



Quotable

My desire is that we will learn the importance of making the most important part of Christmas our focus—and that's Jesus.

—Charles R. Swindoll

Every Christmas, millions of us go in search of the perfect gift for our loved ones. If the gift is just right, our loved ones open the package and say with a gasp, “It’s wonderful! Thank you!” as we beam with delight.

On the first Christmas, God gave the *ultimate* perfect gift to His loved ones—to all of us! He wrapped heaven’s treasure in the tiny, humble frame of a baby and, beaming with delight, gave us His only Son. On that night, like a proud father, God sent angels to deliver a heavenly birth announcement to some astonished shepherds, who rushed to see the baby born in an animal shelter and laid in a feeding trough as a makeshift crib (Luke 2:7).

And so, the first Christmas took place not in a cozy home around a brightly lit tree but in a pen with a few farm animals, some shepherds, and two exhausted parents gazing at the greatest gift anyone has ever received.

In this first of twelve daily Christmas studies based on four holiday messages by Chuck Swindoll, we’ll join the small gathering around the manger in their worship of Jesus Christ—God’s indescribable gift. We’ll look deeply into the child’s eyes, imagining the man Jesus, reflecting on His death and resurrection, and admiring four gifts that He offers us today—grace, truth, love, and hope.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Take a few moments to quiet your spirit and invite the Lord to minister to you through His Word. Read the following verses, and imagine the setting of the nativity as it might have been. A cold winter night. The sounds and smells of animals. A location in a hillside cave or on the dirt floor of the lower level beneath a first-century house.

After Mary and Joseph had settled into this shelter, “the time came for [Mary’s] baby to be born.” Luke continues,

She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. (Luke 2:7)



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JESUS: THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT
Jesus: The Gift of God's Grace
Twelve Daily Studies for Christmas
John 1:10–14; 2 Corinthians 9:15

**SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES**
STUDY

After hearing the angels' announcement, the shepherds "hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And *there was the baby*, lying in the manger" (Luke 2:16, emphasis added).

For centuries, artists have attempted to capture the moment the shepherds saw the newborn Savior and His mother treasuring her baby. View the online image of the 1622 painting, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, by Gerard van Honthorst, which is exhibited at the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne, Germany.

What feelings do the figures in the painting convey? In the space below, record their perceived emotions, and write a prayer to God expressing the feelings you might have had if you had been there.

Now, let's open the Word to find Paul's description of adoration for Jesus.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

In his message, Chuck reflects on Paul's expression of wonder: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15 NASB). Read [2 Corinthians 9:15](#) in the New Living Translation. How does this Bible version translate the verse?

Like a dry inkwell, Paul's mind was an empty reservoir from which to draw words to describe the wonder of Jesus. Perhaps one reason for Paul's speechless awe was Jesus' *eternal nature*, which John portrayed in the first chapter of his gospel.



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Observation: Jesus Existed Before Bethlehem

A key principle in the *Searching the Scriptures* process is observation. Observation helps you grasp what the text says before attempting to interpret and apply it. Read slowly John 1:1–5, and write down the answers to the following questions.

What did John say about the divine nature of “the Word” in John 1:1?

Write the phrases in verses 2–5 that describe “the Word’s” actions. Note any parallel phrases, comparisons, repetitions, or themes.



Interpretation and Correlation: God’s Son Became Human

Who is the Word? The apostle John unveiled His identity as Jesus, specifically the Messiah, to whom John the Baptizer pointed (John 1:6–9, 15, 29–34).

What does it mean that “the Word became human and made his home among us” (1:14)? To help with your interpretation, correlate John 1:14 with Paul’s explanation of Jesus’ incarnation in Philippians 2:6–7. What added information did Paul provide?





Application: Worship Jesus, God Incarnate

Chuck summed up this study, connecting the doctrine of the incarnation with the birth of Jesus:

Do not think that Jesus began at Bethlehem. Do not think that Jesus began to exist when He was conceived in the womb. That's when He became a human. He has always existed. Being deity, there has never been a time He did not exist. This is what the Pharisees could never grasp. . . . But we see Him, and, thanks to John, we understand Him to be the One who came through the miracle of the Holy Spirit's work in Mary's womb.

Take a few moments of private worship to picture the baby in the manger as *God in the flesh*. “This gift too wonderful for words” (2 Corinthians 9:15) is the giver of your life and the light shining in your dark world. Write down your praise to God for His indescribable gift: Jesus!

Why did God give us His Son? One reason was to channel His grace to the world. Through Jesus, we have all received “grace upon grace” (John 1:16 NASB). In the next study, we’ll examine this verse in more detail and focus on Jesus as the giver of grace.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, through Your Son, You made the universe. The tiny fingers on the baby in the manger formed the planets and flung the stars in space. In the misty, precreation past, You had me in mind as Your beloved. I praise You for the awesome God You are, and I thank You for Your indescribable gift: Jesus. Amen.



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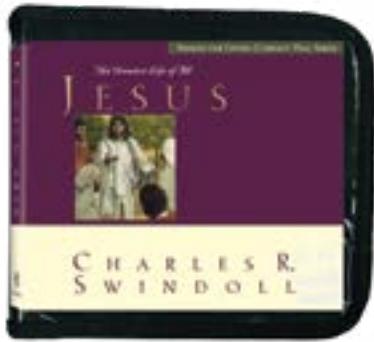
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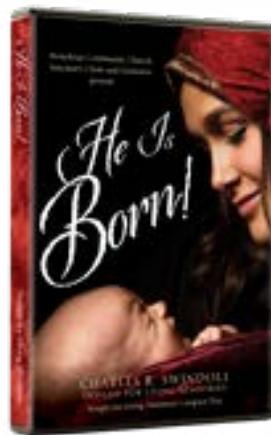
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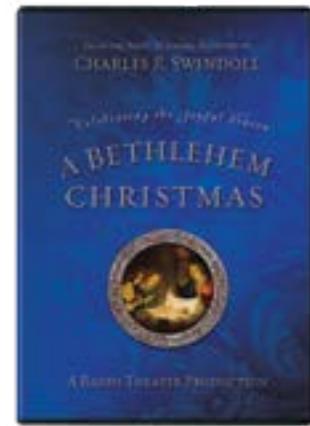
Tools for Digging Deeper



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by Charles R. Swindoll
CD series



He Is Born!
by Stonebriar Community Church
Choir and Orchestra
compact disc



A Bethlehem Christmas:
Celebrating the Joyful Season
(A Radio Theater Production)
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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