

Twelve Gifts of Christmas

From Our Heavenly Father Study Guide

Stanley Holstein



Twelve Gifts of Christmas From Our Heavenly Father Study Guide
Copyright © 2022 Stanley Holstein.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by SLH Publishing; P.O. Box 177, Bluffton, OH 45817;
Website: <https://hopethroughthetruth.com>.

Words in brackets [] have been added by the author for clarification.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide; www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.®

Scripture quotations marked (ESV), taken from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®) copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, are used by permission. All rights reserved. The “ESV” and “English Standard Version” are registered trademarks of Good News Publishers.

Scripture quotations marked (KJV), taken from The Holy Bible: King James Version; Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version. Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2009; are used by permission.

Quotations taken from *Twelve Gifts of Christmas From Our Heavenly Father* and *Hope Through the Truth Standing in the Gap in America*, Stanley Holstein, copyright © 2021 and 2020 respectively, are used by permission of SLH Publishing, P.O. Box 177, Bluffton, OH 45817; <https://hopethroughthetruth.com>.

Any websites, phone numbers, or company or product information printed in this book are offered as a resource and are not intended in any way to be or to imply an endorsement by the publisher; nor does the publisher vouch for the existence, content, or services of these sites, phone numbers, companies, or products.

Book cover design and interior book formatting by 100 Covers.

A very special thanks to the editors, Don Boehm and Kathy Boehm; whose teaching experience and knowledge of the Bible have made this guide more organized, reader-friendly, and scripturally accurate.

ISBN 978-1-7360865-7-5 (eBook)
ISBN 978-1-7360865-6-8 (paperback)
Printed in the United States of America.

Table of Contents

Preface	1
Introduction	3
Lesson 1 – Jesus Christ – The First Gift of Christmas	5
Lesson 2 – Grace – The Gift of God’s Plan	19
Lesson 3 – Life – A Daily Gift from God	33
Lesson 4 – Being Chosen by God Is His Gift	47
Lesson 5 – Our Faith in God Comes From Him	61
Lesson 6 – The Desire to Live for God Is His Gift	75
Lesson 7 – The Holy Spirit – God’s Power in Us	89
Lesson 8 – The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – God Producing in Us	103
Lesson 9 – The Word of God – His Gift of Revelation	117
Lesson 10 – Adopted by God – His Gift to Spiritual Orphans	131
Lesson 11 – A Living Hope – God’s Gift of Encouragement	145
Lesson 12 – Eternal Life – The Final Gift of Christmas	159
Small Group Leader’s Guide	173
Notes	177

Preface

The lessons in this study relate to information contained in the book *Twelve Gifts of Christmas From Our Heavenly Father*. However, you don't need that book to use this study guide. Any statements such as "the author says," "the author writes," "the author has written elsewhere," or "in his book;" are referring to portions of text taken directly from that book.

God the Father offers many gifts to those who love him. This study addresses twelve of those, beginning with the birth of God's Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Each topic is discussed in detail as portrayed in the Holy Bible; culminating with the final gift, eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. My hope is, through this study, we will truly ponder and realize the incomprehensible extravagance of each gift our heavenly Father has given us. May we consider how each present enables us to live life to the full on Earth while preparing us for a glorious eternity.

To dwell on such matters is so important since I, as a believer, still have a powerful force with which I must reckon every day; my self-centered nature. Far too often, I view God's plan of salvation from a "me" perspective. I chose to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. I exhibited the faith to believe. *I . . . I . . . I*. Sometimes, I think it's all about me.

As we delve into Scripture, we will recall, or maybe even realize for the first time, what God says about the origin of faith to believe in Jesus Christ, the desire to live a godly life, and other eternal matters. Those who have studied the Bible will likely have read every verse and discussed every topic we will cover here. Yet, in coal-miners' parlance, as we "dig" into the Word of God regarding these fundamental matters, sincerely desiring to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit; he will lead us to "nuggets" of wisdom worth far more than gold.

No matter how much biblical wisdom we have acquired, returning to the basics of Scripture is always profitable. As Peter wrote to the first century believers:

"So, I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. . . . And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things" (2 Peter 1:12, 15).

Near the end of this study a personal question will be posed regarding our salvation; "At the moment of my repentance, what did I bring to the foot of the cross?" That was the most illuminating question for me during the course of this study. Hopefully, you will keep this question in the back of your mind as you open each of the twelve gifts. May God bless you richly for your efforts in this endeavor.

Introduction

I love the Christmas holiday season. It has produced so many fond memories for me. Mom and Dad loved Jesus, and this time of year was all about his birth. This season was special to me for other reasons. There was no school. Bedtime curfews were loosened and snack times became more plentiful. Best of all, I knew presents were coming soon. There was a sense of excitement and expectation in the air for me. How could it get any better?

