

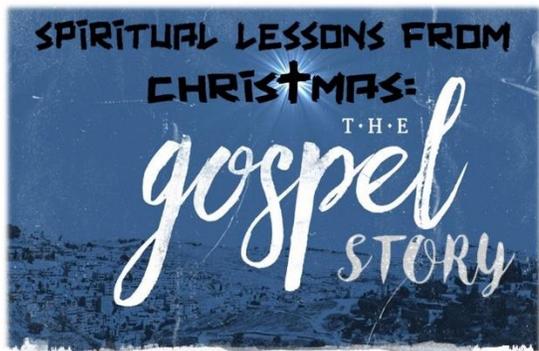
GULF SHORES

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Gulf Shores, AL

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

Prepared by Ray Reynolds



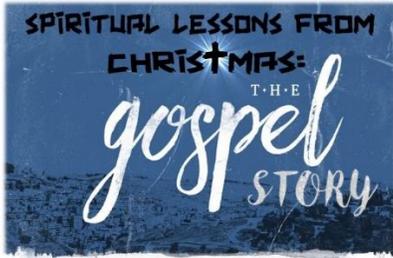
GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bible Class Study Guide (by Ray Reynolds)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON OUTLINES	PAGE
1) <i>The Christmas Season</i>	3
2) <i>The Christmas Tree</i>	4
3) <i>The Christmas Lights</i>	5
4) <i>The Christmas Nativity</i>	6
5) <i>The Christmas Child</i>	7
6) <i>The Christmas Visitors</i>	8
7) <i>The Christmas Carols</i>	9
8) <i>The Christmas Gifts</i>	10
9) <i>The Christmas Spirit</i>	11

This study guide was created by Ray Reynolds for use in Bible classes at the Gulf Shores Church of Christ (Gulf Shores, AL). The material presented in this class series will be gleaned from personal notes, the New King James Study Bible, Dr. Coy Roper, Dr. Steven Guy, Dr. Bill Bagents, Dr. Edgar Elliott, Mark Copeland, J. Vernon McGee and other sources.



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds

Lesson #1 - The Christmas Season

Introduction: For some people this is an exciting time of the year. They love the wrapping paper, bows, boxes, presents, cookies, candies, and pies. Some people just can't wait to start trimming their trees putting up Christmas lights, and wrap their mailbox in lights. Many people love to hear Christmas songs and carols in every store and on every radio station. They get excited when they see Rudolph, Frosty, and Santa Claus decorations. They buy inflatable decorations, wreaths and mistletoe. It's a time for hot chocolate, fruitcake, gingerbread houses and eggnog. We break out the Christmas cards, photo albums and handmade ornaments. Who doesn't love Christmas!?

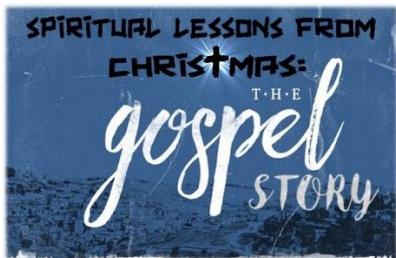
You might be surprised to know that there are some people this time of year that are more like the Grinch, Ebenezer Scrooge (A Christmas Carol), Old Man Marley (Home Alone) or Mr. Potter (It's A Wonderful Life). These people might remind you of the Cranks in the book "Skipping Christmas" by John Grisham. They made a movie based on that book called "Christmas with the Cranks." I'm not sure why some people hate Christmas, but I think it could be traced to about three different reasons: 1) they were trained from birth hate Christmas, 2) they were raised in poverty and watched every other child receive gifts, while they had very little, 3) their religion prevents them from keeping the Christmas holiday. There may be other reasons why, but I think those three basically summarize the issue at hand.

One group that hates Christmas is secular atheists, because they hate Christians. Did you know that American atheist organizations will spend millions to put up anti-Christmas signs and run negative ads during this season? They want you to say Happy Holidays, stop caroling, rename your tree a Holiday tree, and exchange CHRISTmas for X-mas. For the past decade there's been a war on religious holidays, but especially on Christmas. Because Christ's name is in the holiday. Therefore, we need to teach spiritual lessons during Christmas. Every item discussed in this series, relating to Christmas, will be connected to "The Gospel Story." Let's enjoy this season together....

