

## THE GIFT OF GOD

As we enter the Christmas season, many are searching for that perfect gift with plans to wrap it in beautiful paper and place it under a Christmas tree. It is only fitting to remember that the only truly perfect gift was wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger. This gift is Christ the Lord, the only begotten Son of God. Christ, the creator of heaven and earth, came to earth to save His people from sin. It was Gabriel, the same angel who announced the birth of Christ to shepherds in the field, who over 500 years before told that Christ would come and what his mission would be. Gabriel told Daniel that Christ would "...finish the transgression ...make an end of sins ...make reconciliation for iniquity, and ...bring in everlasting righteousness" Daniel 9:24-25. So perfect was this gift and so complete was his work, that never again would any person need to live in sin and die a sinner.

Many will say, "I do not believe this!" That is so unfortunate for them because it is their unbelief that dooms them to live in sin for the remainder of their lives. Jesus told some Jews who were expecting their Messiah, "The Christ," to come, "...if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" John 8:24. The truly sad part is, if they "die in their sins" they will also perish with their sins.

While the scripture speaks clearly that Christ came and died to "take away," "put away," "wash from," "sanctify," "purge," "purify" and "cleanse" from sin, the church as a whole has chosen to embrace a doctrine that is not even once stated in the scripture. It is the belief that Jesus died on the cross to take the penalty for our sins, with the conclusion being that a child of God can continue to sin without penalty. Consider the logical end of such teaching. If we can be saved and still be sinful, then it would be true that every person in America could be "saved" and nothing would change in our nation. Our prisons could still be full; we could still abort a million babies a year; our youth could still be destroyed by drugs; gay marriage could still be the law of the land; over fifty percent of our babies could still be born outside of marriage, and yet everyone would go to heaven when they die. The "New Heavens and the New Earth" would be just as corrupt as this one is, because Christ (in this scenario) "failed" to do what the angel Gabriel said he came to do, that is, to make an end of sin.

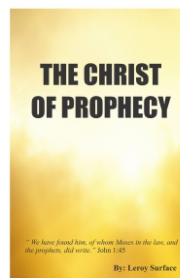
Some believe that Christ did not accomplish what he came into the world to do because he was "murdered" before He could establish His "political system" on earth. The truth is, the only reason Christ came to earth as a man was to die on the cross. The scripture says,

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, **he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death** he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2:14-15. The only way that Jesus could have failed to fulfill his mission was if he had not died on the cross!

The apostle Paul said, "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" II Cor. 11:3. I also have a fear. It is that the souls of millions of people who have trusted in a corrupted gospel will be lost in their sins and damned for eternity. This corruption of the gospel is not a recent phenomenon. Jude told of ungodly men in the first century church, who "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness" Jude 1:4. Unregenerate men have built on that false doctrine of grace for centuries. Almost five hundred years ago the seeds of philosophy were sown into the reformation doctrine of grace, and we are reaping the abundant harvest of that error: a generation that doesn't know that it is "lost" because it doesn't know what it means to be "saved."

We are "saved by grace, through faith." Our "faith" is to "believe the record God that gave of His Son" I John 5:10. The record we must believe was given hundreds and even thousands of years before Jesus was born to Mary. The first record is of "the seed of the woman" who would "bruise the head of the serpent" Genesis 3:15. One of the last is Gabriel's prophecy of "The Messiah the prince" who would "make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness" Daniel 9:24-25. Those who think Jesus failed in His first mission believe He will fulfill all these promises at His second coming. Jesus did not fail, however. He told the Jews, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" John 8:31-32. Jesus is "The Christ" who came into the world to "take away the sin of the world" John 1:29, to take it out of the heart and nature of everyone who will believe the truth and trust only in Him. Oh how wonderful it is to be made free from sin to serve Christ without struggle. It is God's gift to man.

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