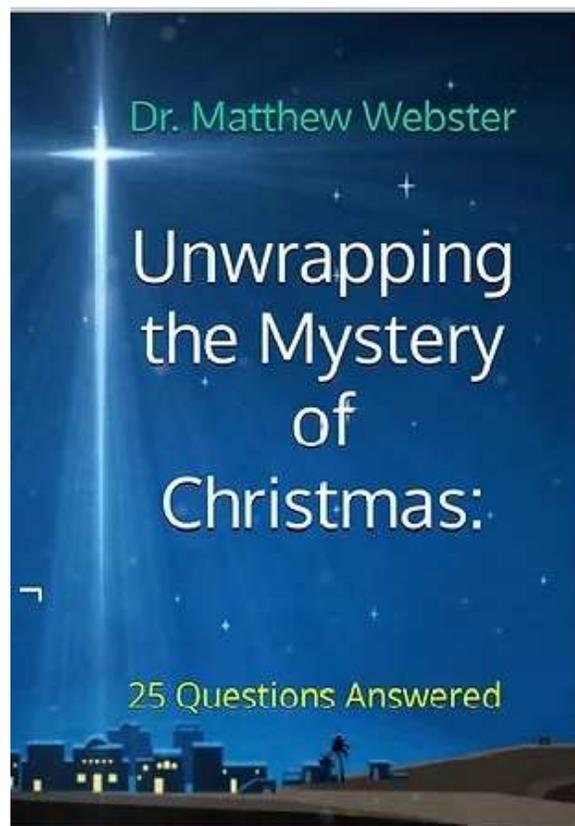


Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas: 25 Questions Answered
A 7-Week Journey into the Wonder, Purpose, and Power of Christ's Arrival
By Dr. Matthew Webster



How to Use This Course:

Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas

A 7-Week Journey into the Wonder, Purpose, and Power of Christ's Arrival

By Dr. Matthew Webster

Welcome to *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas* — a sacred, Spirit-filled journey designed to take you deeper into the heart of the greatest gift ever given: Jesus. This course isn't just about learning facts surrounding the birth of Christ. It's an invitation to encounter Him personally, reflect on the beauty of grace, and carry the message of Christmas beyond the holiday season and into your daily life.

Whether you're going through this on your own, with your church family, or in a small group, each week is carefully crafted to bring Scripture to life, stir your heart, and lead you into practical transformation.

What to Expect Each Week:

1. Weekly Theme + Teaching

Each session begins with a devotional focus rooted in the events surrounding Christ's birth, from prophecy and response to identity and mission.

 What to do:

- Read slowly and reflectively.
- Ask, "*How does this part of the story reveal God's heart for me?*"
- Invite the Holy Spirit to personalize the message.

 Why it matters:

These aren't just history lessons — they're spiritual mile markers designed to renew your faith and shift your perspective.

2. Chapter Reading from the Book

Each session pairs with a section of *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas* that answers essential biblical questions with historical insight and Gospel clarity.

 What to do:

- Read with curiosity and a pen in hand.

- Highlight connections between ancient prophecies and present promises.
- Revisit sections that stir questions or joy.

👉 Why it matters:

This book equips you with biblical truth that grounds your faith in more than sentiment — it anchors it in grace.

3. Learning Objectives

A clear summary of what spiritual truths, theological insights, and personal growth you'll walk away with each week.

👉 What to do:

- Preview before diving in.
- Use them to focus your time with God.

👉 Why it matters:

It helps track spiritual progress, not perfection, but transformation.

4. Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

Each week offers deep prompts to help you process the story personally.

👉 What to do:

- Be honest.
- Journal without editing or performance.
- Invite God into your processing.

👉 Why it matters:

Writing it down brings clarity. These questions let the truth move from head to heart.

5. Prayer Prompt

Each week includes a Spirit-led prayer rooted in the week's theme.

👉 What to do:

- Pray it aloud — or rewrite it in your own words.
- Use it as a starting place for a deeper conversation with God.

👉 Why it matters:

Prayer is where revelation becomes relationship. These prayers help you receive, not just recite.

📖 6. Memory Verse

A handpicked verse to carry in your heart and repeat in your mind.

👉 What to do:

- Write it out, post it where you'll see it.
- Recite it daily until it becomes a declaration.

👉 Why it matters:

God's Word renews your mind and anchors you when life shakes you.

💬 7. Group Discussion Questions (Optional)

Designed for small group use or spiritual conversations with a friend.

👉 What to do:

- Use as talking points in a group or even over coffee.
- Be vulnerable and grace-filled as you share.

