

## Heaven's Greatest Gift

John 3:16 NKJV

- I. Preparing the gift.
  - a. The eternal Son had to become the begotten Son. Hebrews 1:1-6 ESV  
“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup>He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup>having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.”
    - i. Today speaks of time. The term begotten was inherited from the human race. It is the father's role in conception. You are born of your mother and begotten by your father. Jesus was born of Mary and begotten of God the Father – fully man and fully God.
    - ii. John 1:1-3; 14 NKJV “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” When the eternal Son became flesh we beheld God in human form – stunning! How was the eternal Son conceived in a human womb? Way beyond our pay grade!
  - b. Adam was created and sinned bringing a curse on the human race; Jesus was begotten, not created, but had to become a man to reverse the curse that humanity was under.
  - c. When He brings Him into the world – the angels all worship Him. Imagine this scene in heaven – “Where is He?” Don't you remember? The virgin will conceive and her child will be called Immanuel – God with us. Remember – to us a child will be born and a son will be given – He will be called Mighty God. Here's the good news – when He is born, we're all invited to worship Him in human form. \*The angels who go to the shepherds were just there. This will be a sign to you – Savior, Christ the Lord – a baby in a manger with swaddling cloths. That's the eternal Son in human form – it's a sign – the Savior/Messiah is on earth.

- II. The price of the gift.
  - a. Jesus was born to die. He was born where the lambs were born and came to be watched over by the shepherds who watched over the sacrificial lambs which all pointed to the One who had to come.
  - b. Hebrews 10:5-7 NIV “Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; <sup>6</sup>with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll— I have come to do your will, my God.’” \*The Old Covenant lambs only foreshadowed – without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. \*The justice of God demanded a sacrifice that His love provided. The Father gave the Son, and the Son gave Himself. John 10:18 NIV “No one takes it (My life) from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” \*Put away your sword – I only have to say one word to My Father. Your will be done!
  
- III. What all is in the gift?
  - a. Paul calls it an indescribable gift. (2Cor. 9:15 NASB) Ephesians 2:7 says we’ll still be unwrapping it in the ages to come.
  - b. What’s in it right now?
    - i. The promise of eternal life. Romans 6:23 NIV “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in<sup>[a]</sup> Christ Jesus our Lord.” God wants to share His eternalness with us. This gift takes away the fear of death because the best is yet to come.
    - ii. A new identity. Jesus is both the only begotten son and the firstborn among many sons. How is that? Romans 8:15 NIV “The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.<sup>[a]</sup> And by him we cry, “Abba,<sup>[b]</sup> Father.” \*Jesus wants to make a family for the Father – “No one comes to the Father except through Me.” \*Women are sons; men are part of the bride – relationship not about sexuality.
    - iii. Intimacy with God. \*Shane’s message – He is our high Priest and He gave Himself as a perfect sacrifice so that we could draw near. The relational intent – God near us – Old Covenant; Jesus tabernacled in our history – God with us; but the big plan was the intimacy of God in us. Salvation is a relationship not an event! \*Abide and abode – if you make your home in Me you will bear much fruit.
  
- IV. Receiving the gift.

- a. Recognizing that it has your name on it. \*Luke 2 It's for all the people and it's for you. "Whoever believes in Him..." that includes you if you want it to.
- b. "All I want for Christmas is you." \*Number 1 20 weeks in this last year – a new record; 50 million albums sold. All God wants is you.
  - i. Why He loves us is a mystery, but He does. He doesn't need us, but He wants us. It's why He came to earth; it's why He died on the cross – love kept Him on the cross, not nails.
  - ii. Not our performance, our hearts. \*Mary in season two: "I can't live up to it." Jesus: "I'm not asking you to; I only want your heart and I already have it. I forgive you. Stay close and everything else will take care of itself." (He gave her a hug – do you need a hug from Jesus today?)
- c. The gift exchange:
  - i. We give Him our sins, He gives us His righteousness. (We have to own that we are sinners)
  - ii. We give Him our past, He gives us His future. (We have to be willing to take our identity out of what we've made ourselves)
  - iii. We give Him our life, He gives us His life. (Self-preservation will keep you from Jesus)
- d. Have you received heaven's greatest gift? What a great time to do it!