Discussion:

- I. *The Christmas Tree - What does it mean? What spiritual lessons can be learned?*
- II. *The Christmas Lights - What does it mean? What spiritual lessons can be learned?*
- III. *The Christmas Nativity - What does it mean? What spiritual lessons can be learned?*
- IV. *The Christmas Child - What does it mean? What spiritual lessons can be learned?*
- V. *The Christmas Visitors - What does it mean? What spiritual lessons can be learned?*
- VI. *The Christmas Carols - What does it mean? What spiritual lessons can be learned?*
- VII. *The Christmas Gifts - What does it mean? What spiritual lessons can be learned?*
- VIII. *The Christmas Spirit - What does it mean? What spiritual lessons can be learned?*

Conclusion: Christmas may be over commercialized. Christmas may have a heightened secular appeal and may be corrupted by false concepts. Christmas may be in the wrong season, because we are almost certain that the so-called "Birthday of Jesus" may be way off. Christmas may be a sad and depressing holiday to some people. However, there is a fantastic old song that says, "Little is Much, When God Is In It." Far be it from me to hinder or discourage others who see Christ in Christmas or in anything else. If Christ is in it, at least He is being proclaimed (**Philippians 1:15-18**). We get a glimpse of God during this time of year! God bless you and merry Christmas! How can we share the gospel story during Christmas? Will you share spiritual lessons? Have you received the gift of salvation through Jesus?



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds

Lesson #2 - The Christmas Tree

Introduction: It is Christmas time! I want to share spiritual lessons we can learn through the Christmas season. I want us to see how everything connects back to the gospel story. Each of us have opportunities to talk about Christ during this holiday season and God has given us many visual reminders of His saving work. Jesus did a marvelous job teaching object lessons throughout His ministry. We need to learn from Him. Our text for today will be **Isaiah 53:1-6**. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Compassion - Lessons From Our Heart

- Our heart can be full of love for God (**Deuteronomy 6:5**).
- Our heart can have confidence (**Psalms 27:3**).
- Our heart can repent and change (**Psalms 51:17**).
- Our heart can be guarded (**Proverbs 4:23**).
- Our heart can be pure (**Matthew 5:8**).

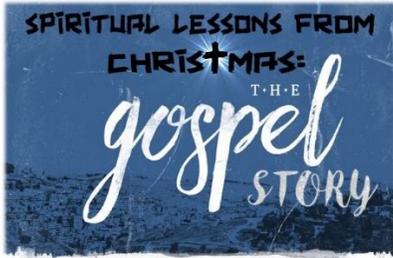
II. Culture - Lessons From Our World

- Our culture does not value souls (**Mark 8:34-38**).
- Our culture does not know Jesus (**John 15:18**).
- Our culture does not know peace (**John 14:27**).
- Our culture does not know the gospel (**Acts 1:8**).
- Our culture does not have true wisdom (**I Corinthians 2:1-16**).

III. Commission - Lessons From Our Ministry

- Our ministry is our work (**Exodus 35:30-31**).
- Our ministry should be clear (**Luke 16:13**).
- Our ministry is how we use our gifts (**Romans 12:3-8**).
- Our ministry is a calling (**Ephesians 4:1**).
- Our ministry builds up the church (**Ephesians 4:11-16**).

Conclusion: What brought peace during the famous "Christmas Truce of 1914." Trees? Lights? Candles? Gifts? No. Only hope in Jesus Christ. Trees are a sign of hope to the Christian (**Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29, Galatians 3:13, I Peter 2:24**), but the real hope is in Jesus. This is a season for reflection and meditation. Think about good things (**Philippians 4:8**). If Christ is in CHRISTmas, at least He is being proclaimed to the world (**Philippians 1:15-18, Romans 14:6-9**). We get a glimpse of God during this time of year! How can we share the gospel story during Christmas? Will you share spiritual lessons you have learned? Have you received the gift of salvation through Jesus?



