

ADVENT FRIDAYS

Chapter Four – Why Does It Matter?

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit
(Matthew 1:18, ESV).

Christmas is not merely a good story. It is the true story of the world. As C S Lewis once observed, “Now the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us the same way as others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened.”

McLaughlin concludes her wonderful book with a poignant question, “Why does Christmas matter? She, rightly, argues, “if the story of Jesus isn’t true, —if he’s just a story in some people’s heads—we don’t just lose the magic of Christmas, we lose everything. Good and evil. Even you and me.” She is disturbingly correct.

Her first insight is this—if we lose Christmas, we lose all values. She writes, “Whether or not you believe in God, my guess is that you believe in human rights. You probably believe that...that rape is evil, and that the rich should not oppress the poor. But ask yourself this question: why? If there is no God, these claims aren’t moral facts, they’re opinions.”

Citing best-selling author, Yuval Harari, a man who rejects Christianity, she points out “our deepest moral beliefs are not self-evident facts, they are biblical beliefs.” Christians should be the first to recognize this, but often don’t. We have assumed, wrongly, that many of the morals we cherish are self-evident.

We have forgotten how much biblical Christianity has shaped the cultural values of the West. Lose Christ and you will soon discover that the values you assumed inviolable, evaporate inside any other worldview. In fact, as McLaughlin goes on to observe, values we’ve assumed were self-evident would have been mocked by the ancient Romans and Greeks.

So, first, to lose the Christian story is to destroy the moral foundation upon which the values of the West were built. Lose the Christian story, and America is, as Francis Schaeffer once noted, a “cut flower.”

Furthermore, if we lose the true story of the world—i.e., the Christ of Christmas—we forfeit the very idea of meaning. If, as atheistic evolutionists argue, the world, interpreted from a purely scientific viewpoint, has no meaning, then humans are nothing more than outcome of blind evolutionary processes that operate without purpose. Consequently, our lives are not a part of a divine plan. On this interpretation, all design is merely apparent, and all meaning is entirely fictional.

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Chapter Four – Why Does It Matter? (Continued)

Increasingly, atheistic philosophers are arguing you and I have no identity. Our sense of self, on their interpretation, is nothing more than chemical processes of the brain. According to them, the search for meaning is a delusion. Hence, the title of Dawkins' book—The God Delusion.

Conclusion: The Christmas story is a part of a much larger story, the true story of the whole world—the story found exclusively in Scripture.

Allegedly, John Daly, whom the French might dub the “Enfant Terrible” of golf, once said, “I believe nicotine plus caffeine equals protein.” Hopefully, he was speaking “tongue and cheek.” However, this should remind all of us that what we believe matters.

Opening Questions

Read: 1 Peter 1: 13-21; Exodus 20:1-17; Ephesians 5:1-14.

1. Does it matter what you believe about swing mechanics? Or asked another way, can you believe something false about the swing and expect to consistently “get away with it?”

2. What about alignment? If you believe you are square to the target but are aligned way right, will that have adverse effects on your game?

3. When Peter, under the inspiration of the Spirit, writes we were redeemed by blood from our “futile” (i.e., meaningless) way of life, what is he saying? 1 Peter 1: 13-21.

4. Moses, after meeting with God on Mount Sinai, communicates the Ten Commandments to Israel. Are we to understand those commandments only applied to them or should we understand those commandments apply to all people for all time? Exodus 20:1-17.

5. When Paul instructs us in Ephesians that certain behaviors will be judged when Christ comes again, are we to understand that as myth and /or folklore? Or should we understand that as a true report of what happens to those who refuse faith/belief in Jesus Christ? Ephesians 5:1-14.
