

Advent in Biblical Perspective
The Spirit of Christ at Christmas
“Two Advents, One Savior”

Titus 2:11–14

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

December 24, 2016 – Christmas Eve (early service)

We will be looking at Titus 2 as we get symbolism and direction from God’s Word. In my family at Christmas, growing up, at age 10, you went from only being a gift receiver to becoming a gift giver. You still got to receive but you also started giving at age 10. At age 10, I was going to lay the ground work for how the children in my family would engage in this responsibility to not only receive gifts with dignity and gratefulness but give gifts appropriately. I was the oldest of the four children in my family so I set the pace. I remember working through what I was going to get for everyone. For my dad it was a pair of socks and that was pretty simple. Back then a white pair of tube socks costs .19 cents. I was going to go over the top for my mother. My mother used to smell so good. So I decided I was going to buy my mother some perfume. I figured all perfume was the same. So one day I went with my mom to work at Sears & Roebuck and walked over to the perfume counter. I saw this beautiful blue bottle with a gold top and it was called Evening in Paris. Then I saw that it was \$1.19 and that looked good to me also. I think in 1969 they quit making Evening in Paris but I do understand now it is a collector’s item. I saw the value of it immediately and bought it but little did I know that very few bought this item and very few are even in the mother’s category. When my mom got it my mom acted excited to get it and she even wore it to church that night. I’ll never forget that and the thought that goes behind appropriate gift giving.

Today we go about gift giving by getting him up on his knee and the question is, what is it that you want for Christmas? We give gifts at Christmas as a response, an affirmation and a celebration of what Paul calls God’s indescribable gift. John refers to this in John 3:16 that says [16] *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* Here’s the fact. We did not get up on God’s knee to tell Him what we wanted. God gave His Son who went to His knees in a garden and rose and went to a cross to give us, not what we wanted, but what we needed. God gave His Son who gave His life with an atoning death on a cross that we could have everlasting life.

If you had been living in the first Noel which is a derivative of Latin and French meaning Christmas, over 2,000 years ago, the coming of the Messiah would not be unexpected. In fact appropriately we sing the carol ‘Come Thou Long Expected Jesus’ and He was expected. He had been promised and prophesied. God’s covenant people did certainly believe that a Messiah would come. They did not know when He would come and in fact they began to wonder He would actually come but they knew He would come because God had promised it. God had prophesied and prophecy is nothing more than prewritten history. God had prewritten historically what would come into reality through the birth of His Son. He would be a Messiah.

They were also not confused about this Messiah. They knew He would be prepared and sent from God according to Isaiah. He would be God and one of His Names was prophesied Immanuel which means God with us. He was eternal from eternity before and He would establish a Kingdom that would be a forever Kingdom and the increase of His government would know no end. They knew He would be born of a virgin. They knew He would be born in Bethlehem. They also knew when you took all of those prophetic words, sixty plus promises and

prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament, that they boiled down to two promises. One is He will save His people from the righteous judgment of God for their sins and two He would bring the righteous judgment of God upon those who were not His people. They knew those two promises would be fulfilled in this Messiah. There were two promises and one Savior.

They didn't know that we now know from God's Word is that there would be two Advents. The first Advent would fulfill the first promise – He has come to save His people from their sins. His name will be called Yahweh saves because He will save His people from their sins. Then He is coming again to bring His people to Himself and to bring judgment upon those who are not His people. This was clearly identified in an early confession hymn of the church that is recorded for us from Titus 2:11–14.

Titus 2:11–14 says [11] *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

Grace of God is another name for God. The word 'appeared' that is used here is used to describe a sunburst or a sun rise. Here the light of God has burst into the darkness of man's sin. He has come to save His people and they won't just be found in the nation of Israel for they will be found from all the nations. The grace of God will instruct us and cause us to wait for the appearance of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. Did you notice something in this passage? There are two appearances, two Advents.

In the first one He came not to bring judgment but to bear our judgment. He came as a man to take our place on the cross, paying a debt He did not owe for debtors who had a debt we couldn't pay. He came to bear our judgment and save us from our sins. The second promise is the second Advent. We are looking for the Blessed Hope and the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who on that Day will bring judgment as He brings His people to Himself. Two promises, one Savior – two Advents with one to save us by bearing God's righteous judgment for sinners and the second to bring God's righteous judgment upon all who renounce Him as Lord and Savior and rest in their own devices and designs in life.

There is a line in the Christmas hymn 'Silent Night' that says 'how silently, how silently' and it's appropriate. In the first Advent when He came to save us, He humbled Himself, was born of the virgin in a forgotten royal town of Bethlehem silently. There were a few invited guests from a shepherd's field. There He lay in the trough that would feed animals and there He comes silently – God with us. To come from that stable to a cross, from that cross to a tomb, from that tomb He'll come forward and from the Mount of Olives He will ascend. As they are looking up they are instructed 'why stand ye gazing for this same Jesus will come again in like manner' on that Day to bring judgment.

The first Day (Advent) He came silently with a few invited guests, coming to bear our judgment which we celebrate on Christmas Day, but there is a coming Day. The first Day was a fact of history that had been prophesied and fulfilled. The coming Day will be a fact of history that has already been prophesied with prewritten history. On the first Day He opened the door of salvation and He brought the Day of grace on that Day to save His people from their sins. There is a coming Day and it won't be silent. The trumpet of God will sound. The voice of the archangel will resound and there won't be a few invited guests that observe it for every eye shall see Him. It won't be a few that bow to Him for every knee will bow to Him but that Day closes

the Day of grace, the door of salvation. We now anticipate what is going to happen on the coming Day.

This Day is the Day of salvation! Your Savior came to those who didn't want Him but needed Him and He gave Himself for us who would not want Him but needed Him. He gave Himself because He who did not need us wanted us that we could receive. Have you ever noticed around this time of year how you grapple with things like 'am I buying too much' or 'is this too extravagant' and that's understandable but there is nothing more extravagant than God's gift for you. It is indescribable. God so loved that He gave His only Son that we could have the gift of salvation this Day.

The Savior has come for you. He is coming again and that Day closes the door of salvation. When He came He opened the door and this Day He says to you, "Come to Me all of you who are weary and heavy laden for I will give you rest and on that Day when I come again it will not be a terrifying Day to you but it will be a glorious Day because you will be with Me forever! Come this Day just as you are without one plea for Jesus, My blood was shed for you." And you say "Jesus I come!" Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your precious, wonderful Word. I thank You that we can celebrate the Day that You came to save Your people from their sins even as we anticipate the Day that You are coming again to bring it all to a consummation. We rejoice that You came to bear our judgment and we anticipate the Day You come to bring judgment but we praise You that on that Day, while a terrifying Day for all who fall into the hands of the living God for it is appointed the Day of Judgment, for Your people it is a glorious Day for we go Home. Come quickly Lord Jesus but until You come we will go with the light of the Gospel to invite others to come for Jesus says 'come' for He came for You. The Spirit says 'come' for He has come to bring you. The Church of Jesus Christ says 'come' because we have been brought and bought by Jesus for I pray in His Name, Amen.