

Message #44 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Santa Claus"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. And thanks again for your letters and requests for CDs and transcripts of our messages. Please feel free to request any of our messages, and I want to remind you once more that they're free for the asking. Also, I want to take just a minute to explain a little about the Image of the Beast series. In case you have not listened to prior programs and are not sure what the image of the beast series is about, let me give you just a short summary. The Image of the Beast series is a study which is based on Revelation 13. But it covers an extensive description of the two beasts, the mark of the beast, what the Image of the Beast is, what the notable miracle of fire from heaven is, and how this applies to Christians for today. This series is intended to be for the Christian of today, not for a Christian in the future, because Revelation 13, describes what is happening today, not what is going to come to pass tomorrow. However, I must warn you that the four CDs, with the accompanying transcript, is very in depth, and very difficult to understand for those who are not familiar with Bible scriptures. But if you like Revelation, and have wondered about the explanation of chapter 13, then this CD series may be just what you're looking for. The 50 page transcript is included so that you can listen to the CDs and follow along at the same time. We feel this helps, and when you come to a place which is difficult to grasp, you can pause the CD and reread the transcript. Anyway, if you find yourself reading Revelation fairly often, than you may very well appreciate these CDs. Anyway, they are free, just like the other messages. Please don't feel like you have to donate something in order to request this material. As with any ministry there are always financial needs. But our desire is first and foremost to provide that which fulfills a need in you. We never have to worry about finances because God always provides what we need. No, we don't have an unlimited amount of

finances, but we believe that if God doesn't provide the necessary funds, then we don't need to expand. It's better to let God determined when we expand than to try to do it ourselves by trying to pry money out of people. We believe that if we are truly a ministry then we need to be concerned about ministry and leave the financial problems in God's hands. So please, send us a request for this Image of the Beast series, and/or any other messages you would like. The other messages also come with the written transcript so you can follow along as you listen to the CDs.

Well, let's go ahead with today's subject. Today I'd like to talk about Santa Claus. Yes, I mean the little ho, ho, ho guy in the red suit. To the world he seems like such a nice friendly part of our imagination, but I would like to show you another side of Santa Claus, and also the whole concept of secular Christmas.

A few years ago I wrote a poem about Santa Claus. It uses the same cadence as the poem called, "Twas the Night Before Christmas," but it is far from having the same meaning. Let me read it to you, and then we'll talk about it so you can understand what I really feel about Santa Claus. It's called, "Santa's Last Night." Here goes.

SANTA'S LAST NIGHT

By Randy Smith

Twas the night before Christmas and Santa was late, the night had turned into a very long wait.
Ma in her nightgown 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.

Well, that's it! That's what I feel about Santa Claus. I don't think Santa Claus is a nice little guy in a red suit. I think Santa Claus is an attempt by Satan to destroy the glory of God, and to prevent true worship. Santa Claus is opposed to the self-sacrificing nature of Jesus Christ, which

means that the nature of Santa Claus is anti-Christ. Satan's purpose for the mythological Santa Claus is to train children and adults to desire things of this world rather than the things of God. Notice that when you include secular celebrations of Christmas, you eventually end up with a jolly old elf that lives at the north pole and makes children dream of toys and sweets coming in abundance once a year. Notice that he has power to rise up chimneys and that he moves around with reindeer that can fly. Pagan tradition of the Norsemen tells us that their chief god, Odin, slew the Frost Giant, and then created the world out of him. Thus the cold of winter is woven through each mythological detail. Jack Frost on the window panes is a euphemism pointing to the concept of frost being part of the original life form. The hell Christians see as being filled with flames of fire is seen by this pagan religion as being an extremely cold icy place. The reindeer that evolved into the Santa Claus story are generic to cold icy areas of the North, which is what this Pagan religion was all built around. This is where we get the concept of Yule for the Christmas season, and such a great emphasis on things that come from extremely cold climates, such as evergreen trees, sleighs instead of buggies, and the dreaming of a very white Christmas. You also get a bunch of elves that make toys. An elf is a kind of magic-wielding person regarded in early Germanic belief as powerful and terrifying, sometimes dealing out goodness, and sometimes dealing out evil. In later times they were just regarded as being mischievous. So why do Christians participate in these traditions? The answer to that must lie within your own relationship to Jesus Christ. What will you allow to come in and abide with you and Jesus?

