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The Santa Claus Deception and the True Dimensions of the Grace of God

by — Anthony Mullen

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things (I Corinthians 13:11).

This article is not actually about Santa Claus. I did not write this to prove or disprove his existence. If you are an adult I do not think I need to give you proof that he is a myth. This writing is for the purpose of making one think.

Let us go back to our childhood. It is the night before Christmas. Most of us could not sleep. We had thoughts of candy canes, cookies, eggnog and all of the lights and decorations on our mind. Most of all, more than anything else, we thought of Santa. “What will he bring me?” we thought to ourselves. “I hope he finds the milk and cookies I left for him,” “I hope I was on his Good List,” and so the story goes.

When you were a child, why did you believe in Santa Claus? You believed in Santa because from birth you had been taught that there was a jolly old man who was magical, and flew on a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer. You were taught that, on Christmas Eve, he circumnavigated the entire world in just a few hours, climbed down millions of chimneys and left presents for all of the good children. You believed it because the people you loved and trusted the most, your parents, told you that he was real.

Santa was everywhere. Pictures of him were on storefronts and billboards. He had to be real: you actually had sat on his lap and told him your wishes! You accepted Santa as fact, because your parents told you he was real and, as it seemed, the entire world believed in him. As a child the thought never entered your mind that this all may be made up. Not only had society taught you this as

fact, but the proof was all around you. Santa Claus was a fact, and there was no reason at all to doubt it (if you did, you would be put on the Bad List!).

As you got older, and more mature, doubts started to arise in your mind; but you quickly erased them at first, because the proof was still there and you certainly did not want a lump of coal. Then that notable day came: You met the “kid.” He was the one who said, “There is no Santa, that’s for babies.” What! Could this be true? Then, you had no choice but to ask Mom. “Mom, is there really a Santa?” you asked. Her reply soothed your heart. “Of course there is a Santa. Why do you think there is not?” You then told her about the “kid,” and what he had told you. Then your Mother said, “Don’t listen to him – he is silly.”

To make a long story short, that kept you believing in Santa for a while, but eventually you grew up and realized that Santa was not real. You actually had been lied to; but we don’t see it as a lie: it is just for fun. However, that is exactly what Santa Claus is: a lie.

Now, after I have said all that, we come to the real reason I have written this article: To make you think. The point I am trying to make is that there is another myth very similar to the myth of Santa Claus, and you have been taught it from a child. Man has conjured up a lie that encompasses the entire world, and is believed by many people, just like the myth of jolly old Saint Nick. This lie, however, is not for fun, but is devised to enslave. It is far more sinister, vile and downright evil than the myth of

(see *DECEPTION*, page 3823) ↗

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- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
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- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
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DECEPTION (continued from front page)

Santa could ever imagine. Its roots are firmly planted in the hearts of people to invoke fear so horrible that even to doubt it would make you a heretic.

This lie that most every denomination and creed in Christianity teaches and is believed by the vast majority is like the myth of Santa Claus. If you are one of the few who grows into an adult (spiritually speaking) and stops believing it, you become the “kid.” However, unlike the kid in the Santa Claus story, you will not be called silly, but you will be shunned by most Christians and labeled as “misled,” or even “lost” by many.

Now that I have kept you in suspense for a period of time, I will introduce you to the lie. The lie is that those who are not saved in this life will be burned and tortured in a place called hell forever. Just like a child who believes in Santa, most will not even investigate this to see if it is true. Almost the entire world of Christendom believes in everlasting torment of the wicked. Even most people who don't profess Christ speak of hell. How many times have we heard a lost man say they hope that someone burns in hell? Just like Santa, hell is all around us. Why would someone not believe in an everlasting burning hell? IT'S IN THE BIBLE!

For most, to doubt the existence of hell is blasphemy. Many will say that those who reject the orthodox teaching of hell are changing the Word of God. I say that has already been done! The fact that everlasting torment for the lost is in most English translations of the Bible is undeniable. It is found in almost every English version. If you would pause for a few moments and think about something, you might begin to see that maybe you have been lied to.

Most of Christianity also teaches their children that, if they don't follow the doctrines of the “church” (and there are multitudes of different ones), they will go to hell and be tormented in fire forever. The sad fact is, most Christians teach this, and teach that those who receive this punishment deserve it!

