



# The Blessings of Christmas

By

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Being a Christian has so many wonderful blessings attached to it. In fact, the Apostle Paul tells us that we are blessed “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). These blessings began when God chose us in Christ “before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:4-6)

Here are some thoughts about the blessing of Christmas I wrote more than 30 years ago.

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“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see

this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” Luke 2:8-20

God sent His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ, to bless the Nation of Israel. Zechariah prophesied about those blessings after the birth of his son, John the Baptist.

“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.” Luke 1:68-75

Notice the promised blessings:

- Salvation from Israel’s enemies (the Gentile nations)
- Rescue from the hand of Israel’s enemies

- Enablement for service to God without fear

Notice that the promises are connected to former covenants (agreements) God made with Israel:

Horn of salvation in the house of David (Davidic Covenant)

To show mercy to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath He swore to our father Abraham (Abrahamic Covenant)

These blessings of God surrounding the birth of Christ as listed by the prophet are for the nation of Israel.

Now see what Paul wrote in Ephesians:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3

Our blessings as members of the Body of Christ are different than the nation of Israel. Our blessings are in the “heavenly realms.” They are “spiritual” blessings rather than “national” blessings. You and I have no promise of an “earthly” country where we wait for our Messiah to come from Heaven to establish His Throne on earth. Our “citizenship” is in Heaven, “from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:20-21)

One thing that is the same for both the Body of Christ and Israel is that Jesus Christ is Lord of both. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). Jesus is the King of His Body in Heaven and will also be the King of Israel on earth, ruling from the ancient city of Jerusalem. After Jesus dismisses the old heaven and old earth and creates the new heaven and new earth, He will reign from the New Jerusalem which will come “down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Revelation 21:1-2)

“The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” Revelation 21:23-27

Our blessings are spiritual and exist in the sphere of the “heavenly realms.” Here’s what Paul said happened to us through Christ even before Jesus became flesh and walked among men. (Reading from Ephesians chapter one)

God chose us in Christ “before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” That’s what we are in Christ — “holy and blameless in his sight.” The beauty of that is God sees us as holy and blameless in Christ. No Christian always acts in a holy and blameless

way, but God sees us that way in Christ Jesus. He has seen us that way from before He created the world. He knew what we would become in Christ because He chose us.

God decided beforehand to adopt us as His children in Jesus Christ. We are His Children of Grace. God did it because it “pleased” Him to do it. No one forced God to want us, choose us and adopt us. He wanted to do it! That’s the wonder and mystery of His Love.

God bought us back. He redeemed us. The purchase price was the “blood” of His Son Jesus Christ. The cost to God was the brutal death of His One and Only Son at the hands of wicked men.

God forgave us all our sins according to the riches of His Grace. He lavished His Grace and Forgiveness on us with all wisdom and understanding.

God made known to us the mystery of His will—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one Head, Jesus Christ His Son.

Christ came to earth as God’s promise to Israel, but the leaders of Israel rejected their Messiah. Christ then turned from Israel to the Gentiles and revealed Himself to all people, Jew and Gentile, as their Savior and Hope of glory. He gave to us the greatest Gift possible—  
”every spiritual blessing.”

God has a Gift for you this Christmas. It is the Gift of forgiveness of sins and of Eternal Life. You can know for sure that you will be with God “in the heavenlies” forever.

How do you receive this Gift from God? Through faith! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31) “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

God Loves you! He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for you. Jesus died but He did not remain dead. Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Right Hand of God in full power and glory. Jesus offers you His Gift of Eternal Life. Speak to Him. Tell Jesus about yourself. Confess your sin and pain to Him. Tell Him you believe in Him and want to receive His special Christmas Gift, the Gift of Eternal Life.

After you’ve receive Christ as your Lord and Savior, read the Book of Ephesians in the Bible. It will tell you what God gave you. It will tell you how to live an exciting life—a life filled with real joy and love for God and others. Read Paul’s letters to the Romans, Colossians and Philippians. Read all of Paul’s letters to the early churches. Read the Gospels and Acts and the entire Bible. It will be a blessing to you for the rest of your life.

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13-14

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