

“Gift” Giving

by Wayne Goff

Now that Thanksgiving is behind us, we now focus on the next holiday of Christmas and the tradition of gift-giving. What kind of “gifts” has God given to us?

“The Free Gift”

Romans 5:15-16 refer to “*the free gift*” which comes from the grace of God and the Man, Jesus Christ. Verse 16 calls it “*justification*,” while verse 17 refers to it as “*righteousness*.” These are biblical synonyms referring to the salvation found in the blood of Jesus Christ, emanating from the grace of God.

Romans 6:23 makes it **even more clear** when it says, “*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Notice that sin **earns** one *spiritual death*, while God’s unmerited gift **gives** us *eternal life*. What a contrast! We cannot earn eternal life, but eternal life is still *conditional*. We must meet the conditions of obedience to obtain eternal life. In doing so, we have not earned anything (see Romans 4).

“Good Things”

Jesus explained the goodness of His heavenly Father in Matthew 7:11 when He said, “*If you then, being evil, know how to give **good gifts** to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give **good things** to those who ask Him!*” God loves us and is willing to give us the things we need, if only we will take the time to ask!

For example, **wisdom** is one of God’s freely given gifts. “*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him*” (James 1:5). Who doesn’t need wisdom, or a little extra wisdom? David’s son, Solomon, asked for just that when God told him he would be the next king of Israel (1 Kings 3:9). God was pleased with this request.

Furthermore, God gives to His children “*every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*” (Eph. 1:3), and this is sufficient provide us with “*all things that pertain to life and godliness*” (2 Pet. 1:3)! God could not have given His children a *better spiritual gift* than free access to eternal life found in the gospel! It is our duty, as Christians, to develop our spiritual eyesight and understanding so that we can appreciate the Lord’s gift and the statement of Jesus that man would trade the whole world to save his own soul (Matt. 16:26). One may find that difficult to believe now, but it will be painfully obvious to the unbeliever at the moment of his death!

In addition, the apostle Paul said that God “*gives to all life, breath, and all things*” (Acts 17:25). Here, the “*all things*” refers to God’s benevolent providential gifts that make life habitable and enjoyable on the earth. “*Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*” (Acts 14:17). God has done this for all mankind from the beginning of time. What a pity that man has become unthankful (Rom. 1:21) of God’s bountiful gifts, both *physically and materially*. Dear reader, always be mindful of the “*good things*” God gives you!

“The Gift of the Holy Spirit”

“*Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’*” Acts 2:38.

What is “*the gift of the Holy Spirit*”? Is it the Spirit Himself, or the gift given by the Spirit? Grammatically, there is no way to discern between the two, but by textual comparison it is rather easy to learn. A parallel passage is Acts 3:19, which reads: “*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.*” By comparing the two, it is obvious that “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” is equal to “*times of refreshing ... from the presence of the Lord.*” Thus the “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” is **that** which is given by the Holy Spirit. The “*gift*” then refers to the many spiritual blessings one has **in Christ** which cannot be found **outside** of Him. The *continued* forgiveness we find through Christ’s priesthood (Heb. 4:16; 7:25) is one prime example.

Conclusion

Space does not permit an exhaustive study of the many gifts God gives to His children. But these are enough to help you appreciate the fact that we are wholly dependent upon God, and that He loves us deeply. **304803**