

UNTO US

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Presented at Trinity Community Church, San Rafael, California, on Sunday, December 20, 2009

NKJV Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ *For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

⁷ *Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

NKJV Luke 2:8-14

⁸ *Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

⁹ *And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.* ¹⁰ *Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.* ¹¹ *For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* ¹² *And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."*

¹³ *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:*

¹⁴ *"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"*

To You

Children are born every day. It is special when a child is born to someone we know or someone close to us. It is most significant when a child is born *to us*. It changes our lives! It is an amazing gift from God! It is usually the fruit of our love! And immediately becomes the *object* of our love!

A childless couple... a surrogate mother... a birth, at last!

1,000 years transpired between Isaiah's prophecy and Luke's Bethlehem announcement. 1,000 years of waiting, wondering, hoping, despairing, praying, longing, uncertainty. Then, almost without warning, He came! The Light of the world. The Messiah, the Christ. God's Son, our Savior. ***"Unto us a child is born."***

This Son was not only born, He was given... to us. By God. In answer to our desperate need. In answer to a million prayers. To be our Savior. To become our High Priest. To become the Lord of all. *"Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

He came with a message, not of fear, but of peace and great joy — to all people. This is why we celebrate Christmas! Christmas is much, much more than a holiday. More than a day off of work.

More than a day to gather with family. More than a day to exchange gifts. Christmas represents the Day of days — when God gave to us His only Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. ***“Unto us a Son is given.”***

Christmas is the Day that new life began — a new and everlasting life for humankind. The Day was announced by angels — with bright light and songs of praise! For this was not just a “good man,” not just a “holy man” — this was the birth of Christ the Lord, God’s own Son.

Long ago, God had spoken to His people in many fragmentary ways through the prophets, but in these last days, He has spoken to us in the person of His Son, Jesus. He is so much greater than angels; they are but His cheerleaders. Jesus is God, the Living Word, revealing God’s grace and truth. Born as a man — for a short time lower than the angels — but now crowned with glory and honor and seated at the right hand of Almighty God. His words are truth. Of Him, the Father said, *“Listen to Him.”*

A King

Jesus did not obtain His Kingdom merely by inheritance; He earned it by obedience. And He learned obedience by the things that He suffered in this life. Obedience to God is not a lesson easily learned. Initially it may seem so, but God’s does not cease His demands until He has our *whole* heart. Not just our convenience. Not just our compliance. Not just our gifts. Not just our sacrifices. But our everything. ‘Til our hopes and dreams and joys and riches are all — above everything else — in Him. For when the Bible says “all things,” it means nothing is left out.

Jesus suffered with us, and He suffered *for* us. He became flesh and blood — just like us — so that His strength could overcome our weakness. God could not die, unless He became a human. And unless He died in our place, He could not wipe away the stain and price of our sins. He did not do this for angels, He did not do this for animals, He did it for us — human beings. ***“Unto us a Son is given.”***

A Code

God could have just sent a message, by any one of a number of servants. Once, He gave such a message, a code of law, a series of commandments. But these could never accomplish what His Son accomplished. God’s Law, given to Moses, only heightens our awareness of our moral failures, and our consciences convict us. Moses was faithful to deliver it, but he could not deliver us. And the history of Israel’s disobedience and infidelity — not to mention our own — is the record of the limitation of the First Covenant.

But now, a child has been born and a Son has been given! To us! For us! To give us rest from our fear and despair. To give us peace in God’s will. There is no peace in rebellion. There is no peace in disobedience. There is no peace in putting God off or trying to hide from Him.

There is peace in the Son of His love. There is peace in His Christmas gift. Not a code, but a spirit. A change of heart for us. *“I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts.” “I will give them a new spirit.”*

Like the High Priest of old, Jesus has made an offering for our sins — His own life; a Life for a life. But He has made it just once, for everyone, for all time. An infinite offering of peace and salvation in that One Life.

He is our hope of a perfect peace, a complete change, a forever full life.

No other sacrifice will do. No religious ceremony. No spiritual ritual. No fasting and prayer. No Bible memorization. No blood or incantation. No mantra or meditation.

A Greater Sacrifice has already been made. A Perfect Sacrifice has already been given. **“Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given.”** *“For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.”* He has set us free from the penalty for violating the law code. That is over now. That is ancient history. He has done it!

Have you pinned your hopes on His offering? Have you trusted in the Son God has given as an offering for our sins? **“Unto us a Son is given.”**

Now, we wait for His return, for He will come again, bringing salvation to all who are looking for Him. Shadows of darkness are growing upon the earth. Thick darkness will cover the people. But the Light of Life will come and the Sun of Righteousness will rise, and the darkness cannot overcome Him. But will He find faith on the earth?

A Faith

God’s Son came to prepare a people — a people for God’s own possession. A people who bear a peculiar mark that identifies them as His. A people of faith. It is not an external mark that can be observed with the eye, but a mark in the heart, that can be felt by the one who bears it, and recognized by those who share it. A people of faith. **“Unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given.”**

“And of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.”

A king, a kingdom, a government — all imply a people united under one leader. A wonderful Leader, a Wonderful Counselor, who provides wise and fitting guidance for each of His people. A strong Leader, a Mighty God, who gives strong and enduring courage to each of His servants. A faithful Leader, an Everlasting Father, who provides loving nurture and purpose for each of His children. A protective Leader, a Prince of Peace, who guards His people and supplies their needs.

To such a One, we should give our full allegiance. Could anything less answer to the fullness of His loving sacrifice?

And to one another — all children of His — we owe our enduring love. Could anything less honor His gracious Fatherhood?

NLT Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ *Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.* ²⁴ *Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.* ²⁵ *And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.*

This is the life of faith. Affirming. Motivating. Encouraging. Together.

NIV Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

By faith we endure difficulty and trouble, trusting God to bring us through. By faith we show one another acts of kindness, even if feelings dim or circumstances distract. By faith we gather regularly to

worship God and build up each other. Our humanness does not put God off; our faith draws Him near. Our love for one another breeds contagious joy. The stories abound, small and great, of those who have overcome great odds by trusting Christ and loving His people.

Trouble comes to everyone. In life's storms we must keep our eyes on Christ; He shows us how to survive and how to thrive. His persistent love puts a song in our hearts and in our mouths, a song of praise to His great name. ***“Unto us a Son is given.”***

“Glory to God in the highest!” We sing it. We shout it. We whisper it. We hum it. *“Glory to God in the highest!”*

NLT Hebrews 12:28

Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshipping him with holy fear and awe.

NLT Hebrews 13:1

And keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters.

NLT Hebrews 13:5-6

⁵ *For God has said, “I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.”*

⁶ *So we can say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear.”*

“Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given.”

NLT Hebrews 13:20-21

²⁰ *Now may the God of peace—who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood—²¹ may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen.*