

The Prayer and the Gift

I. Gifts!

A. We love Gifts! Black Friday

Billions in sales -

B. What We Expect and What We Get. [slide 1]

2Cor 9:15 Thanks be to God for **his inexpressible gift!**

C. Expectation of a Messiah

II. The Unexpected Gift

A. Zechariah & Elizabeth – Upright, Blameless, Unfulfilled

Luke 1:5 NIV In the **time of Herod king of Judea** there was a **priest** named **Zechariah**, who belonged to the priestly division of Abi-jah; his **wife Elizabeth** was also a descendant of Aaron. **6** Both of them were **upright** in the sight of God, observing **all the Lord's commandments** and regulations **blamelessly**. **7** But they had no children, because **Elizabeth was barren**; and they were both **well along in years**.

B. Once in a Lifetime

8 **Once** when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, **9** he was **chosen by lot**, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. **10** And when the **time for the burning of incense** came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

C. His Forgotten Personal Prayer

11 Then an **angel of the Lord appeared to him**, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. **12** When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was **gripped with fear**. **13** But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; ***your prayer* has been heard**. Your

wife **Elizabeth will bear you a son**, and you are to give him the name John. **14 He will be a joy and delight to you**, and **many will rejoice** because of his birth, **15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord**. He is **never to take wine** or other fermented drink, and he will **be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth**. ... **17** And he will go on before the Lord, in **the spirit and power of Elijah**, to **turn the hearts** of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous — to **make ready a people prepared for the Lord**.”

18 Zechariah asked the angel, “**How can I be sure** of this? **I am an old man** and **my wife** is well along in years.”

D. Unbelief and the Loss of Voice

19 The angel answered, “**I am Gabriel**. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. **20** And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because **you did not believe my words**, which **will come true at their proper time**.”

Beginning of the Story of God’s Greatest Gift

II. The Gift Beyond All Expectation

2Cor 9:15 Thanks be to God for **his inexpressible gift!**

A. Gift of Facing our Shame - Felix Culpa

John 3:14 And *as Moses lifted up the serpent* in the wilderness, *so must the Son of Man be lifted up*, (Numbers 21)

As the we behold our need, we behold the cure.

B. Relax and Trust

15 that whoever *believes* in him *may have eternal life*.

John Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, searched the local language to find a satisfactory word for *believe*. One day after a hunt he fell exhausted into a lawn chair outside his tent. One of

the natives observed, “It’s good to stretch yourself out and rest when you’re tired.” Immediately Payton seized on the words “**stretch out and rest**” and translated the New Testament word for *believe* in that way.

ETERNAL ABUNDANT LIFE - What does it look like?

Early in his ministry when Harry Ironside lived in San Francisco, he conducted a meeting for the Salvation Army. At the end of the sermon, a well-known socialist handed Dr. Ironside a card on which he had written, “Sir, I challenge you to debate me with the question, ‘Agnosticism vs. Christianity’ in the Academy of Science Hall next Sunday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. I will pay all expenses.”

Ironside read the card aloud, then agreed to the debate on certain terms. **First**, that the socialist bring to the debate a man whose life had been wrecked by sin but was now redeemed for righteousness and goodness because of agnosticism. **Second**, that he would bring a woman wrecked by sin, an outcast prostitute, who had been rehabilitated and now lived a virtuous, happy life because of agnosticism. Ironside agreed to bring one hundred such people saved by the power of Jesus Christ whose lives would be “present-day proof of the truth of the Bible.” The man left the hall unwilling to take up such a challenge.

C. The Gift Beyond Words -

John 3:16 “For God so **loved** the world, that he **gave** his **only Son***, that whoever **believes** in him **should not perish** but **have eternal life**.

[slide 2]

17 For God did **not send his Son into** the world **to condemn the world**, but in order **that the world might be saved through him**.

[slide 3]

| | | |
|---------|------|---------------|
| Love | Gave | ONLY BEGOTTEN |
| Believe | | ETERNAL Life |

Sent into World

Not to Condemn, But to Rescue, Heal, Deliver

III. The Prayer of John - the Unveiling of Jesus

Rev. 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ,

1:9 I, John, your brother and **partner** in the **tribulation** and the **kingdom** and the **patient endurance** that are **in Jesus**, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. **10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day**, and **I heard behind me** a loud voice like a trumpet **11** saying, "**Write what you see** in a book and **send it** to the seven churches,..."

1:12 Then **I turned to see the voice** that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw **seven golden lampstands**, **13** and **in the midst of the lampstands** one like **a son of man**, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. **14** The **hairs** of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His **eyes** were like a flame of fire, **15** his **feet** were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his **voice** was like the roar of many waters. **16** In his right **hand** he held seven stars, from his **mouth** came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the **sun** shining in full strength.

John's Prayer ends with a NEW Heaven AND NEW EARTH and the Spirit and Bride saying, "Come Lord Jesus!"

IV. Our Prayer for this World

Matt. 6:7 "And when you pray,...**9** Pray then like this:

**"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.**

**10 Your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Don't be selfish! Pray & Live for NEW Heaven AND NEW Earth?