Is this true justice? Is it justice that an all knowing, all powerful God, in His infinite wisdom would create an entire universe and throw most of it away, and keep only a handful? I myself believed this lie most of my life, but there were a few times when God gave me a glimpse of how awesome His grace truly is.

One instance of this that has been on my mind since it happened is the day that a young man expressed to me what was on his heart. It was in the early 1980s. I attended a church that was extremely zealous for lost souls. I worked at a shipyard and a group of us went outside the gates of the shipyard almost daily at lunchtime and preached on the street.

I met a man named Tony Hunter and told him about the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. At this time I believed in the everlasting torture of the lost in the lake of fire (and why wouldn't I? I was taught this from a child and it was right there in my *King James Bible!*)

One day a strange thing happened. As Tony and I were working, he shared something with me that I had never thought about. He said, “It doesn't seem fair to me that billions of people that God made have to burn forever.” WOW! How do I reply to that?

Of course, with all my fundamentalist training, I had the answer (or so I thought). The answer to me was simple, and this is what I said: “Well, it may not make sense to us, it may not seem fair, but God loved the world so much that he gave His Son to die for us. If someone doesn't accept this gift from God, then they deserve to burn forever.”

I could tell by the look on his face that the answer I gave him did not satisfy his soul. (It didn't satisfy me either, but that was the only answer I had!) The next thing he said confirmed the look on his face. He said, “It still doesn't seem fair. Don't you think that an Almighty God could save even the most evil person, and even Satan himself?”

This statement shook me to the core. It even made me pray that God could do something for these poor lost souls that He created. Tony Hunter was the “kid” I met when I was a child (spiritually speaking). He made me think that maybe, just maybe, I had been lied to, and just like I learned over the years that Santa was a myth, maybe tormented souls in hell forever was also a lie.

My friend, it took me almost 30 years to understand that hell is a lie. I spent almost 30 years of anguish and torment of my mind believing that my God was going to abandon most of His creation and torture them forever.

I had gotten to the point where I actually hated the ►

God I once loved. I wished in my heart that I had never been born. I had absolutely no control over my existence. Did I ask to be born? I used to ask God why He made me. I had been born and dropped into a sinful, evil, vile world of lost souls, most of whom would be tortured for eternity in flames with no chance of redemption.

It just didn't seem fair to me that He could pour out His grace on me, and I would live throughout the ages with Him, but most people would be burned forever. The thing which really wore me down was the fact that people like Adolph Hitler (and I do not mean to minimize his sin) had also been born without a choice. He did not ask to be born. He did not ask God to make him so that he could devastate the world with his evil and torture and kill millions of people. Did not God know that he would commit such atrocities and evil acts that he would go down in the annals of history?

Did not God know that Adam would sin and pass death to the entire human race? If God is all-knowing, and He is, why would He make man in the first place? Did God enjoy making men suffer? Did it please God to make man so that he could put most of them in a place so awful, so horribly torturous and painful, that not even the darkest death camp Hitler could devise can even come close in comparison?

A God who knows everything, and yet still creates people who will burn forever, is not the God I wish to serve. Some have estimated that, from Adam to the present, there are 160 billion people who have been born. It is also estimated that of these 160 billion only 5 billion have truly believed (I personally think there are not that many who have truly believed). Can you possibly believe that your God will burn 155 billion people in a sadistic torture chamber whose horrors cannot begin to be conceived by the mind? If you are a fundamentalist Christian, your answer is probably "Yes," because you, like I, have been deceived by years of indoctrination.

Over the course of almost 30 years, through struggling in my mind with the church, and even the Bible itself, I have come to the knowledge that our awesome God has now given me. I have come to understand that man has conceived a lie that has spread throughout the world and, like the Santa myth, is believed by "children."

Like the child you once were, you have been taught something that you believe in with all of your heart,

because this belief is worldwide and the "proof" is all around you. Like the belief in Santa when you were little, those who love you and are closest to you tell you about hell. Until God sees fit to give you the light needed to understand truly what Christ did on the cross, you indeed will be a "child."

