

## I. Four Stories One Truth: The Gift John 1 Dec. 23, 2007

### II. The Gift Dilemma

A. A little boy was writing his Christmas list and figured rather than just sending his list to Santa, he would go directly to God. He had gotten into some trouble at school and he wasn't doing much better at home, but decided to give it his best shot and ask for a bike.

His mother encouraged him to reflect on his behavior over the last year, and tell God why he deserved a bike.

LETTER 1: Dear God: I have been very good this year and I would like a bike for my birthday. I want a red one. Your friend, Brad

He knew this wasn't true. He had not been a very good, so he tore up the letter and started over.

LETTER 2: Dear God: This is your friend Brad. I have been pretty good this year, and I would like a red bike for my birthday. Thank you, Brad

This wasn't true either. So he tore up the letter and started again.

LETTER 3: Dear God: I know I haven't been a good boy this year. I am very sorry. I will be good next year if you just send me a red bike for Christmas. Thank you, Brad

He knew, even if it was true, this letter was not going to get him a bike.

So he went downstairs and told his mother he wanted to go to church.

He walked down the street to the church and up to the altar, looked around to see if anyone was there, picked up a statue of the Virgin Mary from the nativity scene, slipped it under his jacket and ran out of the church, down the street, into his house, and up to his room. He shut the door and sat down and wrote this letter to God.

LETTER 4: I GOT YOUR MAMA. IF YOU WANT TO SEE HER AGAIN, SEND THE BIKE. Signed, YOU KNOW WHO

B. Christmas and gifts have become synonymous. The two are inseparable.

C. *Cartoon*: It's strange, but ever since that star appeared, I've had this overwhelming urge to go shopping.

D. *Bang & Olufsen ad*: You can wish upon a star or treat yourself like one. For those on the move, this package is perfect. The Earphones bundled with the EarSet bluetooth mobile phone headset will make the perfect gift for that special someone. Even if that special someone is you. Regularly \$510, now for a limited time \$450.

E. What has come to be known as the traditional Celebration of Christmas, with men in red suits, elves and reindeers, at its best was focused on the opportunity to give, but now it is pretty much about what I receive.

### III. Four Stories One Truth

A. Mark was written for Roman understanding, Matthew for Jewish understanding, Luke for the Greek and Gentile world, John was written for first century Christians, Jew and non-Jew. Not so much to tell the story to record history, but to encourage, inspire, encourage to pray, testify to the life in the spirit, being born again.

B. Warren Wiersbe: Whereas the first three Gospels major on describing events in the life Christ, John emphasized the meaning of these events.

C. There is the one truth that runs through all the Gospel stories, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and those who put their trust in Him and have a relationship with Him will have eternal life.

IV. John 1:1-18 (NASB) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God. {3} All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. {4} In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. {5} And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. {6} There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. {7} He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. {8} He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. {9} There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. {10} He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. {11} He came to His own, and those who were His own did not

receive Him. {12} But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, {13} who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. {14} And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. {15} John bore<sup>^</sup> witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" {16} For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace. {17} For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. {18} No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

#### V. Gift 1: The Word

A. *John 1:1-18 (NASB) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God. {3} All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*

B. Genesis begins with God speaking the world into existence. Jews would understand John's opening words and the importance that Jesus and God are one in the same and at work creating, but now in this Plan of Redeeming, Saving the World.

C. The Greek translation for Word is Logos.

1. For the Greek, Logos had a unique meaning.
2. Greek philosophers spoke of Logos as the Reason of God, the mind of God.
3. John invites the whole Greek, non-Jewish world into the story of Salvation

D. *John wrote Revelation 1:8 (NIV) "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."*

E. He (Jesus) is Alpha and Omega, 1<sup>st</sup> and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Jesus is God's first word of salvation and His last....

#### VI. Gift 2: Life and Light

A. *{4} In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. {5} And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

B. Hark the Herald Angels Sing: Light and life to all He brings, risen with healing in His wings.

C. *Life*

1. *John 4:14 (NASB) but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."*
2. *John 5:21 (NASB) "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.*
3. *John 5:24 (NASB) "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*
4. *John 5:26 (NASB) "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;*
5. *John 6:35 (NASB) Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*
6. *John 10:10 (NASB) "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.*
7. *John 11:25 (NASB) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies,*
8. *John 14:6 (NASB) Jesus said<sup>^</sup> to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.*

### D.Light

1. *John 3:19 (NIV) This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*
2. *John 8:12 (NASB) Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."*
3. *John 12:46 (NASB) "I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness.*

### VII. Gift 3: Acceptance

A. {11} *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. {12} But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, {13} who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

B. *John 15:15-16 (NASB) "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. {16} "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.*

C. Last week Luke addressed his letter to Theophilus. Friend of God.

### VIII. Gift 4: Word made Flesh

A. {14} *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

B. **He got tired.** *John 4:6 (NIV) Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.*

C. **He got thirsty.** *John 4:7 (NASB) There came^ a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said^ to her, "Give Me a drink."*

D. **He knew grief.** *John 11:33 (NASB) When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled,*

E. **He knew sorrow:** *John 11:35 (NASB) Jesus wept.*

F. **He bled.** *John 19:34 (NASB) but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.*

### IX. Gift 5: Grace and Truth

A. {14} *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth {15} John bore^ witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" {16} For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace. {17} For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.*

B. The Old Testament gave the Law through Moses.

C. The law was given as a means to show us the best way to live, but God's plan for Salvation was always through Faith, through relationship.

D. For the most part, the people living at the time of Jesus had no hope for Salvation apart from the law.

E. Salvation was based on performance.

F. Even Jesus affirmed the Old Testament and the Law, but John records that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law.

G. Jesus' words recorded by *Matthew 5:17 (NRSV) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.*

H. John makes it clear that God has revealed His son Jesus Christ as a means for all people to have a relationship with Him based on grace not law, based on relationship, not performance.

I. Often people think that grace is just a get out of jail free card. Those rarely exist outside of Monopoly.

J. Warren Wiersbe states: Grace without truth would be deceitful, and truth without grace would be condemning.

#### X. **Gift 6: God's Explanation**

A. {18} *No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

B. Ever had a person in authority say, "I don't have to explain myself or my actions."

C. As a parent, I have probably said that.

D. I am so glad that the God of the universe doesn't follow that procedure.

E. {5} *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

F. *Isaiah 9:2 (NASB) The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.*

#### XI. The Long Walk

A. There's a story about a woman missionary in the South Pacific Islands who was explaining to a group of children the custom and significance of giving gifts at Christmas. "Giving gifts," she said, "expresses love and reminds us of the perfect gift of love we received from God: Jesus." Later that week, a young native boy came to the missionary's side and said, "I love you and want you to have this." He pulled from a straw basket the most beautiful shell the missionary had ever seen. As she admired its beauty, she recognized it as a special shell only found on the far side of the island, a half day's walk from the village. When confronted by this, the boy smiled and said, "Long walk part of gift!"

B. God "walked" 2000 years with his people before sending the gift of Jesus, guiding them through the law and the prophets. Since the birth of Jesus he has walked 2000 more years expressing the Grace and Truth, through the Word becoming Flesh and dwelling among us!

C. He made the long walk from heaven to be the Gift of Life Abundant and Life Eternal.