

RECEIVING GOD'S GIFT

John 3:16

Jelšava, 25 December 2018

<p>Χάρις τῷ θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ</p>	<p>2Cor 9:15 Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!</p>
<p>13 καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. ¹⁴ Καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψώσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ¹⁵ ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. ¹⁶ οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. ¹⁷ οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνη τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῆ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ. ¹⁸ ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται, ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.</p>	<p>John 3:13-18 No one has ascended into heaven except him who <u>descended from heaven</u>, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the <u>Son of Man be lifted up</u>, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." ¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.</p>
<p>העירתי בכם היום את־השמים ואת־הארץ התיים והמוות נתתי לפניך הברכה והקללה ובחרת בחיים למען תחיה אתה וזרעך ²⁰ לאהבה את־יהוה אלהיך לשמע בקלו ולדבקה בו כי הוא חייך וארך ימיו לשבת על־הארמה אשר נשבע יהוה לאבתיו לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב לתת להם</p>	<p>Dt 30:19-20 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose <u>life</u>, that you and your offspring may live, ²⁰ loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, <u>for he is your life and length of days</u>, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.</p>
<p>1John 3:16 ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν</p>	<p>1John 3:16 By this <u>we know love</u>, that he <u>laid down his life for us</u></p>
<p>1 Peter 5:7 ... αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν</p>	<p>...he cares for you</p>
<p>John 14:18 Οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς, ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς</p>	<p>John 14:18 I will not leave you as orphans; <u>I will come to you</u>.</p>
<p>נשקוֹבֵר פְּרִיאָנָה וְהֵאבְרוּ דָרָךְ כִּי־יִבְרַח כָּמֵעַט אִפּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יִלְחֹצֵי בוֹ</p>	<p>Ps 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.</p>
<p>Nu 21:5-9 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." ⁶ Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷ And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent (שָׂרָף) and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." ⁹ So Moses made a bronze serpent (נָחָשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת) and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at (וְהִבִּיט) the bronze serpent and live.</p>	

OUTLINE

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4. TO REMEMBER**0. INTRODUCTION****0.1 CELEBRATING THE INCARNATION**

- pagan holidays? → ignore it!
- The Incarnation without Christs' Resurrection does not help us.

0.2 CHRISTMAS GIFTS

- Christmas and gifts → enjoying the gift of the Son of God
- tradition of gift-giving – pagan? **Esther 9:19** the Jews ...send gifts of food to one another...
- expression of joy
- parallel to the gifts of the Magi...

0.3 JOHN 3:16

- [C.H.SPURGEON [1834-1892] *Immeasurable Love* (No.1850)] I WAS very greatly surprised the other day (y.1885), in looking over the list of texts from which I have preached, to find that I have no record of ever having spoken from this verse [since 1854]. This is all the more singular because I can truly say that it might be put in the forefront of all my volumes of discourses as the sole topic of my life's ministry. It has been my one and only business to set forth the love of God to men in Christ Jesus.

[PIPER *Solid Joys*] ...something must be done to help us once more feel the awe, the fear, the astonishment, the wonder of the Son of God, begotten by the Father from all eternity, reflecting all the glory of God, being the very image of his person, through whom all things were created, upholding the universe by the word of his power. You can read every fairy tale that was ever written, every mystery thriller, every ghost story, and you will never find anything so **shocking**, so **strange**, so **weird** and **spellbinding** as **the story of the incarnation of the Son of God**. How dead we are! How callous and unfeeling to your glory and your story, O God! How often have I had to repent and say, "God, I am sorry that the stories men have made up stir my emotions, my awe and wonder and admiration and joy, more than your own true story."

