

Three Christmases

#0372

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 24, 1971

The text is 2 Corinthians the 9th chapter, the 15th verse:

“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift”
2 Corinthians 9:15.

The gift of Jesus to this world is the greatest gift that was ever given *by* anybody *to* anybody, the greatest gift that *could* be given. In fact, God poured out all heaven in one gift, and gave it to the most undeserving piece of creation in the whole universe. That’s like Him. He’s a great giver.

“For God so loved the world...” John 3:16.

Let’s say it together:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” John 3:16.

Yes, what a wonderful gift.

“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift”
2 Corinthians 9:15.

Unspeakable, that is, it is impossible for human speech to reveal what a gift it is. Its height, its depth, its breadth, its length, it is without measure, infinite. A million, million years from now, we’ll still be celebrating the birth of Jesus into this human family, the coming of Jesus to this world. This is indeed our hope, the basis of our hope.

“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift”
2 Corinthians 9:15.

Now, of course, we don’t know what day Jesus was born. But as someone has well observed, the *day* He was born is not so important as the *fact* He was *born*. That’s what counts. That’s what we’re celebrating tonight—not the day, but the fact of this wonderful gift.

And certainly, this is a gift that we’d do well to remember 365 days in the year. What do you say? We’re going to remember this wonderful gift, the gift of Jesus to this world.

However, tonight I want to talk with you about three Christmases. And the first is this first Christmas (although it wasn't called by that name), the night that Christ was born, the night the shepherds saw the angels and heard their song, the night whose date we don't know, but the night when heaven was poured out to this earth.

I want you to note an expression regarding the birth of Jesus in Matthew the 1st chapter and the 21st verse. This is before the birth, at the time the angel came to announce to Joseph the wonderful fact that the young woman to whom he was engaged was to have a child conceived by the Holy Ghost. And the mission of the angel at this time included, among other objectives telling Joseph what the name of this baby was to be.

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” Matthew 1:21.

Now, that word “Jesus” comes from the Greek form of the word that is called Joshua in the Old Testament. You remember Joshua was the one that led the children of Israel into the earthly Canaan. This Joshua, this Jesus, is going to lead us into the heavenly Canaan. And this word, as you will note in the margin of your Bible, means Savior. That's the thought of the angel when he says:

“...and Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” Matthew 1:21.

But it is not merely Savior. Those who have studied in the original languages tell us that this word comes originally from two words—Jehovah, the great I Am, Creator, and Savior. So, it is Jehovah-Savior. It is God coming to earth to save man. This is the real meaning of the word. And this, of course, admirably fits our blessed Lord, for He is Immanuel, God with us. God, the Son of God, now the Son of man, linking earth with heaven and heaven with earth. What a wonderful gift, dear friends, what a wonderful gift.

But now, notice the meaning of this word and what a word it is. Of all the many, many names of the Son of God, this name Jesus is most precious. On it depends our every hope.

“...and Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins” Matthew 1:21.

A lost man needs a Savior, and this is Jesus. This is why He came to earth; this is why He was born. Now notice, He came to save His people from what? Their sins.

You know, nearly everybody in the world would like to be saved from something. I'm sure there are multitudes in some of the less-favored lands that would like to be saved from famine tonight. I'm sure there are multitudes that would like to be saved from war and its ravages. And oh, how many are lying on beds of pain in hospitals, in homes, or without any home, suffering disease, anguish. They'd

like to be saved from all those things. Yes, friends, nearly everybody would like to be saved from something.

Many who have a fair amount of health and a fair amount of this world's goods would love to be saved from fear, from worry, from anxiety, from problems of the spirit. But the great thing that Jesus is most anxious to save us all from is that which *causes* all these other things. That's sin, sin.

And so, it was not enough that Jesus comes down here into this world and die that men's sins might be pardoned. To be a full and complete Savior, He must not only be able to write "pardon" opposite our names in the books of heaven, but He must also be able by His miraculous creative power working with the human heart, to lift us back into harmony with that law which was broken through transgression, through sin. This is His mission.

Now, how did He carry it on? Dr. Livingston, the great pioneer in missions in the heart of Africa, once said that God had only one Son, and He made Him a medical missionary. Is it true? Oh, yes.