Prior to writing this poem, I had an experience which gave me some insight into what Satan was truly doing to us human beings. This was several years ago, just about a year before I gave up watching TV and from allowing secular Christmas to be part of my home. I was watching a news item which was reporting on the activities of a certain church. As I watched the program, what I saw was a church congregation, with the children sitting up front in the first two or three pews. It was evident that the Christmas play had just taken place, and the service was coming to a close. The minister in front was telling the story of Jesus who was born in a stable and then placed in the manger. He was describing the importance of who Jesus really was and what he meant to us. As I watched, I could see that the children were bored to death. They were fidgeting, but trying very hard to behave. Then the minister concluded his speech and announced to the children that he had a special surprise for them. Then he turned and pointed at the door beside the platform. The door then opened, and out came a man dressed as Santa Claus, with a big bag slung over his shoulder. And picture what I saw happen then. The children, who had been so uninterested in the story of Jesus began to jump up and down and yell gleefully. They were ecstatic. The man dressed as Santa Claus opened the big bag and began to distribute presents. The children were thrilled.

As I sat there and watched this event, it struck me so strongly that what had really made the children excited was not the story of Jesus, but a man in a red suit who they recognized as the giver of presents. I don't know if you can comprehend what I'm trying to say, or what I was feeling at the time, but I saw that Jesus was overshadowed by a concept which taught that the getting of presents was a wonderful thing.

The Bible tells us that when we come to Jesus, we are to forsake everything in this world. We know, as Christians, that Satan's purpose in this world is to turn us away from the worship of God and from the joy of Jesus Christ. He wants to destroy God, and take his place. He tempts us with the delights of this world in order to turn our hearts away from the things of God. He doesn't want us to be stimulated in our spirit, but he wants us to stimulate our flesh. The whole concept of Jesus Christ is to reveal the word of God. The whole concept of Jesus Christ is to bring people to an acceptance of God's will. We were not called to stimulate our flesh, but to die daily, to crucify our worldly man. We were called to put our old nature to death in order that God's Holy Spirit nature could begin to live within us.

Santa Claus is the secular replacement for Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to earth to give us the gift of eternal life. The purpose of Jesus is to encourage us to turn away from earthly things so that we might desire heavenly things. Colossians 3:2, tells us to set our affection on things above, not on things of the earth. And verse three says, "For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

The concept of Santa Claus may seem to be harmless. The very concept of Christmas itself from a secular viewpoint may seem to be just a nice friendly cozy thing. But if you would stop and take a look at it a little more closely, you will recognize that what Santa Claus and secular Christmas has caused is a strong desire to spend money in giving people things of this world and in receiving the same. Yes, you can argue that you love to give gifts more than receive them, but you cannot deny the fact that each year at Christmastime the world goes crazy. People spend more money than they have. There is hardly a family that does not go into debt for presents. Everyone must buy a Christmas tree and ornaments. The tree is lit with many lights, and takes a prominent place in the home. Presents are placed under its boughs, and both children and adults cannot wait until Christmas Day. No, you may not find yourself overcome with secular Christmas, but Satan has managed to overcome most of the world with it. You may not have been destroyed by it, but many people have. And for sure, many children are being taught that Christmas is trees and lights and candy canes and toys. And the children that grow up are now the adults that also enjoy secular Christmas more than Jesus.

When Jesus Christ came to this earth he did not teach us to focus our attention on things that people of the world do. He didn't tell us to take the secular concepts of a non-Christian world and make them our own. Why do Christians mingle with the rest of the world and participate in the secular celebrations? We, as Christians, have the things of God to celebrate. We have the joy of salvation in Jesus Christ. But Satan does not want us to experience the joy of our salvation, but he wants us to experience something, anything, that will stimulate our flesh. The last thing he wants us to do is to stimulate our spirit. He doesn't want us to be concerned with heavenly things. It doesn't take too much to realize that if Satan doesn't want us to be concerned with crucifying that old fleshly nature of ours, but wants us to focus our attention on his world system, that he will continually come up with something to encourage people to do just that. Many Christians enter into celebrations of secular holidays because they cannot comprehend that there is anything wrong with playing with these things. But just imagine how Jesus felt

concerning that scene I described to you of the children seeing the man dressed as Santa Claus come into the church.

