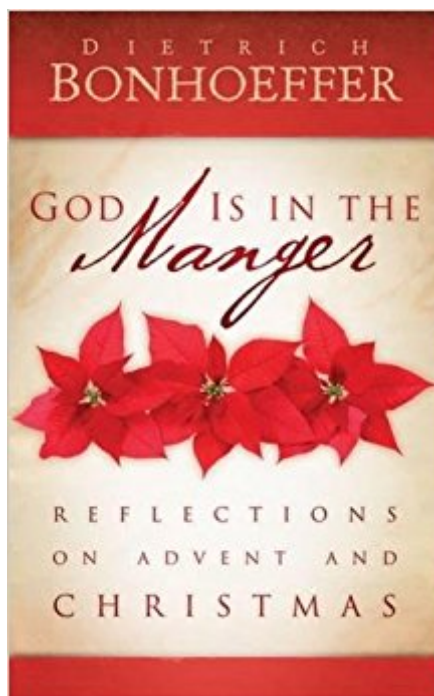


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God Is In The Manger: Reflections On Advent And Christmas



Synopsis

"There are only two places where the powerful and great in this world lose their courage, tremble in the depths of their souls, and become truly afraid. These are the manger and the cross of Jesus Christ." "No priest, no theologian stood at the cradle of Bethlehem. And yet, all Christian theology finds its beginnings in the miracle of miracles, that God became human." These stirring words are among forty devotions that guide and inspire readers as they move thematically through the weeks of Advent and Christmas, from waiting and mystery to redemption, incarnation, and joy.

Supplemented by an informative introduction, short excerpts from Bonhoeffer's letters, and passages from his Christmas sermons, these daily devotions are timeless and moving reminders of the true gift of Christmas.

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Customer Reviews

"These Advent and Christmas reflections of Bonhoeffer flew from his prison cell, flung open the doors of hope, and sailed heavenward as heart-wrenching prayers, prayers from a condemned man, prayers from a hopeful man, prayers from a man who embodied what it means to pray 'May your kingdom come.' This will be my Advent and Christmas book." --Scot McKnight, Karl A. Olsson Professor in Religious Studies, North Park University, and author of *The Jesus Creed* and *The Blue Parakeet* --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45) was a Christian minister, seminary professor, and theologian who

became one of the leading voices of opposition against Nazism during World War II. He was a founding member of Germany's Confessing Church and was executed for participating in a plot to assassinate Hitler. His theological views have become highly influential in the years since his death.

GOD IS IN THE MANGER: REFLECTIONS ON ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS by DIETRICH

BONHOEFFER I realize this is January but I wanted to let you know about a book I read during Advent and Christmas. I have been looking for a good Advent book for a long time and I have found it. This little book is divided into 5 parts: * Advent Week One--Waiting * Advent Week Two-- Mystery * Advent Week Three--Redemption * Advent Week Four-- Incarnation * The Twelve Days of Christmas and Epiphany Reading devotional literature by Dietrich Bonhoeffer can be challenging. But *God is in the Manger* opens up the gospel and will take you to the heart of the Christmas story. Most of these devotions are taken from writings during the time Bonhoeffer was being held in a Nazi prison cell. Also included with each day's reading are short excerpt from Bonhoeffer's letters and passages from his Christmas sermons. I plan to read this again before Advent 2011. We need to be reminded about the real reason for Christmas--Christ.

These are very useful and edifying edited Advent and Christmas devotionals that force the reader to deal with the reality of the incarnation and the tension of the right now and not yet aspects of the Christian life. They do make a great compliment to the Advent and Christmas season. If read in sequence, there are daily devotions that last the reader from December 1 - January 6. The material in this book is taken partly from the book of collated, Bonhoeffer writings, called, "I Want to Live These Days With You: A Year of Daily Devotions." Also, each reading includes in most cases a section from a letter or sermon from Bonhoeffer, written or given during the Christmas season. The great value of this little 100+ page book is that the author, who never had the opportunity to compile his writing in this format, during his short life, is that they are written in context of someone who was taken from his family and fiancée, and faced with the coming execution by an anti Christ regime, in NAZI Germany. Many of these writing are written in the context of his life struggling against or suffering under NAZI oppression. So Bonhoeffer, from the outset makes no illusions of a sentimental Christmas holiday, though he surely pined for the reassurance and comfort of family. He was comforted by the Christ who came and is coming again. There are at times hints of Neo - orthodoxy, which is not unexpected. Bonhoeffer's writing remains clear, and direct, even if much of the time, it is complex and deep. The book is divided into five sections: Waiting, Mystery, Redemption, Incarnation, and the Twelve Days of Christmas to Epiphany. So while these are

writings of a young theologian, wrestling greatly with what Christ called him to, during some of the most difficult of times, the tone of the writings is never not pastoral, and kind. Bonhoeffer does speak to the internal callings and struggles that are common to all Christians, and his call is to point others constantly to the reality and hope that the incarnation represents.

My new go to Christmas season devotional. It's by week (7 days worth) so it doesn't matter what day of the week Christmas falls on, then following Christmas there are devotionals by calendar day until Jan 6th. It covers the *whole* season. Also each week has it's own topic, so you really focus on one idea at a time, which I really liked. The passages are excerpts from letters, so it's a little different in style than most devotionals, but perhaps also a bit more personal. It is 2016 and I've picked it up again. I am excited to go through it and be challenged again!

Bonhoeffer is one of my Theological heroes, always has been since I was in Seminary in the 1960 era. I was preaching on Christmas morning 2016 and needed to find inspiration along with the Gospel reading from John, (1: 1-18), once again my two heroes came through. Also this small work is powerful and a great place to start for a time of contemplation. I recommend it for anyone seeking a special place for this Season of the Church Year.

If you haven't read Bonhoeffer or if you think you don't have the time, this is a great way to dip your feet into his thinking. Using excerpts from sermons, letters, and even writings of others (like his fianc   responding to him), we get some great advent thoughts on the miracle and mystery of Christ. I used this as ideas for advent sermons and for my weekly column in the church newsletter during December. Pretty good amount of material for such a short book! Designed for daily readings for 30 days, you could also do it in about 2 hours.

It is easy to read and helps to focus on the Word of God leading up to and during the Christmas season.

These meditations are focused primarily on Christmas and Advent, but with other themes thrown in. The book was very helpful for me this year to reorient my heart and mind to the meaning and purpose of Christmas. Much has been lost and distorted even in the Christian celebration of this glorious event. I think we lose the majesty and the power and the awesomeness of Christmas when it becomes about gifts or family or church (good things, but not ultimate things). Christmas should

always and forever be about God becoming man (no, a baby), being born (no, born in a stinky, dirty, noisy stable), living (no living a commoner's life), and dying (no dying a traitor's death). He did this for the twin goals of fulfilling his Father's will and executing a rescue mission that no Seal team would dare attempt. Jesus was born, lived and died for God and for you. Christmas is about Christ, not us. Glory to God indeed!

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