While Christ was a mighty Preacher, He spent more time healing the sick than He did teaching the Word. Why? For several reasons, friends. There is something about ministry to the sick which gives a wonderful opportunity for revealing love, tender, thoughtful, gentle care. And this, our Savior longed to bring to the weary, the sick, the heavy laden, He longed to bring them the message of His Father's love.

And so, as He passed through the villages and the cities and the countryside, He was always looking for people that needed help—the deaf, the blind, the man with the palsy, the woman with the issue of blood, the little children with fever brought by their mothers to experience His healing touch. Even the lepers were cleansed, and the dead were raised. Yes, Jesus was the great Medical Missionary. He was revealing the love of God to men.

But friends, He was doing more than this in His medical ministry. On more than one occasion, He said to those He healed:

“...Go, and sin no more” John 8:11.

“...lest a worse thing come unto thee” John 5:14.

The healing that He brought was not just some miraculous thing that would lead men to feel that they could continue in transgression, unlike some of the healing that is carried on today in His name, the healing that Christ brought to men brought with it a message of reformation of life, a message that changed the habits of men.

“...Go, and sin no more” John 8:11.

“...lest a worse thing come unto thee” John 5:14.

And so, Christ made these occasions of healing opportunities for teaching physical and spiritual law, the great principles of life that would bring men back into harmony with the law, the transgression of which had brought their sickness.

And so in all ages, friends, God is seeking through the Gospel not only to cancel out our guilt but to take away our transgressions, to bring us back into harmony with His wonderful life.

You know, Brother Glanzer, every now and then he writes some lines, and he showed me this just before the meeting.

And I said, "Brother, I want you to sing it for us just a little way into my sermon tonight."

Come, Brother Glanzer. He's going to sing it for you, and He's going to teach it to all of us.

"Thank You, Lord, for coming to earth,
Thank You, Lord, for Bethlehem's birth;
Thank You, Lord, for bringing to me
Thy great salvation so full and free."

I like that, Brother. I like that.

[Brother Glanzer] This is unrehearsed.

[Elder Frazee] We're going to rehearse it now.

[Brother Glanzer]

"Thank you, Lord, for coming to earth,
Thank you, Lord, for Bethlehem's birth;
Thank you, Lord, for bringing to me
Thy great salvation so full and free."

"Earth" and "birth"; "me" and "free." Let's sing it.

"Thank you, Lord, for coming to earth,
Thank you, Lord, for Bethlehem's birth;
Thank you, Lord, for bringing to me
Thy great salvation so full and free."

Now, once more with a real "thank you" spirit:

"Thank you, Lord, for coming to earth,
Thank you, Lord, for Bethlehem's birth;
Thank you, Lord, for bringing to me
Thy great salvation so full and free."

[Elder Frazee] Thank you so much.

Well now, the next Christmas I want to have us look at for a few minutes is linked with the one we've just looked at. This one's only 106 years ago. The first one was nearly 2,000 years ago, wasn't it?

The Christmas I want to have us think about for a few minutes now, December 25, 1865, in Rochester, New York. Let's go back just a little to get the setting. In 1844 our Savior entered upon His closing work in the Heavenly Sanctuary, the work which is to prepare a people for His coming, a people in full harmony with His law.

During the early years of the Advent message, attention was given especially to searching out and bringing together the doctrines of this great three-fold message as revealed in the Bible, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation. And then, in organizing, bringing together the scattered flock, in 1863, our General Conference was organized. Just a few thousand Seventh-day Adventists then in all the world.

Shortly after the organization of the General Conference in May of 1863, the Lord drew near and gave His people through the gift of prophecy a wonderful vision on health. This was in a little farmhouse near Otsego, Michigan, on June 6, 1863.

It's been my privilege to be there in that little farmhouse, to see the place where the angel of God came to the messenger to the remnant and gave her the wonderful vision outlining the health message, the advantages of the natural remedies, sunlight, air, pure water, proper diet, exercise, and rest, and trust in divine power. We haven't time to go into all that tonight. That was a wonderful thing. That was in June of 1863. But we're talking about 1865 tonight and how did that fit in.

James White, one of the leaders of this movement, had so poured out his life in the first 20 years of the development of this work and message that his strength was spent. And in 1865, he suffered a stroke of paralysis. And the doctors despaired of his life thought that even if he did live that he wouldn't be able to do anything.

