

## The REAL Christmas Story – Various Scriptures

John 1; I don't know about you, but the further we get from the *real* Christmas story, the more bizarre all the other ones get; Have you noticed that?  
Like **Daddy, Why Doesn't Santa Use Elephants?**  
Or how about **Cajun Night Before Christmas**; Complete with alligators instead of reindeer, and a Louisiana accent instead of English

And then there's **Pete The Cat Saves Christmas**; Which goes like this . . .

Twas the day before Christmas and Santa was ill.  
In the cold winter wind he had caught a bad chill.  
Will Christmas be canceled? Will it come to that?  
"Never!" cried Santa. "Let's call Pete the Cat!"

Not to be outdone by **Pinkalicious: Merry Pinkmas**

And my favorite title of all – **Llama Llama Holiday Drama**

Bizarre; Nothing wrong with them necessarily, but just strange; And about the furthest thing from **The REAL Christmas Story**

So I want to spend the next few minutes talking about *that*; In hopes that you'll embrace it if you haven't, and delight in it all the more if you have

And it starts with this . . .

**God became man (John 1:1,14)**

The *real* Christmas story starts with the fact that God became man

Something the Apostle John made crystal *clear* in the first few verses of his gospel, his account of Christ's life; Saying in v1 . . .

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Now, the word *word* here, translates the Greek word *logos*; Which was an expression in those days referring to the sum total of all the . . .

Wisdom, truth, and creative power in the universe

And it was not only *present* when the world was made, *in the beginning* – but it was embodied in someone who was both *with* God, and *was* God

That's all we know at this point – the *word* is an all-knowing, all-powerful, pre-existent being who is part of the godhead

Until we get to v14; Where it says that the Word became *flesh*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

The *Son*, referring to Jesus – the Son of God

Who, *as* God, became flesh, dwelt among us, and revealed his glory, his nature

IOW God became man

Which would be like you and I becoming an ant; Or a single-cell organism; Or a sub-atomic particle; Something utterly insignificant compared to us

And unthinkable at that; But not for God; It was part of his plan

➤ Declared from the get-go to Joseph, by an angel (**Mt 1:21-23**)

Regarding Mary, he said – [21] *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.* [22] *All this took place to fulfill what the*

*Lord had spoken by the prophet: [23] “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).*

Once again, God became man b/c Jesus took on flesh

And *in him* [the Apostle Paul says] *all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell* (Col 1:19)

*In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily* (Col 2:9); Over and over again . . .

The NT writers confirmed that God became man\*\*\*\*\*

➤ To which some of you might be thinking – “I don't believe that; That's just the pipe dream of a few head-cases, looking for followers”; But the evidence says otherwise  
B/c everything that's written about Jesus, is written *by* eyewitnesses, or *based on* eyewitnesses; People who saw him, walked with him, and knew him

And they had nothing to gain by inflating the facts; Especially with something so outlandish as God becoming man; That wouldn't have “sold” in their day

The Jews considered it heresy, and the Romans, ridiculous

In which case they had *nothing* to gain, and *everything* to lose – including their reputations and lives

Which means you can *trust* what they say – that God became man; And did so . . .

**To live as our example (Philippians 2:5-7)**

God became man, to live as our example

Our example of *serving*, our example of *giving*, and our example of *loving*

Like **Ph 2:5-7** says – *Have this mind among yourselves* [this mindset; this governing thought], *which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*

He not only humbled himself by becoming *man*, a baby – but a *servant*

And said in **Matt 20:28** – *The Son of Man* [referring to himself] *came not to be served but to serve*; And we're to have that *same* mindset, that *same* MO

He lived to serve

➤ **And to give**; That's the second part of the verse; He came to serve, *and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

He not only washed people's feet, healed their ailments, showed compassion, and preached the gospel – but died

He actually gave his *life* of all things; He sacrificed himself\*\*\*\*\*

And expects us to do the same, as *living* sacrifices; He lived as our example of *giving*

➤ And last, our example of *loving*

Like **1 Jn 3:16** says – *By this we know love* [IOW here's his example of love], *that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.*

Jesus laid down his life as our example of how to love

Which *could* mean giving up our very lives, like it did for him; But *most* often, it means giving of *ourselves*; Giving of our time, and talent, and effort, and treasure\*\*\*\*\*

God became man to live as our example; And b/c he did so with all the difficulties and temptations *we* experience (Heb 4:15), he really *can* expect us to live accordingly

3<sup>rd</sup>, he died in our place; God became man, to live as our example . . .