My brother Tim recalled, “We always had good Christmases. Mom and Dad made sure of it. As a kid, I never thought about the joy it brought them to see the sheer delight they created for their children.” Neither did I. Every parent I know wants to provide the basic care that their children need to survive. But their desire goes much further. They also want their children to succeed in life in every possible way. Parents want to give their children every good gift that will benefit them. God, our heavenly Father, wants to give us every good and perfect gift because he loves us. The desire of his heart is to be our father and for us to be his children, his loving family.

As a child, I would always awaken early on Christmas morning filled with excitement. I would scurry down the steps into the living room to behold the tree, with lights ablaze and gifts stuffed underneath. It was with great anticipation, and no small amount of frustration, that I waited for the rest of the family to arrive, so we could tear into the presents.

When I was a youngster, Christmas was all about receiving gifts. As an adult, this holiday became about me giving gifts to loved ones. As a Christian adult, I have heard many comments regarding how Christmas has become commercialized; has lost its true meaning as a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. I share these opinions. However, if anyone would ask me, “For a Christian, is Christmas really about gifts?” My response would be, “Yes, absolutely.” But the gifts to which I would be referring are spiritual rather than material. To be sure, God has given, and continues to give, me many earthly blessings: a good job, the opportunity to live to retirement, good health, and a nice home, to mention just a few. Yet, the eternal gifts I have received are far more precious.

As we engage in this study, travel back in time with me to one of your early Christmas mornings; infused with that same child-like exuberance. However, this time, let’s view the brightly wrapped packages under the tree with spiritual eyes and envision the giver as God the Father. May we relish each precious present as we open *Twelve Gifts of Christmas From our Heavenly Father*.

Lesson 1

Jesus Christ – The First Gift of Christmas

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, esus Christ, overflow to the many! (Romans 5:15)

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me,
a Savior, my source of liberty.

Observation

Twelve Gifts of Christmas From Our Heavenly Father, chapters 1 through 3, discuss the origin and development of the Christmas holiday. They also identify Jesus Christ as the first gift of Christmas. The author has stated:

“My memories of the Christmas season include wonderful times of family gatherings, plentiful food, and ample presents. Though my childhood is long gone, those early memories remain vivid. I clearly remember the excitement and anticipation of opening presents. However, that excitement didn't last long after Christmas morning had passed. I appreciated some gifts more than others. I certainly enjoyed the toy dump truck far longer than the sweater I received.”¹

What were some of your best memories of Christmas as a child? What were some of your best memories of Christmas as an adult? How, if at all, has becoming a Christian altered your view of Christmas?

Contemplation

(Suggested reading – Matthew 7:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12:4; James 1:17)

1. As a Christian, do you believe Christmas is about gifts? Why or why not?

(Suggested reading – Matthew 2:1-2 & 9:27; John 6:42)

2. By what worldly names or titles was Jesus known during his time on Earth?

(Suggested reading – Matthew 1:23; Luke 2:11; John 5:25)

3. By what heavenly names or titles was Jesus known during his time on Earth?

(Suggested reading – Matthew 27:50; Luke 2:4-7; Hebrews 2:17)

4. What scriptural evidence indicates Jesus was human?

(Suggested reading – John 1:1 & 18; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:15-19)

5. What scriptural evidence indicates Jesus is divine?

(Suggested reading – Isaiah 9:6; John 4:10; Romans 5:15-17)

6. Does the Bible describe Jesus Christ as a gift to humanity?

Inspiration

George C. Lorimer (1838 – 1904), born in Edinburgh, Scotland, came to the United States in 1856, attended college, and became a Baptist minister pastoring churches in Kentucky, New York, Illinois, and Massachusetts. In his book, *The Galilean*, he writes:

“He [John] is mystical, transcendental, theological. His Christ is from the first [the] Divine incarnation, concerning whom it is more important to know that he is the Son of God than that he is the Son of Mary. He is a being on the Earth, but not of the Earth, moving about in heavenly fellowships, angels descending and ascending on him, and voices of the Eternal guiding and comforting him. The servant of Mark’s Gospel that rises to kingship in Matthew’s, and the king of Matthew’s Gospel that attains to the higher rank of brother in Luke’s, here transcends all human limitations, and appears in alliance with God.”²

“To her [the church] Jesus is, as Irenaeus expresses it, “Born and unborn, God in flesh, life in death, born of Mary, born of God.” As Bishop Hopkins has it, she [the church] declares, “In him omnipotence became weak, eternity mortal, innocence itself guilty, God man, the Creator a creature, the Maker of all his own workmanship, a King without regalia, God without the thunder; a child, without the heart for play. . . .”

