

not offer enough at the auction and thankfully a 33-year-old man raised His paddle and yelled “I’ll give my blood.”

- *The means.* Satan offered materialism, sin, and pleasure, but Jesus offered “his blood.” The blood of Jesus separates the saved from the lost. This is precious blood, and the auctioneer yelled: “SOLD!”
- *The direction.* Jesus gave His blood to satisfy the wrath of God (Romans 5:9).

Thankfully, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, **having obtained eternal redemption for us**” (Hebrews 9:12) (Emp. mine, NO).

FORGIVENESS (Ephesians 1:7).

Inside the big present of redemption was found another gift: FORGIVENESS! Forgiveness is a wonderful gift of God that shows three things.

Freedom. One said forgiveness is a release[3] (Matthew 18:27). Thayer said the word means “release from bondage or imprisonment.” We shook our fists at God’s face and practiced treacherous sins day by day. “If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator; If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist; If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist; If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer; But our greatest need was forgiveness so God sent us a Savior.”[4]

Forgiveness is possible through Jesus Christ. It is through the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus that forgiveness is made possible (Hebrews 9:22). We can be completely forgiven because of Him (Hebrews 8:12).

Forgiveness is tied with many bows. Specific bows of blessings were placed with forgiveness.

Forgiveness allows us to feel

- Clean.
- Guiltless (Hebrews 9:14).
- Acceptance.
- Justified.

God treats us like we had never sinned. “Thomas A. Edison was working on a crazy contraption called a

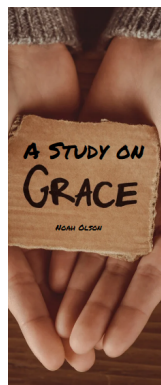
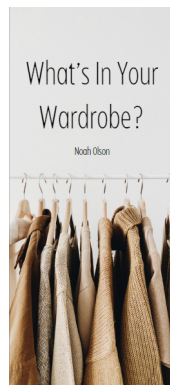
‘light bulb’ and it took a whole team of men 24 straight hours to put just one together. The story goes that when Edison was finished with one light bulb, he gave it to a young boy helper, who nervously carried it up the stairs. Step by step he cautiously watched his hands, obviously frightened of dropping such a priceless piece of work. You’ve probably guessed what happened by now; the poor young fellow dropped the bulb at the top of the stairs. It took the entire team of men twenty-four more hours to make another bulb. Finally, tired and ready for a break, Edison was ready to have his bulb carried up the stairs. He gave it to the same young boy who dropped the first one. That’s true forgiveness.”[5]

It is beautiful to note that we are privileged to be blessed with God’s PRESENTS because we are in Christ. Only those in CHRIST are blessed to open these gifts. Have you opened up these gifts under God’s tree, dear reader?

Endnotes

- 1Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary, *eklegomai*, eSWORD Module.
- 2Bob Winton, gbntv.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Textual/23-Winton-Ephesians_Philippians_Colossians.pdf, p. 26
- 3Ibid, 25.
- 4www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/f/forgiveness.htm
- 5Ibid.

Other Tracts



Call 816-508-8904 for more tracts or go to wordswrittenontheheart.org

Presents Under God’s Tree



Noah Olson



Christmas trees hover over presents that are filled with specific items. Big gifts, ones wrapped in funky wrapping paper, and unwrapped toys appear under the tree. As a child, we can all think about the gifts we received, feeling excited, appreciated, and loved. The gift of God is salvation and there is truly no greater present that can be given than from the Giver of good things (James 1:17).

During Christmas, usually there are many presents. While some families differ in their traditions, this author remembers when him and his sister would count the number of gifts under the tree. Paul begins his letter to the church at Ephesus by showing the abundance of God's gives to His people (Ephesians 1:3). Those IN Christ are not void of any gift and those outside of Christ are void of all of them. God truly places an abundance of gifts under His tree (Ephesians 3:20).

While gift-opening only lasts one morning on Christmas, God's gifts to us last all year. Any date, any time, and in any place on earth can the gifts of God be given. Beautifully, every gift under God's tree has the faithful's name on it.

