

CHAPTER 5

WHY SHOULD WE BOTHER TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Before looking at valid reasons why we should become a Christian, let's look at some common reasons people put forward which are **not** valid, or at least which the Bible never puts forward:

Invalid reason 1 - It is not to do God a favour

God does not need any favours from any of us. You or me finding out about Him and learning what the Bible says, is not going to benefit God. The good news about Jesus Christ is something that God has put in place for our benefit, not His. In other words, we need Him, but He does not need us.

Invalid reason 2 - It is not because He loves you.

It is absolutely true to say that God is love, and that His perfect love is the model for us all to follow. However, that is never put forward in the Bible as the *reason* why an unbeliever should seek to find Him. That may sound surprising. Most people have heard churches telling the public how much God loves them and giving that as the reason for them, in return, wanting to come to Him. The point is that although God is love, He generally only speaks about His love to those who have already repented and believed in Him. With those who do not yet know or love Him, the Bible focuses on His holiness and His impending judgment, not on His love:

*The LORD watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.*

Psalm 145:20 (NIV)

God knows our hearts and how we operate. If He was to present Himself to us on the basis of His love and ask us to come to Him simply because He loves us, then it would not cause us to respect Him. On the contrary, it would only create contempt for Him in the hearts of most of us. That is not just a theoretical statement. It is the practical experience of many unbelievers. They are actually turned off by a message that God loves them. They see it as a kind of weakness in God. Imagine how we would react to a human being who went around telling complete strangers that he loves them and wants them to come to him and be his friend in response to that love. At best we would pity such a person. More likely, we would despise them and consider them socially inadequate and pathetic.

This idea that the gospel should be presented in wholly positive terms, without making any mention of sin, judgment, death or Hell and, instead, just emphasising God's love, is relatively new. It is a false and unbalanced way of presenting Christianity that has only really arisen in the twentieth century and in the West. Before that no such man-centred message was ever given as the basis for turning to God and accepting Jesus Christ.

The inappropriate overemphasis on God's love since the middle of the twentieth century also has the effect of misleading many people into thinking that God would never judge or punish us. We are told that He is too "loving" to do so. That is another false idea which has caused great harm. So, I will not present God to you in that manner, nor appeal to you to believe in Him on the basis of His love for us. That is not how the Bible presents God to unbelievers. Instead, I will begin, as the Bible does, by focusing on God's holiness and how He feels about our sin.

Invalid reason 3 - It is not to improve your life or to achieve happiness.

This again is a misleading basis upon which to urge people to come to Jesus Christ and believe in Him. Firstly it is not the way that Jesus presents Himself in the Bible, nor the way the apostles presented Him. Secondly it is only partially true. The reality is that by becoming a Christian we will not solve all our problems. In fact we will create some extra problems. Neither will it always produce happiness for us.

This rose-tinted presentation of Christianity has been put forward by well-meaning people. They have wanted to make Christianity seem more appealing, so as to get people to accept it. Those presenting it this way may be too scared to tell you the real reasons why you should become a Christian. They fear that if they did tell you the complete truth then you may feel offended, or be put off. It is very possible that you would be offended or put off. But that is still no reason to mislead you about the true nature of the Christian message and what suffering and trouble the Christian life can involve. Look at how hard life was for apostle Paul:

⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

2 Corinthians 4:8-11 (NIV)

²⁴Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28 (NIV)

These two passages give us a glimpse of the terrible hardship that apostle Paul had to endure. It may not be so extreme for you, though it could be, and you need to realise that from the outset. If you become a real Christian it will lead to persecution and trouble and it could even be severe. Yet, too often, a falsely positive message is presented, as if becoming a Christian will solve all our problems and make life easy. It won't.

For all these reasons, much of the Western church has presented Christianity in an artificial and misleading way, making promises which Jesus does not make and which are not supported by the Bible. I do not want to do that. I want to present Christianity to you honestly, as Jesus presented it, and as the Bible presents it, without trying to improve it or make it more marketable. To do so would not only be dishonest, but also very ineffective. Most people are too astute to be misled by such tactics. Even if people are naïve enough to believe such a message, it is not the true gospel and they will end up being disappointed and disillusioned and, quite probably, falling away.

