

## Christmas Bible Study The Bethlehem Shepherds

The publication of the King James version of the Bible, translated between 1603 and 1611, coincided with an extraordinary flowering of English literature and is universally acknowledged as the greatest influence on English-language literature in history. Now, world-class literary writers introduce the book of the King James Bible in a series of beautifully designed, small-format volumes. The introducers' passionate, provocative, and personal engagements with the spirituality and the language of the text make the Bible come alive as a stunning work of literature and remind us of its overwhelming contemporary relevance.

Every gift from God reveals his love, but no gift reveals his love more than the gifts of the cross. Have we taken time to open these? As we do, we find that Jesus did it all just for us.

Tracing the possible origins of the Magi's star, the author uses an ancient Roman coin as a starting point to investigate the possibility that the legendary star may in fact have been an eclipse of Jupiter and the star Aries.

Explores the story and meaning of Christmas for believers, and how it marks the beginning of a hope that endures forever.

Inspired by an Advent box and the desire for others to know the truth about Jesus, Carol B. Weaver wrote *The Heart of Bethlehem: A Twenty-Five Day Journey of Faith for the Christmas Season*. Each day's devotional walks you through the story of Jesus's birth as told in the Bible. Whether you journey alone or with your family, the historical background, application, and prayers can add depth and understanding to your holiday season. Discover for yourself the transforming power of God's love and its impact on the world today. Just add a Bible, a desire for more, and a little time.

**DISCOVER THE TRUE CHRISTMAS STORY** Even when he was an atheist, Lee Strobel enjoyed the Christmas season—the gift-giving, holiday parties, and being with friends and family. But after his wife became a Christian, Lee started to investigate the real meaning behind all those nativity scenes he had seen outside of churches. In this four-week study, Lee reveals what he discovered as he sought to separate the holiday from the holy day, the facts from the fantasy, and the truth from the tradition. In each session you will explore: What the Bible actually says about Jesus' birth and how you can know it is accurate Whether the Christmas story actually happened or developed from the myths of the day The Bible's claim that Jesus was born of a virgin and why it is important to your faith How Jesus—and only Jesus—fulfilled hundreds of biblical prophecies about the Messiah The Case for Christmas will invite you to look beyond the familiar traditions of the season, challenge you to examine the evidence for yourself, and consider why Christmas really matters. Sessions include: Setting the Record Straight Beneath the Fake News A Mind-Boggling Proposition The Prophetic Fingerprint Designed for use with The Case for Christmas Video Study/The Case for Easter Video Study (sold separately).

Imagine Jesus from Mary's point of view—proud of her son, in awe of his gifts and mission, guided by love for him as a person and so much more. In this book, Adam Hamilton begins at the end, with Mary at the crucifixion and resurrection; travels back in time as she witnesses his life and ministry; and ends at the beginning, with the Christ child born in a stable, Mary's beautiful baby. This year, experience Advent and Christmas with Mary. The five sessions are: 1. Beginning with the End 2. The Piercing of Mary's Soul 3. Amazed, Astounded, and Astonished 4. Mary, Full of Grace 5. It Was Not a Silent Night

Who was in the manger that first Christmas morning? Some say he would become a great moral leader. Others, a social critic. Still others view Jesus as a profound philosopher, a rabbi, a feminist, a prophet, and more. Many are convinced he was the divine Son of God. Who was he—really? And how can you know for sure? Consulting experts on the Bible, archaeology, and messianic prophecy, Lee Strobel searches out the true identity of the child in the manger. Join him as he asks the tough, pointed questions you'd expect from an award-winning legal journalist. If Jesus really was God in the flesh, then there ought to be credible evidence, including Eyewitness Evidence—Can the biographies of Jesus be trusted? Scientific Evidence—What does archaeology reveal? Profile Evidence—Did Jesus fulfill the attributes of God? Fingerprint Evidence—Did Jesus uniquely match the identity of the Messiah? The Case for Christmas invites you to consider why Christmas matters in the first place. Somewhere beyond the traditions of the holiday lies the truth. It may be more compelling than you've realized. Weigh the facts . . . and decide for yourself.