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds

Lesson #3 - The Christmas Lights

Introduction: It is Christmas time! I want to share spiritual lessons we can learn through the Christmas season. I want us to see how everything connects back to the gospel story. Each of us have opportunities to talk about Christ during this holiday season and God has given us many visual reminders of His saving work. Jesus did a marvelous job teaching object lessons throughout His ministry. We need to learn from Him. Our text for today will be **Isaiah 9:1-7**. Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Illumination - The Light Sparks

- The light for those in the shadow of death (**Psalm 23:4**).
- The light for those living in disobedience (**Matthew 4:12-17**).
- The light for those in the darkness (**John 1:4-9, 9:1-41, 12:46**).
- The light for those who try to deceive (**I Corinthians 4:3-6**).
- The light for those who are headed to destruction (**I Peter 2:9**).

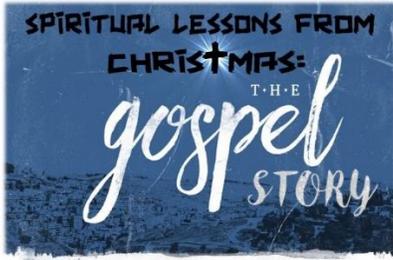
II. Liberation - The Light Shines

- The light for the end of oppression (**Judges 6-7**).
- The light for the end of war (**Psalms 46:9**).
- The light for the end of neglect (**Luke 4:16-21**).
- The light for the end of bondage (**Hebrews 2:14-16**).
- The light for the end of ignorance (**I John 1:5-7**).

III. Incarnation - The Light Spreads

- The light for the individual (**Matthew 5:13-16**).
- The light of the resurrection (**I Corinthians 15:20-28**).
- The light for the family (**Ephesians 5:8-33**).
- The light for the government (**Titus 3:1-7**).
- The light for the church (**Revelation 1-3, 11:15**).

Conclusion: Remember the story of Darnell Barton from Buffalo, NY. What would happen if you started looking for people to help? People need your light. The Lord restores and revives His people despite how desperate the situation seems. In Isaiah's time, the people of Israel seemed to be "going under" and falling apart but there was reason to hope; a light was coming. John said, "*Don't be overwhelmed by the dark world around you; live in the light*" (**I John 1:7**). We need to live in the light and we need to share the light! How can we share the gospel story during Christmas? Will you share spiritual lessons you have learned? Are you walking in the light? Are you shining your light? Have you received salvation through Jesus?



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds
Lesson #4 - *The Christmas Nativity*

Introduction: It is Christmas time! I want to share spiritual lessons we can learn through the Christmas season. I want us to see how everything connects back to the gospel story. Each of us have opportunities to talk about Christ during this holiday season and God has given us many visual reminders of His saving work. Jesus did a marvelous job teaching object lessons throughout His ministry. We need to learn from Him. Our text for today will be **Isaiah 7:14**. In this lesson we will discuss the Christmas nativity. Let's think about who Jesus really was and why He came to earth. What did people think about Him? How did that compare to what we think of Him now? Isaiah spoke prophetically about Jesus and what Matthew reveals in **Matthew 1:18-25**. An old hymn asks, "Who is He in yonder stall at whose feet the shepherds fall?" That question and its answer are critical. When we see a Christmas nativity, we should obviously think about Jesus. What does it tell us? Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Story of the Virgin Birth (Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:34)

- Matthew states that Mary and Joseph were betrothed, not married.
- Without His deity there is no explanation for the virgin conception and birth.

II. The Specifics of the Angel's Words (Matthew 1:19-20, Luke 2:8-15)

- On learning of Mary's pregnancy, Joseph was discouraged.
- The angels revealed that the child was/is God Himself.

III. The Significance of the Mission (Matthew 1:21, Isaiah 43:11)

- The name *Jesus* means "God saves."
- Jesus' name and mission reveal His deity.

