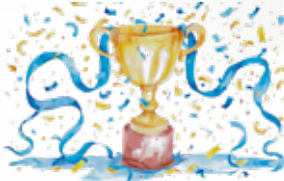


Not a Reward –but a Challenge

Sadly, some of us still believe that our best efforts to live a decent life will earn our acceptance with the Almighty. But how wrong could we be.



The 'price' was paid for us on the Cross of Calvary and the only 'cost' facing those of us who would become His true followers is in terms of commitment...

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Luke 9:23

The greatest challenge facing us this Christmas is how we'll respond to the greatest contrast of them all... the difference between what lies ahead for those who'll accept this challenge...



For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

...and those of us who won't...

...whoever does not believe stands condemned already...

John 3:18

The next step is yours!

Christmas **Contrasts**



Christmas Contrasts

The snow seemed deeper... the suspense much stronger... even waking early on Christmas morning was never a problem!

As we compare our Christmases of times past with those of today, the contrasts are quite clear.

Yet they're also just a pale reflection of those which surrounded that first Christmas, 2000 years ago...



Not a Palace –but a Stable

Who would have believed it? He was the Maker of the Universe...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:1,3



And yet He came into our world as a helpless baby... an event predicted hundreds of years before it actually happened...

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14

At a later time, His followers would go on to say...

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.

John 1:14



Not a Dictator –but a Servant

No-one has ever had more authority and power than He. And yet He didn't accuse or criticise ordinary people like us, though He had every right...

...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Romans 3:23

He was God in the form of man but He didn't come to condemn... He came to serve...



Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant...

Philippians 2:6-7

In this way He has become the only answer to our greatest need...

...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...

1 Timothy 1:15

...because we'll face an unthinkable future when we stand before Almighty God to give account of our lives.



Not a Judge –but a Saviour

He goes on to warn us...

...people are destined to die once and after that to face judgment...

Hebrews 9:27

On that day '***I did it my way!***' will prove worse than useless...

There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

Proverbs 14:12



But although a great moral leader, teacher and example, Christ Jesus really came into this world to die on our behalf...

...as a loving sacrifice...

...to give his life as a ransom for many.

Matthew 20:28

...he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Philippians 2:8

In other words, He took the punishment we deserve.



Not a Threat –but a Promise

But the benefits of this won't be forced upon us. He wants us to seek His forgiveness, facing up to the kind of people we really are...



If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:8

With His help God calls us... actually, He commands us... to turn away from all we know to be wrong.

And in asking the risen Christ Jesus into our lives to become our Saviour and Lord, we're promised a completely new start... with the desire and power to live a new lifestyle... pleasing to Him...

...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

This is the only way for us to be put right with God, and if we don't accept this truth we make the Lord Jesus out to be a liar...

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

