

The Greatest Gift



Gallup Poll

85% - Too Commercial



Do you enjoy Christmas shopping?

50% of Women

34% of Men

The Worst Gifts



Worst Gifts Ever!

DVD Rewinder





Worst Gifts Ever!

Beer Belt!!!



**Holds Cans
Or Bottles!**



Worst Gifts Ever!

**Dead hamster in
the mail.**



Worst Gifts Ever!

Freudian Slippers! - I thought the slippers were kind of cute that is until the faces on the front of the slippers freaked my dog out and he attacked my feet. The slippers were destroyed, I had to get eight stitches and now my dog has a taste for human blood.



Best Gifts Ever!

Justin Bieber
'Someday
collection'





Best Gifts Ever!

Newborn!





Best Christmas Gift Ever?





Evangelical Alliance (UK) Surveys

The price of Christmas spending on mental health

- **19% - worries about paying off the cost of Christmas**
- **25% - feeling depressed**
- **20% - will have problems 'paying the rent' this month.**
- **Over 50% admitted they overspent on Christmas.**
- **39% used credit cards to cover the cost of Christmas.**
- **33% estimated that it would take them more than six months to pay off their Christmas spending debt**



Evangelical Alliance (UK) Surveys

- **51% agreed with the statement:**
"The birth of Jesus is irrelevant to my Christmas"
- **46% disagreed with the statement.**
- **61% agreed with the statement:**
"Christmas is mainly for children"
- **38% disagreed with the statement.**

(2010 survey)



Gifts, Expectations and God's Promises

- **We don't always get what we expect to get.**

Not what you wanted?

He looks happy.





Not what you wanted?

She wanted a doll.





Gifts, Expectations and God's Promises

- **Jewish expectations for the Messiah.**
- **God's promises and our expectations.**



Gifts, Expectations and God's Promises

The Christ child and Suffering Servant

- **God sent his Son!**
- **Jesus lived and died for our benefit.**

***In sending Christ God has offered
the greatest gift, one that we all really need.***



Peace, Joy, Hope & Love

Can we have hope in a world that is filled with despair and resignation?

Can we have joy in a world that is filled with sadness and sorrow?

Can we have peace in a world that is filled with struggle and strife?

Can we have love in a world that is filled with hatred and violence?

Peace





Is peace needed today?

- **Right relationship with God – *Spiritual Peace***
- **Struggles of the soul – *Personal Peace***
- **Poverty, oppression and racism – *Social Peace***
- **Wars, conquest and glory – *Political Peace***



How do we get peace?

“We are not at peace with others because we are not at peace with ourselves, and we are not at peace with ourselves because we are not at peace with God” – *Thomas Merton*

God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.” – C. S Lewis

Our Peace in This Life.

*In the midst of
struggle and strife,
he brought peace.*

**In fulfillment of
God's promise He
provided people
with a way to have
peace with God
and others.**





Peace by God's Promises

Spiritual peace - First, we must have peace with God
- a restored right relationship;

Next, we find **personal peace** which will result from
understanding ourselves aright before God.

Then, we can seek to bring **peace in our society** by
seeking restored relationships and justice.

Finally, we can try to find ways to bring peace
between nations – **political peace**.

Peace

The Birth of Christ Brought Us Peace:

¹⁴ “Glory to God in
highest heaven, and
peace on earth to
those with whom
God is pleased.”

Luke 2:14 (NLT)



Joy

*Is there any joy
in your life?*





What is joy?

- It is ***more than just happiness***...which is based on circumstances.
- It is ***not the absence of struggles***...we should have joy despite the pain.
- It is ***a gift from God*** - one of the fruit of the Spirit.
- ***It is a deep abiding sense of God's pleasure, love and care for us; a sense of well-being because we are in relationship with God.***

Our Joy in This Life

*In the midst of
sadness and sorrow,
he brought joy.*

**In fulfillment of
God's promise He
offered people a
reason to rejoice
despite their
suffering.**





Joy in Being God's Child

God is the source of the believer's joy.

God's acts on behalf of his people are a cause for joy.

Believers can rejoice despite life's trials because God is their strength, shield and life.

Joy comes to us because we are in relationship with our God and Savior.

Joy

The Birth of Christ Brought Us Joy:

²⁰ The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. **Luke 2:20 (NLT)**

⁹ After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! **Matthew 2:9-10 (NLT)**



Hope





What is the hope for today?

**Many people today face life
filled with despair and resignation.**

‘Nothing will change.’

‘Nobody cares.’

‘What does it matter.’



What is hope?

***The day the Lord created hope was probably
the same day he created Spring.***

- Bern Williams

***'Other men see only a hopeless end, but the
Christian rejoices in an endless hope.'***

– Gilbert Beenken

Our Hope for Life beyond life.

*In the midst of
despair and
resignation, he
brought hope.*

**In fulfillment of
God's promise He
fulfilled people's
hopes for salvation
from their
lostness.**





Hope in God's Promises

We put our hope in God who promised us in the Bible that He would redeem us in Christ.

We put our hope in God who raised Jesus to validate His promises in Christ.

We put our hope in God who promised us life eternal in Christ.

We put our hope in God who promised that Christ would return to establish His rule over all creation.

Hope

The Birth of Christ Brought Us Hope:

⁶⁸ “Praise the Lord,
the God of Israel,
because he has
visited and redeemed
his people. ⁶⁹ He has
sent us a mighty
Savior ...

Luke 1:68-69 (NLT)





Welcome to Our World

**Tears are falling
Hearts are breaking
How we need to hear
from God
You've been promised
We've been waiting
Welcome holy Child
Welcome holy Child**

**Hope that You don't mind
our manger
How I wish we would
have known
But long-awaited holy
Stranger
Make Yourself at home
Please make Yourself at
home**



Welcome to Our World

**Bring Your peace
Into our violence
Bid our hungry souls be
filled
Word now breaking
heaven's silence
Welcome to our world
Welcome to our world**

**Fragile finger sent to heal
us
Tender brow prepared for
thorn
Tiny heart whose blood
will save us
Unto us is born
Unto us is born**



Welcome to Our World

**So wrap our injured flesh around You
Breathe our air and walk our sod
Rob our sin and make us holy
Perfect Son of God
Perfect Son of God
Welcome to our world**

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God's Love





Love Came Down

**“Though our feelings come and go, God’s love
for us does not.” – C. S. Lewis**

**“God loves us the way we are, but too much
to leave us that way” – Leighton Ford**

God's Love For Us

*In the midst of hatred
and violence, he
brought love*

**In fulfillment of God's
promise He
demonstrated God's
love for all people
everywhere.**



Love

The Birth of Christ Brought Us God's Love:

⁹ God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰ This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

1 John 4:9-10 (NLT)





Christ is the love of God to us

God took the initiative in saving us.

**God pursues us even as we ignore, malign,
hate, forget and disregard Him.**

God sent the supreme sacrifice for us – His Son.

**God's love is merciful, gracious and extravagant
towards wayward sinners.**

The Greatest Gift

God's Love for
Us in Christ
Which brings
us peace, joy
and hope!