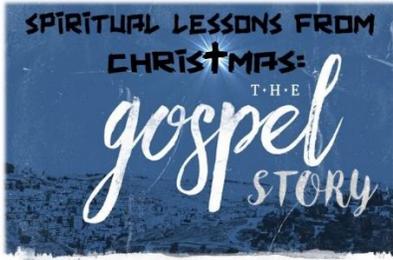
IV. The Synopsis of the Prophecy (Matthew 1:22-23, Isaiah 7:14)

- God's promise was that the virgin would bear a son.
- He was/is a sign God will deliver His people.

V. The Sincerity of the Parents (Matthew 1:24-25, Luke 1:46-55)

- Joseph's faith embraced Jesus' deity.
- His faith was fueled by the fact that this was no ordinary conception.

Conclusion: How should we respond to the Christmas story? Just as Joseph did. In this day of political correctness where Jesus is not to be mentioned, let alone declared to be God, we are ready to declare our Savior's name. Who is that in yonder stall? He is Jesus, Immanuel, God with Us. Our God is in yonder stall. How can we share the gospel story during Christmas? Will you share spiritual lessons you have learned? Are you seeking the truth? Have you received salvation through Jesus?



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds
Lesson #5 - The Christmas Child

Introduction: It is Christmas time! I want to share spiritual lessons we can learn through the Christmas season. I want us to see how everything connects back to the gospel story. **Isaiah 7:14** says, “*The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son, and she will name him Immanuel.*” What does this mean? Let’s study together...

Discussion:

I. What The Prophecy Tells Us

- The Personality of the Messiah = "Wonderful"
Psalm 40:5, 78:4, 107:8, 111:4, 119:27, Psalm 119:129, Isaiah 28:29
- The Profession of the Messiah = "Counselor"
Psalms 37:23, 119:24, Isaiah 40:13, Romans 11:34, John 14:16-17, 16:7, Romans 8:28
- The Power of the Messiah = "Mighty God"
Genesis 3:15, Matthew 28:1ff, John 1:1ff, 10:28, Romans 6:14, I Corinthians 15:20, 55
- The Permanence of the Messiah = "Everlasting Father"
Jeremiah 31:3, Psalm 18:35, Matthew 28:18-20, John 14:16-18, Luke 12:32, II Timothy 1:12, Hebrews 13:8
- The Preeminence of the Messiah = "Prince of Peace"
John 14:27, 16:33, Romans 15:33, 16:20, I Corinthians 14:33, Philippians 4:7, I Thessalonians 5:23

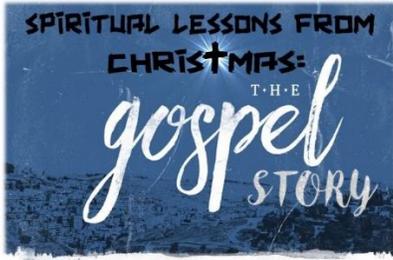
II. What The Bible Tells Us

- Jesus Is Our Judge
Matthew 25:31-32, Luke 12:14, John 5:22-23, 12:48, Acts 10:42, II Timothy 4:1-8
- Jesus Is Eternal
Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1, 1:14, 8:58, 17:5, 17:24, Hebrews 1:8-12, Revelation 1:8
- Jesus Is The Son Of God
Matthew 16:16-18, Mark 1:1, 14:62, John 6:68-69, 19:7, 20:30-31, Romans 1:4
- Jesus Was Undefiled
Matthew 27:24, John 8:45-46, II Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:25-26, I Peter 1:18-19, 2:21-25, I John 3:5
- Jesus Is Our Savior
Matthew 1:21, 20:28, 26:28, Luke 2:11, 19:10, John 1:29, Acts 4:10-12, I Timothy 1:15

III. What Our Heart Tells Us

- We must have strong faith (**Luke 17:6**).
- We must have saving faith (**Romans 3:28**).
- We must have scriptural faith (**Romans 10:17**).
- We must have solid faith (**Ephesians 4:5**).
- We must have faith beyond sight (**Hebrews 11:1**).

Conclusion: How should we respond to the Christmas story? How can we share the gospel story during Christmas? Will you share spiritual lessons you have learned? Are you following your heart? Have you received salvation through Jesus?