Christmas or confusion, Bethlehem or bedlam . . . Which will you choose this year? The truth is, we don't have to choose, because Christmas always happens right in the midst of our chaos. God breaks into our noisy disorder and is made known in Jesus Christ. Christmas and confusion—weren't they intimately related at the first Christmas when Jesus was born? Sometimes we forget that. That's what this study is about—how Christ breaks into our chaos and confusion and brings Christmas—how Bethlehem always happens in the midst of bedlam. The re-introduction of this all-church Advent study, which features a new Leader Guide and DVD, has five sessions—one for each Sunday of Advent and one for Christmas. Each chapter includes questions for reflection and discussion, a brief prayer, a focus for the week, and six daily Bible readings for personal devotional time during the week. The Leader Guide is designed to be used alongside the DVD. It will enable a small group leader to facilitate a weekly discussion about Finding Bethlehem in the Midst of Bedlam using the five DVD sessions as its starting point. Questions and activities will guide group participants to discuss and understand each chapter in greater depth. The DVD and Leader Guide are not a substitute for the book, but a guide for discussing the book in small groups.

Can the Bible be approached both as sacred scripture and as a historical and literary text? For many people, it must be one or the other. How can we read the Bible both ways? *The Bible and the Believer* brings together three distinguished biblical scholars—one Jewish, one Catholic, and one Protestant—to illustrate how to read the Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament critically and religiously. Marc Zvi Brettler, Peter Enns, and Daniel J. Harrington tackle a dilemma that not only haunts biblical scholarship today, but also disturbs students and others exposed to biblical criticism for the first time, either in university courses or through their own reading. Failure to resolve these conflicting interpretive strategies often results in rejection of either the critical approach or the religious approach—or both. But the authors demonstrate how biblical criticism—the process of establishing the original contextual meaning of biblical texts with the tools of literary and historical analysis—need not undermine religious interpretations of the Bible, but can in fact enhance them. They show how awareness of new archeological evidence, cultural context, literary form, and other tools of historical criticism can provide the necessary preparation for a sound religious reading. And they argue that the challenges such study raises for religious belief should be brought into conversation with religious tradition rather than deemed grounds for dismissing either that tradition or biblical criticism. Guiding readers through the history of biblical exegesis within the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant faith traditions, *The Bible and the Believer* bridges an age-old gap between critical and religious approaches to the Old Testament.

Each Christmas, adults and children alike delight at the story of the kings from the East who followed the star to Bethlehem to offer gifts to the newborn Christ. While this familiar tale is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, another little-known version later emerged that claimed to be the eyewitness account of the wise men. This ancient manuscript has lain hidden for centuries in the vaults of the Vatican Library, but through the determined persistence of a young scholar, Brent Landau, this astonishing discovery has been translated into English for the very first time as the Revelation of the Magi. Everything we know about the wise men is based on only a few verses from the Bible. With the Revelation of the Magi, we can now read the story from the Magi's perspective. Readers will learn of the Magi's prophecies of God's incarnation from the beginning of time, their startling visitation in the form of a star, the teachings they receive from the baby Jesus, and the wise men's joyous return to their homeland to spread the good news. This ancient version of the Christmas story is guaranteed to astonish and delight. It will also raise larger questions of the significance and meaning of Christ's birth, and the mission to spread the good news to every corner of the globe. All the drama and intrigue of the brief description of Jesus's birth in the Bible is filled out in greater, more colorful detail, offering for the first time the complete story of these beloved characters.

Spiritual beings populate the stories of Scripture. Angels singing. Demons infecting. Heavenly hosts fighting . . . Ignore the armies of God and Satan and you ignore the heart of Scripture. Ever since the snake tempted Eve in Eden, we've known: there is more to this world than meets the eye. In this classic Christmas novella, best-selling author Max Lucado imagines the spiritual conflict that surrounded the coming of Christ. Surely there was much. If Satan could pre-empt Christ in the cradle, there'd be no Christ on the cross. Journey back in time to the very throne of God ... and witness firsthand the glory, the wonder, and the battle that took place on the very first Christmas. E-book bonus content: An Angel's Story!

Travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem in a unique look at the birth of Christ.

This holiday season step into the Nativity scene through a hole in time and become an active participant in the true Christmas Story! Join this interactive Bible Study and move close to the events and people surrounding the Advent of Christ. You will have the opportunity to be one of the marginalized shepherds, the concerned citizens of Jerusalem and the mysterious but powerful Magi. This is not a quiet peek into the manger. The Christmas Story—Step into Scripture, A Bible Study for Advent is an exciting experience watching prophecy unfold in front of you and miracles appear all around you. It is a unique method for understanding and applying scripture. Scripture is the script! The Bible Study is the director but you determine your actions, thoughts, and feelings as:

- A shepherd personally invited by the God of the universe to see his newborn son.
- A Jerusalem citizen, aware that paranoid King Herod could go on one of his killing sprees.
- One of the Internationally, renown Magi. You're not a king but you are well known as a King Maker!
- You—stepping through another hole in time, forward thirty years, listening to The Good shepherd, and watching Jesus in his ministry; HE is the King of Kings! Welcome to The Christmas Story—Step into Scripture, A Bible Study for Advent!