Most of the public can see through such falseness and hype and they reject it instinctively. That is one reason why so many millions of people have rejected what now passes for Christianity in the Western world. They can see through it and realise that much of it is empty, false and irrelevant to their lives. Sadly, they are arriving at those conclusions not because that is what *real* Christianity is about, but because that is what *apparent* Christianity is about, i.e. the false and compromised message they have been given.

Valid reasons why a non-Christian should believe in Christianity:

Valid Reason 1: Because it is true.

This is actually the only valid reason for believing in or accepting any idea. The reality is that biblical Christianity, (i.e. the real thing, not the various false alternatives), is either true or it is not. If it is true then you should accept it, simply because it is true. But if it is false, then you should reject it simply because it is false, without needing any other reason. That may sound like an unnecessary statement of the obvious, but that is not how most of us think today.

Our society no longer thinks in terms of something as being simply true or false. Instead they think in terms of it being attractive or unattractive, realistic or unrealistic, likely to appeal or unlikely to appeal, practical or impractical etc. In other words, many of us do not accept or reject an idea on the basis of whether it is true in itself. Instead we do so according to whether it would be convenient or inconvenient to believe in it and/or whether we like the implications it might have for our lives if we did believe it. Previous generations did not think that way.

I am reminded of a colleague at work with whom I spoke about Christianity. This colleague said to me that she believed in Jesus but that *“I just don’t want to change my life”*. What she was referring to was the fact that she had a non-Christian boyfriend. She was in a sexual relationship with him and was actively going out to night clubs, drinking very heavily and engaging in a generally sinful life style.

What she meant was that, although she could now see clearly that Christianity was true, she was still not going to accept it, because she knew that Jesus would want her to change her lifestyle. She decided that the inconvenience of changing her life was more than she was willing to accept. Therefore she decided to ignore a message which she already knew to be true. If a person is honest, then they will surely see that that is an absurd way to think. Yet, it is how the majority of people do think in my own experience of telling people about Christianity.

No matter how inconvenient Christianity might be to you, that has no bearing on whether Christianity itself is actually true. If Jesus is the Son of God then He is the Son of God. If He rose from the dead then he rose from the dead. If He is coming again to this world to judge the world then that is what He is going to do. Those things are true no matter what we think about them and no matter whether we find those facts attractive, inconvenient or otherwise.

For example, Britain has a monarchy and we presently have a Queen called Elizabeth II. You might perhaps disagree with that and wish that we had a republic, but no matter what you think, the fact remains that we have a Queen. She remains Queen no matter what you believe and no matter how much you object or protest. She also remains Queen even if you deny, or are unaware, that she is the Queen or if you refuse to acknowledge her. Thus, there is only one reason to believe that Queen Elizabeth II is the Queen, and that is because she is.

Whatever we might think about the monarchy, whether positively or negatively, has nothing to do with whether it is true that she is the Queen. We would consider it odd if an ardent republican was to deny that the Queen exists simply because he disapproves of the idea of monarchy or sees disadvantages in it. Yet, that is exactly what many people do about God and the Bible. They deny what the Bible says simply because they don’t *want* it to be true.

So, I would invite you throughout this book, and indeed in all aspects of life, to test every comment solely on the basis of whether it is true, without any regard to whether or not you want it to be true. **If a thing is true, believe in it. If it is not true reject it, regardless of whether you like it.**

It seems strange that I should even need to say that, let alone emphasise it so much, but in the Western world today, our thinking has become so superficial, and we are so dumbed-down, that it does need to be said.

Valid Reason 2: Because when we die we will face God's judgment, and there will be catastrophic results if we did not believe in and follow Jesus Christ.

This is an unpopular and unfashionable thing for me to say and, sadly, it will offend some people. However, it is an inescapable fact that the Bible tells us that if we do not repent, and believe in Jesus Christ, then we will incur God's wrath and be punished for our sins forever. By that I mean that after we die we will be judged at the Great White Throne judgment. Jesus Himself will be the judge.