The same Jesus, Who came to a world of sinners to die for them, will not give up on them. His mercy endures forever (I Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 107:1; 145:9) Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20)! He did not create us to abandon us. Yes, the wrath of God does abide on the sinner; but God's punishments are always corrective. God will get your attention, one way or another. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19). The power of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is unlimited! Not only *can* He save the world, He *will* save it! He *is* the Savior of the World (John 4:42; I John 4:14)!

The Father has given *all* things into Jesus' hand, (John 3:35), and of *all* that the Father gave Him, He will lose *nothing* (John 6:39). God shall be victorious. The last enemy to be destroyed is death (I Corinthians 15:26). He is not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). His will, *will* be accomplished! He gave Himself as a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time (I Timothy 2:6).

This evil world has constructed a lie of a Santa who knows children's thoughts, knows when they are sleeping, knows when they are awake, knows if they have been bad or good. Santa came from paganism. He is called Santa Claus, Chris Kringle and Saint Nicholas. This lie was conceived to *control* children. "You better be good or Santa will bring you a lump of coal," they say.

I tell you that there is a lie far worse than this! Satan devised a plan whereby to scare "children" into worshipping a pagan god. During the dark ages the Roman Catholic church, with their mixture of Christianity and paganism, tortured and put to death millions of people who wouldn't join them. They warned of a burning hell where you would go forever if you did not join the church. This "hell" is rooted, like Santa, in paganism. It was devised by Satan to control "children" and change the image of our God into a cruel and merciless monster.

Satan took the Scriptures, written in Hebrew and Greek, and mistranslated some words and gave us the English

versions of his masterpiece. There are hundreds of English translations of the Scriptures. Of these hundreds, there are still a few which do not contain the pagan and manmade English word, "hell." "Hell" did not exist in the Hebrew and Greek.

Now, I know that a passage of Scripture is on your mind, for it was on mine when I started to see the truth. It is a famous passage of Scripture to those who teach everlasting punishment. It is the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. It is found in Luke 16 and begins in verse 19. I will not go into detail of why I do not believe this teaches a burning hell, because it would be a lengthy process, and there are many articles already on the subject. What I will say is this; this passage is a parable!

I was always taught, and taught others, that this was a literal story. After really studying this passage, it became very clear that this is a parable. What I must say to you is that you should read Matthew 13:1-15. I pray that God will give you the understanding that he gave to me. (Jesus spoke in parables so that the *religious* would NOT understand!)

The wrath of God is not to be minimized, and you do not want to partake of it. However, the Bible does not teach that when your heart stops beating you are finished. The awesome power of the blood of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, will reach to the lowest depths and pull His creation out and redeem it – even if this means that they must be punished to open their eyes.

One day, instead of only a handful of Gods' beloved, *all* will praise the Almighty God! His *entire* creation groans for redemption (Romans 8:21-23). One day, though it may take a very long time, *all* of His creation will be redeemed. One day a chorus will thunder throughout the universe that Jesus Christ is Lord of *all*. All that He has made and loved enough to die for will see the salvation of God. God will lose nothing. The true power of the cross of Calvary will be revealed, and the true dimensions of His much more abounding grace will be seen (Romans 5:8-21).

It has been said to me that my belief is flawed. I challenge any Christian fundamentalist to deny just one of the following statements.

1. God gave all things into His Son's hand (John 3:35).

2. Of the "all things" that God gave His Son, He will lose nothing (John 6:39).
3. Jesus Christ said that if He was lifted up, He would draw ("drag" in the Greek) all men to himself (John 12:32-33).
4. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
5. In Adam all die, but in Christ all are made alive (I Corinthians 15:22).
6. Christ will reign until He has put all enemies under His feet (I Corinthians 15:25).
7. The last enemy to be destroyed is death (I Corinthians 15:26).
8. After all things are subdued to Christ, He will be subject to the Father, that God may be All in all (I Corinthians 15:28).
9. In the dispensation of the fullness of time He will gather together in one all things in Christ, which are in heaven and earth (Ephesians 1:10).
10. He made peace through the blood of His cross to reconcile all things to Himself, whether they are in heaven or earth (Colossians 1:20).

