

CHRISTMAS SEASON INTERLUDE
Revisiting Messiah’s Descriptive Names
Part II: Christ Our Mighty God
(Isaiah 9:6)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

This Christmas Season, we face seemingly overpowering, unstoppable foes:

(1) We face economically harmful leaders: “President Biden, Gov. Ned Lamont, and liberal commentators like Paul Krugman of The New York Times” claim that “the economy is strong. But opinion polls find that most people disagree, and practically every week produces price increases far above what the federal government claims to be the inflation rate, 3.4% . . . Inflation is weakening the economy, not strengthening it, and remains an offense by the government against the people.” (Chris Powell, “Poverty worsening in state; and tax on ‘nips’ falls short,” Republican-American, November 28, 2023, p. 6A)

(2) We face officials who dish out futile, financially oppressive mandates to check alleged catastrophic climate change: “(T)he environmental regulation the Lamont administration would have adopted . . . except for the clamor raised by Republican state legislators, talk radio, and ordinary people . . . would have prohibited the sale in Connecticut of new gasoline-powered cars after 2035 . . . The regulation . . . put aside . . . was just politically correct authoritarianism, and the people behind it remain in power.” (Chris Powell, “P. C. authoritarianism fails in face of basic questions,” Ibid., p. 8A) The switch to electric vehicles is full of unrealistic and burdensome hurdles for consumers, including the lack of an adequate electric grid and electric car-charging infrastructure in the state, the far less reliability of electric cars and their much greater need for repairs as compared to gas-powered and dual powered “hybrids.” (Chris Powell, “Unfix the ‘fixed costs’; and reality is sinking car ban,” Ibid., December 5, 2023, p. 6A)

In Genesis 8:22, God pledged to keep the earth habitable for mankind for the duration of the earth’s existence, so mandates by officials who seek to check alleged world catastrophic climate change are both needless and despotic!

(3) We face destructive Marxists: “The oppressor-oppressed worldview that paints democratic Israel as the ‘oppressor,’ and Palestinian terrorists as the ‘oppressed,’ so prevalent on college campuses, is pure Marxism” (Mike Gonzalez and Lindsey Burke, “The roots of college-campus insanity,” Ibid., November 25, 2023, p. 6A). Marxism is also an impoverishing ideology, for “Venezuela” has “300 billion barrels of proven oil resources to second-place Saudi Arabia’s 266 billion. But while Saudi Arabia consistently boasts one of the world’s 20 largest economies, Venezuela’s is a joke” because it is “blighted by decades of inept, brutal and hopelessly corrupt misrule by an entrenched neo-Marxist regime.” (“Marxism fuels migrant crisis,” Ibid., December 4, 2023, p. 6A)

(4) We face bureaucrats who cover up election fraud: Betsy McCaughey, a former lieutenant governor of New York, in her piece, “Why the left keeps election fraud quiet” (Ibid., November 29, 2023, p. 6A) wrote, “(E)mails released by the House Judiciary Committee on Nov. 6 reveal that a government-sponsored task force is muzzling public figures, thousands of ordinary Americans, and media outlets . . . when they report election irregularities.”

(5) We even face bureaucrats who *promote* voter fraud: U. S. Representative Nicole Malliotakis, R-N.Y., last Sunday “accused New York City of attempting . . . to illegally register migrants housed at a Staten Island shelter to cast ballots in the upcoming elections. Malliotakis, joined by four other Staten Island Republicans, claimed a city contract with a nonprofit hired to run the shelter includes a stipulation that voter registration forms are to be distributed to asylum-seekers staying there – which they called both unlawful and underhanded.” (Jared Downing, Carl Campanile and Jorge Fitz-Gibbon, “City’s Migrants Voter ‘Fraud,’” New York Post, December 4, 2023, p. 15)

(6) At the local level, we often hear of believers who face seemingly overpowering, unstoppable foes, and many of these believers express frustration and mental fatigue in trying to know how to handle them!

Need: *So we ask, “This Christmas, how does God want us to handle seemingly overpowering, unstoppable foes?”*

- I. In the prophet Isaiah’s day, the people of Judah faced a seemingly overpowering, unstoppable enemy:**
- A. Aramea’s king Rezin had planned to join Israel’s king Pekah in a coalition to attack Jerusalem in Judah and replace its king Ahaz with a puppet king, Isaiah 7:1; Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 1046.
 - B. When Judah’s king Ahaz and his people heard of this plan, they were very frightened, Isaiah 7:2.
 - C. God sent Isaiah to king Ahaz to inform him that the Aramean-Israel coalition’s planned invasion would not occur, that Ahaz was to be careful to stay calm, not be fainthearted, and trust in the Lord, Isaiah 7:3-9 ESV.
- II. In such a setting, Isaiah 9:6 promised the coming of Messiah as the “Mighty God,” what had edifying application to the plight that king Ahaz and Judah faced from the Aramean-Israel coalition:**