Our pioneers had heard of an institution in the state of New York called Our Home on the Hillside. It was in the town called Dansville. And here, a physician by the name of Dr. Jackson was using hydrotherapy and other natural methods. And since these methods seemed to be in harmony with what had been revealed to Sister White in vision, they took Elder White to this place. And Elder and Sister White stayed there for a number of weeks, enjoying the treatments, the health lectures, the diet, and seeking to get help.

But there were some problems. Although much of what the doctor presented and did was in harmony with the light that had come from vision, there were some things that were not. For example, the doctor advocated no salt in the diet. Another thing, he felt that Elder White, since he had been working heavily in religious lines, should not be troubled now about religious things. He felt that he should be quiet physically and mentally and spiritually. This especially burdened Sister White, for she knew that this was not in harmony with the light that God had given.

Another thing, the physicians there recommended certain amusements such as card playing, chess and checkers and dancing. And so, for these and other reasons, the Whites finally decided that they should not linger there. The doctor felt it was unwise to move Elder White.

But Sister White finally said, "We must go."

So, they decided to go as far as Rochester, a comparatively short journey away, and there meet with brethren. And for three weeks, they united in special prayer, sometimes several times a day, pleading with God that Brother White might be restored.

And on Christmas day, 1865, God came near and gave another vision of glory to His chosen messenger. And this gift was not for the healing of Brother White that day, but rather, my dear friends, a gift a thousand times, ten thousand times more wonderful. It was a revelation of a plan to establish an institution for the treatment of the sick and the education of those who would learn how to be well, that would bless not only Brother White but thousands upon thousands of others all around the globe as that sanitarium plan should be extended.

This is why Seventh-day Adventists have sanitariums. This is why we have a medical college. This is why we train physicians and nurses, and other helpers in medical lines. This is why we train health educators. It all came because of that Christmas gift from heaven to earth on Christmas day, 1865, in Rochester, New York. I'm thankful for it. Aren't you friends?

Let me read you just a few lines that Sister White wrote as the result of that vision. You'll find a number of things in *Volume 1* of the Testimonies on this, especially in pages 489, 90, 91, 92. Notice, this came through vision, through revelation:

"I was shown that we should provide a home for the afflicted and those who wish to learn how to take care of their bodies that they may prevent sickness"
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1, page 489.

Notice the name, that word that was chosen to represent the atmosphere, the attitude in that institution. What was it called? A home. May we never lose it, dear friends. May we never lose the vision of the atmosphere.

"I was shown that we should provide a home..." *Ibid.*

Notice the double purpose of the home.

"...for the afflicted..." *Ibid.*

That is, the sick, that they might be ministered to, that they might be treated. And a second purpose:

“...and those who wish to learn how to take care of their bodies that they may prevent sickness” *Ibid.*

Oh friends, it's a wonderful thing to find people that not only want to get relief from their symptoms but want to learn how to get away from the thing that made the symptoms. This is the difference between the true sanitarium and a lot of other things that we won't take time to talk about.

Oh friends, I'm so glad for a positive program to lift men out of the rut of conventional habits that make them sick, make people sick, and lift them into a life of obedience to the laws of nature, which are the laws of God. What do you say?

You see, in the sanitarium, as God gave it to this people that Christmas day in 1865, facilities were to be brought together not only for the treatment of the sick but for the education of the patients and for others who might come to learn the way of life.

And do you know, our people responded with alacrity? Although there were only a few thousand of them in all the world, they gathered together with might and mané to establish this institution. And in a little over six months, they opened on the west side of the little town of Battle Creek, a little place with a big name, the Western Health Reform Institute, the Western Health Reform Institute.

And from that, eventually developed the great Battle Creek Sanitarium, which in a generation spread its influence literally all over the world, my friends. By the turn of the century, less than 40 years after that, Battle Creek became a synonym for rational methods of the treatment of the sick and reformation in health.

People from the royal families of Europe, some of the wealthiest people of this country, the Duponts, the Morgans, the Rockefellers and others came to Battle Creek to listen to the lectures that Dr. Kellogg gave as he was the medical superintendent for many years, to receive treatments in those lovely treatment rooms, and to be under the care of Dr. Kellogg and the staff of physicians associated with him.