The thing that most do not understand is that the Lord God is in *complete* control. He *did NOT* make creation, give man a so called "free will," and then Satan took this opportunity to thwart God's plan. *It did not happen this way!* God did not have to change plans because Satan messed up His original one. God knew exactly what He was doing. He knew Adam would sin before He made him. He "allowed" Satan to beguile Eve, just as he hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 7:13; John 12:40), all in order to show His glory.

God actually *caused* the fall of man (Acts 15:18)! It was not some haphazard plan. It was not, as most teach, that God had to send Jesus to clean up the mess Satan made of His plan. The *disease* is sin, and God had the *cure* before the disease existed! The cure is the cross, and Christ was slain before the foundation of the world (I Peter 1:19-20; Ephesians 1:4).

The Lord *caused* death to pass to all men and had the remedy before it happened. It was *always* His plan to bring man down, and then lift him back up, *to show His love and glory*. God is not bipolar! He is not a sadistic monster who will burn men forever in hell. His plan, like Himself, is perfect. His plan is, and always was, to save His creation.

It is an awesome thing that God is the Creator of the world. However, it is a far more awesome thing that He is the Savior of the world. Without the “fall” of man, God would indeed be the Creator; but without sin, He could not be the Savior. Without sin and death, man did not need a Savior.

Just as the serpent fooled Eve in the garden, God has fooled the serpent! He has allowed Satan to give man a mistranslated English Bible, but He didn't allow him to remove the cure for sin from its pages. The Love of God and His Christ are still there and, one day, God will open the eyes of *all* and His *true* love will be seen.

Now, the Scriptures say that death will be destroyed (I Corinthians 15:26). If death is destroyed, there can be no “eternal death” (this is what some fundamentalists and annihilationists call the destruction of the wicked). “Eternal death” does not exist – not on earth, not in heaven, not in the sea or sky, and certainly not in some weird, made up, far off, fairy tale place where souls are tortured forever! If death is destroyed, *there will be no death anywhere* (including the “The Second Death,” which *is death*)!

Dear Friend, it is time to grow up. It is time to understand the ultimate, awesome, fantastic plan that God has, and had, for His creation from the foundation of the world. God's will is going to be accomplished, and neither your so-called “free will” nor all the powers of darkness can stop it! Praise our all-powerful God!

*Who will have **all** men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for **all**, to be testified in due time* (I Timothy 2:4-6).

I cannot wait until the day when, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He gathers together in one *all* things, in Christ; when *every* knee will bow, and *every* tongue will confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord; when

the wonderful cross of Calvary is fully understood, and God's ultimate plan is revealed; when all men shall see that Jesus Christ truly is the Savior of the world; when all of God's creation will cry out in thundering unison, “We love Him, for He first loved us”; when death and *hades* are cast into the lake of fire and death is destroyed and transformed into life; when the harlot church system is trampled and burned along with the traditions of men, which have blinded us from God's true grace; when all men see hell exposed for what it is – a lie – and will not be able to contradict God's love any longer.

For almost 30 years I prayed that God could find some way to forgive all men and save them. As the Scriptures stared me in the face – that He *IS* the Savior of the world, the propitiation for the sins of the world, that He has the keys of death and hell, that He loves the world, that He died for the sins of the world – there was also the doctrine of damnation blinding me and contradicting the true grace of God. I now realize that God had answered my prayer before I asked it!

It is now my prayer that you, too, will think every time you read of God's grace, love and will, that *all* will be saved, and that hell is a myth, that He *really* is the Savior of all men, that He *really* is all powerful and that He *really* will draw all men to Himself.

I pray that you would study, with all of your strength, with all of your being, the words “for ever,” “hell,” “*sheol*,” “*gehenna*,” “*hades*” and “*tartarus*.” I pray that the love of God will overwhelm you to the point where you cannot sleep. Yes, I pray that you are tormented with the thoughts of countless numbers of God's creation burning in hell forever as Scriptures such as I John 2:2 flash in your mind. I pray that these thoughts will open your eyes and that you, too, will see the truth.

I pray that, as the myth of a Santa that is taught worldwide faded away as you became a man, the myth of everlasting damnation will also fade away as the love of God controls your heart.

If you see the truth of Who God is and deny the lie of “eternal separation” from Him, you will lose friends. Some of your closest companions will abandon you, but this is all worth the joy and peace and love of God in your heart. I know, for it has been in mine! ■



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