Instead of being allowed to be part of the Kingdom of God and to spend eternity living a life of happiness and perfection we will then be cast into the Lake of Fire, which is an eternal punishment. It was created for the Devil and for his fallen angels. But it will also be used for all those people who do not accept Jesus Christ and follow Him. God is not simply recommending that we should repent and believe in Jesus Christ. He is *commanding* us to do so:

"...God commands all men everywhere to repent."
Acts 17:30 (NIV)

The good news about Jesus Christ is not something which is simply being passively suggested or offered to us, which we are free to accept or reject without any consequence. It is true to say that we are free to reject Jesus and to refuse to repent. But it is not true to say that there is no consequence. Though I do not wish to offend anybody, I have no alternative but to say that a dreadful eternal fate awaits all who reject Jesus Christ. They will not be admitted into the Kingdom of God. Instead they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire and in a fully conscious condition.

I really wish that that was not true and that God would forgive and accept all people whether they repent and believe in Jesus Christ or not. I wish that that was the message that I could present to you now. Not only would it be a much more attractive message, but it would also make me more acceptable for saying it. Yet, what can I do? I can only present the genuine message that the Bible presents. I have no authority to change it in any way.

Many would view it as politically incorrect and undemocratic of God to presume to "command" us to do anything, rather than merely suggest it to us politely. However, you and I both need to remember who God is. He is not merely a man. He is not on the same level as us. He is the Creator of the entire universe. He created us and he owns us. We are His property and He has every right to instruct us and judge us:

*¹⁰for every animal of the forest is mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills.
¹¹I know every bird in the mountains,
and the creatures of the field are mine.
¹²If I were hungry I would not tell you,
for the world is mine, and all that is in it.*
Psalms 50:10-12 (NIV)

*Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty and the
splendour, for everything in Heaven and earth
is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all.*
1 Chronicles 29:11 (NIV)

*²⁴And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is
You who made the Heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them.*

Acts 4:24 (NASB)

*Know that the LORD Himself is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.
Psalm 100:3 (NASB)*

*Rise up, O God, judge the earth,
for all the nations are your inheritance.
Psalm 82:8 (NIV)*

*The Heavens are yours,
and yours also the earth;
you founded the world and all that is in it.
Psalm 89:11 (NIV)*

Every one of our lives is also sustained by Him. The very atoms of which we are made are held together in their various orbits and movements by God. For that reason too, He has the authority, as the God of the whole universe, to tell us anything He wants to tell us. He equally has the authority, the right and the power to punish us if we disobey or ignore Him:

*"Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die."
Ezekiel 18:4 (NASB)*

Thus, if He tells us that ignoring and rejecting Him in this life will result in eternal separation from Him in the Lake of Fire, then we need to take that seriously. It needs to be a real inducement to us to repent and get right with God.

Some would say that it is wrong to present God in this "unattractive" way, i.e. as someone who is capable of judging us and punishing us. They argue that it would be better, instead, to present Him as someone "nicer". That is exactly what much of the modern Western church has done and is still doing. It has edited out anything about God which it does not find attractive in marketing terms and replaced it with more acceptable characteristics.

The Bible presents to us a God who is perfectly holy, righteous and just. He has pledged that He will judge and punish sin. However, most of the churches in the West are presenting a God who is "tolerant", and "accepts us unconditionally". It may, perhaps, appeal to some of us if God was like that, but there is no biblical basis for saying that He is. On the contrary, the Bible tells us clearly that God is going to judge sin eternally. God has enemies and He openly states that He will punish them.

Some criticise God for that and reject Him on the basis that He ought to act differently. They say He should accept us all, regardless of how we respond to Him. But it would be most unwise to think like that. We must humbly accept that He is God, and that we are not, and then take these things seriously. If we do, then we will be in the right frame of mind to flee from God's wrath, which is most certainly coming.

