

Message #117 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“Trying To Unscramble The Word, Santa”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about Santa Claus. You know, the ho, ho, ho guy in the red suit. And yes, I know that Christmas is past and spring is in the air, but Santa is on my mind and I've just gotta talk about what is on my heart. You may not like it, but you can at least listen to what I've got to say and then the rest is up to you.

I don't like Santa Claus. No, I'm not anti-Christmas. But, I am anti-Santa Claus. You see, I'm anti-anything that is anti-Christ. And Santa is as anti-Christ as most everything else in this world that tries to downplay Jesus Christ and to emphasize the delights of this world. Colossians 3:1-2, says, “If you, then, are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Clearly the Bible emphasizes our need to focus on the heavenly things of God and not on the delights offered by this world. But sometimes the hearts of Christians seem to be overloaded with the things of this world instead of the things of God. Of course, Santa, ----- oops, excuse me, I mean, Satan, wants to encourage you toward the delights of this world in order that your heart might be deceived. Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us that God has set the world in the hearts of the sons of men in order that they will not understand the mystery of God. However, if we are truly sons of God, we are no longer sons of men. And, if we are sons of God, then we will not have the world set in our hearts, but Jesus will be the central focus in our hearts, and our lives will demonstrate him and not continually be demonstrating the delights of this world. If your affection is set on things above instead of on things of the earth, then you won't be so covetous of

earthly delights. Believe me, Santa, ----- oops, excuse me, I mean, Satan, doesn't want you to crucify yourself with Christ, he wants you to keep that old man of the flesh alive and pamper it as much as possible. Therefore, he has given us lots of things that encourage us to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and to the, oh, oh, here comes that term that no Christian likes to hear, pride of life.

Lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life are generally not taught much in the church anymore. It's not really a very popular topic. When a preacher teaches about abstaining from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life he generally starts to see the congregation of his church start to dwindle down, not to mention the loss of weekly donations.

But these three general categories of sin are central to the doctrine of Christ and to the concept of dying out to the old man of the flesh and being born again in the Spirit of God. But Christians are deceived on a regular basis into thinking that lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life are a normal part of the world, and that God wants to bless his people in material things in order that they might focus their attention on their own wants and desires.

Santa Claus is way toward the top of the list when it comes to useful weapons in Satan's arsenal. Santa Claus may not be the central focus of adults, like he is for children, but in a sense, if adults are crazy about giving gifts until their budget is destroyed every year, then in a way, the adults are focusing on Santa Claus, too.

Now, what I'm saying might be offensive to many of you. Sorry! Can't help it. When God gives me a message, I have to give it. I wish sometimes that I was less offensive, because I really do have this great desire to be accepted by people. Alas, it just seems that God isn't as interested in me being accepted by everyone as he is in getting out the message that will best glorify him. And actually, we must remember that it is God that this world is created for, not us. We're just sojourners. We're just strangers who are supposed to be passing through. We weren't meant to settle in and heap up riches unto ourselves. We weren't meant to wallow in the delicate things of earth, but to come out from among them and be separate. And the last that I remember, separate is not the same thing as what the Joneses down the street are doing.

Now, Santa Claus is a very interesting character. Most people think of him as a jolly old saint who loves everybody. Well, that's what Satan tries to get us to think. After all, Satan is the one who designed Santa Claus. You don't think that God created him do you? If you do, then listen to a few facts concerning Santa and then see if you still think he is a product of God.

Santa lives at the north pole. This is from the mythological religion of the Norsemen who look at the north pole as the place where the creation of the earth came from. In mythology they refer to the frost monster from which the earth was created. This winterized religious perspective includes jack frost, another manifestation of the frost monster. Yule is the term used to describe the secular Christmas time of celebration, and the yule log is the wood that is burned in the fire and keeps us toasty warm. The reindeer, are of course, the animal of choice if you're from the

north, and interestingly enough they fly. Santa not only works at the north pole, but he employs elves to do his work. Elves are mythical creatures of Germanic mythology and Germanic paganism. In Norse mythology elves were originally a race of minor nature and fertility gods, and are sometimes portrayed as being immortal and having magical powers. Satan, ---- oops, excuse me, I mean, Santa, also is considered to be an elf, according to the poem, "Twas The Night Before Christmas." And, he is also considered to have magical powers and knows everything people do, and whether they have been naughty or nice in the past year. He can enter through the chimney of a house, and even more surprisingly, he can ascend back up the chimney just by laying his finger against his nose. He can travel the whole world into every house in a single night and still get back to the north pole by morning, not to mention eating a veritable ton of cookies and milk that every child leaves for him. Mythology doesn't say anything about Satan having an iron stomach, but I suppose that just goes with the job.

