

SALVATION IS A GIFT, NOT A REWARD

2/7/23

The human race is able to enjoy all of God's natural and Spiritual creation without charge. Everything we see and love, every person we know and care about, are all created by God as a free demonstration of who he is and what he stands for. He is the giver of life and gifts. Nothing God gives us is able to be earned; it's all a free gift for his creation. Salvation is the greatest gift of God for humanity. It gives us the chance to move away from our human greed and failings and give us eternal life... all free of charge.

The wisest man who ever lived in the Old Testament, had this to say about God and his creation.

Promises identified by Solomon. ECC 5:18 Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, **which God giveth him**: for it is his portion. **19** Every man also to whom **God hath given** riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; **this is the gift of God.** **20** For he shall not much remember the days of his life (*the negatives are forgotten because of the great blessings*); because God answereth him in the joy of his heart. *Awareness of God is vital or all will be missed.*

Jesus begins his early ministry by revealing the greatest gift ever offered to mankind.

Promised and explained by Jesus. JOH 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, **If thou knewest the gift of God**, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have **given thee living water.** **11** The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? **12** Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? **13** Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: **14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall **give him** shall never thirst; but the water that **I shall give him** shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. *The greatest gift was confirmed at Pentecost.*

Salvation was identified by miracles and demonstration... not religious beliefs or services (Simon had to learn this painful lesson).

The gift and its nature. ACT 8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was **given**, he offered them money, **19** Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. **20** But Peter said unto him, **Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money** (*Simon believed the gift was affordable through good works and/or money*). *The cost of salvation is priceless... beyond works and money.*

Painful reality of human responsibility and its consequences.

Beginning. ROM 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, **even over them that had not sinned** after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. **15** But not as the offence, so also is the **free gift**. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the **gift by grace**, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. **16** And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the **gift**: for the judgment was by one to condemnation (*condemnation came from one sin*), but the **free gift** is of many offences unto justification (*Christ's sacrifice covers all sins*). **17** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the **gift of righteousness** shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

The Gift of life includes the miracles that Jesus prophesied.

The gift of God has miracle working power. EPH 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the **gift of the grace of God** given unto me by the **effectual working of his power** ('*dunamis*'... miraculous power).

God's gifts are meant to be shared as they never run out... like the loaves and fishes.

The Holy Spirit needs to be used. 2TIM 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou **stir up the gift of God**, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. **7** For God hath not given us the **spirit of fear**; but of **power**, and of **love**, and of a **sound mind**. We have clarity of thought based on simple and provable power. We are not asked to understand everything about God... but we are expected to use what he has given us.

Working for the Lord Has many benefits.

Simple summary of our blessing and its use. 1PET 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the **multitude of sins** (*sins can only ever be forgiven... forgiveness cannot be paid for nor earned*). **9** Use hospitality one to another without grudging. **10** **As every man hath received the gift**, even so minister (*offer without charge or cost the best of yourself to others*) the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. We need to stop living our lives trying to earn forgiveness and blessing, they are only made possible by walking in the spirit and using its powers for good.

God offers lifelong blessing and help and it comes in many different gifts... but one thing is certain, you cannot earn it and you cannot go it alone.