



## **JESUS—AN UNCOMMON KING**

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Many kings have lived and reigned over nations around the world and throughout history. Some were born to it. Some seized it. Some were chosen.

Those who were born to it arrived in a line of succession, passing the throne among the family from generation to generation. Those who seized it, did so by stealth or by force. Those who were chosen won the vote of popularity.

Jesus from Nazareth was none of these, yet He appeared to do all three.

Jesus was born to it, from a genealogical perspective, since both His mother and her husband had descended from the line of Israel's King David. They were actually very distant cousins, separated by fourteen or more generations.

However, the Kingdom over which Jesus reigned was, in His own words, *"not of this world,"* meaning His authority to rule was not derived from human lineage, but from His true Father, God Almighty, as He was conceived by a miraculous act of the Holy Spirit.

Nor was His Kingdom gained by use of destructive force, yet He took it to Himself, right under the noses of those who opposed Him the most, capturing them in the very traps they had set for Him. Some might say He used stealth, so as to outwit them, but everything He did had been spoken by their own prophets and written by their own scribes, so it could hardly be said to have been done in a corner. They could have understood, if they had listened. And so might we.

Tragically, one of the things that stops people's ears from hearing, is their own scheming to have things the way they like. Jesus gained great popularity for a time, but many of those who followed Him did so based on their own agendas, and when He wouldn't be manipulated on their terms, they lost interest, or abandoned Him, or turned against Him. It still happens today.

It's very likely that at least some of those who welcomed Him one day with shouts of "Hosanna! Blessed is He!" later that same day, cried relentlessly for His execution, "Away with Him! Crucify Him!"

In the end, it was not Jesus' popularity that seated Him on the throne. Rather, in spite of the deadly opposition that killed and buried Him, God raised Him from the dead three days later, and then took Him back to Heaven where He was crowned King of kings and Lord of lords forevermore. One day soon He will return to the earth to establish in its fullness His everlasting Kingdom.

This has been known and read from prophetic poetry for thousands of years. Here is just one example that paints the picture of Jesus as an uncommon King.

Another season of unsettling threats of war and captivity swept down upon the nation of Israel, like a sandstorm, stinging their senses and blurring their vision until they could hardly think. In desperate searches for answers to help, people turned in every direction but upward. God was not in all their thoughts, unless it was with contempt for their troubles.

Conspiracy theories abounded, only confusing the people further. Dread of the future surrounded them, yet they did not turn to the One who holds the future in His hand. Instead, they looked to their past, to point the finger of blame at those who preceded them, or to seek wisdom from the dead who had not survived their own generation.

More than 700 years before Jesus was born, God intervened in those bleak conditions through a man called Isaiah or Jeshaiiah, whose name meant "the salvation of Yahweh (God)." In fact, the name Jeshaiiah is closely related to the name Jeshua, or Jesus, which means "Yahweh (God) saves." Here is what Isaiah wrote and proclaimed to the people of Israel in his day:

*Isaiah 8:19* Someone may say to you, "Let's ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do." But shouldn't people ask God for guidance? Should the living seek guidance from the dead?

It is just what so many do—whether through mediums, psychics, fortune-tellers, horoscopes, Tarot cards, tea leaves, or Ouija boards. If that is the way of the world, and yet not unfamiliar to us, where should we look instead?

*8:20* Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict His Word are completely in the dark. <sup>21</sup> They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God, as they look up to heaven. <sup>22</sup> And when they look down at the earth, wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair, and this will thrust them further into darkness.

Pacing the floor in deep distress and calling out to God for help, while his eyes scoured the carpet, as if some amulet of hope might appear at his feet, the pastor's cries seemed to bounce of

the ceiling without effect. Then, he was interrupted by a Voice, which He recognized intuitively. God said, "Stop! Why are you looking at the floor? You'll find no answers there. Lift up your head and look to Me!" From that moment, the pastor lifted his face and turned his eyes toward Heaven when He prayed.

It's like the lyrics of the old hymn:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full in His wonderful face  
And the things of earth  
Will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Isaiah sang it for them in his own words: *"Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict His Word are completely in the dark."*

Then, he added this consolation:

*<sup>9:1</sup> Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. <sup>2</sup> The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.*

What could bring an end to that great darkness? What great light would they see?

