

Occasional Update #27

2 December 2024

God's gifts to us

When God the Father, gave His Son

God so loved ... that He gave ...

Around this time of the year, many people start to think about Jesus being born (not that He was born on 25 December, of course!) And just as three men from the East came to see Jesus and give Him gifts, so the tradition of giving and receiving gifts around "Christmas day" began.

The birth of Jesus, of course, is not just to think about the gifts we give and receive, but far more importantly, to remember the **gifts God has given to us**, especially the gift of His Son. God loved the world so much that He gave His Son to come into this fallen world and redeem all those who believe in Him, so they will not perish but have eternal life through His gift to us!

I've been reading the book of Ephesians recently and noticed some of the gifts God has given to us, as recorded in this book. All 6 chapters in Ephesians have verses which speak of at least one of these gifts. I've highlighted some of His gifts to us, which we need to recognise and, of course, for which we need to give Him our thanks and praise.

God's Gifts to Us

Ephesians

1:1-2 Greetings

Paul, who is an apostle of Jesus Christ by God's will;
To the saints who live in Ephesus and who are faithful to Christ Jesus.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:3-14 Spiritual blessings in Christ

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love. **He destined us** to be adopted as His children through Jesus Christ, because this was His will and good pleasure, to the praise of His glorious grace which **He freely gave us** through Jesus, His Beloved Son.

[He redeemed us] We are redeemed through His blood; our sins are forgiven because of the riches of His grace that He lavished on us.

He has made known to us the mystery of His will, with all wisdom and insight, according to His good pleasure that He set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Him – things in Heaven and things on earth.

[He has given us an inheritance] We have also obtained an inheritance in Christ, having been destined according to His purpose, He who accomplishes all things according to His counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of His glory. In Him, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, you also were marked with the seal of the **promised Holy Spirit**, who is the promise of **our inheritance towards redemption** as God's own people, to the praise of His glory.

1:17-19 Paul's prayer for the Ephesian Christians

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **will give you:** a Spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know Him, so that with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you will know what is the hope to which He has called you; what are the riches of His glorious inheritance among the saints; and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power for us who believe, according to the working of His great power.

God's gift of a Spirit of **wisdom and revelation**. God revealed to us, through giving us His Son, all the things we need to know about Him, the world we live in, and how we should live. He also gives the Spirit of wisdom to us, so we know and do what is good and right.

He gives us **hope**, in the midst of what so often seems a hopeless world. We are given hope as He reveals to us the riches of His glorious inheritance, and the immeasurable greatness of His power.

1:22 God has put all things under Jesus' feet, and **gave Him** to be the head of all things to the Church (God's people). Jesus is God's gift to us, and for a fallen world.

2:8 For by **grace** you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Our salvation comes through God's gift of grace, which we receive by faith. (God's grace is mentioned 12 times in Ephesians)

3:7-8 Paul said, "I was made a minister, according to the gift of the **grace** of God given to me by the effectual working of His power. To me, who is less than the least of all saints, is this **grace** given, so that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

4:7, 11-12 To every one of us is given **grace** according to the measure of the gift of Christ. ... He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

These gifts are for us to *use* for the *Church which Jesus is building!*

5:2 Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and has **given Himself** for us as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.

Jesus gave **Himself** as His gift to us – His love, His life, His teaching, His promises, and so on! What an amazing gift! In no other religion (or atheism) has anyone else given themselves so fully as Jesus, and His gift which brings eternal life – in God's presence, and His glory, forever! He paid the price for His gift to us, so that we might have the gift of His salvation.

5:25-27 ... Christ also loved the Church, and **gave Himself** for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might **present it to Himself a glorious church**, not having **spot**, or **wrinkle**, or any such thing; but that it should be **holy** and without **blemish**.

6:10-18 God's gifts to us include the whole **Armour of God**. Each gift is prefaced by words like: take, or take up; or put on, or fasten. These are "weapons" and their "protection" which we need to use in the battles we face. We need to receive them, thank God for them, and use them!

God so loved the world [*including me*] that He gave His only Son,
so that whoever [*including me*] believes in Him
will not perish but will have Eternal Life. (John 3:16)

LET US PRAISE AND THANK GOD FOR ALL HIS GIFTS TO US!

Let us also pray for those who do not yet know His goodness, gifts, salvation and – **WHY** He came!

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