More detail about God's Judgment

Please consider all the following passages which make clear that sin, judgment and the need to repent are major recurring themes throughout the Bible. I want to demonstrate that I am not exaggerating or basing what I say on just one or two verses, taken out of context. This theme of judgment is stated over and over again to ensure we do not miss it. In fact I could have listed dozens of other passages too:

*"...he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."
Acts 17:30-31 (NIV)*

*For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.
Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NASB)*

*I will punish the world for its evil,
the wicked for their sins.
I will put an end to the arrogance of the
haughty and will humble the pride of the
ruthless.*

Isaiah 13:11 (NIV)

*¹¹The proud look of man will be abased
And the loftiness of man will be humbled,
And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
¹²For the LORD of hosts will have a day of
reckoning
Against everyone who is proud and lofty
And against everyone who is lifted up,
That he may be abased.*

Isaiah 2:11-12 (NASB)

*³⁰"Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the
Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall.
³¹Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why
will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the
Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!"*

Ezekiel 18:30-32 (NIV)

*See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling
to punish the people of the earth for their sins.
The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her;
she will conceal her slain no longer.*

Isaiah 26:21 (NIV)

*"The day of the LORD is near for all
nations.
As you have done, it will be done to you;
your deeds will return upon your own head."*

Obadiah 15(NIV)

*⁷John said to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you
to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say
to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can
raise up children for Abraham. ⁹The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does
not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."*

Luke 3:7-9 (NIV)

*⁴⁹"This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from
the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of
teeth."*

Matthew 13:49-50 (NIV)

It surely makes sense for any rational person, having been given such a clear warning to take note of it and get into line. The warning God gives is not just clear, it is repeated over and over again. The only way you can miss it in the Bible is if you decide you don't want to hear it. Sadly, that is a common response.

When an unsaved, unforgiven person faces God's judgment, everything he has ever said, done or thought will be judged. Then his sins will be punished. If you knew that you were going to be put on trial in front of a very senior criminal judge, who was going to evaluate you closely and punish you, would that not affect you? Would it not influence the way you act, think and speak? It certainly ought to. Yet, that is precisely the position that every non-Christian is in. We simply need to recognise the reality of that.

Later in this book we shall see in clearer detail each of the different ways that that judgment will operate. There is not just one single judgment. There are many different stages to the overall judgment and it operates very differently for Christians and non-Christians.

Non-Christians will be judged and punished for their sins. Christians will not be, because their sins are forgiven and forgotten. However, they will still be judged, albeit in a very different way, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. At that judgment every Christian will be judged on the basis of what he did with his life and how he used his talents and his time from the point of his conversion onwards.

Everything before then is forgiven and forgotten, provided we are a genuine Christian. Jesus will then reward, or rebuke, each Christian on the basis of how well he does in that assessment of his life as a disciple. (See Book Four for much more detail on how Christians will be judged, what the criteria for the judgment will be, and what the rewards may be.)

In simple terms, therefore, each of us will be judged, whether we are Christians or non-Christians. That fact ought to have a major bearing on the way we live if we are rational people. That would be true even if it was a merely human judge before whom we were awaiting trial. It ought to be much more true if the one judging us has perfect information, perfect evidence, perfect wisdom and where it is absolutely impossible to deceive Him or hide anything from Him. So, the fact that we all face God's judgment should profoundly influence us.

It is also a major reason why we should accept Jesus Christ and deal with our sin now and seek to be forgiven for it now. The alternative is to leave it too late and go to the judgment with our sins unforgiven and undealt with. You cannot repent after you die. It will be too late then. Once we die it is all over. We then face God's judgment and there is no opportunity to change our minds or to repent belatedly:

And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment,
Hebrews 9:27 (RSV)

You have no way of knowing when your life will end. It could be that you will die tonight or in five years' time or 50 years' time. Or it may be that you are only 10 seconds away from a Boeing 747 jet flying in to the side of your office building and bringing your life to an end in an instant, totally unexpectedly. Our lives and our bodies do not belong to us. God can take our lives away from us at any time. We belong to God, who made us:

Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under Heaven belongs to me.
Job 41:11 (NIV)

"All these things my hand has made and so all these things are mine," says the Lord.
Isaiah 66:2 (a) (RSV)

God therefore has every right to bring our lives to an end whenever He wishes. He does nothing wrong by ending our lives. You have no valid basis to complain about anything God does, because He made you and He owns you. Thus, you need to seize your chance to get right with God. Do it now and don't leave it till later. If you do it now then you will be forgiven.