👉 Why it matters:

We grow in community. These discussions often lead to healing, insight, and connection.

🔧 8. Practical Application (Fresh Each Week)

Each week includes an intentional challenge or spiritual practice unique to this course.

👉 What to do:

- Try it. Stretch your faith. Don't worry about doing it "perfectly."
- Journal the outcome or what surprised you.

👉 Why it matters:

Faith becomes vibrant when we live it out. These are tangible, grace-driven ways to move from information to transformation.

🧠 9. Weekly Reflection Prompts

Mini-questions to guide your thoughts as you go about your day.

👉 What to do:

- Reflect during a walk, morning routine, or bedtime prayer.
- Let them echo in your heart throughout the week.

👉 Why it matters:

Spiritual growth isn't limited to a session — these prompts keep the journey alive all week long.

👉 Final Encouragement:

Jesus didn't just come into the world — He came into *your* world. The manger wasn't the end of the story — it was the starting point of God's rescue plan for you being unveiled.

Take your time. Let each week reawaken wonder, ground you in grace, and draw you nearer to the One who came so near to you.

You don't have to earn this gift — only unwrap it.

♥ Week 1: The Gift of Christmas – Discovering the Deeper Meaning

☀ Theme: More Than a Holiday – Embracing the Person of Christmas

“Christmas is not just a day — it’s a declaration. Jesus is God’s greatest gift, given when we least deserved it.”

📖 Weekly Focus + Teaching

This week, we begin by asking the foundational question: *What is the meaning of Christmas?* We often get lost in the decorations, the traditions, and the gifts, but at its core, Christmas is about God's gift of Himself to us. The light in the darkness. The tree becomes the cross. The gift is eternal life.

In our first session, we’ll explore the symbolism of common traditions (gifts, trees, light) and trace them back to their gospel roots. We’ll also examine how the prophetic fulfillment in Jesus’ birth affirms God’s faithfulness — and how His grace shapes the way we celebrate.

📖 Reading Assignment

- *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas*: Read pages 13-41. Chapter 1 (Questions 1-4)

🧠 Learning Objectives

By the end of this week, you will:

- Understand how Christmas traditions reflect spiritual truths.
- Recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy.
- Appreciate God’s grace as the foundation of Christmas.
- Begin to see yourself as a recipient of the greatest gift ever given.

☀ Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

1. What traditions have shaped how you view Christmas?

2. How does viewing Christmas as “the arrival of grace” change your perspective?

3. Which prophecy about Jesus’ birth stands out most to you? Why?

4. How does it impact you to know that Jesus is the fulfillment of promises made centuries before His birth?

 **Prayer Prompt**

“Jesus, thank You for coming not just into the world, but into my world. Help me unwrap the true meaning of Christmas, beyond tradition and into transformation. Let this season be a time of remembering the grace that found me and the light that now lives in me. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”

 **Memory Verse**

Luke 2:10-11 (NIV)

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.”

 **Group Discussion Questions**

The Origin, Meaning, and Traditions of Christmas

Primary Questions:

Question 1: What is the meaning of Christmas?

Question 2: What is the reason we give gifts during Christmas and adorn evergreen trees with decorations?

Question 3: What were the prophecies of the Messiah's birth, and did Jesus fulfill all of them?

Question 4: Was Jesus born on December 25th, and in which year did His birth take place?

1) Have you ever wondered why we exchange gifts in celebration of Jesus' birthday? What was your influence on giving gifts to others on Christmas?

2) The story of the Magi bringing gifts to Baby Jesus is a familiar one, but do you know what those gifts symbolize and why they were so significant?

3) Christmas is widely celebrated around the world. Have you ever wondered how other religions and cultures observe the birth of Christ, and have you ever celebrated Christmas in another country before?

4) Did you know that the tradition of gift-giving during Christmas has its roots in the ancient Roman festival of Saturnalia? How is this festival connected to our modern-day Christmas celebrations? What is the biblical reason found for why we give gifts in celebration of the birth of Christ? Other than gift giving, how else might you celebrate the birth of Christ with others?

5) For many, the true gift of Christmas is the birth of Christ. But why is this event considered the ultimate gift, and how does it impact your celebration of the holiday season?

6) Early religious leaders often incorporated pagan traditions into Christmas celebrations. Why might they have done this, and what value is there in doing so?

7) Have you ever stopped to think about why we decorate evergreen trees during Christmas? What is the significance behind this tradition? Do you have any special decorating traditions that you do? How did those traditions start?