In that church, Jesus Christ was overshadowed by Santa Claus. If there is one place on this planet where God is supposed to be glorified, it is in church. People attend church to share in the worship of God. And in this place, of all places, Satan was able to turn the attention away from Jesus Christ and to the things that this world offers. It was not the stimulation of the spirit man that was being given at that time, but a promise of stimulation of the fleshly man. You may think that secular Christmas is just a game, just having some harmless fun. But what do you think God thinks? Do you think God says to himself, "Oh well, it is so nice that the children are happy. I hope they get many presents?"

If you think God is more concerned with people being happy with the things of this world than he is with people being happy in him, then you have something else to think about. God did not place us in this world so that we could be occupied with it. He placed us in this world so that we could be occupied with coming out of the world and coming to him. The most important thing in everyone's life should be Jesus Christ, not the world's view of Christmas trees, Easter eggs and jack-o-lanterns.

Sure, some of you may think, "what's the harm in just playing. We're not really worshipping Satan, and we're not really trying to stimulate our flesh, we're just having fun." But playing with fire will burn you. No, maybe not initially, but eventually you will find that you cannot control what you started out to do in fun. The world is full of people who think Harry Potter is just something to play with. The world is full of people who think Pokémon is just a game, or that Dungeons & Dragons is just something to do in your spare time. But maybe you realize how extremely evil these things are, and yet don't realize how playing with Santa Claus is also a game that did not come from God. God said, "it is better to give than to receive." Then Satan came along and twisted the word of God and said, "it is better to give than to receive, so give as much as you can of the secular things of this world so that you can make everyone happy." The result of this lie is that people become immersed in the things of this world, both giving and receiving, and their happiness does not stem from the things of God, but from the things of this world. There is no end to Satan's game. What he wants you to do is to become so preoccupied with the things of this world that you will not spend the time seeking the things of God.

Christians seem to think that they can play with the world and then seek God when they have a little bit of spare time. But Satan knows that if he can get you to pursue things of this world that will stimulate your flesh, that soon you will not have such a great interest in Jesus Christ after all. Satan knows that if you let your mind focus on earthly things enough, you will lose interest in heavenly things. The concept of giving of yourself is pure. But when the concept of giving is attached to stimulation of the flesh, you have no longer given God to others, but you have given the world. And you have not received God, but have received the world.

Romans 8:6-8 says, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Also, James 4:4, says, “You adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore desires to be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

Notice that these two scripture passages used the word enmity. The word enmity means, “a deep-seated mutual hatred.” When we read these two scripture passages, we see that they say that between the carnal mind and God, and between the friendship of the world and God, there is deep-seated mutual hatred. The carnal mind is extremely opposed to God, and God is extremely opposed to the carnal mind. If you are playing with the world, if your mind is focused on carnal things, then there is a deep-seated mutual hatred between your thoughts and God. If you are a Christian, and you think you can play the games that the world plays and that God will not mind, then you do not understand that there is enmity between your friendship with the world and God. Galatians 6:7 says, “7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.”

It is time for Christians to stop acting like non-Christians. Christians should act like Christians, and start glorifying God instead of glorifying Santa Claus, Christmas trees, jack-o-lanterns, and Easter eggs. For now, Christians may not think it makes that much difference. But what are you going to do when you walk into the presence of Almighty God and he says, “how did you train up your children? Did you teach them to love me and to give themselves as a self-sacrifice? Did you train up your children in the way they should go?” What will you say in the presence of God? Will you tell him that it was just all in fun? Jesus Christ is coming back for a church without spot or wrinkle, not for a church that likes to play games. Satan doesn't want you to be ready when Jesus comes. He wants you to continue to play the games of earth. Satan says, “don't look up, because you might see your salvation drawing nigh. Just keep your head down and keep playing.”