

The Incomprehensibly Wise King

“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”

It is a familiar idiom that encourages us to persevere in the face of failure. Often it reminds us that failure is not the end, and that we should not give up on our goals or aspirations, but rather to keep trying until we succeed. Yet, are there ever circumstances that prohibit success and make failure inevitable? Certainly! **The truth is that there are certain things that we are incapable of doing.** In particular, physically and intellectually we all have limitations that no repeated “trying” will overcome. This is even more profoundly true when it comes to our spiritual condition. We find ourselves walking in gloom and in deep darkness (Is 9:1-2; see also Is 59:9) deserving only of God’s judgment. Even more disturbing is that we cannot improve or remedy our condition no matter how hard we try. Is there any place we can turn to escape seemingly certain failure?

Yes! The answer is found in Isaiah 9. Here the prophet reminds us that our rescue comes from the God of the angel armies. It is His intense love, unstoppable devotion, and relentless commitment that ultimately accomplishes His redemptive purpose: “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this” (Isaiah 9:7).

How is this possible? How does this extraordinary God engage with ordinary humans like you and me? In the well known and deeply loved Christmas carol, “What Child Is This?”, the writer, W. Chatterton Dix, beautifully answers this mystery by posing a rhetorical question of his own:

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

God enters our world as “King eternal” (the Son of God) and as “King birthed” (the Son of Man). He is worshiped by the armies of angels and adored by insignificant herdsmen. He is both extraordinary and ordinary; both completely unlike us and yet just like us. “In Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Col 2:9). What an incomprehensibly wise King! He is able to “sympathize with our weaknesses ... tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). In his sermon entitled “Vision of a Transcendent God”, Dr. D.A. Carson asks,

How do you describe a God who is purer than the driven snow, who is more magnificent than the most stunning sunset, who is more entrancing than a million twinkling stars, who is more nourishing than the best of foods, who is more loving than the ideal parent, who is more awesome than all of the unleashed forces of nature? **How do you describe a God like that?**

This is the amazing context of the familiar names that describe the character of King Jesus found in Isaiah 9:6. What we are unable and incapable of doing, Jesus does, beginning as our Wonderful Counselor - the incomprehensibly wise King. He is worth trusting, obeying, and confiding in.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 (ESV) - *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when **I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”***