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds

Lesson #6 - The Christmas Visitors

Introduction It is Christmas time! I want to share spiritual lessons we can learn through the Christmas season. I want us to see how everything connects back to the gospel story. Each of us have opportunities to talk about Christ during this holiday season and God has given us many visual reminders of His saving work. Jesus did a marvelous job teaching object lessons throughout His ministry. We need to learn from Him. Today we will discuss the Christmas visitors (**Matthew 2:1-12** and **Luke 2:8-20**). Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Shepherds

- Stage #1 From the Shepherds to Jesus (**Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 2:8-20**)
- Stage #2 From Jesus to Paul (**I Corinthians 15:1-11, Galatians 1:11-12**)
- Stage #3 From Paul to Timothy (**I Timothy 6:20, II Timothy 1:13-14**)
- Stage #4 From Timothy to reliable men (**I Corinthians 4:1-2, II Timothy 2:1-2**)
- Stage #5 From reliable men to us (**II Timothy 3:16-17, Matthew 28:18-20**)

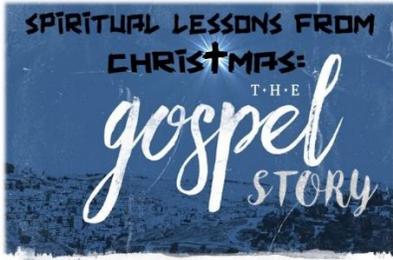
II. The Magi

- Seeking Christ takes effort (**Matthew 6:33**).
- Seeking Christ takes time (**Matthew 7:7**).
- Seeking Christ takes sacrifice (**Philippians 3:1-11**).
- Seeking Christ takes endurance (**Jeremiah 29:13**).
- Seeking Christ brings rewards (**Psalms 16:11**)

III. The Observer

- Believing helps us to become righteous (**Genesis 15:6**).
- Believing should be accompanied by action (**Deuteronomy 27:10**).
- Believing should affect the way we live (**Mark 1:15**).
- Believing should lead us to salvation (**Romans 10:9-10**).
- Believing is more than acknowledging (**James 2:21**).

Conclusion: How should we respond to the Christmas story? What can we learn from the Christmas visitors? How can we share the gospel story during Christmas? Will you share spiritual lessons you have learned? Are you seeking the Lord? Are you giving a message of hope to others? Have you received salvation through Jesus?



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds
Lesson #7 - The Christmas Carols

Introduction It is Christmas time! I want to share spiritual lessons we can learn through the Christmas season. I want us to see how everything connects to the gospel story. Each of us have opportunities to talk about Christ during this season and God has given us many visual reminders of His saving work. Jesus did a marvelous job teaching object lessons throughout His ministry. Today we will discuss Christmas carols (**Luke 2:8-20**). Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. Joy to the World (#659)

AUTHOR: Isaac Watts
DATE: 1719

NOTES:

II. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (#654)

AUTHOR: Charles Wesley
DATE: 1739

NOTES:

III. O, Little Town of Bethlehem (#660)

AUTHOR: Philip Brooks
DATE: 1865

NOTES:

IV. O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

AUTHOR: John Mason Neale
DATE: 1861

NOTES:

V. O Holy Night

AUTHOR: Placide Cappeau de Roquemaure
DATE: 1847

NOTES:

VI. Silent Night, Holy Night (#663)

AUTHOR: Josef Mohr
DATE: 1818

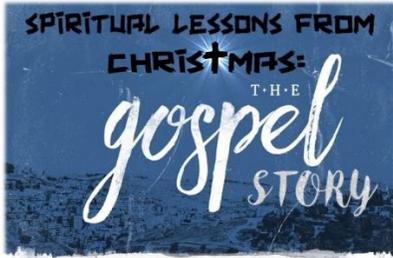
NOTES:

VII. The 12 Days of Christmas

AUTHOR: Unknown
DATE: 1600s

NOTES:

Conclusion: How should we respond to the Christmas story? What can we learn from Christmas carols? How can we share the gospel story during Christmas? Will you share spiritual lessons you have learned? Are you singing praise to the Lord? Are you giving a message of hope to others? Have you received salvation? Will you keep it to yourself?



