

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Newsletter

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Personally, I love Christmas when I can get together with my children and grandchildren and join in the fun and excitement of Christmas morning as they open their gifts. It brings me back to very happy memories as a child and of one particular Christmas. It was 1959, the last Christmas Grandpa Jennings was alive. We were at his home and on TV Harry Belafonte was singing the song of that year, "Mary's Boy Child". It wasn't often we got snow in Ireland, but that year it snowed on Christmas Day. I recall us driving home in an all white scene, not another vehicle on the road. I can see it yet. But why do I really love Christmas? Is it the memories of days long since gone, or is there another reason?

In my heart of hearts I do love it because of the past and present joys it brings, but as I see the gifts being opened, I think of the greatest gift of all, God's gift to man, salvation through His Son. In the giving of gifts I observe several things. They are the expression of care and love, they indicate observation and preparation, they are ideally received with gratitude, and they give joy to both the giver and recipient.

When thinking on the gifts God offers to us, I am grateful that God in love observed the need of humanity, and prepared a gift for every individual no matter who or what they are.

Today many live in a sphere of loneliness and are uncared for, dejected, belittled, used, and unloved. Very often their companion is a little animal, for some the feeling of personal worthlessness is their constant associate. To such God sends a clear message: "God so loved the world that He gave" (Jn. 3:16). No matter who reads these lines, or is seen on the TV, you tube, twitter, or elsewhere, God says: "I love you". Irrespective of how you feel or perceive yourself, He says: "I love you" and your worth to me is beyond that which money can buy.

Of course, to appreciate any gift there must be a conscious awareness of a need, and in life, God seeks to make us aware of our need for Him. We learn that the human spirit can never be satisfied by the things the world offers. There is spiritual confusion on every hand. Questions asked are:

- a) "Which is the right way to God?"
- b) "When will I have done sufficient good works to outweigh the deficiencies?"
- c) "What is this world coming to in its injustice, famines, wars, droughts, volcano eruptions, hurricanes? Who has an answer?"

There arises in the heart the desire for quietness of heart and mind. Many years ago a man crowned with thorns stood before a Roman governor, and the governor asked: "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38). It is a question some are asking today. We have learnt from experience the emptiness of the human heart, for our problem is a broken fellowship with God. God loves us and wants us to have the attitude of Job who so long ago asked: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" (Job. 23:3).

[Where is God?](#)

Christmas reminds me that I can find God in the stable at Bethlehem. One night long ago, into a world of spiritual

darkness an angel appeared to shepherds and said: “Unto you is born this day” (Lk. 2:11). It was night and yet the angel called it day! The reason was, in that manger as the Saviour of the world, and when Christ entered this world, darkness could be dispelled and light flood the spirit. For the first time, the foreboding shadows of the unknown and uncertainty could be shattered, for He brought light and immortality to light.

In that stable was the one who:

- a) Was God yet had become a servant. The wonder of His Person!
- b) Who swaddled the earth was himself swaddled on earth. The wonder of His condescension!
- c) Who formed the light had his own form marred more than any man. The wonder of His humiliation!

Why was He born in an outside place? One reason was so that all those who knew rejection in life would realize He knows what it is like to be uncared for and unloved by the masses.

He came to:

- a) “To take away (the penalty for) our sins.” (1 Jn. 3:5)
- b) “That He might destroy the works of the devil.” (Jn. 3:8)
- c) “That we might live (have abundant life) through Him.” (1 Jn. 4:9)
- d) “To be the Saviour of the World.” (1 Jn. 4:14)

Christmas also reminds me of a place called Calvary when God in Christ paid the cost to provide salvation for me, the individual. In my mind I go to that hill lone and grey, and there are three crosses. On that central cross there hangs, as a criminal, the Son of God, and I ask: “Why is He there?” It was the perplexing query which puzzled Isaiah as he looked at Christ and said: “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” (Isa. 53:4), that is, this is the man who was always there for us, healing our sicknesses, giving hope when all was lost, and comforting the bereaved. Why is He on a cross? He then realizes that which the man on the central cross is experiencing is not just pains from the hands of men, for Isaiah says He was: “smitten of God and afflicted” (Isa. 53:4). Isaiah then wonders what had He done to deserve this punishment from God? Finally the truth breaks upon him: “He was wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement for my peace was laid upon Him, and by the stripes He bore for me, I can be healed”. I look at that cross and I see the fulness of God’s love telling me: “This is the value I put on you. My son bore your sins punishment on that cross to give you the gifts of:

- a) “So great salvation” (Heb. 2:3)
- b) “Life abundantly” (Jn. 10:10)
- c) “Precious promises” (2 Pet. 1:4)
- d) “Reconciliation to God” (Rom. 5:10)
- e) “Peace with God” (Rom. 5:1)
- f) “Everlasting life” (Jn. 5:24)

How can I get this gift?

How can I get any gift when offered? I simply take it!

Do I do anything for a gift? No!

Can I do anything to merit God’s favor? No!

- a) God says: “It is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). Instead of putting my faith on my works and devotions, take it and put it on Christ.
- b) God says: “You have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16). It is not Christ and my works, it is 100% dependence on Christ.
- c) It is a transference of faith from my works to Christ’s work.
- d) It is the accepting of Him as my Saviour from the penalty of my sins.
- e) It is the dependance on Him alone for making me right with God.
- f) It is repenting of my sins and independence on self to dependence on Christ.

Some years ago there was a very wealthy African chief who was also the chief lawgiver. It was discovered that someone was stealing his jewels and he gave a decree that whoever the guilty person was, they would be punished with 40 stripes. In time, the individual was brought before him. It was his own mother. She was guilty and the whisper was heard: “if it was one of us what would he do, where is the justice?” Then he made the pronouncement: “You are guilty and must receive the forty stripes”. The whisper was heard: “Where’s the love?” Then taking of his robes, he offered himself to be the punishment bearer. The guilty mother stood to the side and he was whipped with the forty lashes. With the last stoke he died. Broken hearted, the mother lifted him in her arms and said: “he did for me”. That is what Christ did for each individual. If only they will accept Him.

This is what Christmas is about, a baby in a stable, a man on a cross dying for me, and a risen Lord who is seated at God's right hand, ever interceding for the redeemed.

... *Rowan Jennings*



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