

# JESUS: THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT

## Jesus: The Gift of God's Hope

### Twelve Daily Studies for Christmas

Romans 4:18–24; 8:24–25; 15:13

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY



## Quotable

*Hope is a sense of  
confidence that God  
is at work.*

*It has nothing to do  
with age, marital  
status, or experience  
from the past. It  
has everything to do  
with the living God.*

— Charles R. Swindoll

It was a rare moment when the apostle Paul couldn't find the right words to express spiritual truth, but when he put his pen to parchment to describe Jesus, no word came to mind. "Thanks be to God for. . . ." Paul must have paused to contemplate what to write next. The great theologian's vocabulary could have filled a dictionary, but he lacked the language to express the wonder of Jesus. So Paul penned, "Thanks be to God for His *indescribable* gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15 NASB, emphasis added).

What puts Jesus beyond description is His divine nature. In Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, "lives all the fullness of God in a human body" (Colossians 2:9). He "radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God" (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus embodies God's *grace*—divine favor toward underserving humankind. He embodies God's *truth*—reliable principles for living. And He embodies God's *love*—infinite compassion for sinners. God offers these gifts to us in the person of His Son, and as we receive them, we discover another gift in Jesus: *hope*.



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

What do people hope for at Christmas more than material things, like a new TV or the latest tech gadget? Here are a few items that won't fit under the Christmas tree but may be on our wish list:

- Restoration of a broken relationship
- Healing of a physical ailment
- The return of prodigal child or grandchild
- Renewed joy after the loss of a loved one



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Who wouldn't trade all their Christmas presents for just one of these gifts? What are you hoping for this Christmas?

Offer to the Lord your heart's desires in a quiet moment of prayer. Ask the Lord to reveal His Son to you through your study of His Word and to renew your hope in Him.



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Hope has been an integral part of Jewish life since the beginning. We might say that the Jewish nation was conceived in hope. Let's trace the origin of Jewish hope two thousand years before Jesus to the heart of the first parents of the nation of Israel, Abraham and Sarah. Read Paul's description of Abraham, who "believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing" (Romans 4:17).

*Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. (4:18–21)*



### Observation: Hoping for the Impossible

Observing a passage is the first step of the *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study. Look again at Romans 4:18–21. Underline the key nouns and circle any key verbs that stand out.



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What did God promise Abraham (*Genesis 12:1–3; 15:1–6*)? Why might this promise seem impossible to fulfill (*18:1–2, 9–14*)?

What convinced Abraham to keep hoping in God's "impossible" promise (Romans 4:21)?

Truly, it was Abraham's confidence that God would provide an heir that resulted in the Jewish nation. Hope, indeed, is in the nation's DNA.

This same tenacious confidence in God's promises kept the nation afloat for about fifteen hundred years through wave after wave of enemy invasions . . . until the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and exiled the Jews. All hope seemed lost, but the prophets buoyed the Jews' spirits with reminders of God's faithfulness, such as this word from the Lord to the captives in Babylon.

*This is what the LORD says: "You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:10–11)*

Let's take a closer look at the context of these verses to discover the meaning of the passage.



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#### Interpretation and Correlation: Putting Our Hope in God

After Moses freed the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt and Joshua led the conquest of Canaan, it seemed God's promises to Abraham had been fulfilled for good. Why, then, did the Lord remove the Jews from their land (*Jeremiah 17:1–4*)?

The people's sin may have lost them the freedom to live in their land, but their sin didn't lose them their *relationship with God*. What promise from God gave the exiles hope? To find the answer, read *Jeremiah 29:10–15*.

What attributes of God gave the people hope? None other than the same attributes we celebrate in Jesus at Christmas: *grace* to the underserving, *truth* we can count on, and *love* for sinners!



#### Application: Trusting in God's Plan

God's grace, truth, and love in Jesus offer us hope, even at times when we think all hope is lost. In his message, Chuck Swindoll offered this assurance:

Babylon isn't forever. Captivity isn't terminal. Let me add, the difficulties and challenges of the old year are not forever. God has plans for us that are filled with "a future and a hope."

What is one principle about God—as illustrated by His dealings with Israel—that you can apply today?



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Think back to the hopes you listed in the beginning of this study. How does the principle you mentioned above encourage you?

Tomorrow is Christmas, the day we celebrate the birth of the one true hope of the world. Thank the Lord on this Christmas Eve for the promises He fulfilled in the past, and trust Him to continue fulfilling His promises in the future.



#### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for the hope I have in Jesus. How powerful is this hope! It fuels my life when I await Your answers to my prayers today. On this side of Your yet-to-be-fulfilled promises, I lean on Your attributes to keep me hoping. I lean on You and wait with confidence in Your grace, truth, and love. In the name of Jesus, amen.*



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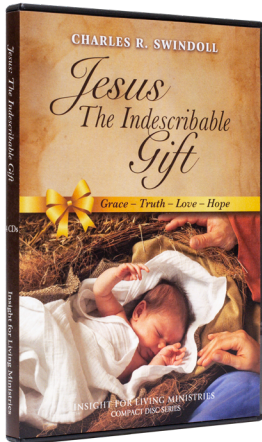
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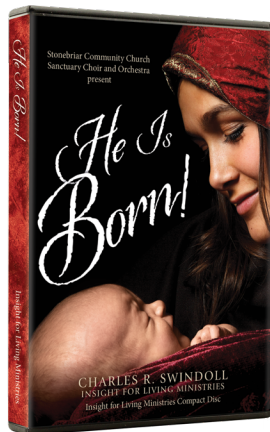
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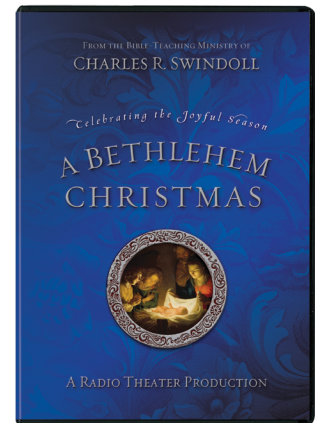
#### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Jesus: The Indescribable Gift**  
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)**  
by Charles R. Swindoll and  
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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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