### **And die in our place (Rom 5:6-8)**

IOW he wasn't just our ransom, but our *substitute*; **Rom 5:6-8**

*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—[8] but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners [still ungodly], Christ died for us.*

Now, there are 3 parts here that might be a bit disconcerting to you

#### **1. We're all sinners**

That's the implication; *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*; Us; Sinners (8)  
B/c we've done wrong things, and we've violated God's laws and God's design  
All of us; *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* the Bible says (Rom 3:23)  
All of us fall short of God's standard of righteousness and holiness  
*None* [are] *righteous* [it says], *no, not one* (Rom 3:10)

And Rom 5:19 says that – *by the one man's disobedience* [referring to Adam] *the many were made sinners*; B/c of his sin, we're sinners; And we *prove* it by sinning  
So no matter how you slice it, we're all sinful sinners; And that's a problem

#### **2. We need dying for**

V8 says – *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*  
Why? B/c in God's eyes, *without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins*  
(Heb 9:22); That is, without the loss of life . . .  
There's no pardon for our sin and sinfulness

That's why the people of God in the OT sacrificed *animals* year after year – so their sins could be atoned for and covered . . .  
Until Jesus died once and for all, to forgive them

Christ *died* for us, b/c we need dying *for*; In our sin, we're completely at a loss, without his death on the cross

And 3<sup>rd</sup>, the third part of this that might be disconcerting, is that . . .

#### **3. God died**

That's the implication; *Christ died* it says; Referring to Jesus  
And since Jesus is God with us, God in the flesh – *God* died (**Summary**)  
Which is even more unthinkable than becoming a man  
But that's what the Bible says, over and over again  
That God in the flesh who *didn't* deserve it, was crucified for those who did

Crucified . . .

#### **That we might be saved (Lk 2:9-11)**

That's the next part of the *real* Christmas story; There was an ultimate purpose for his advent, and incarnation, and life, and death; Namely, that we might be saved

Which was proclaimed so well and so famously by one of the *herald* angels who appeared to the shepherds that first Christmas (**Lk 2:10-11**); *Fear not* [he said], *for behold* . . .  
*I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* (Luke 2:10-11)

And then, about 90 years later, the Apostle John reiterated it in **1 Jn 4:14** . . .

*We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*

And what do saviors do? They save (**1 Tim 1:15**); Just like Paul said  
*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*

➤ The question is, from what? What does Jesus save us *from*?

And the answer, is the *consequences* of sin – the fact that we're going to die, and spend eternity in the torment and suffering of hell, apart from God\*\*\*\*\*  
That's what Rev 20:15 says – *If anyone's name* [is] *not found written in the book of life*, [they are] *thrown into the lake of fire*  
[Where] *they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.* (2 Thess 1:9)  
That's the consequence of sin, that God became man, to save us from

➤ And you can avoid it, you can have your name written in the book of life, if you believe and repent; Just like Jesus said when he began his ministry  
*Repent and believe in the gospel* (Mk 1:15) – the good news of salvation; The *real* Christmas story

You can be saved, if you believe that Jesus died in your place, and repent of your sins  
Confessing them as wrong, asking him to forgive you, and turning from them  
Believe, and repent; It's that simple; It may not be easy, but it *is* simple  
And I want you to hear the testimony of someone who did just that recently; And the circumstances God used to get their attention  
Take a look (**God@Work Video** – Josh and Kim Smith)

➤ What circumstances has God been using to get *your* attention?

And are you *paying* attention? Especially to the goodness and *kindness* of God in your life; B/c that's what he often uses that to draw people to himself  
*Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?* (Rom 2:4)  
What are the good things in your life that God may be using to get your attention?

Or maybe for you, it's not blessing but *hardship* he's using to get your attention and save your soul; Is that it? Whatever the case, don't ignore it  
Believe that when he died, he died for you; And turn from your sin to follow him as Lord – that you might be saved . . .

#### **And live with him forever (Rev 21:3)**

That's the last part of the real Christmas story

God became man, to live as our example and die in our place, that we might be saved and live with him forever

Forever, b/c the Bible says that Jesus was lifted up on a cross, dying in our place, *that whoever believes in him may have eternal life* (Jn 3:15); Life, forever; With *God*  
**Rev 21:3** says – *Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*

God became man that we might be saved, and live with him forever – starting right now

You see, when we're saved, the *Spirit* of Christ dwells *within* us – no longer just among us, but within us

Guaranteeing us life to the full, and life forever (Rom 8:10-11)

That's the *real* Christmas story\*\*\*\*\*

➤ The question is, do you believe it?

Do you believe that Jesus is God in the flesh, and that when he died, he did so for you?

To save you from an eternity of hell, and give you life forever?

Do you believe that?

And are you ready to repent? To confess your sins to God, ask him to forgive you, and live for him as Lord of your life?

If so, you can do it right now; You can pray and be saved (**Summary**)

Not just for fire insurance to keep you out of hell; Or life insurance just in case it's all true; But blessed assurance that Jesus is yours, and you are his

Never to be separated, and never forsaken

With strength for today, and bright hope for tomorrow

You too can be saved – if you believe, and repent

Prayer – If you feel like I've been speaking to you, and you want to be saved, pray w/ me

“Lord Jesus, I believe you died in my place, for my sins, taking the punishment I deserved; I believe it; I believe in you

And I repent of my sins – I admit that I've sinned, and know that I'm a sinner; Would you forgive me? I'm sorry God, and I'm done with it

Save me I pray, and be Lord of my life; I want to live by your example from now on”

Lord, thank you for saving our souls and making us whole; Thank you for your great salvation so rich and free

Guide and protect each and every one who just prayed to receive you as Lord of their lives; Fill them with your Spirit, and fuel them with your Word

And receive our tithes and offerings now for the work of ministry – we give with hearts full of joy and gratitude, for all that you've given us; Including your Son at Christmas