

Cyber Column by John Duncan: A world of contrasts_72505

July 22, 2005
Posted: 7/22/05

CYBER COLUMN: A world of contrasts

By John Duncan

I'm sitting here under the old oak tree, wondering about a world of contrasts.

In London, grief reigns in the aftermath of terror, while innocent children play cricket in open fields and streets. Hurricanes rip through the Gulf of Mexico, but daily cruise ships sail the seas with carefree travelers. In Granbury, a trip to Wal-Mart to purchase the necessities of life is contrasted with the fact that American consumers waste money every year on things they do not need or never will use.

Contrasts, they swirl around us—up and down; good and bad; happy and sad; tall and short; light and dark; mountains and valleys; winners and losers; and fast and slow.

John Duncan

Contrasts appear in the Bible, too.

Take, for example, Jesus' visit to the temple after his triumphal entry into

Jerusalem via a gate. The next day, Jesus went to the temple. Contrasts abound—the holy presence of God in the Holy of Holies with the priests and the prideful money changers who barter doves on a table in the temple courtyard; the anger of Jesus and the casualness of the money changers; the inner turmoil of plotting among the scribes and the outer peace of Jesus; the hostility of Jesus’ enemies and the blissful amazement of the crowd; the unrighteousness of religious leaders and the righteousness of Jesus; the flying coins and the doves sitting in cages; the house of prayer and the den of thieves. Contrasts multiply.

Still, when I think of the temple, I think of the veil of the temple torn in two when Jesus died on the cross—one Christ, two pieces of cloth severed at the center; one holy Jesus, an unholy world; light on the cross, darkness around. Add lightning and thunder and midnight at midday, and you have the makings of high drama. Or as one of our children said in Vacation Bible School when he heard the story of Jesus: “Oh, that! I saw the movie!” Welcome to a world of contrasts—the real drama of Jesus’ sacrificial life placed as Hollywood theater to a 21st century 10-year-old.

All this leads me back to where I started—the contrast of a world of terror, London, and a world of peace, Jesus. So much discussion continues about safety, protection against terrorists on trains, religious extremists and a bomb on a bus. Lord Byron in one of his poems, says, sarcastically, “I say—the future is a serious matter.” The future is a serious matter.

In the confusion of terror at King’s Cross, one survivor described the scene as shards of broken glass, trails of blood and the feeling like she was in a fish tank watching others fight for their lives. A teenage girl collapsed in tears and had a tissue with the word “life” printed on it.

I do not know much about terror, although I sense it every time I go through security at the airport for a trip. I do not know much about King’s Cross, although twice a year it is my travel point of connection on the way

to Cambridge. I always say, "Seven million people in London, and they were all on the train today." I do not know much about that fish-tank feeling, but I know we live in an ocean of people as diverse as the fish in the seas.

As for contrasts, I am reminded of one necessary constant: Jesus. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). In a world of contrasts, it is the King's Cross that anchors the soul. And this message is a simple, yet essential one today: In Jesus you have abundant life.

John Duncan is pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church in Granbury, Texas, and the writer of numerous articles in various journals and magazines. You can respond to his column by e-mailing him at jduncan@lakesidebc.org.

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