

## The Arrival of Joy

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Gotthold Beck

喜びの訪れ

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Luke

2:10 Then the angel told them, "Stop being afraid! Listen! I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.

2:11 Today your Savior, the Lord Messiah, was born in the city of David.

[International Standard Version]

It may sound like a joke to some people that the Lord was born for them. It doesn't make any sense! We are not worthy of such a gift. However, it is true. After all, our Lord is not here to demand. Instead, he came to give. He has a desperate desire to give to us. Needless to say, what he gives us is real, not fake. All kinds of religion only give us false hope. Contrarily, this Lord is the savior who was already prophesied in the Old Testament.

Isaiah

9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

This prophecy was fulfilled through Jesus. On the night of the first Christmas Eve, the angel said, "Stop being afraid! Listen! I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. Today your Savior, the Lord Messiah, was born in the city of David." He was the one who was prophesied to save us thousands of years ago.

Paul wrote to the people in Corinth;

2 Corinthians

8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. Although he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, so that you, through his poverty, might become rich.

9:15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.

The Lord entered this world for us, which was filled with sins and evil. After all, it was to save us worthless and degenerate humans. The salvation mentioned in the Bible refers to letting us have the fellowship with the Lord.

To be saved is to have a fellowship with the fountain of life. Humans will return to life when they have true fellowship with this fountain of life. They will be saved by this. They will begin to live positively with lively hope. Who is it that can save humans? No dead man can bring the fellowship of life with God. All men have a sinful nature since they were born. Some people believe that men become sinners when they commit sins. The Bible says the opposite. We commit sins because we were born as sinners and this is the only possible explanation. All kinds of philosophy and religion have been trying to find their own way to communicate with the Lord God. They believe that they will accomplish it based on human efforts. However, it is an absolutely pointless and vain idea.

Humans can never save others. It has to begin from the side of the Lord. The Lord is trying to find all sinners who are far removed from himself. After all, to save each one of us, the Lord has handed over the most precious one he had, his most beloved one, his only begotten son, the Lord Jesus. We will not fully understand the meaning of this sacrifice while we are alive in this world.

However, when we enter the eternal world, as I have repeatedly mentioned, we will all be extremely busy. We will have a desperate desire toward expressing gratitude. We will never be able to worship too much.

Why did Jesus have to become human? As is clearly stated in every part of the Bible, the Lord God is the totally holy one. Holiness and sins can't go together. The Lord cannot compromise with sins.

For this reason, the Lord has to punish all sins and cast out all sinners. If the Lord decides to not punish some sinners, it means a compromise with sin, which is absolutely unacceptable. Although in the beginning, the Lord was an intimate friend of humans and the creator who loved us, he had to choose to become the judge of humans because of the sins they committed.

Some people say that because the Lord deeply loves humans, he would never punish them, but this is totally wrong. The Lord is absolutely holy and for this reason, he cannot overlook any sin without judging it

The Lord is the totally holy one and at the same time, he is the owner of absolute love. He is love itself. Because the Lord was totally holy, he became the judge of humans. He then became the savior, because of the perfect love he had.

Why and how could the holiness of the Lord and this love of the Lord co-exist with each other? Once, a man had a very intimate friend. They had very good fellowship until one day, this friend made a terrible mistake through which he was burdened with heavy debts.

The man first rebuked his friend harshly for incurring such debts. However, on the other hand, he loved this friend from his heart. Now, how could the love and the righteousness of this man go together?

After rebuking his friend, this man paid all the debts. Here, the righteousness of this man could finally go with his love. There was only one way to make it happen and it was to dedicate himself. It was to make a sacrifice.

By making this sacrifice, the friend could finally be broken and begin to repent. The Lord loves corrupt people as much as he hates the sins of corrupt people. Not only has the Lord become the judge of corrupt people, he is our savior as well. He opened the way of salvation by giving his only son.

Not only did God love each one of the humans so much that he gave his only begotten son, he still has the same love for us today. This is exactly the miracle of Christmas. If the Lord did not give his unique son, there would have been no arrival of salvation.

The son, the Lord Jesus, gave up his glory in heaven to become a man like us according to the Bible. This was an unimaginable sacrifice. Although Jesus had a divine nature, he gave up the strength and glory of God.

He had to do so to become human. This was the answer of the Lord to the arrogance of humans. What an answer it was! No matter how deep our worries are, or how serious the problem we are facing is, the answer of the Lord God is always Jesus.

Jesus sacrificed himself for us and accomplished the eternal redemption. The Lord has declared that the blood of his son, Jesus, was enough to take away all sins of humans. The Lord had to cast out the first humans from Eden, the beautiful land of joy.

It was because they did not respect enough the value of the gift they were given. When we receive some gift, we should naturally give thanks for it and appreciate its magnificence. The Lord gave us the best thing.