8) In the beloved Christmas classic, "A Charlie Brown Christmas", Linus famously drops his security blanket during a pivotal scene. Do you know the symbolism behind this moment?

9) There are several prophecies related to the birth of the Messiah in the Bible. Which prophecies do you remember from this chapter?

10) The exact date of Jesus' birth is a subject of debate, but many celebrate Christmas on December 25th. Do you know why this date was chosen and what month Jesus might have been born?

Closing Thoughts: Christmas is a holiday with a rich history and meaning. The true meaning of Christmas is not found in the commercialization of the holiday but in the story of the Nativity and the gift of salvation offered by Christ. The accuracy and trustworthiness of the Bible's account of the Nativity are supported by historical evidence, eyewitness accounts, and the meticulous attention to detail given by Luke, a physician and historian. As we celebrate Christmas, let us cherish the love and grace God has bestowed upon us and spread the gift of Christ to others across the world.

✂ **Practical Application:** 🎄 "Reverse Advent Calendar"

Instead of receiving something each day — give something.

Here's how:

- For the next 7 days, set aside one item per day (non-perishable food, hygiene items, gift cards, etc.)
- At the end of the week, donate the items to a local ministry, shelter, or someone in need.

Why?

Christmas started with radical generosity. Reflect God's gift to you by becoming a gift to someone else.

💡 **Questions to Carry Into the Week**

- How might my celebration of Christmas look different if I centered it fully on Jesus?

- Where am I still trying to earn a gift that God has freely given?

- What small shift can I make this week to live more generously?

Week 2: Mary's Yes – Embracing God's Favor with Faith

Theme: From Ordinary to Chosen — Saying Yes to God's Plan

"God doesn't look for the perfect — He looks for the willing. Favor is found in Christ."

Weekly Focus + Teaching

This week, we explore Mary's calling — a young girl from a humble town, chosen to carry the Savior of the world. She had nothing the world celebrates: no wealth, no influence, no power. Yet she had God's favor — and she responded with courageous faith.

We'll unpack why the virgin birth was necessary, the symbolism behind Mary's name, and how God's favor still rests on the willing. This is a week about saying yes to God, not because we understand everything, but because we trust the One who does.

Reading Assignment

- *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas*: Read pages 49-64. Chapter 2 (Questions 5-8)
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Learning Objectives

By the end of this week, you will:

- See how God uses the humble and willing for divine purposes.
 - Understand the biblical and theological significance of the virgin birth.
 - Identify areas in your life where God is calling for your yes.
 - Recognize how favor flows from relationship, not performance.
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Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

1. Where in your life do you feel ordinary or unqualified — and how might that be the exact place God wants to move?

2. What does Mary's example teach you about courage and obedience?

3. Have you ever sensed God calling you into something bigger than yourself? How did you respond?

4. What might God be inviting you to say "yes" to right now?

 **Prayer Prompt**

"Lord, like Mary, I want to say yes — even when it stretches me. Thank You for calling me favored, not because of what I've done, but because of Your grace. Give me the faith to trust Your plan, and the courage to walk in it. Use my life for Your glory. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen."

 **Memory Verse**

Luke 1:38 (NIV)

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May Your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

 **Group Discussion Questions**

Mary's Found Favor

Primary Questions:

Question 5: Why was Mary chosen to be the mother of Jesus?

Question 6: How did Mary become pregnant, and what was her age at the time?

Question 7: Why was the virgin birth necessary, and did it happen?

Question 8: Which angel visited Mary?

1) Why was Mary the right choice in God's plan to bring forth the Messiah?

2) What impact would Joseph's bloodline have had on Jesus if there would not have been a virgin birth? Do you think it was part of God's divine plan that Joseph would be of the bloodline of Jeconiah?

3) What do we know about Mary's probable age when she became pregnant and gave birth to Jesus? Does this give you a new perspective on the challenges she faced at such an early age?

4) What is the argument made against the virgin Birth taken from Isaiah 7:14, and how is it refuted?

5) What is the argument that the Virgin Birth was mythical and borrowed from stories like Mithra, and how is it refuted?

Closing Thoughts: Mary was a humble peasant woman from the tribe of Judah and the lineage of King David. She and her husband Joseph were not wealthy or powerful people, and they made offerings of two doves or pigeons as a sacrifice in the temple. Mary's life was characterized by courage, faith, obedience, and purity. She was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, the Savior of the world, because of her lineage, her engagement to Joseph, her virginity, and her good character. The genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke serve different purposes, but both show that Jesus was born of a virgin and that Joseph was not His biological father. Mary's age at the time of Jesus' birth is uncertain, but she was likely between 13 and 16 years old. The Bible tells us that Mary became pregnant through the Holy Spirit and gave birth to Jesus as a virgin. While we do not know exactly how the miracle of the Virgin Birth took place, we know that it was through the power of the Holy Spirit.

