

Have you finished your Christmas shopping yet? Are you still wondering about what to get for that last minute gift?

Have you thought about what you may want for Christmas? Have you written a present list for your family and friends or have you told them to surprise you?

Out of all the things that you have asked for or wish to get this year, what would be the one thing that you would say is the best present of all?

For some it would be the latest electronic gadget like a mobile phone, games console or pc tablet. Others want to wear the latest offering from the top designers, or maybe you have set your sights on a diamond or some other bling that shines brighter than any Christmas tree light.

Everybody likes to receive a gift, particularly young children. Who doesn't like to see their excited faces eagerly opening well wrapped, brightly coloured presents on Christmas Day. Well that's what Christmas is all about, the children - isn't it? Contrary to popular opinion or belief, Christmas isn't about

In his story "A Christmas Carol", Charles Dickens takes his readers into the life of Ebenezer Scrooge on Christmas Eve 1843. Scrooge is some kind of unscrupulous money-lender who preys on the poor and needy, unmercifully exacting high interest on the loans that his victims have taken out.

The story begins in his counting house where Dickens gives us an insight into the uncharitable nature that consumes this old man. Early on in the story we are introduced to his nephew, who annually invites his uncle Ebenezer to Christmas dinner, but is always rebuffed. Bob Cratchitt, his long suffering clerk, who is the complete opposite to Scrooge, is reluctantly 'allowed' to take the day off to spend time with his family on Christmas Day, but must report for work early the following day. Next we are introduced to two business men who call collecting money for a fund to support the poor at Christmas. Scrooge quickly shows them the door with only a mouthful of abuse.

Dickens describes Scrooge as "... a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!", whose dislike for all things Christmas is immortalised in his catchphrase, 'Bah! humbug'.

For many of us, Christmas is one of our favourite times of the year. It is nice to get a break from our normal routines and to spend time with our family and friends. Many families have special Christmas customs and traditions, involving decorations, meals, songs, and the exchanging of gifts with loved ones. All of these things are very nice, but is this the true meaning of Christmas?

It seems that every year the shops put up their Christmas displays earlier and earlier, and that each year there is increasing pressure to buy more and more expensive gifts. There also seems to be a competition to see who can put up the largest and most elaborate display of decorations. With all of these things, it is very easy to lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas.

But as we strip away the layers of glitter, commercialism, and tradition that surround the celebration of Christmas, the holiday's true meaning becomes easier to see. The star that tops the Christmas tree reminds us of the star that the wise men followed two thousand years ago while seeking the newborn King. Who is this King? As the angels said to the shepherds, "For there is born to you this day in the city of

partying, presents, tinsel, trees or turkey. Neither is it about our children, however, Christmas is about one child - a child that was born about 2000 years ago. This baby was so special that a host of heavenly angels were sent to announce His birth:

*"And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." (Gospel of Luke)*

We give presents to people we love at Christmas and Jesus, this baby, was God's gift to you. God gave His Son so that you might have everlasting life.

*"For God so **loved** the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through Him" John 3.16-17*

God loves you no matter who you are or what you have done and wants you to receive His gift. Jesus is still God's gift to you - this makes Jesus the best present of all.

As the story develops we see that Scrooge is visited by three ghosts during the night, the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future who come to show him the error of his ways and what it would be like for him if he didn't change.

As the story comes to its dramatic conclusion we see a repentant Scrooge waking up on Christmas Day morning. He mends his ways and becomes a changed man.

The real story of Christmas is not about Scrooge or even Father Christmas. The real story of Christmas is about the birth of Jesus, God's Son. God Himself came to earth to bring about a change in the hearts of men. You may not be as bad as Scrooge, but the Bible calls us all sinners<sup>(1)</sup>. We have all sinned, we all have need of a Saviour. Jesus is the Saviour that we need. The angel speaking about Mary said to Joseph, "she will bring forth a Son and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins"<sup>(2)</sup>.

To pay the price for our sins and save us Jesus had to die. He was crucified on a wooden cross and died for you. On the third day Jesus rose again from the dead and has the power to

*David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord"<sup>(1)</sup>. **Christmas** is the day that we celebrate the birth of the *Christ*—Jesus the Son of God.*

What was the reason that Jesus left his home in heaven to come to this world? Was it simply to do good works, or to leave an example for us to follow? No, "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*"<sup>(2)</sup>. He came to deal once and for all with the problem of sin that separates every one of us from God. "But I'm not a sinner!" you might say. Have you ever lied? Have you ever had an impure thought? God's Word is very true when it says, "*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Yes, we are all sinners, and if judged on our own merits, would all come short of heaven. Sadly, many people don't realise that "*Every one of us shall give account of himself to God*"<sup>(4)</sup> and that "*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life: and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him*"<sup>(5)</sup>. But here is where the distractions of the holiday disappear completely and the true meaning of Christmas becomes clear to see. Christmas is all about God's great love for us and the priceless gift that He

Any gift is meant to be received. We wouldn't be happy if any of the gifts we give are rebuffed. God gave us Jesus and wants us to receive Him not reject Him. Receiving Jesus could not be simpler. All you need do is sincerely believe on Him with all your heart and He will come in to your life and give you His gift of everlasting life.

It often helps to pray a short prayer, you can use the one below

**"Dear Jesus, Thank you for loving me. I ask You to come into my heart and life. I receive You right now. Cleanse me and forgive me of all my sin. Prepare for me a place in Heaven. Thank you Jesus that I am now saved and a child of God. Amen"**

For more details, please contact:

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St. Paul's Bay, MALTA  
[www.voice-faith.com](http://www.voice-faith.com) tel: +356 7944 3464

forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all your unrighteousness<sup>(3)</sup>. All you need to do is receive Him and you will have your life turned around, like Scrooge you will become a new person. The Bible says *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new"*<sup>(4)</sup>. Not the old life patched up but a brand new one, how about that for Christmas?

Receiving Jesus could not be simpler. All you need to do is repent of your sin and believe on Him with all your heart and He will forgive you and give you His gift of everlasting life.

It often helps to pray a prayer, you might want to use this one:

**"Dear Jesus, Thank you for loving me. I repent of my sin, I ask You to come into my heart and life. I receive You right now. Cleanse me and forgive me of all my sin. Thank you Jesus that I am now saved and a child of God. Amen"**

Scripture References:

(1) Romans 3.23 (2) Matthew 1.21 (3) 1 John 1.9 (4) 2 Corinthians 5.17

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offers to all.

This gift, the gift of eternal life<sup>(6)</sup>, was purchased when Jesus, the sinless Sacrifice, died on the cross for our sins. Now He is risen from the dead and offers eternal life to everyone who will confess their sins to Him and trust Him as their Saviour. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"*<sup>(7)</sup>. If you have never made Jesus your Saviour, do it now. Then you can celebrate the true meaning of Christmas! It often helps to pray a short prayer, you might want to use this one:

**"Dear Jesus, Thank you for loving me. I repent of my sin, I ask You to come into my heart and life. I receive You right now. Cleanse me and forgive me of all my sin. Thank you Jesus that I am now saved and a child of God. Amen"**

Scripture References:

(1) Luke 2.11 (2) 1 Timothy 1.15 (3) Romans 3.23 (4) Romans 14.12  
(5) John 3.36 (6) Romans 6.23 (7) John 3.16

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# THE BEST PRESENT OF ALL



## A LIFE TURNED AROUND

## The True Meaning of Christmas

