

JESUS: THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT

Jesus: The Gift of God's Grace

Twelve Daily Studies for Christmas

John 1:1, 14, 16–17; 8:3–11; 2 Corinthians 9:15

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



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

Christmas is the day we celebrate the birthday of Jesus. But is it accurate to say that Jesus has a birthday in the same sense as other great men and women in history? Can a day in December truly mark the beginning of the Son of God?

Unlike every other baby, Jesus had no beginning point. He existed before His birth just as the apostle John stated: “In the beginning the Word already existed” (John 1:1). Jesus Himself declared His preexistence: “Before Abraham was even born, I AM!” (8:58). And He affirmed His true origins: “I have come down from heaven” (6:38). John the Baptizer, who was born before Jesus, testified to Jesus’ eternal nature: “He existed long before me” (1:15).

In eternity past, Jesus as the Son of God communed in perfect harmony with His Father and the Holy Spirit. This is the mystery of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three in one. Coequal, coexistent, and coeternal.

Why, then, did God the Father send His Son into His creation? For what purpose was Jesus born?



PREPARE YOUR HEART

As we seek answers to these questions in God’s Word, let’s prepare our hearts by meditating on the angel’s song to the shepherds. After announcing Jesus’ birth, the angel “was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

*“Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”*
(Luke 2:13–14)



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The angels sang glory to God and a blessing of peace to humankind. In the space below, join the heavenly host by writing a prayer of praise to God for giving us His Son and asking the Lord to bless you with the peace the angels offered the fearful shepherds that first Christmas night.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Now read slowly and reflectively the following verses from John's gospel.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (John 1:14, 16–18 NASB)



Observation: Jesus Gives God's Grace

The *Searching the Scriptures* method of observation invites you to examine the text as a detective might look for clues. What stands out? Do you see any repeated words, contrasts, or comparisons? Can you summarize the flow of thought? What are the action words and descriptors? Do you see a word you need to define?

With these questions in mind, reread the verses above using your Bible study magnifying glass. Feel free to print the page and make notes on paper or use the PDF tool to highlight a word or phrase with your cursor. What do you observe?

Back to our initial questions. Why did God the Father send His Son into His creation? For what purpose was Jesus born? One purpose was to give us the gift of God's grace. Did you notice the word *grace* appearing several times? It's a significant theme in John's gospel. Let's look closer at the meaning of *grace*.



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Interpretation and Correlation: We Receive Grace upon Grace

Focus on the verse, “For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace” (John 1:16 NASB). In his message, Chuck Swindoll explained the phrase “grace upon grace” this way: “I like to think of it as one gracious act after another, one grace moment after another.” Read John 1:16 in *the New Living Translation* and in Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase *The Message*. How do these versions express the phrase?

Did you notice in John 1:16 the contrast between Jesus and Moses? Grace upon grace came through Jesus, but *law upon law* (so to speak) came through Moses.

The Mosaic law revealed God’s holiness and lit the way to freedom from sin. God meant the law to be a blessing for God’s people, like a jeweled crown. Unfortunately, this glittering headpiece was corrupted into an iron yoke of traditions forged by religious tyrants to enslave God’s people (Mark 7:8).

Correlate this text by comparing the unbearable yoke of the legalists with the yoke of grace Jesus offered in *Matthew 11:28–30*. What words describe Jesus and His yoke, along with its blessings to all who wear it?

Jesus’ gentle nature attracted weary people burdened by legalism. His open arms of grace drew crowds of overburdened people. In his message, Chuck defines *grace* in two ways. First, grace is God’s unmerited favor, such as our pardon from sin. Second, it is the quality Jesus displayed through His gracious acts. It is the “the loveliness of God,” as Chuck puts it.

Instead of chaining us to a religious grindstone, Jesus invites us to walk with Him forever linked by grace. We *live in* His grace as we receive His love, forgiveness, and acceptance, and we *live out* His grace through our gracious acts to others.



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Application: Receive Jesus' Gift of Grace

Chuck urges us this Christmas to keep our focus on Jesus and His gracious deeds.

Think about Jesus. He often touched the unclean. He always welcomed sinners. He ate with them. He was with those suffering from leprosy. Not only did He touch them, He cleansed them and welcomed them back. He even stayed in their homes. He dined with scoundrels and tax collectors. . . . He broke the mold because He was a man of grace.

As you prepare to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, celebrate His gift of grace. How do you need to receive His grace this Christmas? Write your answer below. In prayer, thank Him for His gift of grace, and ask Him for help to pass His grace to others.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I want to follow Your Son who drew crowds of overburdened people with His song of grace. I join the multitudes who followed Him then and throughout the centuries. Thank You for sending Your Son to show me Your heart of love and acceptance. I receive the grace offered by Jesus and the peace offered by the angels. Help me to overflow with Your grace and peace to all I meet today. Amen.



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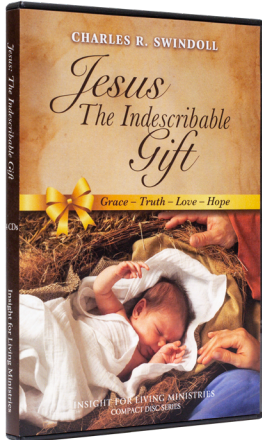
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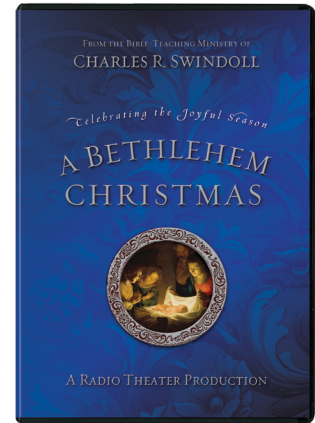
Tools for Digging Deeper



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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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