♥ Week 3: Trusting Through the Unknown – Joseph’s Role in the Story

☀ Theme: Faith in the Fog – Obeying When It Doesn’t Make Sense

“When life is confusing, faith isn’t knowing all the answers — it’s trusting the One who does.”

📖 Weekly Focus + Teaching

This week focuses on Joseph — a man often overlooked in the Christmas narrative, yet one whose quiet strength and radical trust made a way for God’s plan. Faced with a scandalous situation, Joseph initially plans to leave Mary, but God intervenes, and Joseph listens.

We’ll explore Joseph’s response to Mary’s pregnancy, the reasons behind their journey to Bethlehem, and what it cost him to walk in obedience. This week is about **trusting God in uncertainty** and responding with integrity, even when the path doesn’t make sense.

📖 Reading Assignment

- *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas*: Read pages 70-88. Chapter 3 (Questions 9–11)
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🧠 Learning Objectives

By the end of this week, you will:

- Understand Joseph’s cultural context and courageous obedience.
 - Reflect on the power of integrity when no one’s watching.
 - See how God guides through confusion, not with immediate clarity, but with presence.
 - Practice surrender in moments of uncertainty.
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✨ Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

1. When have you been faced with a situation that didn’t make sense but required obedience?

 **Group Discussion Questions**

**Joseph's Reaction to Mary's Pregnancy
and the Journey to Bethlehem**

Primary Questions:

Question 9: What was Joseph's reaction to finding out Mary was pregnant, and who changed his mind?

Question 10: Why might Mary travel with Joseph to Bethlehem when she was so far along in her pregnancy?

Question 11: What would the journey have been like for Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem? How far did they travel, and how long would it have taken?

1) What option did Joseph have according to the Mosaic Law in properly handling Mary's pregnancy?

2) How harsh was the punishment for adultery if there were multiple witnesses under the Mosaic Law? Why would this have not been an option for Joseph with Mary's pregnancy?

3) What was the reason Joseph didn't consider of why he could still marry Mary?

4) What emotions do you think Joseph felt immediately after he woke up from his divine dream?

5) If you were a Roman official, why might you want your subjects to return to their present homes rather than their ancestral homes to be counted in a census?

6) Which day of the journey to Bethlehem would you have enjoyed the most?

7) Which day of the journey to Bethlehem would have been your least favorite and why?

Closing Thoughts: The story of Joseph and Mary in Matthew 1:19 highlights the cultural and legal context of Jewish betrothal and marriage. Joseph, as a righteous man, had only one option in dealing with Mary's pregnancy according to the Mosaic Law, which was to issue a certificate of divorce. However, an angel revealed to him that Jesus was conceived in Mary through the Holy Spirit and that the Child would be the Son of God, so he could take Mary as his wife. The journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem was a challenging one, filled with uncertainty, fear, and hardship. However, it was also a journey of faith, hope, and perseverance, as they trusted in God's plan for their lives and remained obedient to His will.

Their journey reminds us of the power of faith in times of difficulty and uncertainty. It also teaches us to trust in God's timing and to have faith that He will provide for us, even during our struggles. As we reflect on Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, let us be inspired by their unwavering faith and commitment to God's plan for their lives. May we also learn to trust in God's goodness and faithfulness, even when our circumstances may seem overwhelming.

✂ Practical Application: 🌸 "Faith Step" Commitment

Obedience often begins with a single, quiet yes.

Here's how:

- Identify one area of your life where you're waiting for clarity before taking action.
- Instead of waiting for answers, take a *small* step of obedience this week (a call, a conversation, a decision, etc.).
- Journal what happened when you trusted instead of hesitated.

Why?

Like Joseph, you don't need all the answers to walk in God's will — you just need the courage to trust.

♥ Week 4: Responding to the King – Awe, Song, and Humility

☀ Theme: The Response of Hearts – When Heaven Interrupts Earth

“Your response to grace shapes your experience of it. Will you sing, surrender, or stay silent?”

📖 Weekly Focus + Teaching

This week, we turn our attention to **the first responders to the Messiah**: Mary, Zechariah, the shepherds, and the angels. Each of them heard the news, but each responded uniquely.

