

IT'S CHRISTMAS...ANY IDEAS?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind. ⁵ And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.

The Witness John the Baptist

⁶ A man came, *one* sent from God, *and* his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light. ⁹ *This* was the true Light that, coming into the world, enlightens every person. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, and *yet* the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own people did not accept Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.

The Word Made Flesh

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only *Son* from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John *testified about Him and called out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who is coming after me has proved to be my superior, because He existed before me.'" ¹⁶ For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time; God the only *Son*, who is in the arms of the Father, He has explained *Him*. **John 1:1-18 NASB**

As at no time in my existence, we are engaged in a battle...a battle of ideas. Our ideas are thoughts and suggestions about what we ought to do. But what does this have to do with Christmas? Well, people have lots of ideas about Christmas that have nothing to do with reality or the true meaning of this glorious day, and sadly many people also have very skewed ideas about life, truth and the future. And many other issues.

In his book, "The Secret Battle of Ideas", Dr. Jeff Meyers says that "our ideas largely determine our understanding of life's meaning and guide us in the way we live. Everyone forms ideas about questions such as:

- Am I loved? If I were to disappear, would anyone miss me?
- Why do I hurt? Bad things have happened to me. Can I overcome them and find joy?
- Does my life have meaning? Is it possible for me to find direction in life?
- Why can't we just get along? Is there any hope for this world? What will it take for us to stop fighting and find harmony? So many things seem to be going wrong!
- Is God even relevant? Does God get involved in the details of my life?

-Dr. Jeff Meyers

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The true story of Christmas, the coming of Jesus to save us addresses all of these issues. The truth of His coming as our savior and Lord grants us a world view that empowers us with God given ideas and principles that establish us in this life and that prepare us for eternity.

Christmas is the day that holds all time together. – Alexander Smith

The Christmas message is that there is hope for humanity, hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory. – J.I. Packer

The Christmas story gives its triumphant answer; “Be not afraid.” – Karl Barth

This is Christmas, the real meaning of it: God loving, searching, giving Himself to us; man needing, receiving, giving himself to God. Redemption’s glorious exchange of

gifts, without which we cannot live, without which we cannot give to those we love anything of lasting value. This is the meaning of Christmas, the wonder and the glory of it. – Ruth Bell Graham

Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man. – Anonymous

The manger is a symbol of what can happen when Jesus Christ resides in us. The ordinary becomes extraordinary. – Bill Hybels

Let’s take a look at the ideas people have and the questions that Dr. Meyers tells us they generate.

- Am I loved? If I were to disappear, would anyone miss me?

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **Romans 5:8-9 NASB**

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) **Ephesians 2:4-5 NASB**

¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, ¹⁷ comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word. **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 NASB**

⁷ Beloved, let’s love one another; for love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, because God is

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love. ⁹ By this the love of God was revealed in us, that God has sent His only Son into the world so that we may live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. **I John 4:7-10 NASB**

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood **Revelation 1:5 NASB**

The LORD appeared to him long ago, *saying*, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you out with kindness. **Jeremiah 31:3 NASB**

The Gospel is not so much a demand as it is an offer, an offer of new life to man by the grace of God. – E. Stanley Jones

Love came down at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine; Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign. – Christina Rossetti

You are loved. You are known, and you are NOT alone.

- Why do I hurt? Bad things have happened to me? Can I overcome them and find joy?

²⁵ "Then I will compensate you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust— my great army which I sent among you.

²⁶ You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; then My people will never be put to shame. ²⁷ So you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God and there is no other; and My people will never be put to shame. **Joel 2:25-27 NASB**

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. **Psalms 34:18 NASB**

¹⁶ On that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, Zion; Do not let your hands fall limp. ¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior. He will rejoice over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. ¹⁸ I will gather those who are worried about the appointed feasts—They came from you, *Zion; The disgrace of exile is a burden on them.* ¹⁹ Behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors; I will save those who limp and gather the scattered, and I will turn their shame into praise and fame in all the earth. ²⁰ At that time I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together;

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Indeed, I will make you famous and praiseworthy among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the LORD. **Zephaniah 3:16-20 NASB**

Also, Judah, there is a harvest appointed for you, when I restore the fortunes of My people. **Hosea 6:11 NASB**

You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. **Acts 10:38 NASB**

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. **Psalms 147:3 NASB**

Joy is the direct result of having God's perspective on our daily lives and the effect of loving our Lord enough to obey His commands and trust His promises. – Bill Bright

gentleness of spirit and a magnetic personality. – Billy Graham

In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him. – C.S. Lewis

Joy cannot be pursued. It comes from within. It is a state of being. It does not depend on circumstances, but triumphs over circumstances. It produces a

The Star of Bethlehem was a star of joy. "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy."

All true joy comes from Him. – D. James Kennedy

God sees, He knows, He cares, and He is lovingly powerful to move in our lives. He empowers us through dark and difficult times and 'Joy comes in the morning.'

- Does my life have any meaning? Is it possible for me to find direction in life?

⁹ *This* was the true Light that, coming into the world, enlightens every person. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, and yet the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own people did not accept Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.

