

Christmas

God's Present Is
His Christmas Presence
Matthew 7:14
SM 12/25/2022 – Tim Carpenter

Concept: God's Abiding Presence

Intro: **A word about the title:** our word for gift, present, is the result of one whose presence is required to present the present.

The word Christmas comes from Christ's Mass. Mass means to be sent out into the world after sharing His body & blood in worship.

STANDING OUTSIDE OUR FARMHOUSE, my parents & brothers' warning about rats in cellar.
{PHOTO}

One day, my brother & I were locked out and needing in... badly! **But the rats in the coal cellar!**

Many stand outside of God's dwelling, a relationship with Him.

They want in, BUT FEAR the process of entering into His presence.

God wants everyone to receive His Christmas Present of His Christmas Presence

Message: **Do you have that Christmas Present in your life, for your family?**

God is omnipresent, but only those who have His Spirit can dwell in His manifest presence in their lives, now and forever.

† **What does the Bible say?**

1. Old Testament – The Journey from Eden to Christmas Presence: How did we get from Eden to where we could sing? Xⁱ

A. **GENESIS 3:8-23** - Eden was a paradise because of God's presence, far more than because of its utopian condition.

1. **VS 8-11** – Sound of the YHWH Elohim in the garden “hid themselves from the presence of YHWH Elohim”
2. The blame game and God's curses and promise; Seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head, but bruise his heel
3. **V21** YHWH Elohim made for Adam & his wife garments of skins & clothed them.
 - a. Hand crafted by YHWH Elohim
 - b. The clothes served as a promise of His provision, His propitiation, & His “abiding” presence in their exile.
 - c. **The question of Scripture then becomes how we humans can return to that paradise?**

B. **Genesis 6:18 NOAH** “My covenant will be with you” / Hand shut the door & that same Hand guided that ship to Ararat.

1. **A warning of God's judgement (2 Peter 3 and then 1 Peter 3)**
2. **A promise of salvation through the waters...** not removal of dirt from the flesh but as an appeal to God for conscience

C. **THE 3 FATHERS – THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PEOPLE**

1. **Genesis 17:4** Abe: “My covenant will be with you”
2. **Genesis 26:3** “Isaac I will be with you and bless you...”
3. **Genesis 28:15** Jacob “I am with you and will keep you wherever you go...”

D. **EXODUS 3:7-8 MOSES – FROM GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE BURNING BUSH, ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUS COVENANT**

1. “Do not come near, take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground!”
2. “I've seen the affliction of My people, I've heard their cry, I've come down to deliver them, I will bring them up”
3. God was present in the pillar of cloud & fire and present in the Rock that gave water. (Ex 13:21; 1 Cor 10:4)

E. JUDGES & KINGS: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATION

1. **Joshua 1:5** Joshua “Just like I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.”
2. **Judges 6:16** Gideon “But I will be with you...”
3. **Psalms 23:6** David.... “I shall return to dwell in the house of the YHWH for length of days (here, now and future)
4. **1 Kings 9:3 Solomon’s Temple** – “... My eyes and heart will be there for all time”.

F. PROPHETS TO CONFIRM HOW GOD WILL KEEP HIS PROMISES

1. ISAIAH 7:14

- a. God gave a sign to hardhearted Ahaz that He is with His people, Immanuel.
 - b. God meant that sign to foreshadow birth of a virgin of His own Son, the true gift of God’s presence with His people
 - c. To deliver mankind from not just Herod & Augustus, but the 2 evil kings in our lives: Satan &, more dangerous, self
2. **Jeremiah 29:12-14** “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you.
 3. **Daniel Dan 3** - 3 friends “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace” – Neb saw 4...
 4. After the Exile God stirred the people to finish the temple, the symbol of God’s presence, **Haggai 1:13** “I am with you”.
 5. His last promise was from **Malachi 4:5-6** “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

And then there was a silence for 400 years,

Nothing like that since the days they were slaves in Egypt.

