

WHAT IS YOUR MOST UNFORGETTABLE CHRISTMAS GIFT?

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What is your most unforgettable Christmas gift? I remember mine!

Our family had just returned back to the United States from missionary work in China and Tibet. Mom and Dad were pastoring a small church in Pennsylvania and there wasn't much money to go around.

I desperately wanted an electric football set for Christmas. That's all I could think about. But, my Dad warned me. "George, money is very tight this year and I don't know if we are going to be able to get you that."

We always opened our gifts on Christmas morning. I'm the youngest of the three children in our family and I eagerly tore into the small gifts designated for me. There was no football set. Finally, everyone had opened all their gifts. Nothing was left – until my Dad said, "Oh, George, I think there is one last gift for you in the closet." I ran to the closet and pulled out a brand new electric football set. I cannot begin to tell you my joy. Over the next few years, I played with that set by the hours. In fact, almost 60 years later, I still have it.

But, as I grew, I came to understand that there's an even better gift than the most prized Christmas present. It is this: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Look at the 12 greatest facts contained in this most famous and central verse of the Bible.

- First, the greatest lover is "God."
- Second, the greatest extent is "so loved."
- Third, the greatest number is "the world."
- Fourth, the greatest act is "that he gave."
- Fifth, the greatest gift is "his one and only son."
- Sixth, the greatest invitation is "that whoever."
- Seventh, the greatest simplicity is "believes."
- Eighth, the greatest person is "in him."
- Ninth, the greatest deliverance is "shall not perish."
- Tenth, the greatest difference is found in this one small word, "but."
- Eleventh, the greatest certainty is "have."
- And twelfth, the greatest possession is "eternal life."

All this we have at Christmas in Jesus Christ our Lord, Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

Over thirty years ago, the National Aeronautics and Space Agency sent the Voyager space probe into the universe. It carried a twelve inch copper disk filled with diagrams, photographs, music and recordings of earth sounds. It was the intention of NASA that if the Voyager were ever discovered by aliens, then they would know something about life on this planet.

How differently God communicates with us. He didn't send us a recording. He sent us His Son! Jesus is God's inter-planetary probe – all the way from heaven to earth.

And, at this Christmas time, Jesus seeks room in our hearts even though when He first came there was no room for Him in the inn. Have you opened your heart to him? Have you received this most wonderful gift of all – the gift of Jesus who brings you forgiveness of sins, meaning and purpose for this life, and eternal life for all the ages to come? Receiving this gift is not complex. All you have to do is pray: “Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Forgive me of my sins. There is room in my heart for you. I believe you are God's Son, that You died for me, that You rose from the dead, and upon my confession of faith in You, You grant that I become a child of God, an heir of life eternal.

May this be a most blessed Christmas in your life and home! We have received the greatest gift of all . . . and that makes this a very Merry Christmas!