Mary sang. Zechariah prophesied. The shepherds ran. The angels rejoiced.

Through their stories, we learn this: **when Heaven interrupts your life, your heart reveals its posture.** This week is about examining your response to God’s presence, not just in celebration, but in surrender.

📖 Reading Assignment

- *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas*: Read pages 95-118. Chapter 4 (Questions 12–15)
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🧠 Learning Objectives

By the end of this week, you will:

- Understand the significance of Mary’s and Zechariah’s songs as responses of faith.
 - See how the shepherds’ role in the story models humility and quick obedience.
 - Reflect on your personal response to the presence and promises of God.
 - Cultivate a heart of worship, gratitude, and action in response to grace.
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☀ Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

1. When was the last time you felt truly in awe of what God was doing?

 **Group Discussion Questions**

The Response to the News of the Coming Messiah

Primary Questions:

Question 12: What were the different responses to the news of Jesus' birth or impending arrival?

Question 13: What do we learn from the song Mary wrote when she was pregnant? What do we learn from the song Zechariah wrote?

Question 14: Why did the angels appear to the shepherds?

Question 15: What was the sign for the shepherds to find the Messiah?

1) How many different responses to Jesus' birth are recorded in Scripture, and what do these responses tell us about the diversity of human reactions to God's grace given in our world?

2) When Mary received the news of Jesus' birth, what emotions did she experience, and how can we relate to her varied emotions when something life-changing happens to us?

3) When Elizabeth greeted Mary, what did she say, and how did her prophetic words affirm God's plan for salvation through Jesus?

4) How did John the Baptist respond to the news of Jesus' birth, and what does this tell us about the special relationship between the two?

5) When Joseph learned of Mary's unexpected pregnancy, how did he react, and what can we learn from his willingness to trust God's plan despite any doubts and fears he might have had?

6) What did the angels' message reveal about God's love and grace for humanity?

7) What was the shepherds' response to the announcement of the birth of the Messiah, and how did their immediate action to see the newborn Savior reflect their faith and hope?

8) Why did King Herod feel threatened by the possibility of a new king? How did his fear and jealousy lead to violence and tragedy?

9) When Simeon saw the Baby Jesus in the temple, how did he respond, and what can we learn from his faith and patience in waiting on God to fulfill His promise?

10) How did Anna, a prophetess in the temple, respond to the news of Jesus' birth, and what can we learn from her devotion to God and her recognition of Jesus as the Messiah?

11) When the Magi heard about the birth of a new king, how did they respond, and what can we learn from their journey of faith and their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh?

12) What does Mary's song, also known as the Magnificat, teach us about God's character, His mercy, and His concern for the marginalized and oppressed?

13) What can we learn from Zechariah's song, the Benedictus, about God's faithfulness, His promise of salvation through Jesus, and the role of John the Baptist in preparing the way for the Lord?

14) What is the significance of the ancient Jewish tradition of wrapping the firstborn lamb in swaddling cloth, and how does it foreshadow the sacrificial death of Jesus, the Lamb of God?

15) Why did the shepherds find the Baby Jesus lying in a manger, and what does this humble setting reveal about God's love for the poor and the powerless, and His willingness to enter into our world as one of us?

Closing Thoughts: The different responses to the birth of Jesus in the Bible demonstrate the multifaceted nature of the event and the complex ways in which people can respond to it. Some, like the shepherds and the Magi,

responded with joy and wonder, recognizing the birth of a Savior who would bring hope and salvation to the world. Others, like King Herod, responded with fear and hostility, recognizing the potential threat to their power and control.

These different responses highlight the transformative power of Jesus' birth and how it challenged and disrupted the status quo. The birth of Jesus was not just another historical event, but a moment of profound significance that would change the course of human history.

As we reflect on these different responses, we think of how the world today responds similarly to the good news of Jesus Christ. Some respond with joy and wonder, recognizing the message of hope, love, and redemption that He brings. Others respond with fear and hostility, clinging to the illusion of power and control they think they have. The choice is everyone's to make, but the consequences of our individual responses are profound.

✂ Practical Application: 🎵 "Worship Response" Challenge

Turn your response into a rhythm of praise.

Here's how:

- Create a personal "response playlist" — 5 worship songs that echo your heart to God.
- Spend 15 minutes a day this week listening, praying, or journaling while listening to your playlist.
- Write your own 1-paragraph "song" or prayer to God, like Mary or Zechariah.

Why?

Responding to Jesus starts with worship, not effort. This will tune your heart to grace all week long.