Strange as it may seem, that light was a person. Not a person of greatness, as the world might seek or expect, but the greatest of persons, just the same.

*<sup>9:6</sup> For a Child is born to us, a Son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*<sup>7</sup> His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David for all eternity.*

*The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!*

This is an astonishing prophecy! Compact in words, yet overflowing with glorious content. Permit me to unpack it a bit, and see if it doesn't blow you away!

"A Child is born to us," as all children are; nothing of apparent significance here... yet. In just a moment we'll return to it from another vantage point, and its significance will fairly explode!

"A Son is given to us." A gift implies a Giver. A Father has given us His Son. Is this an unusual gift? What would cause a father to give His son to another? A marriage! A Son has been given to us as a bridegroom, a husband, a protector and provider, a loving head of the house.

From the rest of the passage, we gather that this Son is a great and everlasting Leader, and He is God. But He didn't arrive in the prime of His leadership; instead, He was *"born to us"* as a Child—helpless and needy Himself, yet destined to rule over all.

The magi who had seen His star traveled for many weeks to worship the One who was *"born King of the Jews."* It was His destiny from before His birth. And more: He was to be King of all kings, and Lord of all lords.

The everlasting God has been *born* among us—as God, and as human. The God-Man, born as an infant; supernaturally conceived, and naturally birthed. Born for greatness. Born to lead. Born to rule—as one of us.

*"For a Child is born to us, a Son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders."*

We celebrate the birth of the Christ Child today, but Jesus is no longer an infant. He grew in stature, before God and humanity. That means He grew up in His relationships. And He grew up in His responsibilities.

And today, He's got the whole world in His hands. The whole, wide world. And that includes everybody here. His shoulders are wide enough to govern us all in righteousness, and that government will never end.

What do you call such an uncommon king? *"He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* These are not courtesy names or nicknames. They reveal the multi-faceted character of this uncommon King.

We read the English translation as a collection of four names—four nouns and four modifiers—and this is fine, as all translators agree. However, in the original Hebrew it is actually a collection of eight nouns! As if it read, *"His name will be called The Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty, The God, The Eternal, The Father, The Prince, The Peace."*

***"He will be called The Wonderful."***

"Wonderful" is a common expression of delight or esteem—"Isn't he just wonderful!" But this word is more specifically "extraordinary" or "exceptional"; it denotes highly unusual ability. In fact, it is more in line with "marvelous" or "the miraculous One."

Jesus was "The Miraculous One" in many ways; particularly, His miraculous birth and resulting unique nature—Son of God and Son of Man. He understands both God and humanity perfectly, because He is both of us in one being.

Jesus was also a renowned worker of miracles, more than any of the Hebrew prophets before Him. His miracles relieved the pain and grief of thousands, and even caught the attention of those who vehemently opposed Him.

Jesus' death was something of a miracle, though thousands of others also suffered crucifixion. The miracle was that He died so rapidly, for it often took agonizing days. To shorten the time on that day, the Roman soldiers were ordered to break the legs of the crucified, in order to make it impossible for them to lift themselves up enough to draw another breath. But Jesus, they found, has already expired in a matter of a few hours. He had said, *"No one takes My life from Me. I lay it down of My own free will."* (John 10:18)

Certainly His resurrection was a miracle! So much so that His own disciples were incredulous. Therefore, Luke recorded this reflection: *"After his death Jesus showed the apostles a lot of convincing evidence that He was alive. For 40 days He appeared to them and talked with them about God's Kingdom."* (Acts 1:3)

After this, *"He was taken to heaven. A cloud hid Him so that they could no longer see Him. They were staring into the sky as He departed. Suddenly, two men in white clothes stood near them. They asked, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking at the sky? Jesus, who was taken from you to heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw Him go to heaven'"* (Acts 1:9-11). They were stunned.

Here, that term was connected with Jesus' ability to guide you with His counsel, indicating the effect His counsel offers—its impact may be nothing short of miraculous. Jesus is The Wonderful.

***"He will be called The Counselor."***

Of course, we may most often think of a counselor as an emotional advisor, but the term originally referred to a strategist in battle or in a courtroom. Whether He's leading the charge against an enemy, or defending you against an accuser, King Jesus has the excellent strategy you need.