Then, when you face God's judgment, instead of being at the Great White Throne judgment, it will be at the "Judgment Seat of Christ". That judgment is solely for believers who have been forgiven. They face no condemnation. It is for reckoning up what rewards (if any) are due to them, or alternatively, what rebuke is due to them for what they did, or failed to do, after their conversion, while they were meant to be operating as Jesus' disciples.

If however we do not repent, believe and follow Him, then we go instead to the Great White Throne judgment. This is for unsaved people. No rewards will be given out, but only eternal wrath and punishment. You have the chance to make a decision now and have your trial transferred from the Great White Throne to the Judgment Seat of Christ. You would then be judged as a believer, rather than as an unbeliever. Then it would be on the basis of what reward you should receive, rather than what punishment you should get.

The choice is yours now, but it will not always be your choice. The chance can be lost, and lost forever and you have no way of knowing how much time is left to you. I appeal to you therefore to take this warning seriously and to respond. Apostle Paul did the same when he wrote to the Corinthians and begged them to be reconciled to God:

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. *2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)*

Eternal life

You and I, and everybody else, are eternal. That is the case whether we want to be or not. The Bible says that we are made in the image of God. That has many implications, but one of them is that we are eternal. This is where we differ from the animals. Their lives come to an end and are not eternal, because they have no spirit.

But, each of us is eternal, whether we want to be or not, and whether we believe it or not. The irony is that even the most hardened atheist will one day die and discover, to his surprise and horror, that he has an eternal conscious existence. He will also realise that there is a God, whose anger and judgment he must now face. We are eternal because, uniquely amongst all God's creation, we have been given a spirit. We are made up of:

- a) our body,
- b) our soul (which is a collective term for our mind, emotions and will) and
- c) our spirit.

Whereas our physical body dies, our soul and our spirit are eternal. They will live on forever and ever. We shall all do so either in Heaven or in Hell (temporarily) and then in the Lake of Fire (permanently).

Resurrection bodies

Moreover, all of us, whether we are Christians or not, are going to be physically resurrected one day, as Jesus was. We will all be given resurrection bodies which will be physical but also eternal. Christians will be given resurrection bodies and will live with Jesus Christ forever.

Unrepentant unbelievers who have rejected Jesus Christ will also be given resurrection bodies which will be equally eternal. But they will then be cast into the Lake of Fire where they will suffer punishment forever. That is a terrible prospect. The eternal and indestructible nature of the resurrection body is shown by the fact that even in the Lake of Fire that body will not be burnt up or damaged in any way. As unpleasant and as unfashionable as it is, we need to reflect upon this dreadful prospect. It is valid that it should motivate us to respond to God.

This horrifying prospect of judgment is a crucial truth that the Bible clearly teaches. However, it has been covered up and ignored by much of the Western church, because it is not politically correct. They also feel that it will put people off. Yet, regardless of those things, the fact remains that it is true. I can see no alternative but to speak about it. How can I hide it when Jesus spoke openly about it?

There are various ways in which many people in the apparent church have tried to do away with or at least tone down judgment, Hell and the Lake of Fire. One way is the idea of ‘*annihilation*’. The people who believe in that suggest that God is too nice or too good to punish anyone eternally. They say that what He does instead is to simply end their existence, or annihilate them completely. If so, then they no longer have any conscious existence. That would be a comfort if it was true, but there is no basis whatsoever for believing in it. It is the direct opposite of what the Bible actually teaches.

Others teach an even more misguided idea, namely “*universalism*”. They go further and argue that God is so nice that He won’t even annihilate people. Their idea is that He will simply save and forgive everybody, no matter what they believe or do. It is remarkable how many people within the apparent church think like this. It implies that they do not need to have any concern about eternity or about the fate of unbelievers, because on this basis everybody will be saved anyway. So, nobody has anything to worry about. Again, it would be wonderful if it was true, but it is not true. It directly contradicts what Jesus has said to us out of His own mouth, let alone what the prophets and apostles have said.