🎯 Questions to Carry Into the Week

- What interrupts my peace — and how can I turn those moments into worship?

Week 5: Glory in the Manger – The Message Behind the Method

Theme: When Majesty Meets Humility

“God chose a manger — not a throne — to tell you He’s not far off. He’s Emmanuel. Right here. Right now.”

Weekly Focus + Teaching

This week focuses on the **actual birth of Jesus** — and the staggering truth that the King of Kings was born in obscurity. We’ll explore the prophetic meaning behind Bethlehem, the swaddling cloths, and the manger itself.

Every detail of Jesus’ arrival shouts: **“I came close. I came low. I came for you.”**

This week challenges our ideas of worth, power, and success, reminding us that God often moves in unexpected places to do His greatest work.

Reading Assignment

- *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas*: Read pages 130-152. Chapter 5 (Questions 16–19)
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Learning Objectives

By the end of this week, you will:

- Understand why Bethlehem, swaddling cloths, and the manger all carry rich spiritual symbolism.
 - Recognize how God’s glory is often hidden in humble places.
 - Reflect on how Jesus’ lowly birth reshapes your view of success and identity.
 - Find peace in knowing that God meets you in the “low places” of your life.
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Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

1. What stands out to you about Jesus being born in a manger rather than a palace?

 **Group Discussion Questions**

The Birth of the Messiah

Primary Questions:

Question 16: Where was Jesus born, and why would God choose this town?

Question 17: Did the inn where Mary and Joseph sought shelter during Jesus' birth belong to a relative, or was it a lodging facility? Also, is there any prior mention of this inn in the Bible?

Question 18: What is the significance behind Jesus being wrapped in swaddling cloths, and how does this relate to the purpose of His birth?

Question 19: Why was Jesus born in a manger, and what did the manger birth foreshadow?

1) What is the significance of Jesus being born in Bethlehem, placed in a manger?

2) Why is Micah 5:2 important in proving the real location of Jesus' birth?

3) What is the history and significance of Bethlehem in the Bible?

4) How does the story of Benjamin's birth in Bethlehem foreshadow the birth of Jesus?

5) Can you imagine walking around 90 miles, the same distance as Mary and Joseph did while being pregnant? What is the farthest you have traveled on foot or by animal before?

6) What was Geruth Kimham, and why is it significant?

7) Who was Kimham, and what did King David do for him?

8) What lesson can we learn from Kimham's willingness to say "yes" to King David's invitation?

Closing Thoughts: The birth of Jesus in a manger, wrapped in swaddling cloth, points to Jesus' mission on Earth. The swaddling cloths foreshadowed Jesus' burial cloths, reminding us that He came into the world to die for our sins. Furthermore, the fact that Jesus was born in a manger, a feeding trough for animals, reminds us that He is the Bread of Life that we feed on. Let us receive the sustenance He offers. Let us feast on His Word, be nourished in His presence, and let us share this life-giving bread with others so that they, too, may find sustenance and eternal life in Christ.

✂ Practical Application: 📦 **"Small Things" Gratitude Box**

Find the sacred in the simple.

Here's how:

- Set up a small "gratitude box" or jar in a visible place.
- Each day this week, write down one small, humble moment where you saw God's grace show up.
- On Christmas Day (or Sunday), open the box and read each note aloud, reflecting on how God showed up in the "Bethlehems" of your life.

Why?

This practice will help reframe how you perceive value — and remind you that glory often comes in ordinary packaging.

🧠 Questions to Carry Into the Week

- Where might God be asking me to notice His presence in the small or overlooked places?
- What does it mean to reflect Jesus' humility in my relationships this week?
- How can I embrace being "lowly" like Christ, without losing sight of my identity in Him?

♥ Week 6: Protection and Providence – When Light Meets Resistance

☀ Theme: The Clash of Kingdoms – God’s Plan Cannot Be Stopped

“The arrival of Jesus wasn’t just peaceful — it was powerful. His birth shook the powers of darkness, and it still does.”

📖 Weekly Focus + Teaching

This week explores the dramatic and dangerous moments that followed Jesus’ birth: the Magi’s mysterious visit, Herod’s murderous plan, and the holy family’s escape to Egypt.

We’ll unpack the symbolism behind the gifts of the Magi, the significance of the Star of Bethlehem, and the spiritual truth that **God’s plan for your life comes with protection, provision, and purpose — even in peril.**

This is a week of remembering that the enemy may resist God’s promises, but he cannot stop them.