- A. Sadly, king Ahaz did not heed Isaiah's message, but he hired the empire of Assyria to attack the Aramean-Israel coalition and thus defend Judah from the coalition's invasion, 2 Kings 16:7-9.
- B. However, in Isaiah 10:20-21, God announced that one day Judah's people would no longer rely on Assyria, the nation that would strike the Kingdom of Israel down, but that Judah would rely on Him, the "Mighty God," a description that translates the Hebrew Scripture's term '*El Gibbor*. (Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 623)
- C. The term '*El Gibbor*' is also translated "The Mighty God" in the description of Messiah in Isaiah 9:6, and its use in the book of Isaiah highlights God's role as a protective Warrior on behalf of His people:
 1. *Gibbor* literally means "mighty man," and it was likely originally "a technical term for men of a certain social class, 'nobles' who had the privilege of bearing arms for their king." (H. A. W., *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, 1980, volume I, p. 148)
 2. Since much of Ancient Israel's history occurred "in a heroic age" where people delighted in the "exploits" of their military champions, "God was often depicted as a warrior," the "true prototype of the mighty man," and both Isaiah 9:6 and 10:21 attributed this characteristic to Israel's coming Messiah, *Ibid*.
 3. Thus, Christ would be '*El Gibbor*, the "Mighty God," Who would perform military exploits on behalf of His people in Judah.

Lesson: King Ahaz and the people of Judah were to trust the "Mighty God" to perform great protective military exploits to protect them from the seemingly overpowering, unstoppable Aramean-Israel enemy coalition.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) If we face seemingly overpowering, unstoppable foes, may we trust our "Mighty God," Jesus Christ, to do great military exploits to protect us so we can fulfill His callings for us.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message and provide additional guidance . . .)

(1) Each foe mentioned in our introduction who makes life difficult for us believers in Christ is influenced by our adversary, the Devil. (1 Peter 5:8) We explain (as follows): (a) In 3 John 2 ESV, NIV, John wrote that he prayed that all would go well with believer Gaius and that he might enjoy good health. God then wants godly believers to have life go **reasonably** well for them and **generally** to enjoy good health. (b) However, officials who cause inflation, who make oppressive mandates to offset falsely asserted catastrophic climate change, elitists who push harmful Marxism, bureaucrats who cover up election fraud or promote it, and local people who oppress us counter God's will for us. They function aligned with the world that 1 John 5:19 ESV, NIV claims is under Satan's control.

(2) In response, we note that our "Mighty God," Christ, is the Word of God personified (Revelation 19:11-13), so heeding His Scriptural guidance on handling such parties who are influenced by Satan gives us His victory in handling them, and one such passage is 2 Timothy 2:24-3:9. Paul there wrote to Timothy, pastor of the Church at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3; 4:11-16), who faced opposition from people who had been taken captive by Satan in their thinking to do Satan's will (2 Timothy 2:26b). This passage initially applies to pastors, but it can also apply to any believer who faces one who opposes God's will for his life in making life difficult (as follows): (a) We must not argue with Satanically influenced people, 2 Timothy 2:24a NIV, ESV. One whose mind is influenced by Satan is not open to any other view, so arguing with him is a futile exercise! (b) Rather, the afflicted believer must be kind, able to teach the true view if the wrongdoer ever becomes open to it, and the believer must patiently endure evil mistreatment by the Satanically influenced wrongdoer, 2 Timothy 2:24b ESV. This calls for the godly to rely on the Holy Spirit Who indwells us for behavior control, Galatians 5:16, 22-23. (c) If opposed by people under Satan's influence, we must gently instruct them in hope that God will grant them repentance that leads to a knowledge of the truth that the wrongdoers might come to their senses and escape Satan's influence, 2 Timothy 2:25-26 NIV, ESV. (d) If people yield deeply to Satan's influence to become self-centered, covetous, proud, slanderous, insubordinate, reckless, manipulative, etc. as described in 2 Timothy 3:1-9, we should avoid them, 2 Timothy 3:5b.

(3) As for the hardships and costs that people influenced by Satan produce for us, (a) 1 Corinthians 10:13 claims that our "Mighty God" will not let us be tempted above what we are able to handle but will make a "way to escape" sinning in the confrontations we face. (b) Also, Hebrews 13:5-6 with 1 Peter 4:16-19 promise that God will meet our every material, mental, emotional and spiritual need so that we can do His will if we are content with what we have and rely on Him regardless what trouble others make for us. May we then be content with what we have and entrust the welfare of our whole being to the Lord for His involvement in handling Satanically influenced foes.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we trust our Mighty God to perform exploits in handling our overpowering foes for us.