

God's Christmas Gift

This month the world awaits the answer to one, four-word question. "Who's our next President?!"

The son of a U.S. Senator who wanted his son to become President ... vs the son of an ex-President. Apparently, we dads have life-shaping influence over our boys.

In early 19th century England, surgeon William Dix was so taken with the poetry of Thomas Chatterton that he named his own son William Chatterton Dix.

Like his father, young William's heart was also in poetry. He went on to write lyrics to a haunting melody that dates back to the late 1500's. We know it as the ancient, English folk song, "Greensleeves" -- a mournful plea for the return of a lost love. It's mysterious, like "American Pie," "Eleanor Rigby" and "Chattahoochie Bridge."

Dix's song would become one of our most treasured Christmas carols, which would've made his dad proud.

18 centuries earlier, in the village of Bethlehem in northern Palestine, another Father's dreams for His Son were being realized.

Fulfilling Old Testament prophecies, a young virgin named Mary -- a descendant of Israel's King David who was born 10 centuries earlier in this same town -- gave birth to the Christ child.

Here, after many centuries, was the central figure of the Old Testament. History is HIS STORY --- one majestic Individual who will ultimately rule and bless the entire world which He Himself had spoken into existence!

In Genesis (12) God tells Abraham that from him a nation -- the Jews -- will emanate through which all the world will be blessed.

700 years before Christ, Isaiah the prophet wrote (9:6), "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder ... He will bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world. This is going to happen because the Lord of heaven's armies has dedicated Himself to do it!"

Isaiah's contemporary, Micah, prophesied (5:2), "O Bethlehem Ephratah, you are but a small Judean village, yet you will be the birthplace of my King who is alive from everlasting ages past!... He will be our peace."

Old Testament predictions of Christ's birth, life, crucifixion and resurrection were written with such specificity that they read like an eyewitness account – *predating* the events themselves! Different writers in different centuries, anticipating Messiah's coming! Only the supernatural mind of God could've conceived and pulled off this all-time miracle!

This Christmas let's look past Bethlehem, five miles up the road to a hill just outside Jerusalem named Calvary. Jesus' salty disciple Peter is there, watching the Son of God hang and die on a Roman cross, sentenced to a death He did not deserve, to pay a debt He did not owe.

Peter completes the ballad of Bethlehem (I Peter 3:18): "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit."

This is the *real* Christmas story. You and I are born in sin, already condemned to die and spend eternity in a place the Bible calls hell. Just as sure as Dr. Dix's love for poetry shaped his son's life, so our first parents' sin, says the Bible, shaped our lives. Like father, like son.

But the Good News is that Christ who is just – died a substitutionary death for you and me (the "unjust"). And He did it once and for ALL! Why? So that He could bring you and me to His Father, eternally forgiven, thanks only to the grace of God, not to anything we deserve or could ever earn.

History's seminal four-word question is the one we each must answer: "What Child Is This?" And on the other side are THESE four words: "Is He *my* Savior?"

In these Nordy's lunches we're studying the book of John, Jesus' disciple, who comes right to the point: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

"What Child is this who laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?

Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear, shall pierce Him through;
The cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh.
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh.
Come peasant king to own him.
The King of Kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

This, this is Christ the King
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, The Son of Mary."

What better time than now to bring the gift of your life to Jesus who loves you?

If it's your heart's desire to accept God's Christmas gift of forgiveness for your sin, and to trust Him with your life, take this moment to say something like this to Him:

"God, I have nothing of value to offer you....except my own life, a life which Your Son Jesus died to save. Thank You for sending Him to earth where on the cross He paid my debt, and died for me. Right now I humbly accept Your great gift of forgiveness. Thank You, God, more than I can ever say. I want to begin today to follow You. In Jesus' name, amen."

His Deal
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