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# Words of Truth

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## God Is NOT "Santa Claus"

By: Brian A. Yeager

Recently I was talking with a brother in Maryland. We were discussing false teachers whom tell people that if they do certain things, God will provide them with mates, job security, good health, and a host of other carnal "goodies". He specifically recounted to me a sermon he heard where the preacher made the point that if you are a faithful Christian and there were layoffs at work, you'd be safe. Men that teach such errors twist verses like Romans 8:28, which is about spiritual blessings contextually (Romans 8:28-39), and people fall for it. People end up serving God for carnal reasons rather than spiritual reasons.

The life of a faithful Christian is not going to be a carnally blessed life above anyone else's. In fact, the life of a Christian is often found to be more difficult. Consider these Scriptures written concerning faithful followers of the Lord: *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me... These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world... Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God... It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us"* (Matthew 10:34-37, John 16:33, Acts 14:22, and II Timothy 2:11-12).

Any single reference above is enough to show that serving God faithfully will not bring about the "good life" here on earth that carnally minded people seek. Many more Scriptures could be used to show the same points as stated above (i.e. Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:22-23, John 15:20, Acts 8:1-4, II Corinthians 4:8-12, II Timothy 3:11-12, I Peter 4:12-16, etc.). Jesus suffered (Luke 9:22). The Apostles suffered (Acts 5:40-42). Their faithfulness did not prevent suffering, but rather caused it. Are we better than they? Do we deserve better than the only begotten Son of God? Will carnal thinking save us (I Corinthians 3:1-3)? No, no, and no!

I know that most reading this article do not think of God in the false manner I have briefly exposed. My concern is that we are not doing enough to keep others from falling for this false doctrine. We have to expose it. Too many people have been falsely taught that serving God will benefit them like a child that is lied to about the false concept of "Santa Claus". Our God gets a bad name when these false teachers promise things, which are not going to come to fruition, in the name of our Heavenly Father. Logical people will become atheists because of the lies that these men tell. They'll think God is a fictional character like "Santa Claus". Consider some points as we look at the need to expose these false doctrines.

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## **This False Doctrine Makes God A Respector Of Persons And A Liar**

In the neighborhood that I grew up in there was severe poverty. Parents lied to their children promising that the false character "Santa Claus" would reward their good behavior with gifts. Some children received very little on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Then the parents were left to explain (LIE about) why the boy down the street got a new bike, even though he behaved badly, but this child did not. That is what happens with this false doctrine. People look at God and wonder why the ungodly flourish while their good behavior is unrewarding. This is the wrong way to present or look at God (Psalms 73:1-24).

God is NOT a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11, and I Peter 1:17). When that lady finds a husband and another does not, such was NOT the work of God. Finding a mate is on you (Proverbs 18:22). When someone gets a good job, such was NOT the work of God. Working is on you (Ephesians 4:28 and II Thessalonians 3:10). God does not dangle carnal carrots in front of us to get us to serve Him. The reward He promises is in the life to come (John 5:28-29 and John 14:1-3). It is false teachers who falsely promise things in the flesh for pretentious spiritual service (II Peter 2:17-18). God does not work on us through our fleshly desires. In fact, He steers us from such thinking (Romans 13:13-14 and I Peter 2:11).

These false teachers make promises, in the name of God, that will NOT come true (Jeremiah 6:14). Then, the person whom these false promises were made to will start to blame God when that promise fails. They will falsely conclude that God is a liar because these false teachers will twist Scriptures to prove their point (II Peter 3:15-17). They will never realize that it is not in God's nature to lie (Titus 1:2). They will turn from God, though they've never truly turned to Him. Thus, we need to be ready and capable of exposing these lies!

### **We Need To Expose The False "Santa Clause" Doctrine**

When false teachers present God as a form of the fictional "Santa Claus" they are setting God up to be a liar (Jeremiah 8:11; 15). The woman who starting serving God to find a husband will find sore displeasure that God does not answer her prayers. She's been lied to. We have to try and stop these lies from being told. We have to expose these dark deceptions (Romans 16:17-18, Ephesians 5:6-11, and II Timothy 3:1-9). If we do not, those who fall into this carnal way of thinking about our Lord will continue to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13).

We have to gain the knowledge and ability to show people that God has already provided His part in all that we need from Him (II Timothy 3:15-17, II Peter 1:3-10, and I John 4:14). We need to show them that God's active role today is not for our pleasure, but our needs. For example, He provides the things we NEED (i.e. Acts 14:17) for us to live another day so that we can be saved (II Peter 3:9). He doesn't gift wrap our wish lists nor answer prayers to the carnal satisfaction of anyone (James 4:3).

### **Conclusion**

God is much more than any idea of "Santa Claus". He has provided the means for life here (Matthew 6:25-34) and to come (Titus 2:11-14). Let's stand against misrepresentations of God! Let's show people that service to God is spiritual and so is the reward!