"[Bethlehem] brings within reach 11,000 years of history, centering on the beloved town's unique place in the world. Blincoe's love of Bethlehem is compelling, even as he does not shy away from the complexities of its chronicle." -- President Jimmy Carter Bethlehem is so suffused with history and myth that it feels like an unreal city even to those who call it home. For many, Bethlehem remains the little town at the edge of the desert described in Biblical accounts. Today, the city is hemmed in by a wall and surrounded by forty-one Israeli settlements and hostile settlers and soldiers. Nicholas Blincoe tells the town's history through the visceral experience of living there, taking readers through its stone streets and desert wadis, its monasteries, aqueducts, and orchards to show the city from every angle and era. His portrait of Bethlehem sheds light on one of the world's most intractable political problems, and he maintains that if the long thread winding back to the city's ancient past is severed, the chances of an end to the Palestine-Israel conflict will be lost with it.

A remarkable gift can arrive in an unremarkable package. One did in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago. No one expected God to come the way he did. Yet the way he came was every bit as important as the coming itself. The manger is the message. In this four-session video Bible study, Max Lucado explores how the One who made everything chose to make himself nothing for us. He experienced hunger and thirst. He went through the stages of human development. He was taught to walk, stand, and wash his face. He was completely and genuinely human. Because of Bethlehem, we no longer have marks on our record . . . just grace. We have the promise that God is always near us, always for us, always within us—and that we have a friend and Savior in heaven. Long after the guests have left, the carolers have gone home, and the lights have come down, these promises endure. The Because of Bethlehem Study Guide includes video discussion questions, Bible exploration, and personal study and reflection materials for in-between sessions. Session Titles: God Has a Face Worship Works Wonders God Guides the Wise Every Heart a Manger Designed for use with Because of Bethlehem: A DVD Study 9780310687849 (sold separately). The DVD is a two-disc set for Christmas and Easter.

Why should we care about heaven? -- What is heaven like? -- When does a person go to heaven? -- Where is heaven? -- Who goes to heaven?

??? The story of Christmas like you've never heard before ??? The Bible teaches us the real story of Christmas. The problem is people have taken this story and added on to it. Cultures have added on to it. It's passed through countries, and they've tacked on their little spin. We have thousands of years of a Christmas that is built around legends and myths. The Christmas we know is, in places, more a fairytale. It's an inspiring one for sure. But a fairytale, nonetheless. When you begin to unwrap the many layers of the first Christmas, you begin to see that there's more to Christmas than meets the eye. God is giving us a message—a gift to unwrap. This book helps us slow down and unpack the layers so we can see just how beautiful this gift really is. This is the story of Christmas. Christmas: God's gift to us. This book is a stand-alone title of the Organic Faith series.

In our consumer culture, it can be difficult to help our kids understand the true meaning of the Christmas season. In *Celebrating Advent*, author Ann Hibbard has created a way for parents to set aside a daily time during Advent to talk with their kids about the spiritual meaning the season holds. She shares practical steps that you can take to make Christmas a more meaningful, happy experience for your family. Inspiring and creative family devotions provide a moment of peace and reflection for each evening of Advent, while fun and inexpensive project ideas help parents focus their kids' attention on what really matters at Christmas: Christ.

Because of Bethlehem Study Guide Love is Born, Hope is Here Harper Christian Resources

Tonight a king will be born, and all the stars in heaven are competing to see who can shine the brightest for him. But when the stars see the poor family huddling in the shabby stable, they begin to think that this baby couldn't be a king after all! That is, all the stars except the smallest, loneliest star in the sky, Little Star. He recognizes the baby Jesus as the King of kings and understands His special message of love. Read on to discover the extraordinary way Little Star serves his King on that cold, dark night. Certain to become a Christmas classic, this delightful tale connects the star atop the Christmas tree to the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of Jesus.

In this four-week Advent study, author Richard B. Wilke focuses on people in the story of Christ's birth. There are those we associate with the joy and celebration of Christmas—the wise men, the shepherds, and Joseph. Yet the author reminds us not to forget that the evil King Herod is also part of the Christmas story, and how it is because there is evil in our world that we so desperately needed—and need—a Savior. Each lesson includes a key scripture, brief reflection, questions to discuss, a suggested Christmas carol, and a prayer. Table of Contents: First Week of Advent Let's Keep Herod in Christmas (Matthew 2:1, 7-8, 16-18) Second Week of Advent Let's Keep the Wise Men in Christmas (Matthew 2:1-12) Third Week of Advent Let's Keep Joseph in Christmas (Matthew 1:18-25; 2:13-15, 19-23) Fourth Week of Advent Let's Keep the Shepherds in Christmas (Luke 2:8-20)