Although this has been a lengthy section, I feel it has been necessary to really drive home this point about judgment. We face a terrible end if we do not repent, accept Jesus Christ and believe in Him. Thus in choosing whether to do so, we need to be very aware of the consequences of choosing not to. That prospect needs to influence us to make the right decision, and to make it now, while there is still time.

How does God resurrect people?

I would also just mention, in passing, that in my experience people often get confused as to how exactly God can manage to resurrect people whose bodies have decayed away centuries ago. Some people’s bodies have even been cremated and so are totally obliterated. Many have asked me how it can be possible for God to raise them to life again. Some have asked me if God uses the very same physical remains and even whether He has to retrieve all the atoms of carbon and hydrogen and so on that were in our bodies when we were alive.

The answer, in my view, is probably best explained by saying that all God needs is the information that was used to form our bodies in the first place. That is all contained within the DNA in our genes. That is really just a complex code which arranges every part of our physical make up. So, I expect God will just recreate us in accordance with our DNA.

It doesn't matter what physical material God uses and whether they are the same atoms or different ones. Indeed, even as we live now, the atoms of which we are made are continually changing and being replaced. We are not the same person physically today that we were a few years ago. Most, or all, of the atoms in our bodies will have been replaced over that time. So, it's a non-issue.

As for where the information about our DNA is now, it is simply stored in God's memory. He knows the DNA codes for every person He has ever created. So, when He recreates them, i.e. resurrects them, He will just speak their bodies back into existence. He spoke everything into existence in the first place in Genesis chapters one and two when He tackled the far larger job of creating the entire universe.

That said, when God resurrects us He will not make us exactly as we are now. We will be entirely recognisable as ourselves, but we will be perfect. Any faults, defects or imperfections will be gone. So, any handicapped person will no longer be handicapped. They will be whole and perfect.

We have to focus on the bad news first

My objective in the rest of this book is to set out for you as clearly as I can what the Christian message is, so that you can make an informed choice. However, before I can tell you the good news that Jesus Christ came to bring, I must first tell you a lot more about what the bad news is. It is only by knowing all about the bad news that we can ever begin to understand the good news and realise just how good it is.

I hope that you will bear with me therefore as I spend some further time clarifying exactly what the Bible means when it talks about sin, judgment, Hell and the Lake of Fire. That is necessary before I start to look at what Jesus did to save us from it all. For now, I must continue focusing on the bad news because it is essential to understand that before we can begin to understand or appreciate the good news. Moreover, you are unlikely to have heard much, if any, of this before because the true Christian message has been so suppressed and 'toned down' within the apparent church. Therefore, even if you have gone to church all your life, you may not have been told these things.

Some readers may be discouraged as they read the chapters that follow. They may be thinking that the bad news just seems to go on and on and that we never seem to be getting to the good news or seeing any benefit from believing in Jesus Christ. But hang on in there and keep going. It will all make sense by the time you get to the end. Then you will be equipped to make a fully informed decision to follow Jesus Christ and to receive the amazing benefits and blessings that that leads to.

The benefits of being a Christian

We have already seen some of the bad news, and there is more to look at. However, there are also many very positive advantages which come from being a Christian. Though I'm determined to tell you all the bad news and to leave none of it out, there are certainly many blessings and advantages that will come to you if you become a real Christian.

You will experience peace of mind in a new way and you will always have God to turn to in any times of difficulty or grief. In addition you will become a part of the wider family of the church and will make many genuine friends, probably far more than you would have as an unbeliever.

The greatest advantage of all though, is that if you become a Christian, not only will you be saved from God's judgment and from Hell and the Lake of Fire. You can also look forward to spending all of eternity in glory, being in God's presence within the Kingdom of God and enjoying all the immense blessings and joys that that will involve. The world that awaits us is going to be indescribably wonderful. Why would any sane person choose not to go there? Moreover, how tragic it would be to miss it all simply because you did not choose to make the effort to find out about it.