When we understand the "presents" that God has given us, we will want to serve Him more, for His love prompts our love for Him (1 John 4:19). Let us examine a few presents under God's tree.

CHOSEN (Ephesians 1:4).

It is a wonderful feeling to be chosen for something. Perhaps it's to a team, for a competition, or maybe just to hang out with friends; being chosen excites emotion. More importantly, is the feeling of being chosen by the Creator. The first present under God's tree is the gift of being chosen. About the word used, Mounce said, "to choose as the recipients of special favor and privilege." [1] We learn that:

The chosen are the obedient. Unconditional predestination is not the topic addressed here. Instead, being chosen means that God chose a specific plan and the obedient did what the plan required! The chosen

are the called (Romans 8:30) and the chosen were called by the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). D.L. Moody said, "The elect are the whosoever wills, the non-elect are the whosoever won'ts."

Every member of the Godhead was at work in the choosing process (1 Peter 1:2). Chosen indicates an action upon the chooser and ever member of the Godhead had a part in salvation's plan. Of specialness, is the choice of God BEFORE the foundation of the world or our conception.

In return for His choosing, we should choose Him. We cannot be a part of the chosen, if we do not obey Him. In His mind, the chosen are holy and blameless. It would be disrespectful and disgraceful for us to refuse a present that is given to us freely!

No person likes to feel left out of the group...thankfully God does not leave us out IF we choose Him.

ADOPTION (Ephesians 1:5).

Adoption is a wonderful blessing where the rejected can be accepted. While these children are not biologically tied to these parents, they are still their children. Through Jesus, we can have the right to be called His own (John 1:13). In sin we were enemies, but out of sin we are His children. We learn:

Adoption requires a choice. Those who adopt usually CHOOSE to adopt. Commonly, love prompted this choice (1 John 3:1). God predetermined before the foundation of the world that anyone would have the opportunity to become a child of God through Jesus Christ, for it is through Him that such is possible (John 1:12).

Adoption requires a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-29). Adoptions costs thousands, but Jesus bought us with a higher purchase price (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Adoption implies we are a part of the family (Galatians 4:4-5). As adopted children get to eat at the table, wear the last name, and live in the home; adopted children of God, eat at God's spiritual table, wear His name, and eventually live in His home. God had signed our spiritual birth certificate after baptism

and said, "YOU ARE MY CHILD" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

GRACE (Ephesians 1:6).

Without this gift, others would not be possible. Grace is a gift freely given, else it would not be grace. Grace is unmerited favor and it is as one said, "God's Riches at Christ's Expense." The English word "grace" is found 131 times in the New Testament. While the mercy of God keeps up from punishment, it is through the grace of God that we receive salvation. Ask three questions

- *What does grace do for us?* It brings salvation, cleanses our consciences, and gives us a hand as we walk to heaven. God's grace is manifold (1 Peter 4:10); meaning apparent in many areas.
- *Where is grace?* It is available to all (Titus 2:11), but it is appreciated only "in the beloved." The beloved is in Jesus (Matthew 3:17; 2 Timothy 2:1).
- *How to get grace?* It is not unconditionally given. Passing through the waters allows us to receive it. While Christians are under grace (Romans 6:15), they do not have a license to sin (Romans 6:1-2). "Grace alone" is not Biblical, for grace teaches us to DO SOMETHING (Titus 2:12).

Grace is the ultimate gift as one said, "We owe everything we have that is good and right to God's grace." [2] Paul said that he was what he was because of God's grace (1 Corinthians 15:10).

REDEMPTION (Ephesians 1:7).

God's gift of grace leads to the gift of redemption. This gift causes us to sing (Revelation 5:9). Redemption means to buy back or as Thayer said, "a releasing effected by payment of ransom." Redemption requires

- *The item.* We were captivated in sin (John 8:34; Romans 6:16-17) and in NEED of being bought back. We stood on the auction table ready to be bought hoping Satan would not raise his sinful paddle.
- *The ransom.* Jesus was this ransom (Matthew 20:28). Jesus was the means by which the price could be paid (John 1:14). We were costly and we needed the highest bidder. The Law of Moses did