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Christmas Gift Ever!

As the Savior, Jesus offers salvation freely as a gift. In order for a gift to be truly *free*, it must be given voluntarily and without charge. At Christmas time we give gifts to celebrate the “greatest gift” that has ever been given.

What is this great gift? It is salvation from sin and its penalty! The greatest gift of all time is that Jesus Christ paid for the sins of His people on the cross. Listen to the blessings of this gift: “...He brought you [that is, those who believe in Him] to life along with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions; obliterating the bond against us, with its legal claims, which was opposed to us, He also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:13-14).” Now, *that’s* some gift!

The Bible explains that we do not earn or deserve this gift, we only accept it by faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast.” Salvation is a gift—the greatest Christmas gift of all time and we must accept this gift by faith.

What is faith? Faith is believing who Christ is and what He did. By faith we confess we are sinners. By faith we repent of our sins. By faith we call upon the Lord’s mercy and forgiveness. By faith we are saved!

There are two possible responses to Christ’s gift of salvation. You could either say “No, I don’t want it,” and walk away *or* you can accept it.

How do we accept the gift of salvation? Romans 10:9 says, “For, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.” Confess to God that He is holy and pure and that you stand before Him a guilty, lost and helpless sinner. Sincerely ask Him to save you and take His rightful place as the Lord of your entire life so that He would enable you to turn from sin and live for Him.

The Bible says that those who trust in Christ for their salvation are children of God! John 1:12 gives us this promise: “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God (NKJV).”

Those who are God’s children receive all the blessings of this wonderful Christmas gift from Jesus. Their sins are completely forgiven, they are assured of Heaven, they are adopted as true sons and daughters of God and they are filled with His Holy Spirit! If this is true of you, get to know your Heavenly Father through prayer, regularly studying His Word, and involvement in a good Bible-teaching church so that God can use you for His glory and your joy!

**Would you like to know more?
We’d love to help! Please contact us at
The Grace Tabernacle
732-681-3712**

**Join us for Sunday worship at 8:45 and 10:45 a.m.
To find out more information or hear recent
sermons, please visit our website:
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THE BEST GIFT BEGAN WITH THE GREATEST BIRTH!



Most people rejoice when babies are born. Babies are an amazing gift from God! The most well-known birth in all of history is that of Jesus Christ. Why is Jesus' birth so celebrated? It's because of who Jesus is and why He came.

You probably already know that Jesus was miraculously born to a virgin named Mary. Yet Jesus' birth was far more than a simple miracle of life—God Himself, the creator of the universe, became a man! You might think that God would come in pomp and pizzazz, but instead He simply was born in a manger somewhere in the little town of Bethlehem.

That little baby lying in a manger was God in the flesh. Several passages in the Bible speak about this miracle. John 1:1 states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* The "Word" being referred to is Jesus Christ. Christmas is a celebration of the day when God became a man!

The other reason why Christmas is such a renowned holiday is because of what Jesus did when He died. Jesus is the one person in history who was born to die. Though He was a good teacher and He showed us the meaning of love and sacrifice, the greatest reason why Jesus came was to be the Savior.

Jesus came as the Savior because we need to be saved from our sin. What is sin? Sin is violating God's holy law. Not only is it terrible acts such as murder and theft, but also common attitudes such



as envy, lying, bitterness, and unforgiveness. Moreover, sin includes avoiding doing good things such as giving God glory or helping the poor and oppressed.

Sin doesn't just break rules, it offends God's holy character. God is loving, merciful and pure. He is also holy, perfect, and infinite. When we sin, we violate His holy nature. Since God is perfect in holiness and purity, by definition this means that His perfection requires total purity in Him and His presence. The Bible says there is no shadow within God—that means that there is not a single thing in God's presence that would darken His brilliant radiance (James 1:17). Psalm 5:4-5 says, "...no wicked person finds refuge with you; the arrogant cannot stand before you."

Because there is no sin in God's presence, and because we have all sinned (Romans 3:23), we must be separated from Him. As sinners, if we were in His presence, His glory would no longer be perfect. The prophet Isaiah explains this when he says, "It is your crimes that separate you from your God, it is your sins that make Him hide His face so that He will not hear you (Isaiah 64:6)."

Do you sin? Everyone does. Perhaps you might say, "But I don't sin a lot." Well, the problem with sin is more serious than you may think. Suppose you were extremely thirsty and I had a glass of water, but before giving it to you, I put in a single drop of dioxin (often labeled the world's most deadly poison). Would you drink it? Of course not, just one drop contaminates the whole glass of water!

The same is true of



sin. One sin contaminates us. Even if you have committed only one sin in your entire life you are not perfect enough to enter into God's perfectly holy presence. James 2:10 confirms this when he says, "For whoever keeps the whole law, but falls short in one particular, has become guilty in respect to all of it." To dwell in God's presence, you must also be perfectly holy.

That standard might seem high, but we need to understand what it means for God to be infinitely holy. Because we have sinned against an infinite being, the penalty must also be infinite. The penalty for *each sin* is infinite and we could never pay such a compounding, infinite debt. No amount of church attendance or sincerity will satisfy the ever-increasing debt we owe. That is why Jesus Christ had to be born—we needed Him to live a perfect life and atone for sin as the Savior.

Some people might say, "I don't need a Savior! My good deeds outweigh my sins!" That might be a common hope, but our "good deeds" do not remove our sin. Throughout Scripture, the Bible explains that a moral life is virtuous, but it has nothing to do with taking away the punishment we deserve for the sins we commit. There is no scale or balance where our good deeds are measured against the infinite weight of our bad deeds.

Suppose a murderer were to stand before a judge and say "Please don't convict me for murdering! Look at all the money I gave to the church!" Giving money to a church has nothing to do with removing the punishment a person deserves for murder. Likewise, just as good deeds do not remove our guilt for crimes against society, neither do they remove our guilt for crimes against God. That is why Christ had to come.

The Best

(Continued on the back fold)