The Word Made Flesh

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only *Son* from the Father, full of grace and truth. **John 1:9-14 NASB**

A Living Hope and a Sure Salvation

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1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen **2** according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in *the* last time. **6** In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials. **I Peter 1:1-6 NASB**

9 But you are A CHOSEN PEOPLE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **10** for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. **I Peter 2:9-10 NASB**

3 See how great a love the Father has given us, that we would be called children of God; and *in fact*, we are. For this reason, the world does not know us: because it did not know Him. **2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. **3** And everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. **I John 3:1-3 NASB**

Jesus came into the world so that we could know, once and for all, that God is concerned about the way we live, the way we believe, and the way we die. – Billy Graham

Christmas means the beginning of Christianity-and a second chance for the world. – Peter Marshall

The Scriptures were not given for our information, but for our transformation. – D.L. Moody

The same God who empowered Samson, Gideon, and Paul seeks to empower my life and your life, because God hasn't changed. – Bill Hybels

All the power of God-the same power that hung the stars in place and put the planets in their courses and transformed Earth-now resides in you to energize and strengthen you to become the person God created you to be. – Anne Graham Lotz

God will never lead you where His strength cannot keep you. – Barbara Johnson

Make the least of all that goes and the most of all that comes. Don't regret what is past. Cherish what you have. Look forward to all that is to come. And most important of all, rely moment by moment on Jesus Christ. – Gigi Graham Tchividjian

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Jesus came to give us life, real life, eternal life, and He gave us His spirit and His Word to empower and direct us.

- Why can't we all get along...Is there any hope for this world? What will it take for us to stop fighting and find harmony? So many things seem to be going wrong.

¹⁵ Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. ¹⁷ The world is passing away and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God continues *to live* forever. | **John 2:15-17 NASB**

¹⁸ Little children, let's not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. ¹⁹ We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will set our heart at ease before Him. | **John 3:18-19 NASB**

²³ This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps His commandments remains in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He remains in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. | **John 3:23-24 NASB**

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who previously were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the hostility, *which is* the Law *composed of* commandments *expressed in* ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two one new person, *in this way* establishing peace; ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the hostility. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household. **Ephesians 2:13-19 NASB**

²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. ²⁶ For you are all sons *and daughters* of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **Galatians 3:25-28 NASB**

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. | **Corinthians 12:13 NASB**

⁸ But now you also, rid yourselves of all of them: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* obscene speech from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you stripped off the old self with its *evil* practices, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *self*, which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created it— ¹¹ *a renewal* in which there is

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no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, *and* free, but Christ is all, and in all. ¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, *and* patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so *must you do* also. **Colossians 3:8-13**

Jesus had a loving heart. If he dwells withing us, hatred and bitterness will never rule us. – Billy Graham

Jesus Christ is not a security from storms. He is perfect security in storms. – Kathy Trocoli

God's help is always available, but it is only given to those who seek it. – Max Lucado

- Is God even relevant? Does God get involved in the details of my life?

⁶ “This is what the LORD says, *He who is* the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of armies: ‘I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me. ⁷ Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; and, let him confront Me beginning with My establishing of the ancient nation. Then let them declare to them the things that are coming and *the events* that are going to take place. ⁸ Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced *it* to you and declared *it*? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any *other* Rock? I know of none.’” **Isaiah 44:6-8 NASB**

⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no one else; there is no God except Me. I will arm you, though you have not known Me, ⁶ So that *people* may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no one else, ⁷ The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating disaster; I am the LORD who does all these things. **Isaiah 45:5-7 NASB**

¹¹ This is what the LORD says, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker: “Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, and you shall commit to Me the work of My hands.

¹² It is I who made the earth, and created mankind upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands, and I ordained all their lights. **Isaiah 45:11-12 NASB**

¹⁸ For this is what the LORD says, *He* who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it *and* did not create it as a waste place, *but* formed it to be inhabited): “I am the LORD, and there is no one else. ¹⁹ I have not spoken in secret, in some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in a wasteland’; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, declaring things that are right. ²⁰ “Gather yourselves and come; come together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge, who carry around their wooden idol and pray to a god who cannot save. ²¹ Declare and present *your case*; indeed, let them consult

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together. Who has announced this long ago? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me. ²² Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. ²³ I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear *allegiance*. ²⁴ They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.' *People* will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame. ²⁵ In the LORD all the offspring of Israel will be justified and will boast." **Isaiah 45:18-25 NASB**

Now faith is *the* certainty of *things* hoped for, a proof of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old gained approval. ³ By faith we understand that the world has been created by the word of God so that what is seen has not been made out of things that are visible. ⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he was attested to be righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. **Hebrews 11:1-4 NASB**

Jesus stooped into an actual identification with human nature, and, by that stoop, lifted human nature into the spaciousness of fellowship with God. – G. Campbell Morgan

God did not write a book and send it by messenger to be read at a distance by unaided minds. He spoke a Book and lives in His spoken words, constantly speaking His words and causing the power of them to persist across the years. – A.W. Tozer

The vigor of our spiritual lives will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our lives and in our thoughts. – George Mueller

Grace comes from the heart of a gracious God who wants to stun you and overwhelm you with a gift you don't deserve-salvation, adoption, a spiritual ability to use in kingdom service, answered prayer, the church, His presence, His wisdom, His guidance, His love. – Bill Hybels

Christ, the son of God, the complete embodiment of God's Word, came among us. He looked on humanity's losing battle with sin and pitched His divine tent in the middle of the camp so that He could dwell among us. – Beth Moore

Christmas was God's idea. His way of giving us life and empowering us to live it. His way of sharing His love, His wisdom and His heart with us. He came to give us life abundantly!

Merry Christmas!