

THE FATHER'S CHRISTMAS GIFTS TO US IN HIS SON
"Gift One - Christ As Our Free, Supernatural Psychologist"
(Isaiah 9:6a)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) Many people today bear mental and emotional needs:

(a) I made the mistake of going into a big department store the Friday following Thanksgiving! I had only wanted to buy some engine oil, but ended up running the gauntlet of flustered mobs who were jostling to do some **must** buying of gifts for their tots!

Though it was still morning, a toy all the kids want this year had sold out, so the manager had put up big yellow signs asking parents to be patient for the store to be restocked!

After weaving around many shopping carts to find my oil near the back of the store, I returned, rounding a corner to see two store clerks sitting on the floor in the toy section, yelling at one another!

(b) Recently, I received a call from a Christian outside of our Church. In the conversation I naturally asked, "How are you?", and in a shaky voice, the believer replied, "Well, I'm hangin' in there as best as I can, I guess!"

I have known this party for years, and what concerns me is that the party has not appeared to have moved off of "square one" all these years to grow into a more secure, positive person!

(c) Any number of times I have talked with Christians who desired lesson notes on depression or some other heart need!

(2) Besides the **needs** of people, it is amazing to note the inferior track record of professional counseling on meeting such needs! In 1978, psychiatry Professor Donald Klein, in congressional testimony on whether he would recommend increasing the U. S. budget to expand government health care for psychotherapy treatment, stated, "I believe that, at present, the **scientific** evidence for psychotherapy efficacy [its medical effectiveness] **cannot** justify **public support**." ("Proposals to Expand Coverage of Mental Health under Medicare-Medicaid," Hearing before the Subcommittee on Health of the Committee on Finance, Ninety-Fifth Congress, Second Session, 18 August, 1978, p. 45 as cited in Bobgan, Psychoheresy, p. 166)

For the sake of either ourselves or others around us with afflictions of the soul, WHAT can we DO for SOLVING their mental and emotional needs? What can we do in light of the fact that they may have already unsuccessfully tried professional help?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "This holiday season, I know a party that bears emotional, mental or behavioral burdens that keep him from functioning well in life. Besides going to a counselor with that route's scientifically questionable degree of effectiveness, can he really get some help?!"

- I. **When Isaiah wrote the Isaiah 9:6 predictions concerning the birth of the Messiah, the people of Israel were DESPERATE for ADEQUATE counsel to handle their mental and emotional needs:**
 - A. Over the centuries since the days of Moses, the people of Israel came to ignore God's Word and fall into apostasy, leaving them to face God's discipline with the coming invasion of the Assyrians, Is. 8:6-8.
 - B. In this state, the people lacked Scriptural insight to deal well with Assyria's threat. Thus, they errantly accused God's prophet, Isaiah of forming a conspiracy with the Assyrians to undermine their morale by predicting Assyria's conquest, Isa. 8:12, Young, Isaiah, vol. I, p. 310.
 - C. Some in Israel out of anxiety turned to spiritists who peeped and muttered, seeking to know the future by consulting the dead so they could improve their survival rates in a possible invasion, Is. 8:19.
 - D. However, as these mediums communed with demons, their insight was destructive, leaving the people worried, angry, depressed and without a solution no matter where they turned for insight, Isaiah 8:21-22.
- II. **To solve Israel's need FOR insight, Isaiah predicted the coming of Messiah, God's SUPERNATURAL COUNSELOR for Israel:**
 - A. God would yet **give** Israel a Son, a Child Who would be born, Is. 9:6a.
 - B. This Child would be known as the "**Supernatural Counselor**":
 1. The term "Wonderful", though parted from "Counselor" in the KJV, modifies "Counselor" as the NIV has it, Ibid., Young, p. 333.
 2. That word, "Wonderful" (*pele'*) appears in Judges 13:18 where the Angel of the Lord reveals Himself to Manoah as One who was "incomprehensible," or Who was **God**, Ibid., Young, p. 334.
 3. As this "Counselor" in context is Israel's **answer** to the *inadequate* mutterings of demons and spiritists in Is. 8:19-22, we understand "Wonderful Counselor" as **God**, the "**Supernatural Counselor**"!
- III. **Jesus Christ's earthly teaching ministry thus fulfilled Isaiah 9:6a, meeting the nation's need for adequate, healing insight as that ministry focused on expounding God's truths to the people:**

