

29.3 A “Wonderful” Christmas Gift

As Christmas approaches, in addition to the birth of Jesus, we naturally focus on our gift-giving to one another. I heard recently about a 90-year-old lady who found buying Christmas presents a bit much, so she wrote out checks for all of her family and friends, and decided she would put them in with her Christmas cards. She wrote out her Christmas cards and wrote *"Buy your own present"* after her name, then sent them off.

But after the Christmas festivities were over, she found the checks in her desk! Everyone had got a Christmas card from her with *"Buy your own present"* written inside but without the checks!

We all like to give and receive gifts. I personally believe that is because we bear the image of God, although it has been marred by sin. God loves to receive our gifts of love. Even more, He has given us the greatest gift of all, the gift of His Son. As **John 3:16** states, **“For God SO LOVED the world that He GAVE His only Son.”**

In thinking about the gift of Jesus, let’s take a look at **Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV)**:

**‘For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

The word “wonderful” in the middle of this passage is key to the verse. It is rich with meaning and filled with truth. It is an umbrella word under which all the words *following* it rest [*He’s a wonderful: as Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.*]. All the words *before* it tell us what qualifies Jesus as *Wonderful*.

Isaiah, the prophet looked 700 years into the future. He saw at least three things about our wonderful Lord which are contained in this one verse.

First, He saw the Wonderful Birth of Jesus. “For unto us a Child is born” Imagine that God not only took on the flesh of mankind, He came into the world through the same means as each of us. He was born of a woman. This truly is a mystery as Paul points out in **1 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)**:

**¹⁶And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the
Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.**

This Christmas, enjoy giving gifts and enjoy receiving them. Be especially thankful for the greatest gift of all that came to this earth in the form of a baby. He grew to be a man of faith. About age thirty He began His public ministry which changed the world, one person at a time.

Second, He saw the Wonderful Death of Jesus. “Unto us a Son is given;” The crucifixion of Jesus occurred on “Good Friday” according to scholars. Of course, what Jesus went through wasn’t good for Him, it was good, or wonderful, for us. Since we have never seen a crucifixion, it is hard to comprehend the depravity of the cross. I understand that the Persians invented crucifixion, but the Romans mastered it. Crucifixion teams could keep their victims alive for days to torture them relentlessly so that they could

provide an example of what would happen to those who would rebel against Rome. The “Pax Romana” was achieved by might, not love.

In another passage, Isaiah portrays the death of Jesus to us. Notice **Isaiah 53:4-6** (NKJV):

**⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

This vividly predicts the horrors of the cross and the blessing for us.

Third, He saw the Wonderful Crown of Jesus. “And the government will be upon His shoulder.” Pilate “tried” Jesus and found no fault in Him. He intended to scourge and release Him. In the process the soldiers placed a crown of thorns on His head to mock Him according to **John 19:5**. Yes, He wore the mock crown of thorns that pierced His Head. Likewise, His hands, feet, and side would be pierced before He went into the grave.

However, He would come out of the grave with a victorious and glorious crown. Listen to **Hebrews 2:9** (NKJV):

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

He will also wear the crown of the King according to **Revelation 14:14** (NKJV):

¹⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

He also offers us a crown according to **Revelation 2:10** (NKJV), **“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”**

This Christmas, as you give and receive gifts, remember how God has given to you. Certainly we have blessings we don’t deserve in this world. The greatest gift of mercy and grace is that of Jesus.

Let’s Keep The Light of God’s Wonderful Son Burning!