

56-02-02-Embracing God's Epiphany
Epiphany, revelation, insight, enlightenment
Titus 2:11

How we respond to divine epiphanies is a choice of the will.

INTRODUCTION:

–**HOM.idea.** 3 versions of **Titus 2:11** (NIV), *For the grace of God that brings salvation has **appeared** to all men.* – (YLT), *For the saving grace of God was **manifested** to all men,* – (MSG), *God's readiness to give and forgive is **now public.** Salvation's available for everyone! **But,** the openly manifested or "public" epiphany of "saving grace" can be **rejected** instead of **embraced.***

–[**David Ulin** in *The Atlantic*, 12/30/2020: "I don't believe epiphanies exist... We're born, we die, and no one ever changes really. Even for James Joyce, an epiphany is just a **literary device** (a writing trick)."] Some *early* writers for *The Atlantic* would disagree, and I'll quote them to illustrate why epiphanies of God's grace are real and must be *embraced.* First,

I. Divine enlightenment is universal.

- A. [**Ralph Waldo Emerson** wrote: "The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul... not subject to circumstance."]
- B. Scripture agrees: *moral enlightenment is built into humans*– **John 1:9**, The true light that **gives light to every man** was coming into the world. (This verse says *Jesus morally enlightens every person.*)

TRANS: *Upbringing, education or experience* can dominate ideas of *right or wrong*, until a *divine epiphany* offers *new insight*. [**Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.** said, "A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience."] But merely receiving the *insight* is not enough....

II. Divine enlightenment must get through to the heart.

- A. [**H. W. Longfellow**, after losing his wife in a fire and learning that his son was seriously wounded in the Civil War, wrote "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." His poem expresses *doubts* about "peace on earth," until an *epiphany* described in the last verse: "Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: / 'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; / The Wrong shall fail, / The Right prevail, / With peace on earth, good-will to men.'"]
- B. Like those bells, **Luke 1:78b-79a** rings out a "public" epiphany–(NKJ) "...the Dayspring from on high **has** visited us; To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."

TRANS: Once God *enlightens our hearts*, the ball is in our court. **How we respond to divine epiphanies is a choice of the will.** *That means...*

III. Divine enlightenment must be personally embraced.

- A. [**James R. Lowell** wrote: "Once to ev'ry man and nation / Comes the moment to decide, / In the strife of truth and falsehood, / For the good or evil side."]
(While the lost must embrace "saving grace" for salvation, we as believers must embrace it for becoming more like Jesus.)
- B. *Epiphanies help Christians grow in grace, if we embrace them.* [**J. C. Ryle** wrote: "When I speak of growth in grace, I mean an increase in the degree, size, strength, vigor, and power of the graces that the Spirit plants in our hearts. When I speak of a person growing in grace, I mean simply this—that his sense of sin is becoming deeper, his faith stronger, his hope brighter, his love more extensive, and his spiritual-mindedness more marked."]

CONCLUSION:

–**Peter** concluded his 2nd epistle with an good exhortation for us to heed as we meet with *epiphanies* and *divine enlightenments* in this new year. It also calls us to praise Jesus every day, all year long– **2 Peter 3:18**. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen. And here's a good motto for doing both: *Embrace and exalt God's Son in 2021!*