Jesus is the ultimate strategist! His wisdom is unmatched. He understands what needs to be done from the divine perspective and also from the human standpoint.

*"For we do not have a High Priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help."* (Hebrews 4:15-16)

Whether its the best approach for overcoming your own weaknesses, or a strategy for conquering the impact in your life of the weaknesses of others, King Jesus has the wisdom you need.

However, I'll warn you now, it may not be the strategy you'd expect. Jesus has a unique way of approaching human issues and problems—sometimes, His way seems upside down from the way we would usually address them. That's because His perspective is so much greater than ours.

*“Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so My ways are higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:9)*

You will do well to seek and listen to His counsel, and do what He tells you, because He truly cares about you. He's not simply interested in making an impression, He genuinely wants to help. But He may ask you to wait, or to remain quiet or patient in the face of hardship. He knows the way to victory. Jesus is the Counselor.

*“So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time He will lift you up in honor. <sup>7</sup> Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.” (1 Peter 5:6-7)*

### ***“He will be called The Mighty”***

As great as it is that Messiah Jesus would be an exceptional advocate when we face any kind of trouble, that role pales when compared to this one: The Mighty One!

The emphasis here is on the magnificence of His strength or power. This is not mere human bravado, but the uniquely divine nature of His strength—whether it be the power of His will, or the power of His words, or the power of His works.

*“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River (where He was baptized) and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days He endured temptations from the devil.” (Luke 4:1-2)*

Elsewhere, we are told that He had been *“tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin.”* (Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus Himself said, *“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself. He does only what He sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.”* (John 5:19)

You see, the power of one's will is not seen in his determination to do what he wants, but in his ability to yield to a higher authority, especially to God. Jesus always did that.

The power of His words captured the hearts of the common man, and mesmerized the learned, even from a young age. He is still regarded today as the world's greatest teacher. His Sermon on the Mount has been scoured for centuries in the effort to plumb the depths of His wisdom.

His works speak for themselves. Forgiving sinners. Healing lepers. Opening blind eyes and deaf ears and mute tongues. Raising the dead. No one else begins to compare.

His power may be seen in the fierce storm and the tsunami, but also in the ability to settle either with a word. Angels do His bidding, and demons shudder and flee at the mention of His name. There is nothing too difficult for Him. Jesus is The Mighty.

### ***“He will be called The God”***

Applying this title to the Man, Jesus, has been a stumbling stone for so many. They imagine a god too pure or too strict or too aloof to have much to do directly with humans—on a par with trying to mate a horse with a gnat.

Actually, what they imagine is a god too small for the miraculous, not really worthy of being called God at all.

But Jesus brought God down to earth. He was Immanuel—God with us. When Jesus said to a paralytic man, *“Son, your sins are forgiven”* (Matthew 9:2), onlooking priests accused Him of blasphemy. When Jesus replied, *“So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...”* (then He said to the paralytic) *“Stand up, take your stretcher, and go home.”* And the man stood up and went home.

Jesus made God accessible to ordinary people, when the religion of His contemporary Jews made Him inaccessible to all but the elite. It was no accident when, on the day of Jesus' death, the heavy curtain in the Temple that prevented all but the high priest alone from entering God's presence was torn in two from top to bottom. The way was made open for all, through the blood of His sacrifice.

From His conception in a virgin's womb, Jesus was God in human form. Fully human, he grew up and learned obedience as a man; fully God, He humbled Himself to become one of us and live a humanly righteous life. Fully human, He offered Himself freely as a sacrifice for our sins; fully God, He took up His life again after He died and was buried, to become the Author of our salvation.

*“For the time is coming,” says the Lord, “when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David’s line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. And this will be His name: ‘The Lord Is Our Righteousness.’ In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.”* (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

And *“there will be no end to the increase of His government.”* Jesus is The God.

***“He will be called The Everlasting.”***

Most look to the resurrection of Jesus as the basis for the eternal aspect of His life. John, however, clearly recognized that eternity has no beginning, and an eternal life has neither beginning nor ending. Thus it has been said that *“God raised [Jesus] up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power”* (Acts 2:24). Impossible! A mortal, human life can be stopped, but eternal life cannot.