This eBook includes the full text of the book plus the Max Lucado novella, *An Angel's Story*. For some, Christmas is a time of excitement, celebration, and family, while for others it is a time of loneliness, grief, and loss. No matter what this season holds for you, the promise of Christmas will bring you a lifetime of hope. Christmas begins what Easter celebrates. The child in the cradle becomes the King on the cross. Because of Bethlehem, we have a Savior in heaven. These are the heart shaping promises of Christmas. Long after the guests have left, the carolers have gone home, and the lights have come down, these promises endure. No one expected God to come the way he did. Yet the way he came was every bit as important as the coming itself. The manger is the message. In the midst of your hectic Christmas season, Max will help you: Rekindle your connection to the Christ of Christmas who offers lasting hope. Lay down your endless Christmas to-do list and receive what Jesus has already done. Heal your heartache by embracing the God who is always near you, always for you, and always in you. As you curl up in a comfortable spot and look into the odd, wonderful story of Bethlehem, may you find enduring hope for all seasons of your life. Advent Devotional Guide included.

Celebrate these stories at home or in the classroom: - The annunciation to Mary- The birth of Jesus- The coming of the shepherds- The flight into Egypt- The visit of the Magi- And more!

Star of the King presents a detailed Bible study on the Star of Bethlehem, revealing how popular astronomical theories have distorted Bible facts. You will learn about: How the Ordinances of God regulate nature; How God and Satan can manipulate nature; The purpose and origin of signs and wonders; How the nation of Israel relates to the appearance of the Star; Details on angels, fallen angels, mysterious appearances of God and more! Illustrated - Indexed. Also but Jeffrey W. Mardis - *ALIENS, ANGELS & OUTER SPACE! A Biblical Investigation into Life Beyond Earth and WHAT DWELLS BEYOND: The Bible Believer's Handbook to Understanding Life in the Universe - Second Edition.*

Every year, millions of people around the globe celebrate Christmas. But what does it all mean? Why did God choose a young virgin named Mary and a simple carpenter named Joseph to bring his only Son into the world? Why was the Son of God born in a lowly manger in a small town called Bethlehem? Who was this infant named Jesus, the One prophecies foretold would save the world from sin and suffering? And what does this nativity story mean for us today? Drawing from both the Old and New Testaments, noted pastor and theologian David Jeremiah provides answers to 25 of the most thought-provoking questions surrounding the most pivotal moment in human history--the birth of Jesus Christ.

Every gift from God reveals his love, but no gift reveals his love more than the gifts of the cross. Have we taken time to open these? As we do, we find that Jesus did it all just for us. This pack contains one Lent Study Guide, one Advent Study Guide, and one DVD.

Drawing on the biblical text and using the latest astronomical research, this book presents compelling evidence that the historic star of Bethlehem that accompanied Christ's birth was actually a great comet. "Who could argue with the message the authors draw from the Bible's Christmas stories? Light in the darkest time of the year, hope in a period of creeping despair—these are powerful and universal themes that can give everyone a stake in Christmas." —USA Today In *The First Christmas* Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan—top Jesus scholars and authors of *The Last Week*—help us see the real Christmas story buried in the familiar Bible accounts. Basing their interpretations on the two nativity narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Borg and Crossan focus on the literal story—the inner truth rather than the historical facts—to offer a clear and uplifting message of hope and peace. With *The First Christmas* readers get a fresh, deep, and new understanding of the nativity story, enabling us to better appreciate the powerful message of the Gospels.

Alex Gondola says that in our modern culture we sometimes "experience Christmas at its worst: overcommercialized, expensive, exhausting, nearly devoid of spiritual significance." In this collection of twenty cogent and inspiring sermons for Advent and Christmas, he reminds us of the key to putting the season in its proper perspective -- "Don't forget the child!" For it is only when we are drawn nearer to the child of Bethlehem, celebrating the simple beauties of the stable, that we can escape from the rush of the season into the divine light of saving grace heralded by the birth of God's Son. This volume is an exceptional source of inspiration for sermon preparation, but it's also excellent for personal devotions exploring the meaning of Advent and Christmas. It's a great Christmas gift! "Alex Gondola has given us a lovely round of Advent and Christmas meditations. They are reflective and delightful. They shine with little gems of human interest stories that can light our path throughout the whole year." Catherine Clark Kroeger Editor, "Study Bible for Women" (The New Testament) "This outstanding collection of Advent/Christmas sermons brings rich insights and new appreciation for the wondrous story of Christ's coming. Whether you are in a pew or in a pulpit on Sundays, you will be grateful for this book." Dr. William P. Baker Senior Pastor Emeritus, First Presbyterian Church Allentown, Pennsylvania Author of "Everyone in the Bible," "Who's Who in Church History," "A Savior for All Seasons" "Alex Gondola, a master preacher, in this collection of sermons, with wonderful illustrations, can assist the working preacher expand her or his creative imagination for Advent and Christmas preaching." Dr. Benjamin Griffin President and Professor of Liturgics Andover Newton Theological School Alex A. Gondola Jr. is senior pastor of Dennis Union Church (United Church of Christ) in Dennis, Massachusetts (located on Cape Cod). He has also served congregations in Springfield, Massachusetts; Rome, New York; and Utica, New York. Gondola is a graduate of Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania (B.A.), Andover Newton Theological School (M.Div.), and Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York (D.Min.), and has also studied at the New College of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh (Scotland). He is the author of "Come As You Are" (CSS), and contributed several stewardship sermons to the CSS anthology" From Every

