

Unto us a Son is given – Christmas 2017

***“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. “Is.9:5***

Beloved in the Lord,

The message of Christmas is that a Child has been born to us, a Son has been given to us. Christmas is the fulfilment of the prophecy which we just heard from God through Isaiah His prophet. Jesus Christ has come for us. He is God’s gift to us. Jesus put it this way:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”John 3:16

Christmas is God’s gift to mankind. God has given us His Son. He did it because He loves us all with an everlasting, unfathomable love. His desire is that we would live in a close relationship with Him here on earth and then spend eternity with Him in Heaven.

Jesus Christ was born for us. I cannot overemphasise this truth. We all need Him, because apart from Him we do not have life. Isaiah wrote:

***“The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.”Is.9:2***

Since Adam and Eve fell into sin, all mankind has been plunged into darkness. Sin darkens the heart and the mind. Jesus came so that we may have light. He came to save us from our sin and to transfer us from the kingdom of darkness into His glorious Kingdom of Light.

The majority of people in this world are living in darkness and we are reaping the results of that. So many are not even aware of the darkness they are in, because they have not received the gift of Light from God. It is only when we are illuminated by Jesus Light, do we really begin to see and understand.

Pastor and author of the great Hymn “Amazing Grace”- John Newton understood this and he wrote:

“Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound; that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost, but now am found, was blind and now I see.” He wrote this after he had encountered Jesus Christ and received Him into his heart in faith.

Every person who has not met Jesus Christ and has not received Him in faith, is blind and spiritually lost. The problem is that many who are in that state are simply not aware of it, or do not want to admit it. They do not seek God, because they do not see a need for Him in their lives.

It is vitally important that we understand that we all need Jesus Christ, with no exceptions. Without Him, we are lost in darkness both here and in eternity. God does not desire for any of us to spend eternity in utter darkness, cut off from Him, by our sin, and that is why He has given us His Son to save us. We read:

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”Titus 2:11-14

Paul then exhorts Titus: ***“These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” Titus 2:15***

The word translated appeared is epithano or epithany which literally means to shine forth. God’s grace has shone forth through Jesus and brings salvation to all men. Sadly not all are saved, because not all receive God’s gift of grace and mercy. Many reject it. How about you? Have you received His gift of salvation? Is Jesus Christ Lord of your life? Have you surrendered your life to Him? Who is the boss in your life? Do you live by your will and desires or do you seek to walk according to God’s will?

If you have not yet received God’s gift, then do it now. Tomorrow may be too late. Now is the time. Understand that God loves you in ways that you cannot imagine. Jesus came into this world for you. If you had been the only person in the world who needed to be saved from eternal hell, then we would still have Christmas and Easter because Jesus would have come for you, because He values your soul and loves you. Can you fathom that? You are precious to God. He loves you. He desires to give you a place in His home forever, but He will never force you. You have been given a free will.

David writes in Psalm 34: ***“O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”Ps.34:8***

Sadly many never heed that invitation and so never experience how good God is, they never realise the joy of being in Christ. The blessings that we receive from Jesus are contained in the names given to Him. There are many names, but today we look at those that are in our Christmas prophecy: ***“And His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”Is.9:5***

Jesus Christ is the Wonderful Counsellor. There is no counsellor on earth that even comes close to Jesus. We all need good counsel, for life is not easy. It is hard to navigate your way through this maze of life and often we do not know what to do or where to turn. Solomon in his accurate and witty way wrote: ***“He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.: Prov.28:26***

We have been given a Wonderful Counsellor, who shows us the right way, who knows all things, who answers us when we call upon Him. He Himself taught:

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. ¹¹ Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? ¹² Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” Luke 11:9-13

Jesus clearly promises that if we ask, we will receive. He promises to give us The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows all things, He is everywhere and He is all powerful. He is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. Since Jesus returned to Heaven on Ascension Day, it is God The Holy Spirit who is active in the earth, and He comes and abides in the heart of every believer.

When you accept and confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, God The Holy Spirit takes up residence in your heart. He is the great Counsellor, He is our Attorney, our Helper, our Comforter and so much more. Jesus said that He the Holy Spirit will take what Jesus has and give it to us. When we are in Christ, we are never without counsel, for Jesus Himself is abiding in our heart.

The next name is “Mighty God”. Jesus Christ is Almighty. He fought our greatest enemy death and He won. With His own death upon the cross, Jesus broke the power of death and took away its sting. On Easter morning, Jesus walked out of the tomb where they lay Him, alive forevermore. He is Almighty God.

All the gurus, the teachers, the founders of religions, that people follow are dead or will die. Only Jesus died and came back alive forever. In His hands are the keys to death and hell. He said:

“Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”Rev.1:17-18

I don't know about you, but I willingly surrender and entrust my life to the one who has all power. Why follow someone who has partial knowledge, partial insight, a little wisdom, when you can follow the one who knows it all and is all powerful. Jesus has all authority in Heaven and in the earth. In His hands is your eternal destiny, and He has said that He loves you.

The next name is Eternal Father. When we believe in Jesus, then we become children of God, and as children we are heirs, joint heirs with Jesus Christ. What is our inheritance? A place in the Father's home, a seat at His table forever and ever. We have a Father who loves us forever.

The last name in this text is Prince of Peace. When we receive God's gift, then we have peace. We have peace because our sins are forgiven, we have peace with God, and we have peace with man. When we are in Christ peace reigns, because we are subject to the great commandment to love God and to love our fellow man. We no longer have wars but peace, because we live in love.

Paul writes:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.”Rom.5:1-2

A Son has been given to us. So much has been given, have you received God's gift?
Amen.

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