

9 Gifts Jesus Died to Give You

When the holy child was born in a rustic setting near the shepherds' fields in Bethlehem, few knew that heaven's greatest gift had come down to the earth. Mary wrapped "the gift" in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. Approximately 33 years later, Roman soldiers rudely and cruelly unwrapped "the gift," stripping Him of His clothing and subjecting the Son of God to humiliation and torture. But it was all the unfolding of a plan:

"For God so loved the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The Everlasting Father gave the best He had. He gave His only Son. He gave precious, sinless blood. No greater love could have been expressed. No greater sacrifice could have been made. No greater gift could have been given. But the generosity of heaven had only just begun.

Forty days after the stone rolled away, the risen Savior "ascended on high"—and not for His own well-being, but to receive "gifts for men" (Ps. 68:18). How amazing! Usually great liberators are showered with gifts from the grateful masses; instead, this heaven-sent liberator promised to pour out numerous gifts on those who prayerfully call upon His name. In the New Testament Paul explained this prophecy:

"He gave some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of service, and for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a complete man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

So the King of kings gifted the world with empowered representatives who would share liberating truth with the multitudes. But once again, the gift-giver was only getting started. Before He left the world He confided to His followers:

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18).

Then He promised to transfer the gift, instructing them to “wait in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

It entered the upper room like a wind-swept fire as 120 were immersed in the power of the Spirit—receiving power over sin, power over satanic spirits, power over the flesh, power over sickness, power to witness, power to change the world and power to ultimately conquer even the curse of death.

Yet this was no mere solitary gift. Like a pomegranate containing many seeds, all encased in a reddish gel, so this “gift of power” contained a multiplicity of associated gifts—each one of them, purchased by and “encased in” the precious blood of the Lamb, such as:

The Gift of Grace—“But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph. 4:7).

The Gifts of Salvation and Faith—“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).

The Gift of Righteousness—“For if by one man’s trespass death reigned through him, then how much more will those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17).

The Gift of Peace—“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and

remind you of all that I told you" (John 14:26).

The Gift of Joy—"I have spoken these things to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11).

The Gift of God's Word—"For I have given them the words which You gave Me. They have received them and certainly know that I came from You, and they have believed that You sent Me" (John 17:8).

The Gifts of Glory, Perfection and Oneness With the Father—"I have given them the glory which You gave Me, that they may be one even as We are one: I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfect in unity, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me" (John 17:22-23).

The Gift of the Holy Spirit—"Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

The Gift of Eternal Life—"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

How should we react to such abundant generosity from God? Every day of the Advent season we should look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus, and the final gifts of the resurrection of the dead, the glorification of our bodies and the restoration of this world to a paradise state. We should also contemplate these things until we are filled with worshipful awe, often echoing Paul's conclusion:

"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift" (2 Cor. 9:15).

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