Angle."

This charming devotional book takes readers on an inward journey to the miracle of Christ's birth in the little town of Bethlehem. Many who will read this book probably haven't actually traveled to Bethlehem. "But that is of little consequence to the adventure of arriving there, to the adventure of discovery that awaits the mystery and wonder in the birth of Jesus," Todd Outcalt writes. The devotions are both personal and challenging. "I hope readers can discover something new that they may have overlooked in the old, old story," says Outcalt. It's important to stay alert on the pilgrimage to Bethlehem, Outcalt reminds readers, for they may encounter Jesus in unexpected moments and surprising people or when they are most tired or confused. "The way to Bethlehem is saturated with stops and starts, with both darkness and light, with angels and the common touch of shepherds," writes Outcalt. Let Us Go Now to Bethlehem contains devotions for the 28 days of Advent, the 12 days of Christmas, and the day of Epiphany. For small-group leaders, the book includes a 6-week study guide with weekly questions for reflection and conversation, a suggested scripture passage for each week, and an invitation to ponder the happenings of that week. As the Gospel of Luke attests, Let Us Go Now to Bethlehem is both an expectant declaration filled with mystery and a declaration of faith. Each day can offer these same expectations and wonders for readers if they open themselves to awe and joy.

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Prepare O Bethlehem is a collection of pastoral reflections on the Scripture readings that appear during the Christmas-Epiphany season. At Christmas, we prepare to once again receive Jesus into our lives, first as an infant, but also as our Lord, King and Savior. Ultimately, however, we receive him as the Word made flesh and we have "beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." (John 1:14). The Word comes to us through the very words of scripture, for it is here, in the Old and New Testaments where we encounter the good news of our salvation. As we read through the scripture lessons for Christmas, Epiphany, and the Meeting of the Lord we are reminded that we are given the greatest gift of all, who is Jesus Christ himself. Unfortunately, the true "reason for the season" is often forgotten as we are bombarded by a myriad of holiday planning, parties, and activities that surround the holiday season. Hopefully we can take a few precious moments out of our busy schedules and patiently read the Word of God as we once again prepare to meet our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

In this four-session video-based study, bestselling author Max Lucado reveals that Because of Bethlehem, we have the promise that God is always near us, always for us, and always with us.

Here is an exciting Christmas drama informed by Kenneth Bailey's career as a renowned biblical scholar and by his years of living in the Middle East. The drama (featuring 30 minutes without music or 50 minutes with music) is biblically accurate, heartwarming and perfectly suited for church performance.

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Counting down from twelve drowsy doves to one small baby lying on a bed of straw, the story of Christ's birth in Bethlehem is told in pictures and rhyming text.

"This book is meant to be an introduction only - a starting point to a biblical view of the universe. . . . Who knows what amazing truths are waiting to be discovered if only the shackles of secular thinking are removed. Now is the time of discovery..." Take a breathtaking look at the universe that is comprehensive guide to the heavens! Sit back and explore the world at your fingertips in this book which: Explains the scale and size of the universe that is hard for our minds to imagine - yet can only indicate the Master's hand at work. Over 50 full-color, rarely seen photos of stars, nebulae, and galaxies. Filled with facts that challenge secular theories and models of the universe - how it began and how it continues to amaze the scientific community. Explores numerous evidences that point to a young universe: magnetic poles of planets, the spiral shape of galaxies, comets and how long scientists think they can last, and much more. With a doctorate in astrophysics from the University of Colorado, Dr. Jason Lisle is your guide to the universe beyond our world in this remarkable book. Step out among the stars and experience the truly awesome power of God through this glimpse of His vast creation.

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