

'GOOD & PERFECT GIFTS'
(The Great Gift Exchange Between God & Man)

James 1:16-18

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shadow of turning...”

Love the Gift, Not the Wrapping

I am amazed at how beautifully and artistically some people can wrap up gifts with glamorous paper, majestic ribbons, and elegant bows! Personally, I am not so endowed and find a simple attempt to attractively wrap a present a huge and frustrating challenge. I rationalize that it isn't the wrapping that's important, it's the gift inside that really matters. I justify my lack of ability to enhance the gift with respectable packaging as not wasting time on something that will last only briefly until it is ripped off the box and cast aside as wastepaper.

But inside I know that a present beautifully wrapped does matter by enhancing the far greater blessing inside with a less valuable outer presentation. The wrapping may be temporary, but it adds something special to the gift inside. Eventually, of course, the wrappings, ribbons, bows and boxes will be deposited in the recycling bin and all focus will be transferred to the main attraction inside. Wrappings may be discarded having served their purpose of drawing attention to the gift. Wrappings are temporarily important but the gift inside is what will be treasured, kept and enjoyed forever.

God's *good and perfect Christmas Gift* of Jesus came wrapped up inside the physical body of a young virgin girl named Mary (*Isaiah 7:14, Jeremiah 31:22, Luke 1:26-38*). After Jesus was born, she re-wrapped Him in strips of swaddling cloths (*Luke 2:7*). These may not have been wrappings of royalty of which He was worthy, but they were *good and perfect* and fitting to the mission He came to perform –

- a physical body which He would sacrifice as an atonement for sin (*Hebrews 10:5-10*);
- a virgin mother to house the pre-birth development of the Son of God (*Isaiah 9:6*);
- swaddling clothes (like ribbons) to wrap Him at birth similarly to the strips of cloth that would wrap His broken body in the tomb after the cross.

Someday the Gift of God will return appropriately wrapped in royal and kingly robes to rule and reign over the earth for a thousand years (*Revelation 19:11-16*), but the wrappings of a humble, human servant Savior were the *good and perfect* wrappings for the Son's first coming into the world to be the sacrifice for all those chosen before the foundation of the world to believe (*Ephesians 1:5*).

Those wrappings are all gone now – the swaddling clothes discarded, Mary deceased, the body of Jesus raised, glorified, and returned to heaven. Their purpose in drawing attention to Him is accomplished and past. But the priceless Gift of Jesus Christ and salvation in Him is the total focus of attention now and until He returns. The Gift of Jesus Christ, once He is received by a repentant sinner, is then repackaged in that believer and offered to others who have not yet let Him into their heart and life. Like those original wrappings, we, the ones in whom Jesus abides, are not to adored or worshiped or held in high regard.

Like gift wrappings, nobody is saved by them, nor is anyone supposed to worship them – we aren't the gift of God, Jesus is the Gift. Hopefully our Christian life is spiritually pure and holy and attractive like the One within, but once our life attracts others to desire God's Gift, we have served our purpose. Someday when we pass away the Gift we contained and offered to others will go on saving and blessing others with His grace. This Christmas let's be sure that our lives and testimonies are wrappings of the love, dignity and beauty of the Gift of God who abides within. We have done our job if we attract others and open up about the Gift that makes us this way. Then, perhaps they will look past the human wrapping we are and receive the Gift of God for themselves.

‘Good & Perfect Gift Preparation’

(The Heavenly Packaging and Wrapping of God’s Christmas Presence)

James 1:17

*“Every good and every perfect gift is from above
and comes down from the Father of lights,
with Whom there is no variation or shadow of turning...”*

God’s Good & Perfect Gift Design

(Perfect timing, perfect delivery method, perfect reason)

*“...when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman,
born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might
receive the adoption of sons.”*

Galatians 4:4-5

God’s Good & Perfect Gift Destination

(Perfect place, perfect advance notice, perfect Person)

*“But you Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among thousands of Judah, yet
out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings
forth are from of old, from everlasting...”*

Micah 5:2

God’s Good & Perfect Gift Delivery

(Perfect couple, perfect travel, perfect birthplace)

*“Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea to the city
of David, which is called Bethlehem... to be registered with Mary, his betrothed
wife who was with Child... and she brought forth her firstborn Son, and
wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger,
because there was no room for them in the inn.”*

Luke 2:4-7

God’s Good & Perfect Gift From You

Have you considered that God has perfectly designed you as a Gift to Himself with all the exact qualities, personality and spiritual gifts He wants to use your life for His glory (*Acts 17:26-27*)? If God chose you to be saved in Christ in eternity past, doesn’t it make sense that He has placed you in the exact location where He wants you to grow in grace and glorify Him (*Psalms 139:16-18*)? And isn’t it therefore true that God has moved your life into position where He can deliver His message of the Gift of salvation in Christ to others and make you experience *“the good, acceptable and perfect will of God”* (*Romans 12:1-2*)?

The Son of God saw His temporary relocation from Heaven to earth that way and what an awesome Gift of God He is to all who believe! Give God the Christmas present of contentment with who you are, where you are, and what God wants to do in, through and for you; then you’ll experience the miracle of the abundant life for Christmas (*John 10:10*)!

*“I have come that they may have life,
and that they may have it more abundantly.”*

John 10:10