That little plant which was established in 1866 in a converted farmhouse on the west side of Battle Creek, became the leading medical institution of the world as far as rational methods were concerned in less than 40 years. So powerful was the influence of these principles.

But how did it all start? By a vision from heaven to God's chosen messenger in Rochester, New York, on Christmas day, 1865. I'm thankful for that gift tonight. What do you say?

Now, I said I had three Christmases to talk about. Yes. And that concerns the little place where you and I are meeting tonight, the third one. It's just 30 years ago tonight that I spent my first night on this place. I was going to say on this campus—what was to be this campus. Thirty years ago this afternoon, Brother Neil Martin (who's now sleeping in Jesus), Brother George McClure, who many of you know, and I knelt on the top of Sunset Hill over beyond what we call the hollow, and

asked the Lord to guide us as to what He wanted us to do in establishing a sanitarium and a medical missionary training place.

And the next morning, up in the little room on the northeast corner of the second floor of Evangelid, the three of us with Dr. Hayward, who at that time was the owner of this property, knelt in prayer after seeking the Lord individually, and decided that a sanitarium should be started here called Wildwood Sanitarium. So that name, Wildwood Sanitarium, was thought of and worked out and accepted on Christmas day just 30 years ago, in the 24-hour period in which we're just entering tonight.

And as I walked down from Crestview and Forest this evening, my wife and I were walking down there around the turn at Oak Cabin, I said to her, "You know, Helen, I was just thinking about it was just about this time of day that as I came by the little trail coming down the hill and down by the spring, that the conviction came clearly to my heart just 30 years ago this evening that this was indeed the place the Lord wanted us to establish this institution."

And I thank the Lord for all the many providence, friends, in the 30 years since. Why, we could stay here longer than Paul was at the Troas meeting just telling the wonderful stories, the providences. Because when we came here, we were just a little band of 12 or 15 people. We didn't have enough money in the whole lot to—well, to even lay the foundation for one building.

And we took on certain obligations when we took over this property, and to put it in just a few words, God has never let us down, my friends. He's never let us down. The hammers have never stopped in 30 years. Building has been going on all this time. The only thing which has at any time measured how fast we built (and I tell you this truly), it was not money but men. And yet, we've never had thousands upon thousands of dollars just sitting waiting. No. God has put together the materials to build and the men to do the building, and the money to pay for the materials. He's measured it out according to His providence all these 30 years.

And now, we rejoice that besides the various buildings on the place which have been erected by students and teachers working together through these 30 years, we now have recently dedicated this beautiful hospital sanitarium over on the hill. And this, too, was built as a work of faith, teachers and students working together, and we've had to pray our way through, just pray our way through.

Incidentally, if there are any of you who would like to help in paying off what we need to finish paying for that building, we could use most any amount any of you here would like to help with, but I'm not going to take up a collection tonight. I just throw that in extra.

What I'm talking about, friends, is the wonderful gift of God. And this Christmas day, with all my heart, I thank Him for the gift that started it all, the gift of Jesus to this world nearly 2,000 years ago. And remember, He came as a medical missionary. He came not only to die that men might be forgiven, but He came to live that men might learn *how* to live and be lifted back to harmony with God's laws, natural and spiritual.

And then, I rejoice in that Christmas gift 106 years ago when God gave to His remnant church the vision of a sanitarium where people might not only be treated in harmony with the laws of nature, which are the laws of God but might learn how to come back into harmony with all those laws. I thank God for the way that institution, planted by revelation, grew. I thank the Lord for the way its influence has spread all over the world, and many similar institutions have been developed. And I thank God tonight for the Christmas of 30 years ago which led us to this place and established this institution, and all the blessings that have come to many of us who are here tonight as the results.

Friends, do you know these three are very intimately linked together in my mind tonight. Because I wouldn't be here if it weren't for the Christmas present that the Lord gave us 30 years ago tonight. And none of you would be here in this particular place.

But there would have been no vision from which to *build* this institution if it had not been for that wonderful Christmas gift in Rochester 106 years ago. And again, none of *these* would have been had it not been for the precious gift of Jesus Himself to this world nearly 2,000 years ago. They're all linked together, and I say again in the words of our opening text:

“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift”
2 Corinthians 9:15.