Anyway, all these things are interesting. But what is even more interesting is that Christians seem to enjoy playing around with the concept of Santa Claus and the whole secular Christmas idea. Parents encourage the fairytale of Santa while at the same time trying to instruct their children that Jesus isn't a fairytale. No wonder children grow up into a confused state of mine.

In scripture we find an even more interesting connection with the north, as in the Bible's reference to the image of jealousy that comes from the north in order to enter the temple of God. Satan, as the king of Great Babylon, is symbolically referred to as that evil presence from the north, and it was from the land of the north that the enemy came and captured the children of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. And, if you can see this, it is still the king of the north that is coming against spiritual Jerusalem in this current day. However, I'll let you ponder that in your own time if you want to.

Christmas is a time that should mean Jesus. Jesus is the reason for the season. However, Santa, - ---- oops, excuse me, I mean, Satan, doesn't want you to think about Jesus at Christmas, and he doesn't want you to think about crucifying the old man of the flesh, either. So he has introduced an alternative Christmas as a solution to his problem. The people of the world have taken the bait, which he dangled in front of them, with a vengeance. And Christians, for the most part, have too. Oh, sure, we still have some of the manger scenes around and the annual church Christmas play so the adults can twinkle their eyes at the kids, but most of the Christmas celebration takes place outside of the church walls, and incidentally, outside of the tenants of scripture.

The Bible warns us about the glitter and the gold, but secular Christmas is nothing but glitter and gold. The Bible warns us about the delicacies of earth, but secular Christmas is nothing but delicacies of earth. Every Christmas morning is an opportunity to wallow in toys for both children and adults. It's an excuse to spend money on things that you wouldn't buy the rest of the year. Christmas has become, just as Satan intended, an opportunity to ignore the call of God to come out from among them and be separate, and instead, to give yourself over to spending and getting. Sure, I know that everyone of you will tell me that your focus is on the giving of gifts in

love. So, O.K. You go right ahead and tell me that. But then, that's the deception. Satan has deceived you into thinking that giving your kid an x-box is a godly thing which increases the understanding of God's word and of Godly things. Candy, toys, DVD-players, televisions sets, snowmobiles, hunting equipment, and mini-bikes accumulate into a mountain of assets which overwhelm the average child or adult and destroy their comprehension of spiritual things.

No, I don't think children should be prevented from playing with toys. But don't you think adults should try to act like grownups once in awhile? Birthdays come around every year too, so why does secular Christmas have to be at the top of the list? And it is at the top of the list for the merchants. The merchants of the earth are going to moan and groan when they finally see Great Babylon going up in flames. It will not only be a destruction for the inhabitants of Great Babylon, but for the merchants as well.

And the merchants want to see you destroyed also. They want to make you their financial fountain that never runs dry. Of course, taking away your money won't destroy your soul, but the things you're buying for yourselves and your kids just might. But why should you be part of the whole Santa Claus thing in the first place? Giving is good, but you would be hard pressed to convince even your own mother that you weren't also caught up in the greed and lust of things of this world. Where does the Bible ever tell us that we should play make-believe with concepts which have no Godliness? When you play make-believe, the same spirit comes into your mind that comes into your mind when you play for real. Whether it is real or make-believe, the thoughts and feelings are still there. The only difference is in what happens to you outwardly. Inside is still the element of wickedness, even though the outside hasn't yet manifested it. However, eventually, what is inside will be manifested on the outside. You can't hide what is inside forever. If you're in love with Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ will be manifested in your outward words and actions. But if you're in love with the delights of this world, then the world will be manifested in your outward words and actions.

So, is Santa Claus just a nice harmless game that Christians can play without being hurt by it. I don't think so. If you think so, then you're just going to have to keep on playing with it. But remember, those who play with fire get burned with fire. You can't control Satan, he is the one who controls you if you give him half a chance. And to play around with secular Christmas is to give Satan more than half a chance.

Now, I'm going to share a poem with you which I wrote a few years back. I shared this a couple of years ago, and I felt it was time to share it again. It's called, "Santa's Last Night." You might recognize the cadence of the poem, but I'm sure the words will be new. Here it is.

Tw'as the night before Christmas and Santa was late, the night had turned into a very long wait.
Ma in her nighty and me in my shirt, because of the hour were less than alert.
But all of a sudden there rose such a crashing, I sprang from my bed, to the window went dashing.
And down in the yard by the old garden shed, Santa was crawling from under his sled.

The reindeer were tumbled all high in a heap, the toys in a pile about seven feet deep.
The sleigh was all dented, the runners were bent, the seats were all dirty, the fabric was rent.
Santa looked more like a sad circus clown, than jolly Saint Nick, of centuries renown.
His clothes were all tattered and ripped up and torn, his boots were unpolished and overly worn.

I rushed out the door and into the snow, the cause of the crash I wanted to know.
What could have happened to old Santa Clause, "What happened," I asked. "What was the cause?"
From the look on his face it was plain to see, that things were not going as well as could be.
He looked up at me and squinted one eye, and then came the word of his shocking reply.

