’s Holy Spirit in everything and when he began his public ministry at age 30, the power of God working through him was astonishing and amazing – healing every sickness and disease, casting out demons, raising the dead, calming the wind and the waves, commanding the fish in the sea, and on and on. Yet still, in physical appearance Jesus still looked just like you and I. He was a person with whom you could comfortably hang out and maybe even go fishing!

But as we think about Jesus as Mighty God during this time period, there was one specific moment that comes to mind when three of his disciples saw him in his full, dazzling glory as the Son of God. It’s called *the Transfiguration*. And what an experience that must have been for Peter, James and John. It happened when Jesus was leaving the crowds again and going up on a mountain to pray. A lot of amazing things happen when people pray! However, the disciples weren’t yet as excited about prayer as Jesus was, because they fell asleep while he prayed. But as they slept, something BIG happened...something big enough and bright enough to wake all three of them up from their slumber. And that something was the unveiling of the kingdom of God...they were about to see into the unseen heavenly realm where angels are fighting battles, God is ruling over all in his glory,

and physically dead saints are enjoying his presence and talking with him and each other. They were about to see Jesus as Mighty God.

Listen to how this all unfolded on the mountain that day from Luke chapter 9:

29 And as [Jesus] was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. 30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"— not knowing what he said. 34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"

Life would never be the same after watching this unfold, would it? These disciples got a wonderful glimpse into the near kingdom of God, which is still just as real and just as near as it was back on this mountain. And they saw Jesus revealed as Mighty God, clothed in dazzling white and shining brightly in his glory and majesty, with the voice of God the Father himself saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" Peter later described this experience, saying:

16...we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.

This vision of Jesus and the kingdom of God was so awe-inspiring to Peter that he wanted to set up three tents to commemorate it and maybe they could just stay there forever on that mountain. I remember having an amazing dream one time about Christ's return and my arrival in heaven, and I was so incredibly disappointed when I woke up and found out it was only a dream. I wanted

nothing more than to stay there forever. That's what heaven and being in the presence of Jesus will be like! But this was not a dream here on the mountain. This was a glimpse into what was really happening in the kingdom of God at that very moment.

FROM ASCENSION TO GLORIOUS RETURN

Well, we could spend much more time on Jesus revealed as Mighty God during his time on earth – one of the big ones being the moment he ascended back into heaven with a cloud after his resurrection – but for the sake of time we'd better move forward in time to our final time period, which is *From Ascension to Glorious Return*. This is the time period we're in right now, looking forward to his glorious return, believing the words of the two angels who appeared just after Jesus had ascended back into heaven, saying: ***"This Jesus, who was taken up into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven"*** (Acts 1:11b).

There are SO many pictures in the New Testament from this final time period of ascension to glorious return...pictures that reveal Jesus, Mighty God, now glorified, seated at the right hand of God in glory and power and majesty, with all authority in heaven and earth given to him, and preparing for his glorious return. Listen to a couple of these pictures given to us by Paul and Peter:

9 ...God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2:9-11)

...Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.
(1 Peter 3:21-22)

Paul encountered Jesus during this time period and he fell to the ground in his presence. What he saw was light so blinding that he lost his eyesight until God later restored it. Jesus in his awesome majesty is more than these mortal bodies can take in, but when we're changed and given glorified bodies at his glorious

return we'll be able to see him as he is and we'll never ever want to leave his presence again.

The apostle John was also privileged to see and hear Jesus in his current glory and the picture he shared with us is most definitely Jesus, Mighty God. Close your eyes and listen to how John described Jesus:

...I turned to see...one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

That's how awesome and majestic and overwhelming Jesus is in his full glory and splendor. When John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, saw his friend Jesus as he currently is in heaven, he fell at his feet as though dead. Over and over again, this is the way people respond when they encounter Jesus, Mighty God. And yet, listen to how Jesus responded to John:

But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, 18 and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

Don't be afraid. For those who approach Jesus with humility and repentance and who call on his name for salvation, there is no need for fear. Reverent worship, yes, but no fear. The awesome and powerful Jesus, Mighty God, is a refuge for those who accept the salvation he offers to all people through his work on the cross. ***Blessed are all who take refuge in him*** (Psalm 2:12b). This Jesus, Warrior Hero God, is on our side when accept him as our Savior and become his disciples.

But for those who reject Jesus and the salvation he has purchased with his own blood on the cross – for those who take offense at him instead of embracing him – there is a great need for fear in the presence of Jesus. And that's because the Father has appointed Jesus Christ as the One who will one day judge the entire

world; something a holy, just and righteous God MUST do. Listen to these passages that describe this coming reality:

Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him... (Revelation 1:7)

This day will be a day ***"...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)***

And Jesus himself says: ***"Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."*** (Revelation 22:12-13)

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. (Acts 17:30-31)

Jesus is Mighty God who will one day judge those who have rejected his love gift to them, but wonderfully save those who have opened his gift through repentance and faith and are seeking to follow him as they eagerly await his glorious return.

APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

I hope today you've gained a fuller picture of Jesus as Mighty God – *Eternal Creator, Warrior Hero, Glorious Son, Judge of all the Earth* – and that you've understood what a privilege it is that we are invited to live in love relationship with him...a place where he is our strong tower, our safe refuge, our warrior hero, our rock, the one fighting for our good. And as we'll see in the next few weeks, this Mighty, Awesome, Majestic Warrior God relates to us like a good father and a wonderful counselor who guides us relentlessly down the path of perfect peace. I pray that this journey we're taking together will lead us to more fully worship,

love and honor Jesus Christ as he deserves and to comprehend and live in the great power and wisdom he offers to us daily through his Word, prayer and the power of his indwelling Spirit. Jesus, Mighty God, is ready to fill you up with his presence and power today, tomorrow, and every day for the rest of your life. Do you believe that today? Let's be his students, his apprentices, and seek him and his kingdom with all that we have and in everything we do!

And if you're here today, but still haven't surrendered to Jesus in simple repentance for sin and trust in him alone for salvation, I'd like to invite you to do that this morning. God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He says so in his Word (1 Timothy 2:3-6). And the only way of salvation, the only way to have your sins forgiven and begin a new life with Jesus, the only way to move from dreading Jesus' return as Judge to eagerly waiting and longing for that day, is to become a follower of Christ...a person who decides you want Jesus more than you want your sin. Will you do that today? How, you may say? Well, it's so simple. Just tell him this: *God, I've lived a life of rebellion against you and I want to change. Jesus, I believe you're the only one who can save me and change me. I believe you died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead. I surrender to you as my Lord and Savior and invite you to take charge of my life from here. Teach me to live life like you by your power. Amen.* When you say this to him and mean it in your heart, you will be at peace with God and at the beginning of a wonderful journey into following Christ and allowing him to change you from the inside out he prepares you for eternity with our great God!

This is the message of hope we have to share with the world and the world needs it so desperately. First we believe it, then God calls us to share it as we live it, because the good news of Jesus Christ is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." Amen and amen!