He gave us this gift which is beyond our imagination. Have we accepted this gift? Do we appreciate this gift? Mary confessed when she gave birth to Jesus, "My

soul praises the greatness of the Lord! My spirit exults in God, my Savior."

Let us ask ourselves this one question. How do we receive this great gift and hold on to it?

First of all, we need to thank. Lack of gratitude is not a trivial matter. It is a sin that will never be overlooked.

#### Psalms

50:23 *Whoever offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifies me, and I will reveal the salvation of God to whomever continues in my way.*

To put it the other way round, "Whoever refuses to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving insults me and the salvation of God won't be revealed to whomever lives an unrighteous wicked life." Those who do not offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord would never receive life. They would at no time obtain strength and thus would never be able to live positively in peace.

We all should confess our sin of not thanking the Lord enough and sincerely apologize to him, shouldn't we? The Lord is waiting for us to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving wholeheartedly and put it into words. Paul was greatly pleased when he truly thanked the Lord. He gasped in pleasure when he said, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."

How can we receive the gift prepared for us and hold on to it? As I just mentioned, the first answer is that it is done by thanking him. The second answer is the worship to the Lord.

Jesus became man to save each one of us and was punished on behalf of us. Father God made Jesus sin for our sins and arrogance to be forgiven. Aren't we compelled to offer sincere worship for this sacrifice?

When we think of the Son Jesus, especially the unimaginable pain he went through, we are compelled to repent and worship the Lord. It is simply a matter of the choice you make between two possibilities. It is nothing but a problem between yourself and Jesus. You are facing a simple choice as to whether you accept Jesus or refuse him.

On Christmas day, people are being urged to accept Jesus and hold on to the gift of the Father God so that they will obtain eternal life. What a wonderful gift it is! What a great plan of salvation! So, why don't we freshly surrender ourselves to Jesus again?

What are we celebrating on Christmas day? It was the day Jesus came into the world in Bethlehem for each one of us. However, even if Jesus comes into this

world one thousand times in Bethlehem, it is absolutely valueless for you if he does not come into your heart.

The Lord is stretching his hand out to give each one of us eternal life within Jesus. The disciples of Jesus confessed that when they saw Jesus, they saw a life in him. It is absolutely true. He came down to this world to give us eternal life.

Jesus repeatedly said, "I am the life itself." We are presented with an unspeakably wonderful gift, which we can either accept or reject. Jesus has already sacrificed his own life on the cross and this time, the devil was defeated. Thus, we have no reason to remain as the slaves of the devil anymore.

Jesus also bore the debt of the whole human race. It made it possible for us to come close to the Holy God. So, let us all refresh our gratitude for the perfect salvation Jesus has accomplished. There is only one way offered to us that leads us to the salvation and it is to believe and entrust. The first man, Adam chose the way that led to death.

What does it take for us to receive the gift from the Lord? We have seen just two answers to this question. Firstly, we need to thank him. Secondly, it is necessary to worship the Lord.

Thirdly, we receive this gift by loving Jesus. Those who love Jesus also love his words in the Bible. Do we read the Bible every day with hunger and thirst? Negligence of not reading the Bible is not a trivial sin.

Sometimes, we find ourselves having been reading the Bible with no joy for days or even weeks, don't we? If we do not face the Bible with hunger and thirst, or if we do not consume his words profoundly, it is no wonder that we do not make any spiritual progress at all. As I just mentioned, lack of love is sin to Jesus.

Jesus wants us to love him sincerely and wholeheartedly. He is desperately waiting for us to do so. He desires that we love the Lord single-heartedly. In the Bible, the Lord is described as the jealous God. If a wife loves her husband half-heartedly or a husband loves another woman at the same time, they will feel jealous.

If we do not love the Lord alone wholeheartedly, he will be grieved. We are the ones redeemed by the blood of Jesus and all of us belong to the Lord, not to ourselves. Our love should be concentrated on the Lord alone. Are we faithful to our job, our parents or our own feelings more than we are faithful to the Lord as we continue our daily lives? Lack of love for Jesus is a formidable sin.

Let us confess to the Lord our sin of not loving him enough. For the Lord, refusing to rely on him is also a sin that will never be condoned. The Lord is seeking someone who relies on him. For us, the only way to reveal the glory of the Lord is to rely on him.

When we reject Jesus from our daily life and try to attain something by our own effort alone, we are insulting the Lord. Do we truly rely on the Lord? When we do, we will never be given an important role to play; instead it will let Jesus alone reveal his own glory. Nothing is more important than that the glory of Jesus be revealed. The Lord himself desperately desires his glory to be manifested.

When the glory of Jesus is revealed, we will have eternal joy and the peace of the Lord himself. "Stop being afraid! Listen! I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. Today your Savior, the Lord Messiah, was born in the city of David." Those who can meekly believe these words are truly blessed. "Do not be afraid. The savior was born for you, to bring you great joy."

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