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Conducted by  
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**“Why as in Isaiah 9:6, is one of the titles given to Jesus that of Counsellor? I thought this was a fairly recent vocation for which people could be trained.”**

I understand what the questioner is saying, and also what might be implied in the question, i.e. how can someone give counsel if not present with us? I would say that in many people's eyes, 'counselling' is a fairly recent branch of the science of psychology insofar as it is employed in industry, commerce, and society generally, but the concept of giving counsel goes back beyond antiquity. Perhaps it would help if we defined 'counselling.'

The noun 'counsel' means deliberation or debate. We can counsel **together**, or we can counsel **with** someone, or we can counsel **ourselves**. It is a means of giving advice, so a counsellor may be called an 'adviser' (We must realise, however, that unless we are prescient, the giving of advice to others is always fraught with difficulty). So what is the scriptural significance of counselling, and how does Jesus significantly fit into the scheme of things?

### **Immutability**

In Heb. 6:17, the writer there speaks about the '**immutability of the counsel of God.**' If something can be spoken of as 'immutable', that means such a thing is 'unchangeable'. Referring that to God, we can say with some certainty that whatever or whoever changes, God Himself will not change, nor will His counsel. As Paul says in Rom. 11:34, "**For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His**

counsellor?" The same apostle asserts, "**His ways are past finding out**" (11:33). Happily, however, God has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus, His Son, and He has called people to deliberation and debate concerning their state before Him. In Isa. 1:16 we read, "**wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil . . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool**" (v.18 Read to V.20).

There is no doubt that God, in the Isaiah passage, is referring to Jesus. The fore-ordained plan of God was to be revealed: Jesus was to be delivered – as God had always known – in order to die for the sins of mankind. Peter makes this clear in Acts 2:23, "**Him (Jesus), being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands, (the hands of the Romans) have crucified and slain**" (words in brackets are my own). It is interesting to note that Peter refers to "ye men of Israel" to take heed of what he says. It is patently obvious that the Jews didn't crucify Jesus, but Peter says "ye have taken . . . and have crucified and slain." This makes it plain that one doesn't have to have committed the overt act to be blameworthy; Jesus Himself reiterated this principle when He said, during His so-called Sermon on the Mount, "**Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart**" Matt. 5:28. a very sobering lesson to us all in our dealings with God. I digress a little, however.

### Christ and the Holy Spirit

In Matt. 5 through 7, there is a classic example of Jesus counselling the people of His day, and even though what He says may seem radical, He is simple telling the people what they **should** be doing but which they had **neglected** to do for a long time. In John chapter 5 we read of Jesus in one of His many confrontations with the Jews; this time about His relationship with God. He counsels them to do what they should already have done. "**Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.**" v. 39. He compounds their error also regarding Moses, "**For had you believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me**" v46. Further on in the gospel of John, Jesus gives some good advice to His disciples, and to us also, "**If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you**" 15:7. Further on in the same discourse, "**If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love**" 15:10. He also warns them about what to expect from the world, "**Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than His Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also**" v 20.

Need I go on? The gospel records abound with counsel given by Jesus, and who better to give it than He who was named 'Counsellor' so many years before His advent into the world? Did not God Himself counsel the world to 'hear' His Son, both when Jesus stood in the Jordan river and on the Mount of Transfiguration? Did not Jesus Himself say, "I and My Father are one"? Who better to know the mind of God than He who was with God before the world began? The counsel of God was clear and authoritative: the counsel of His Son complemented that clarity and authority. The advice to listen to Him is good advice which we should all take to our hearts.

Could we expect anything less, or anything different, from the Holy Spirit regarding counselling? It was he, the Comforter, who was to guide the Disciples into 'all truth'. You remember what Jesus said, "**He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore, said I, shall he take of mine, and I shall shew it unto you**" John 16:14,15.

## Counsel of the Godhead

Reasoning this out we can understand that the truth which was in Jesus, and which was His from God, should also be evident in the counselling of the Holy Spirit. Paul, defending what the apostles taught, speaks about the Holy Spirit, **“For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God”** 1 Cor. 2:10,11. Now every Christian has the in-dwelling Spirit, so how does He help us and counsel us? If we look at Rom. 8 we shall find an important answer. Paul teaches, **“For as many are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”** The operative word here is ‘led’; the Spirit leads, guides, suggests; we respond to that and follow. We respond because we know He will lead us to the truth. But Paul goes on, **“Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ”** vv14-16.

Do you realise the significance of this, dear reader? He who knows the deep things of God in-dwells in us. What bliss is this? If we will but let Him, He will guide us into spiritual treasures that we have not even dreamed of. He will counsel us about the compassion and love of God; the soul-edifying sacrifice of Christ; the glories of Heaven. And yet, we mortals, to our detriment, can quench the power of that welcome Guest. But Oh! we must never do that. How, then, in times of deep distress, when all seems lost, would we hear the that calm, re-assuring, inner voice saying, “Your Heavenly Father knows all about it; be calm and feel the security of His everlasting arms. He will never fail you. I **know**, because I have searched the deep things of Him.”

Well, dear questioner, we’ve said a little about the Great Counsellor, Jesus. But you know, when we talk about Jesus, the Christ of God, we are also talking about the Godhead; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The formidable resources which they have, and which are at our disposal, can take us beyond this temporal world and, as on eagles’ wings, transport us to that spiritual eyrie from where we can look down on the largely Godless world, and from that eyrie to come down, as Jesus came from Heaven, in order to help some poor benighted soul to find the way to God and salvation. It is the counsel of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit that we should do this.

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden,  
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