



When Jesus Enters Your World

Keeping Christmas Well

Acts 9:1-2 (NIV[®])

¹ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest

² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

I. Lessons from Ebenezer ---

A. Recognition & Remorse

Romans 3:23 (Msg)

. . . we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us

1. Recognition (opportunities lost)

Luke 18:13 (NIV[®])

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, '**God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**'"

2. Repentance

Mark 1:15 (NIV[®])

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

3. Redemption

Ephes. 5:15-16 (NIV[®])

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

B. Scrooged!

❖ A name synonymous with being cheap, demanding, narrow of mind & spirit.

Titus 1:12 (NIV[®])

"Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons."

1. What's your name?

Proverbs 22:1 (NIV[®])

A good name is more desirable than great riches;
to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

2. God has a name for each of us

Genesis 17:1-5 (NIV[®])

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. ² I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." ³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴ "As for me, **this is my covenant with you**: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; **your name will be Abraham**, for I have made you a father of many nations.

3. Accepting God's name

Genesis 17:17-18 (NIV[®])

Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" [18] And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

Luke 15:17-18 (NIV[®])

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

4. A Name Change!

Isaiah 62:2 (NIV[®])

The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow.

Rev. 2:17 (NIV[®])

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

C. A Visitation of Grace!

1. Guilty or Not Guilty?

John 8:10-11 (NIV[®])

Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ "No one, sir," she said. "**Then neither do I condemn you**," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

2. A Divine Appointment

Romans 8:1-2 (Msg)

With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved. Those who enter into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. ² **A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air**, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death.

3. Presumptuous Living

Hebrews 2:1-3 (NIV[®])

We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ² For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for awakening me to Your reality. Through Your grace and mercy I have been delivered from the Kingdom of Darkness and welcomed into the Kingdom of Your Son. Holy Spirit help me to live wisely, to invest my days for the benefit of eternity. Guide my heart to honor the Lord that I might please Him in all that I am. Give me the strength and courage to complete my course. In Jesus' name, amen.

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