

## The Difference Between Santa And Jesus

### Luke 2:1-14 (KJV)

**1** And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. **2** (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) **3** And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. **4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) **5** To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. **6** And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. **7** And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. **8** And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. **10** And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. **12** And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, **14** Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

During this Christmas season, it's of the upmost importance to recognize the difference between Jesus Christ and Santa Claus.

You see, both Jesus and Santa have a story which reveals who they are and what they stand for. When you compare the two stories, the difference between the two becomes very apparent.

So, what's Santa Claus' Story? You hear it all over this time of year, but perhaps the clearest summation is found in the song '*Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town.*'

## ***Santa Claus Is Coming to Town***

You better watch out,  
You better not cry,  
Better not pout,  
I'm telling you why,  
Santa Claus is coming to town

He's making a list  
And checking it twice;  
He's gonna find out  
Who's naughty or nice  
Santa Claus is coming to town!

He sees you when you're sleeping,  
He knows when you're awake,  
He knows if you've been bad or good,  
So be good for goodness sake!

You better watch out,  
You better not cry,  
You better not pout,  
I'm telling you why,  
Santa Claus is coming to town!

This is Santa's story. So, who is Santa? Santa is a wonderful old man who brings gifts to those who are good, but only to those who are good. If you cry or pout, If you're nasty or bad; forget it, Santa is not coming to you.

Now I'm not here to complain about Santa. There is nothing wrong with being good. In fact, parents find Santa and his story very useful this time of year. They remind their children that Santa is watching and that they should be good for goodness sake.

Santa's story is fine, but it is different from the story of Jesus. That difference can be heard in today's gospel.

It is expressed in the song of the angels; they revealed who Jesus is. Jesus is the one who brings “joy to all the people.” Jesus is the one through whom God’s favor rests on all.

You see, Santa comes to those who are good. Jesus comes to those who are good and bad alike. What is revealed in the story of Jesus is that Christmas is not about our goodness, but about God’s goodness.

What we celebrate on this feast is not the good things that we have done, but the great thing that God has done in Christ Jesus. Jesus’ story reveals the love of God, which is prior to any of our merits and present despite all our sins.

So, unlike Santa, Jesus comes to us, not because we are good, but because we need him, because we are sinful and broken and weak.

What that means is that there is no person in this church tonight whom God does not love. No matter how much we have sinned; no matter how deeply we have failed; no matter how selfish we have been, God still loves us.

God’s love is not based on our goodness, but upon God’s free choice. Therefore, the love of God that we celebrate at this Christmas feast comes to everybody. It comes to those who are healthy and to those who are sick. It comes to those who are happy and to those who are grieving a loss. It comes to those who are hopeful and for those who are struggling with despair. It comes to those who are holy and to those who are sinners. In fact, the whole message of Christmas aims to move us off ourselves, around our troubles, out of our successes and failures, and enfold us in the universal love of God. This is Christmas joy. This is the Good News.

Now Santa has his good news. Santa’s news is that if you’re good, you might get a Wii or maybe even a Lexus, but Jesus’ news is better.

Jesus’ news is that anyone who opens his or her heart can receive the love of God; a love that can destroy evil, a love that is stronger than death itself.

Therefore, we must not confuse Jesus and Santa. We must keep their stories straight. I know that this task can be difficult. So, I thought that if Santa has a song for his story, maybe Jesus should have a song for his story. Try this one on for size and see if it works.

***Jesus is Coming to Town***

You don't have to watch out.  
It's okay if you cry.  
You can pout all day.  
I'm telling you why,  
Jesus Christ is coming to town.

He's forgotten His list.  
He forgives more than twice.  
He's the Lord of us all,  
Both the naughty and the nice.  
The Prince of Peace is coming to town.

He sees you when you're sleeping.  
He knows when you're awake.  
He'll save you if you're bad or good,  
with a power no sin can break.

So, put sadness aside.  
Let loose with a cry.  
There's no reason to hide.  
I'm telling you why,  
The Love of God is coming to town.

**Merry Christmas!**