All those times God was “with them” was sporadic moments in their history with one person for a short life

BUT HE HAD SOMETHING BETTER!

He had a plan for...

2. New Testament – THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS PRESENCE

A. AND THEN THE LIGHT OF GOD’S PRESENCE DAWNED AS EARLY LIGHT

1. An angel appeared to Zechariah to announce the one like Elijah to fulfill Malachi’s final words.
 2. An Angel appeared to Mary that she, a virgin, would bear a son by the Holy Spirit.
 3. An Angel appeared to her betrothed Joseph bearing witness of that conception by the Holy Spirit.
- B. **THAT ANGEL SUMMED UP THIS COMING BIRTH IN Mt 1:22-23** “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive & bear a son, & they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us)

C. GOD HAD BEEN PLANNING FOR THIS CHRISTMAS GIFT OF HIS PRESENCE SINCE BEFORE ADAM!

1. **John 1:1, 14**; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
2. **1John 1:1**; “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—”
3. **John 14:1-4**; ““Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to

myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH THE LIFE!

4. **John 14:16-17** “*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*”
- D. **THEN THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THE PRESENCE OF GOD TO DWELL WITH MANKIND, SUFFERED THE LOSS OF THE PRESENCE OF HIS FATHER**
 1. **Luke 23:43** There on the cross Jesus makes the promise that all mankind longed for, a return to paradise... and this to a thief who believed in Him!
 2. **Matthew 27:46** – “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani? My God, My God, why have you FORSAKEN ME?”
 3. Then He cried out, “IT IS FINISHED”!
 4. The temple curtain was torn in two... and the dead came out of their graves
- E. **Post resurrection promise, Matthew 28:18-20** “*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*”
- F. **Love never lost for those who are born of God’s Spirit, Romans 8:38-39** “*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

3. The Forever Paradise of Christmas Presence

- A. **Revelation 21:1-5** “*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*”
- B. **Revelation 22:1-5** “*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, & they will reign forever & ever.”*”
- C. **REVELATION 2:7 TELLS US THAT THIS TREE OF LIFE IS IN THE PARADISE OF GOD... Christ made it possible to bring us back to the paradise of God’s promise by His Christmas present of His presence on earth in the gift of His death and resurrection.**

† What does it mean?

- A. From the loss of His presence in the paradise of Eden He will return His people to the paradise of His presence forever.
- B. So In life: In fire, In waters, In death, In sickness, In poverty, In riches, In failure, In success, In Judgment, In Eternity...
- C. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus

† What shall we do?

A. First, as His child:

1. **Wake up remembering His Word, His Presence...** talking and even singing at least in your heart.
2. **Work out your plan** and schedule for the day but be aware of His appointments for you
3. **Walk through the day** praying without ceasing, evaluating the people & unfolding events with His eyes & heart
4. **Wonder about the day** before you fall asleep with thanksgiving, prayer, and a good Word to rest upon.

B. Second, as His ambassador / steward of His Word.

1. **Accept where He has you now to reach those around you now by being Christ's Presence.**
2. **He called you to be light because He is the Light of the world in you where you are each moment of the day.**
3. **Live, laugh, love, with each person you are with and look for that spot in that moment to plant the seed of His Word!**

SO FOR TODAY...

**LET'S GO HOME WITH HIS FIRE IN OUR HEARTS, HIS CANDLE UPON OUR TABLE, AND HIS LOVE
AROUND OUR FAMILIES.**

LET'S GIVE HIM THANKS FOR THE PRESENT OF HIS PRESENCE.

¹ C Autin Miles, "In the Garden"

I come to the garden alone, While the dew is still on the roses; And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, The Son of God discloses.
And He walks with me, and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own. And the joy we share as we tarry there None other has ever known.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice Is so sweet the birds hush their singing; And the melody that He gave to me Within my heart is ringing.

I'd stay in the garden with Him Tho the night around me be falling; But He bids me go - thru the voice of woe, His voice to me is calling.