📖 Reading Assignment

- *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas*: Read pages 159-186. Chapter 6 (Questions 20–22)
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🧠 Learning Objectives

By the end of this week, you will:

- Understand the prophetic and spiritual significance of the Magi’s journey and gifts.
 - See how God’s guidance and protection covered Jesus’ early life.
 - Identify the spiritual battle behind the scenes of God’s calling.
 - Trust that God is both your Defender and your Deliverer in times of danger or uncertainty.
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☀ Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

1. Have you ever experienced spiritual resistance after stepping into something God called you to do?

bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.”

 **Group Discussion Questions**

The Murderous Plan and the Great Escape

Primary Questions:

Question 20: Who were the Magi, and how were they aware of the Messiah's arrival? Additionally, what was the reason for presenting the specific gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh?

Question 21: What was the star of Bethlehem?

Question 22: Why did Herod want to kill Jesus, and how was his plan thwarted?

1) What Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled by Herod's actions and the events surrounding Jesus' birth and early life?

2) How did the Magi know that the Messiah was coming? Which prophet would they have known his prophecies, and why might that be?

3) What lessons can we learn from the story of the Magi, and how can we apply it to our own lives?

4) What did the Magi do when they finally saw Jesus? What route do you think they took to return back home?

5) Some Bible scholars suggest that the Star of Bethlehem was a natural occurrence, while others believe it was a supernatural event. What do you think, and why?

Closing Thoughts: The story of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and their subsequent escape from Herod's wrath is a powerful reminder of God's protection and faithfulness to His promises. Despite facing numerous obstacles and challenges along the way, God's hand was always at work, guiding and protecting them.

Moreover, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the birth and life of Jesus is a testament to the divine plan and purpose that God had for His people. From the prophecy of the virgin birth to the predictions of Jesus' suffering and death, these prophecies demonstrate God's omniscience and His deep love for humanity.

As we reflect on this story, we are reminded of God's ability to guide and protect us. We can take comfort in the knowledge that just as God protected Mary and Joseph, He is with us in our own journeys, providing the strength and guidance we need to fulfill His plan for our lives.

✂ **Practical Application:** 🛡 **"Spiritual Safety Plan"**

Prepare your heart for both wonder and warfare.

Here's how:

- Identify one area of your life where you've felt resistance or spiritual pushback.
- Each morning this week, pray Psalm 91 over yourself and your household.
- Take one proactive step (a confession of God's Word, a conversation in prayer, a boundary set, or a bold obedience) to walk in God's protection, not fear.

Why?

Jesus' birth teaches us that grace and warfare go hand-in-hand, but you are never unguarded. Heaven fights for you.

🧠 **Questions to Carry Into the Week**

- What is God birthing in me right now that the enemy wants to destroy?

- How can I step into courage and obedience like Joseph, even when the cost is high?

- What does it look like to be spiritually alert, but deeply at peace?

♥ Week 7: The Gift That Keeps Giving – Living in the Light of His Arrival

☀ Theme: Jesus' Name, Favor, and Sacrifice – A Love That Changes Everything

“Christmas isn’t the end of the story — it’s the beginning of everything new.”

📖 Weekly Focus + Teaching

This week, we reflect on what it means that Jesus — God with us — took on flesh to dwell among us. We explore His name, His favor, and His sacrifice. We’re not just unwrapping a season; we’re unwrapping a Savior whose love reshapes eternity.

We’ll dig into how His name reveals His mission, how His favor rests on those who receive Him, and how His sacrifice began not at the cross, but in the cradle.

This final week is a commissioning: to carry the message of Christmas beyond December and into your daily life.

📖 Reading Assignment

- *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas*: Read pages 192-211. Chapter 7 (Questions 23–25)
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🧠 Learning Objectives

By the end of this week, you will:

- Understand the theological meaning of Jesus’ name.
 - Discover how the favor of God rests on you because of Christ.
 - Reflect on the humility of Christ’s incarnation as a gift of eternal love.
 - Identify how to live year-round in the joy and calling of Christmas.
-

✦ Reflection Questions (Personal Journal)

1. What does the name “Jesus” (meaning Yahweh saves) personally mean to you today?

2. How does God's favor change the way you see your circumstances?

3. In what ways does the Incarnation challenge your understanding of love?

4. How will you let the truths of Christmas shape your everyday walk with God?

 **Prayer Prompt**

"Jesus, thank You for not only coming into the world, but into my life. Your name brings peace, purpose, and power. Help me live as someone deeply loved and highly favored. Let Christmas not be an event I visit once a year, but a truth I live every day. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen."