So John wrote: *“In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. And the Word became human and made His home among us.”* (John 1:1-5,14)

That’s why the virginal or immaculate conception of Jesus. His seed had no beginning, only a time to be planted. This Jesus, The Eternal One, is the Giver of eternal life. He said, *“My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; no one will snatch them from My hand.”* (John 10:27-28)

***“He will be called The Father.”***

While Jesus was not the first in the Scriptures to refer to God as Father, He was emphatic about this role.

He taught us to pray to the Father in His name, and assured His disciples, *“I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.”* (John 20:17)

He said, *“Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father! Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me.”* (John 14:9-11)

A person cannot simply choose this relationship on His own; a gracious act of God is required.



That's why Paul described it this way: *"You received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, 'Abba, Father'"* (Romans 8:15). *Abba* is the word translated as "Father." The original text is Aramaic, which was the household version of Hebrew, not the formal language of writers. It reads "Abba! Abba!" It was a term of endearment, like Papa or Daddy. He's *that* kind of Father.

*"And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, who calls 'Abba! Abba!'"* (Galatians 4:6) Papa! Papa!

***"He will be called The Prince."***

This is the title of a governing leader. Call him a prince, a governor, a president, a prime minister, or a king—He will be called THE Leader. Above all others. With sovereign authority.

John wrote, *"Just as the Father has life in Himself, thus He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and He has granted the Son authority to execute judgment (among men), because He is the Son of Man."* (John 5:26-27)

*"[Jesus] humbled Himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross! As a result God exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will 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 2:8-11)

And John received a vision of Heaven's Throne Room, which He described in this way: *"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels in a circle around the throne, as well as the living creatures and the elders. Their number was ten thousand times ten thousand—thousands times thousands—all of whom were singing in a loud voice:*

*'Worthy is the Lamb who was killed to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and praise!'*

*"Then I heard every creature—in heaven, on earth, under the earth, in the sea, and all that is in them—singing:*

*'To the One seated on the throne and to the Lamb be praise, honor, glory, and ruling power forever and ever!'*

*"And the four living creatures were saying 'Amen,' and the elders threw themselves to the ground and worshiped."* (Revelation 5:11-14)

By the end of that book, Jesus (the once-slain Lamb) appears triumphantly riding a white horse, leading an army of the saints on white horses, and *"He has a name written on His clothing and on His thigh: 'King of kings and Lord of lords'"* (Revelation 19:16). He is The Prince.

***“He will be called The Peace.”***

God’s idea of peace is far more than the cessation of hostilities; it is encompassed in the Hebrew word *shalom*, which means safety and well-being, health and prosperity. It is the peace that results from wholeness, not just in one’s being, but also in one’s environment. It is holistic peace. That is King Jesus.

From the call of Abram, at the founding of the Hebrew people, the promise God spoke over him was that his descendants, as numerous as the sand and the stars, would be blessed and be a blessing to all the nations of the world. Somewhere along the way that commission was lost, probably from the simple need of self-preservation. In any case, by the time Jesus arrived to declare the Kingdom of God, Judaism had become a cloistered system of elites, grasping for power and influence, at odds with the rest of the world (instead of blessing them).

Jesus came to set that right again, and make of the two people groups one new humanity—neither Jew, nor Gentile, but one in Christ Jesus (see Ephesians 2:15-16). First, by removing our guilt and shame because of sin, and restoring our relationship to God as Father. Then, by leaving us His Word to teach us His way, and giving us His Spirit to fill our hearts with love for one another.

Jesus makes peace within the human soul—free from guilt and fear of judgment.

He makes peace within the human tribe, by giving us the same Holy Spirit, uniting us in His grace and love.

He makes peace with the planet, teaching us not to abuse, but to care for what He has made and deemed “good.”

He makes peace with Heaven, restoring one world in which He reigns as The Prince to secure The Peace for all.

*“His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen!” (Isaiah 9:7)*

When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would bear the Son of God, she asked, “How can this be?”

When you are invited to entrust yourself to the Son of God and Savior, Jesus, you may ask, “How can this be?”

It is written: *“The Lord’s intense devotion to His people will accomplish this.”* Count on it!