I've asked our medical director, Dr. Hansen, and our chaplain, Brother Felt, to say some words at this time as God may move upon their hearts. I'm so glad, friends, for the team we have of medical missionary workers here to treat the sick and educate both the sick and the well in the science of living.

Dr. Hansen, we're so glad that God led you as a graduate physician to cast in your lot with us and to help make this place all that God has planned it to be.

[Dr. Hansen] Elder Frazee, I'm thankful to be part of the team tonight that is helping to make this vision that Sister White had many years ago come true in 1971. And it's my desire that not only I but each person who comes here to be healed or to learn how to help others truly follow in the pattern of the great Medical Missionary who not only said, “Come and be healed,” but, “Go and sin no more.”

And this is the true concept of preventive medicine, isn't it? For this is the only thing that will really keep us well is learning to live our lives in accordance with the laws of health, laws which are just as sacred and important as the Ten Commandments given on Sinai.

And so, I'm thankful tonight for the gift of Jesus and for His redeeming power in my life, and the fact that He ministers every day in the Heavenly Sanctuary to help me get rid of the sin problem.

And I'm thankful, too, for what I've seen in the lives of so many others who have come here in the past few months and for those who I know will come in the future to get this same help and a step closer to Christ and His plan for our lives.

[Elder Frazee] Amen. Thank you, doctor. Before you sit down, Brother Felt—I just want to point out something. Here's a minister. Brother Felt, you know, was trained as a minister in another denomination. He's been well trained, as the ministers of some of the great churches of the country are.

But in the providence of God, Brother Felt, when he heard the third angel's message, recognized it as God's special message for this last hour. And so, for a number of years now, he's been preaching this message. He's our chaplain. And doctor, I've already mentioned coming from our medical college. This is the thing that I wanted to say with my arms around these two men. This church is peculiar in its blending of scientific medicine and Bible evangelism.

Now, there *are* churches, denominations, movements in the world that stress healing through the Gospel, but pay no attention whatsoever to medical science. On the other hand, there are movements that are strong on medical science, but if they use religion at all its something like a tranquilizer, you understand.

But here is a movement that we're a part of, thank God, a little part, in which scientific medicine and the Gospel of the Scriptures are all together in one program. How did we happen, a tiny little church, to do it? I've told you tonight by revelation from the skies.

Thank you, doctor. Now, we want to hear from Brother Felt.

[Brother Felt] Amen. I, too, am thankful for the three Christmases that we've been hearing about tonight. It has been our joy to have fellowship with the folks here at Wildwood for now 22-1/2 years since I was first acquainted with Elder Frazee at a worker's retreat in the summer of 1949. And I was impressed that there was something in this that I needed, that I needed for my service to souls in the work of the district where I was laboring.

Finally, three years later, we resigned from that work, not in order to leave the ministry but in order to learn to blend the physical and the spiritual in the ministry as God has commanded us. I feel as though I have still only scratched the surface, but the experiences that God has given me during the years that followed, I'm deeply grateful for.

One thing that has impressed me very much about the significance of the work here at Wildwood is that in harmony with the counsel of God, it was established just outside, fully in the country, outside a large city. And that its primary mission as an institution, as a medical institution, would be to minister to the people of that city. And as instruments in Jesus' hand, bring many souls to Christ from this area.

The Lord has many, many wonderful ways richly blessed this work, but in this respect, we're just really getting going. And I want to ask your prayers that God will give wisdom and courage and boldness and love to the leadership of this institution that we may learn how more fully to reach the people of the Chattanooga area for Jesus than ever before. This is why especially more than any other reason that I am grateful for the privilege of serving as the chaplain of this institution.

[Elder Frazee] Thank you so much, Brother Felt.

Now, I'd like to hear from some other members of our sanitarium staff. This is unrehearsed, but any of you that are having a part in the sanitarium work as directors, or helpers, students, I'm inviting you just now to come forward and give your witness as to what you feel in your heart concerning the program that God has made you a part of.

And also, I'm giving an invitation to anybody who has been blessed physically or spiritually through the ministry of the sanitarium. If there's a patient or a former patient here that know that God established the Wildwood Sanitarium to be a blessing to you and it has worked out that way, if you'd like to come here to the platform and bear your witness, you may do that, along with the workers and the staff and the students that have had a part in the sanitarium work.

[Testimony service followed.]

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