 **Memory Verse**

John 1:14 (NIV)

"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

 **Group Discussion Questions**

The Impact of Jesus

Primary Questions:

Question 23: Who named Jesus, and what does His name mean and reveal?

Question 24: Who does God's favor rest upon, and what does that mean for those who have it?

Question 25: What sacrifice did Jesus make in taking on human flesh and dwelling among us, and what does that tell us about His love for us?

1) Why was Jesus not named Immanuel despite the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14?

2) What does the name Jesus mean in Hebrew, and what does it tell us about Jesus' reason for leaving Heaven to be with us?

3) What does the prophecy in Micah 5:5 say about our peace?

4) What sacrifice did Jesus make by taking on human likeness?

5) Why did God have Jesus to be born in a manger rather than in a palace?
What did this tell us about this "good news"?

6) How did Jesus' sacrificial death pay for the sins of humanity?

7) In what ways did Jesus' life and ministry challenge the world's understanding of power and greatness?

Closing Thoughts: God's gift of Jesus to humanity is an incredible demonstration of His love and grace. Through Jesus, God showed us the depth of His love and His desire to have a relationship with us. Jesus came to Earth, lived among us, and ultimately sacrificed His life on the cross so that we could be forgiven and reconciled to God.

Jesus took on the sins of the world, bearing the weight of our guilt and shame. Through His death and Resurrection, Jesus could offer to us the opportunity to have a new life in Him, freedom from the burden of sin and death.

By putting our faith in Jesus, we can have a hope that goes beyond this life, with the assurance of eternal life with God. Let us honor and glorify God every day by celebrating the precious gift of Jesus to us.

✂ **Practical Application:** 🎁 **"Grace Forward" Commitment**

Carry the message of Christmas into your new year.

Here's how:

- Choose one word that reflects what Jesus has done in your life this season (e.g., Peace, Savior, Emmanuel, Freedom).
- Write it on a card and keep it visible (mirror, car dashboard, or phone wallpaper).
- Let that word shape your prayers, plans, and purpose for the next 30 days.
- Share the message behind your word with one other person this week — a personal testimony of what Christmas means for your life.

Why?

The cradle wasn't the end — it was the catalyst. This challenge helps you walk into the new year with vision rooted in grace.

🧠 **Questions to Carry Into the Week**

- What gift has God given me this season that I'm called to share?

✦ What's Next?

The Journey Continues With: *The Courage to Hope*

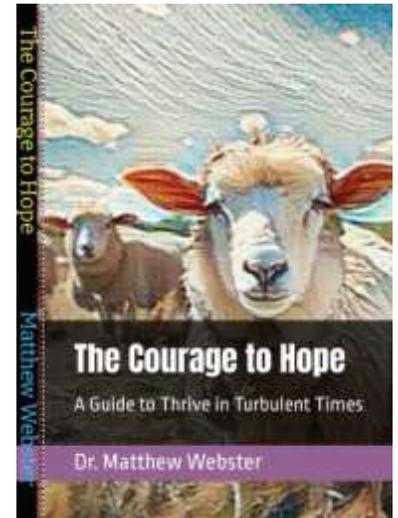
"Hope is not wishful thinking. It's confident expectation — rooted in a God who never fails."

As you finish *Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas*, don't let the joy, grace, and revelation of this journey stop here. There's another chapter waiting — and it's written for those facing uncertainty, fear, and adversity with a promise still in hand.

■ Your Next Course:

The Courage to Hope – A Guide to Thrive in Turbulent Times

by Dr. Matthew Webster



In this life-changing follow-up, you'll walk through powerful biblical stories of men and women who faced impossible odds — and found supernatural hope in the midst of their storm.

🗨️ What You'll Experience in *The Courage to Hope*:

- **John:** Discover the secret of living as one deeply loved.
- **Moses:** Learn how your past does not cancel your calling.
- **Ruth:** See how grace meets you in your most broken moments.
- **Daniel:** Trust in divine protection when lions surround you.
- **Paul & Silas:** Sing your way into victory — even in prison.
- **Job:** Find peace in the process when life feels stripped away.

Each week is centered on one biblical figure's real-life crisis and divine breakthrough, reminding you that **your story isn't over** and **God is still writing victory into your future**.

💡 Why It's the Perfect Next Step:

If Christmas reminded you that God is *with you*, *The Courage to Hope* will show you that He is also for you — even when life feels against you.

🌱 Ready to Walk in Hope?

Let *The Courage to Hope* help you hold fast to God's promises — and thrive even in life's most turbulent times.