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds

Lesson #8 - The Christmas Gifts

Introduction It is Christmas time! I want to share spiritual lessons we can learn through the Christmas season. I want us to see how everything connects to the gospel story. Each of us have opportunities to talk about Christ during this season and God has given us many visual reminders of His saving work. Jesus did a marvelous job teaching object lessons in His ministry. Today we will discuss Christmas gifts (**II Corinthians 9:15**). Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. A Mysterious Gift

- It was a mystery to His parents (**Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 2:8-20**).
- It was a mystery to family (**Matthew 2:1-12, Luke 2:8-20**).
- It was a mystery to wise men (**Matthew 2:1-12**).
- It was a mystery to shepherds (**Luke 2:8-2**).

II. A Miraculous Gift

- He was born of virgin (**Isaiah 7:14, 9:6**).
- He was preceded by John (**Isaiah 40:3**).
- He survived Herod's tyranny (**Jeremiah 31:15**).
- He overcame Satan's temptation (**Matthew 4:1-11**).

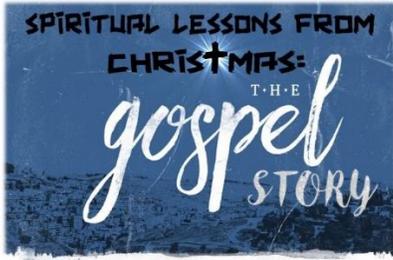
III. A Magnificent Gift

- Eternal life is for those who do God's will (**Matthew 7:21**)
- Eternal life cannot be earned (**Ephesians 2:8-9**)
- Eternal life comes from God (**Titus 1:2**)
- Eternal life gives us hope (**Titus 3:7**)

IV. A Measureless Gift

- God expects us to receive His Son as a gift (**John 3:16**).
- God expects talents to be invested (**Matthew 25:14-30**).
- God expects gifts to be used (**Romans 12:3-8**).
- God expects fruit to be shared (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

Conclusion: How should we respond to the Christmas story? What can we learn from Christmas gifts? How can we share the gospel story during Christmas? Will you share spiritual lessons you have learned? Have you accepted the greatest gift of all? Are you giving a message of hope to others? Have you received salvation? Will you share the gift of Jesus?



GULF SHORES CHURCH OF CHRIST

Series by Ray Reynolds
Lesson #9 - The Christmas Spirit

Introduction It is Christmas time! I want to share spiritual lessons we can learn through the Christmas season. I want us to see how everything connects to the gospel story. Each of us have opportunities to talk about Christ during this season and God has given us many visual reminders of His saving work. Jesus did a marvelous job teaching object lessons in His ministry. Today we will discuss Christmas spirit (**Luke 2:22-40**). Let's study together...

Discussion:

I. The Spirit of Jesus the Christ

- Jesus delivers us from the fear of death (**Hebrews 2:14-15**).
- Jesus delivers us from fury of judgment (**Hebrews 2:16-17**).
- Jesus delivers us from the force of temptation (**Hebrews 2:18**).
- Jesus delivers us from the finality of life (**John 10:10**).

II. The Spirit of Mary & Joseph

- Their situation shows humility (**Matthew 1:18-25**).
- The song of Mary shows humility (**Luke 1:46-56**).
- Their Son shows humility (**Matthew 20:28**).
- Their spirituality shows humility (**Luke 2:22-40**).

III. The Spirit of Simeon & Anna

- They were righteous (**Proverbs 21:21**).
- They were religious (**Micah 6:8**).
- They were ready (**Isaiah 53:1-12**).
- They were redeemed (**Psalms 111:9**).

Conclusion: We celebrate Christmas by telling others about Jesus. We celebrate Christmas by reflecting on a wonderful story with depth and meaning. Jesus came as a frail innocent child into a harsh world of sin. The Bible tells us that everyone who heard about the birth of Christ marveled and Mary pondered these things in her heart. How should we respond to the Christmas story? What can we learn from Christmas spirit? Are you giving a message of hope to others? Have you received salvation? Will you share the spirit of Jesus?