

S.O.H.L.

WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

Pronounced "Soul"

December 23, 2013

Knowing the Difference

MATTHEW 1:18-25 NKJV – (18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. (19) Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. (20) But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. (21) And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." (22) So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: (23) "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." (24) Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, (25) and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Although Santa Claus is a mythical figure, his creation is based in part on a great Christian man named Saint Nicholas of Myra, who lived in the 4th century. Nicholas was born to Christian parents who left him an inheritance when they died, which he distributed to the poor. He became a priest at a young age and was well-known for his compassion and generosity. He had a reputation for giving gifts anonymously-- he would throw bags of money into people's homes (and sometimes down their chimneys) under the cover of night to avoid being spotted.

Nicholas passed away on December 6 sometime around the 340s or 350s AD. The day of his death became an annual feast in which children would put out food for Nicholas and straw for his donkey. It was said that the saint would come down from heaven during the night and replace the offerings with toys and treats—but only for the good boys and girls. There are many different versions of the legend of Saint Nicholas, but all are the inspiration for the jolly, red-suited gift-giver that we now know as Santa Claus.

Jesus and St. Nicholas are very much real. Let us teach our children the truth. A tradition of sharing gifts is beautiful but education regarding the meaning behind the tradition is vital. Christmas gift giving is once a year; the gifts from Jesus take place every day. Take time to teach your loved ones about the birth of Christ and His very purpose for coming on earth. Remember, Jesus us the gift.

On behalf of the [SOHLMEDITATIONS](#) staff, Merry Christmas to you and yours.

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 2:1-20

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Our testimony is the witness of what God has done for us. *Have a safe and wonderful Holiday Season!*

December 1, 2013



SOHL's mission is to sow God's word into the hearts of men and women that will propel them to their God-given destiny.