You think that I'm just a jolly old elf, but my master is none but the Devil himself.
For years he has used me to mix up the truth, deceive all the parents and also the youth.
The old and the young, (the lies are the same), are duped into thinking it's all just a game.
Through me the Devil is telling them all, the truth of God's Word doesn't matter at all.

Folks think they can tell all the girls and the boys, that the best thing in life is getting the toys.
Then wonder why later in each messed up life, the future holds nothing but troubles and strife.
The children no longer are taught to submit, but rather to scream and throw a big fit.
They'd rather see me than have Jesus come, they'd rather have presents, and candy and gum.

They learn to love self and hate all the rest, they might give a little, but keep back the best.
And Santa Clause keeps them thinking of self, they love getting presents from the jolly old elf.
Satan developed the concept of me, from Nicolas, the saint, of church history.
But although it started with love for the youth, it's now come to greed, and a lack of the truth.

And I might be just a concept as such, no tangible thing you can see, hear or touch.
But the place I still hold in the minds of you all, is just as if Santa was forty feet tall.
I don't know the reason I'm telling you this, but back in the Bible in Genesis.
God in His wisdom said, "Let there be light," and Truth now is spreading, He's setting things right.

The church has been sleeping, their eyes have been closed, while the sermons were given, most of them dozed.
But people are starting to open their eyes, they're not so easily given to lies.
Halloween's soon to be purged from the mind, and probably "Santa" won't be far behind,
For God is revealing, He's setting things right, and little by little I'll slip out of sight.

I might be back and maybe I won't, you'll figure it out, if I do or I don't.
But one thing's for sure, there's no longer a doubt, just a matter of time and Truth will win out.
I see you're confused, by the line in your brow, so that is enough to tell you for now.
You may not be able to grasp what I said, it may be too much to put in your head.

So here are some presents, the glitter the gold, some alien toys, like no toys of old.

A shirt for your boy saying, "Everything Goes", some rings for your girl to wear in her nose.
A T.V. for Mom, to watch all her soaps, to make her depressed and dash all her hopes.
Some shades for your eyes to make you look cool, and more things to cause you to act like a fool.

An all season pass to the sport of your choice, so no church will hear the sound of your voice.
And just so you won't be what you should be, a Lazy-Boy chair to watch the T.V.
And turning around with a frown on his face, he put all the reindeer back in their place.
He righted the sleigh and to the team gave a whistle, and they rose to the air like a mis-guided missile.

They bounced off the top of a telephone pole, and the sleigh did a bit of the old rock-n-roll.
But Santa held on as they swerved back and forth, then finally he managed to point them due north.
And I heard him exclaim as they limped out of sight, I hope I don't have a repeat of this night.
Hey Comet, hey Cupid, don't stumble and fall, or we'll vanish away, vanish away, vanish away all.

You know, Santa Claus doesn't really exist. He is just a mythological character created by those who wish to follow the course of this world instead of following Jesus Christ. The non-Christian world generally accepts Santa Claus because it is an opportunity to give excuse to the very things that God has warned us to avoid. No matter what you think about secular Christmas, there is no way you can convince God that secular Christmas is a Godly blessing. The Bible gives us all kinds of scripture to encourage us to love and fellowship in Christ, but nowhere does it encourage us to worldliness like secular Christmas does. You may be able to justify it in your own eyes, but you can never equate it with the word of God. The only part of secular Christmas that comes close to Godliness is the concept of giving. But giving the way the world encourages us to at Christmas time is not even remotely similar to the spiritual enlightenment of God's word.

If we are to come out from among the people of this world and be a separate people unto God, how can we continue to act just like the Joneses down the street and play around with all the crazy concepts which are more anti-Christ than Christ? The only thing you accomplish with playing make-believe with Santa Claus is to destroy your own understanding of true scripture and the spiritual foundation of your children.

Earlier, I mentioned the three categories of sin, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. The word lust means to desire with a desire that cannot be content unless that desire is fulfilled. To desire things of the flesh and not be content with the things which God has provided for you is not Godly. To continually fill your homes with the trinkets and baubles that excite your eyes is also in opposition to Godliness. And pride of life, although it is also included in these three categories, is hardly recognized in the church today as being sinful. Pride is rampant among Christians. I once heard a minister say that his children said to him, "Can't we be Christians and cool to?" His reply was that he thought they probably could be both Christians and at the same time be cool. But the word cool is nothing more than an alternative word for pride. Christians don't need to be cool, they need to be clothed with humility. In today's church, the word humility is a

dirty word. Santa, on the other hand, seems to be an up and coming acceptable concept. What destination are we headed for? Do you think that secular Christmas will provide the promise of eternal life? I don't think so. I think all were getting from Santa Claus is the promise of an eternal hell.