

# God's Gracious Gift

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Everyone loves getting gifts. Some might even believe that the Christmas season is only a gift-giving season. There is truly a far greater meaning to this very blessed time of the year than just giving our simple gifts to each at Christmas. Christians celebrate because of God's gracious Gift to mankind. Scripture declares: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). Because of sinful disobedience to God's will mankind has earned for itself the wages of death. Thanks be to God for his gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We can learn much about God's grace to us by looking at the name of his precious Gift. In a dream an angel spoke to Joseph, the husband-to-be of Mary. She (Mary) will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). The meaning of the name of Jesus is given to us in this verse. Jesus will save his people from their sins. Mankind is saved from eternal damnation by God's gracious gift of His Son born in a manger at Bethlehem. We rejoice.

Believers everywhere celebrate and rejoice at the proclamation of this good news for all men. Without this one divine Gift, life would mean absolutely nothing. Eternal life would be lost. There would be no joy at all. But, now all of that despair has been changed. Jesus was born. Jesus lived a perfect life. Jesus paid the price of our disobedience with his holy, precious blood on the cross. God's gift of forgiveness through Christ brings eternal life to lost and condemned creatures. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). Each of us has been made rich by the poverty of Christ's suffering and death. This is God's perfect Gift to mankind. We rejoice.

Many will travel and gather together with family and

friends for Christmas. The blessings of companionship create a sense of belonging and a warm glow in hearts and homes everywhere. Consider another name of God's Gift and celebrate God's closeness to his creation. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him

every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10,11). By grace we rejoice at the true meaning of Jesus' name.

It is vitally important for each of us to thoughtfully consider everything God's gift means to each one of us. The world grows evil and the love of most grows cold as Judgment Day quickly approaches. All around us the world would try to rob us of the true meaning of Christmas and God's gracious Gift. It can become all too easy for us to be self-centered and selfish in our me-first society. It is all the more important to always remember God's Gift. God's precious Gift of His Son is freely given and truly undeserved. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:5).

Jesus — who saves people from sin is God's gift to us. Jesus who is Immanuel — God with us is God's gift to us. In the glow of the lights and decorations we are reminded that Christ is the true Light of the world. This year especially, we are reminded that Christmas without Christ is a mess. Christmas without Christ is missing a Savior. May we always be amazed every Christmas as we think about the meaning of Jesus in our lives. After Jesus' birth and the shepherds' confessions the parents of Jesus were in awe of what God had done. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart (Luke 2:19). May each of us take the time to treasure up all these things and ponder them in our hearts.

Celebrate this Christmas and every Christmas for God's gift of His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. We truly can rejoice every Christmas and every day of our lives

right into eternity. Buy your gifts. Share your joy with each other in gift giving. All the time may we always remember God's gracious Gift. For God's perfect Gift of Jesus guarantees eternity. Our future is secure. After all the presents are given out; after all the company safely returns home; after all the decorations are taken down and stored away; after all this the light of Christ can continue to shine in our lives; the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14)!

Immanuel — which means, "God with us". (Matthew 1:23). God is with us. How amazing. Our loving Lord God Almighty who created the heavens, the earth and everything in it is Immanuel — God with us. How comforting to know that we are never alone. We rejoice.

Jesus was born in a Bethlehem manger. Jesus lived on earth in humility. He had no place to call his own. In the end Jesus was put to death by the same creatures he came so save. The crowd cried out. "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Willingly, Jesus suffered the pains of death on the cross. But that was not the end. Jesus rose again. Death was destroyed. The devil was defeated. The Son of God and Son of man conquered sin. Therefore at the name of Jesus



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