- A. Isaiah revealed (8:20) that since Israel had not said, "To the Law & the testimony", there was no dawn, or hope of insight in the nation.
 - B. This expression in the context showed Israel had left seeking God's **written Word**, producing her insight vacuum and its gloomy effects.
 - C. Thus, Jesus, the Word of God **incarnate**, came as God's Light to reveal God's healing Word, Is. 9:2 with Revelation 19:12-13, 16:
 - 1. Opposite Israel's darkness and resulting mental and emotional problems caused by her turning to mediums, Jesus was God's brilliant, healing Light for the inner man, Is. 9:2 with 8:19-22.
 - 2. As that Light, Jesus embodies the Word of God, Rev. 19:12-13, 16.
 - D. Thus, as God's Light, Jesus gave a direct presentation of God's Word that brought relief to the people who lived in ignorant gloom, Jn. 1:18!
- IV. **Though Jesus is ascended to the Father for the duration of the Church age (Acts 1:6-11), His SUPERNATURAL counseling ministry is AVAILABLE to help ALL afflicted people TODAY:**
- A. Jesus promised to send God the Holy Spirit to His followers so that they would not be as orphaned, leaderless children, Jn. 14:16-18 NIV.
 - B. Under Christ's lead, the Holy Spirit would teach them, making them recall the things Jesus had taught while on earth, Jn. 16:13-14; 14:26.
 - C. **Today**, the Spirit under Christ teaches the believer through **Scripture**, Jn. 16:12-14; 1 Cor. 2:9-10; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:21
 - D. It then follows that one must believe in Christ for salvation to become indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:38-39; Rom. 8:9b) before he can **qualify** for Christ's "Supernatural Counseling" ministry via the Spirit!
 - E. It also follows that to **obtain** His counsel, one must (a) fellowship with Christ via confession of sins (1 Jn. 1:9) and leaning on the Holy Spirit for behavior control (Gal. 5:16-23) to (b) read and apply God's Word **effectively** under the Spirit's and Christ's Jn. 16:13-14 guidance!
 - F. It also follows that one does well to expose himself to spiritually gifted Bible teachers who correctly expound God's Word, 1 Tim. 4:13-16.

Lesson Application: *This Christmas, through God's GIFT to the world, ANYONE may gain FREE, HELPFUL, SUPERNATURAL COUNSEL from GOD. To do so, he must (1) believe on Jesus Christ as His personal Savior from sin, and that leads to his being forgiven and becoming indwelt by the parenting Spirit of God (Jn. 7:38-39; Rom. 8:9b). (2) Then, by fellowship with Christ as described in "III,B,5" of the sermon notes above, and through a consistent exposure to Christ's counseling ministry given by way of heeding His words in Scripture, one will see his emotional and mental lot IMPROVE! [(3) This also includes being sure we heed CORRECT teaching under APPROVED workmen in God's Word!]*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

(1) Stephen Olford, a former pastor of the large and influential Calvary Baptist Church of Manhattan, reported via cassette tape on an experience he had that affected his views on man's psychological needs.

During one of his Church's midweek Prayer Meeting services, Dr. Olford noticed a distinguished looking man enter the sanctuary and sit down in the pew. After the service, this stranger came forward and introduced himself to Dr. Olford: he was a psychologist responsible for training others in the profession. Indeed, he was head of all of the psychological training in Manhattan! He expressed that "We in psychology know that the most mentally healthful thing a person can do is to pray. We don't know **why** that works, but it **does**! I came to your Meeting tonight to pray because I am in need of help myself. But quite frankly, I don't know **how**! Could you show me **how** to pray?!"

Stephen Olford led the man to faith in Jesus Christ so he could pray effectively in Jesus' name!

Following this illustration, Dr. Olford testified that from this experience and others like it over his decades of pastoral ministry, he had become convinced that only through one's becoming spiritually related to Jesus Christ can he gain effective mental help!

(2) Mike Ridley, an elder at the Wintonbury Baptist Church of Bloomfield, Connecticut, in the June 1990 issue of the church's newsletter, The Good Newsletter, wrote in the "Elder's Epistle" this testimony: "I work in a public high school as a school psychologist . . . During the course of my day, I meet with many young people who are truly hurting. For some, they are caught up in the wicked cycle of drug and alcohol abuse. Others are rebelling against parents or reacting to a painful divorce or separation in the family. Still others are emotionally troubled by [an] inability to relate to their peers or with adults. Some struggle with depression and poor self images . . . We have the answer. We have **God's Word** . . ."

God has given us the Supreme Christmas Gift for the troubled inner man -- the Gift of Jesus Christ, God's Word incarnate, the Supernatural Counselor. His rates are FREE, He keeps ALL HOURS as His Word in the Bible is always available, and His "cell phone" is FREELY open from wherever we pray in the world! Just believe in Him and get help from His Word!