Yes, according to the Inspired Book, Jesus is the meeting place of two worlds—the human world and the divine. The essence of all being centers in him. Godhood and manhood are united in him forever. Limitless ubiquity [being everywhere] enshrines itself in limitable space, measureless eternity enfolds itself in measurable time, incomprehensible infinity clothes itself with comprehensible finitude [having limits or bounds]. The inscrutable [impossible to understand] becomes the familiar, the unknown the known, the invisible the visible, the spiritual the incarnate, and the total result is Jesus of Nazareth.”³

Response

(Suggested reading – Matthew 1:21 & 2:22-23; Mark 1:23-24; John 19:19-20)

7. What significance, if any, do you attach to the name “Jesus of Nazareth”?

Preface to question 8 – The Greek word for “Christ” and the Hebrew word for “Messiah” have the same meaning; “anointed.” According to the *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*:

Christ—meaning anointed, is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word rendered “Messiah,” the official title of our Lord. . . . It denotes that he was anointed or consecrated to his great redemptive work as Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. . . . Jesus the Christ is Jesus the Great Deliverer, the Anointed One, the Savior of men. This name denotes that Jesus was divinely appointed, commissioned, and accredited as the Savior of men.⁴

Messiah—(Hebrew mashiah) meaning anointed, is rendered “Christos.” Thus priests, prophets, and kings were anointed with oil, and so consecrated to their respective offices. The great Messiah is anointed “above his fellows;” i.e., he embraces in himself all the three offices. . . . Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the great Deliverer who was to come.⁵

(Suggested reading – Daniel 9:21-26; Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-21; 1 John 2:20, 27)

8. What significance, if any, do you attach to the names “Christ” and “Messiah”?

(Suggested reading – Matthew 9:6, 14:32-33 & 26:64; Mark 3:11; Luke 1:35; John 3:13)

9. Compare and contrast two titles of Jesus; "Son of Man" and "Son of God."

Preface to question 10 – An abbreviated history of the divided Kingdom of Israel is provided here to show some factors prompting the Israelites, in the thousand years before Christ, to increasingly anticipate the “one who is to come.”

- God promised David, the second king of the united Kingdom of Israel [c. 1005–965 BC], “Your throne will be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16).
- During the reign of Rehoboam, the grandson of David through Solomon; the united Kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms; Judah [Southern Kingdom] and Israel [Northern Kingdom]. Rehoboam remained king of Judah [Southern Kingdom] and Jeroboam became king of Israel [Northern Kingdom] (1 Kings 12:1, 12-21).

- Hoshea, [the last king of Israel, (Northern Kingdom) @ 732–721 BC], rebelled against Shalmaneser king of Assyria. Sometime around 721 BC, the Assyrians captured Samaria and deported many Israelites to Assyria [@ 722 BC] (2 Kings 17:1, 4-6).
- This marked the end of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- Zedekiah, [the last king of Judah, Southern Kingdom], was overthrown by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar; resulting in deportations of Judah’s people [@ 587 BC] to Babylon (2 Kings 24:18) (2 Kings 25:1, 2, 5 & 11-12).
- This marked the end of the Southern Kingdom.
- During the eighth through the sixth centuries BC, prophets foretold the “one who is to come.” From the earlier to the later writings, these mouthpieces of God said:
 - “One who will be ruler over Israel. . . He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. . . His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth” (Micah 5:2, 4).
 - “I will raise up . . . a righteous Branch, a King. . . He will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior” (Jeremiah 23:5-6).
 - “The Anointed One, the ruler, comes. . . It [Jerusalem] will be rebuilt. . . The Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing” (Daniel 9:25–26).

(Suggested reading – Matthew 11:2-3; John 11:27; Acts 19:4)

10. What passages are there in Scripture, if any, indicating the first century Israelites were looking for an “anointed one” or “one who is to come?”

(Suggested reading – Matthew 13:13-15; Luke 23:3; John 6:14-15, 12:12-15 & 18:36)

11. Why did the overwhelming majority of those who were looking for the “one who is to come” reject Jesus’s identity and message?

(Suggested reading – same as for questions 4 and 5)

12. So, was Jesus Christ fully human only; fully divine only; part human and part divine; or fully human as well as fully divine? How did you make your determination from the Bible?

Practical Points to Consider

Unanswered or Additional Relevant Questions

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank you that you sent Jesus Christ from heaven to Earth, born of a woman, to introduce yourself to us and give us your gospel message. Lord, my limited mind cannot truly comprehend fully human and fully divine at the same time in one person. I accept your Word as truth, though I don't understand it completely. Help me to realize everything you intended me to know about you and your Son, Jesus. Lead me into a closer relationship with you and your Son as I study your Word. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.