1. THE VALUE OF THE GIFT

[CHAMBERS] The first thing we need to be educated in spiritually is a knowledge of the dimensions of Divine love, its length and depth and breadth and height. That God is love is a revelation. Unless I am born from above (rv mg), what is the use of telling me God is love? To me He is not love. Where is the love of God in

war? in **suffering?** in all the inevitable **inequalities** of life? No one who faces facts as they are could ever prove that God is love unless he accepts the revelation of His love made by Jesus Christ. John 3:16 does not begin to have any meaning to the natural man who knows nothing whatever of the domain Jesus Christ represents; but let him come up against things and be brought to his wits' end, and then let him read John 3:16. Not until we realise that there is something tragic at the basis of human life shall we recognise the love of God. (*The Place of Help*)

1.1 SUBSTITUTES

- mother-child (**Luke 11:27-28** a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!"²⁸ But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!")
- family (**Mark 3:21,32-35** ... his family ... went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind. ... Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you."³³ And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"³⁴ And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"³⁵ Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.)
- peace (**Mt 10:34** Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword)

1.2 FOR THE RECEIVER

- eternal life → What is it? – Do I need it? – How does it “feel”? – What shall I do with it?

1.3 FOR THE GIVER

- the Only Begotten Son → the Trinity (we cannot appreciate the gift without some understanding of the Trinity)
- “gave” ⇒ to death (to be lifted up); – to be ignored; – to be abused; – to rule the world (the Heir!)

1.4 THE SON OF GOD AND OUR SON

- **Isaiah 9:6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given

2. THE PROBLEM OF RECEPTION

- the story of Israel and the snakes → **2Ki 18:4** And he [Hezekiah] broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan).

[CHAMBERS] What has God redeemed? Everything that sin and Satan have touched and blighted, God has redeemed; Redemption is complete. We are not working for the redemption of the world, we are working on the Redemption, which is a very different thing. Jesus Christ's last command to His disciples was not to go and save the world; the saving is done. He told them to go and make disciples (rv). Our work is to “open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins,” i.e. that they may receive the Redemption which is complete but which is incredible to a man until he does receive it—“I do not doubt that God saves men; nor do I doubt that He can do all the Bible says He can; but it is ridiculous to suppose it includes me!” (*Our Brilliant Heritage*)

2.1 A LOOK WITH UNDERSTANDING

- **Mt 6:26** Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap...
- **2Cor 4:6** For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν· ἐκ σκοτῶν φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ).

2.2 THE OPEN EYES

- **Is 42:6-8** I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,⁷ to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.⁸ I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

3. THE LOOK OF FAITH

- [CHAMBERS, *Disciples Indeed*] “When once you come in contact with Jesus you are not conscious of any effort to believe in Him.”
- [German Muenchener Neues Testament Version 1998] **John 3:16** Denn so liebte Gott die Welt, daß er den Sohn, den einziggezeugten, gab, damit jeder Glaubende an ihn nicht verlorengelasse, sondern habe ewiges Leben.
- [FINNEY *The Oberlin Evangelist. May 25, 1853*] the looking brings the cure, although not one of them can tell how the healing virtue comes. So we are really to look to Christ, and in looking, to receive the healing power. It matters not how little we understand the mode in which the looking operates to give us the remedy for sin.

3.1 NEEDY

- a look full of meaning; serious; conscious of the problem;
- **Mt 9:11-13** And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹² But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
- **Mt 5:3** Blessed are the poor in spirit (οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- **Rev 3:17** ...you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked (σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ἐλεεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός)

3.2 HOPEFUL

- expectancy;
- **Acts 3:4-5** And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.
- **Ps 34:4-5** I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. ⁵ Those who look to him are radiant (הַבְּיטֵי אֵלָיו וְנִתְהַרְרוּ), and their faces shall never be ashamed.

3.3 SUBMISSIVE

- **John 7:17** If anyone's will is to do God's will (ἐάν τις θέλη τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν), he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority

4. TO REMEMBER

- Christmas is about *God giving himself* to us a gift that never can be surpassed.
- The problem is not in *giving* but in our *receiving* it. We need to have open eyes to see the meaning of the gift.
- A look of faith is full of hopefulness and submission to the will of God. Only such faith is able to receive the gift of God in his Son.