

# One Christmas Tradition

## “The Tradition of Gift-Giving”

December 30, 2007

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

*Ephesians 2:8-9, New International Version*

Gift giving has become one of the most looked forward to traditions of the Christmas season, but...

*Did You Know: The tradition of gift giving is actually older than the Christmas holiday itself.*

- Ancient pagan festivals (i.e. *Saturnalia*)
- Germanic tribes of Europe

*And what character of Christmas do we most commonly associate with Christmas gift-giving?*

Jolly old Santa Claus, St. Nick, Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas, Kris Kringle (Christkindle = “Christ child”), Sinter Claus

How much do we really know about Santa Claus?

- 4<sup>th</sup> Century
- 6<sup>th</sup> Century
- 1087
- 1823
- 1866

*“Santa Claus is Coming to Town.”*

*You better watch out; you better not cry.  
You better not pout; I’m telling you why.*

*Santa Claus is coming to town.  
Santa Claus is coming to town.  
Santa Claus is coming to town.*

*He’s making a list; he’s checking it twice.  
He’s gonna find out who’s naughty or nice.  
Santa Claus is coming to town.  
Santa Claus is coming to town.  
Santa Claus is coming to town.*

*He sees you when you are sleeping; he knows if you’re awake.  
He knows if you’ve been bad or good. So be good for goodness’ sake.*

## Does Santa Have Limitations?



Santa can’t possibly know everything.



Santa can’t possibly deliver all the presents.



Santa won’t give what you don’t earn.

Good little boys and girls get good presents. Bad little boys and girls receive a lump of coal in their stocking. When you buy gifts for family and friends, do you buy them based on the behavior and accomplishments of the person you are buying for?

## If Santa Faced God

Would he kneel at the foot of the manger?



God's gift is salvation!

The condition of mankind is by nature sinful. The Bible records the fall of man in the third chapter of the first book – Genesis. As a result of the disobedience or sin of the first man and woman, each of us is born with a tendency to disregard the parameters of life that God established. The consequence of sin is separation from God. However, God desires to live in an intimate relationship with us. In his wisdom, he knew that we needed to be rescued or saved from our condition of sin. So he provided a way for us to be restored into relationship with him.



God's gift is based on grace!

God gave us his best when we deserved the absolute worst.



God's gift is received through faith!

*“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*

*Hebrews 11:1, New International Version*

Christmas gift giving is a wonderful tradition, but there is an inherent flaw. There are always gifts that are the wrong size, the wrong color or sometimes just the wrong gift. There are gifts that wear out and in the grand scheme of life make very little difference in our lives.

God gives a gift that you will never want to return – a gift that will transform your life and your eternity.