



In 1931, a graphic artist called Haddon Sundblom came up with the modern image of Santa. You know, the big man in red? Sundblom was working for Coca Cola who were looking for new ways to sell their drink. What a success story!

Now, all over the world, children are told that if they're good enough, a strange fat man in a red suit from a North Pole factory with magic elves and supersonic reindeer will come to their house and... break and enter.

But isn't Jesus the reason for Christmas? So why are people swapping Jesus, who is real, for Santa, who isn't? The real magic of Christmas is that Jesus came amongst us to save us. And Christianity stands or falls on the historical facts of this wonder.

How many times have we heard people say how disappointed they were to discover that Santa's a fake? Yet the big man keeps on keeping on. Can we really expect children to trust us about important things if we're not straight with them? And the true message of Christmas is not a myth.

Santa is such a poor deal compared to Jesus. Where Jesus offers forgiveness and inner peace by dying on the cross, Santa gives you plastic trinkets made in China.

However the biggest issue is with what the Bible calls GRACE or 'undeserved mercy'. With Santa, being good really matters. If you're good enough you'll get presents. Remember, Santa brings presents to those who've been good throughout the year.

Jesus came amongst us because we couldn't fix up the mistakes we've made with God. Santa's reward system says otherwise. After all I got a present didn't I? But Jesus knows we need help because being good all the time is impossible. It's why kids with sore consciences can sleep sweetly through the night – and adults too!

This is what the Angel of the Lord said to the shepherds watching their flocks on the night Jesus was born:

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

So this Christmas, let's celebrate Jesus.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for the greatest Christmas gift of all, your son, Jesus Christ who came so that we might live with you forever. Amen.

Bible verse: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)