



BAPTIST CHURCH

## The Real Christmas Story John 3:16-18

### Introduction

Nancy Abell tried to get her friend Katharina Groene to turn back. But with 150 miles to go on her 2,500 mile solo hike along the Pacific Crest Trail, Katharina wanted to see her adventure through. It was late in the season, and Nancy was concerned because Katharina didn't have snowshoes. Nancy couldn't stop thinking about Katharina all alone in the mountains. A few days later when forecasters said to expect two feet of snow in the mountains, Nancy called the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office, explaining that her friend Katharina Groene might be in trouble.

On the mountain, Katharina was dehydrated and disoriented and thought she might have frostbite. She kept falling down and having to will herself to get back up. Surrounded by evergreens that were sinking under the weight of the snow, she screamed for help. No one heard her. She got out her phone and began recording messages for the friends and family she hadn't seen for months, apologizing for dying on the trail. The Sheriff's Office launched a search, and soon found her. Rescuers said more than likely Katharina would have died that night or the next day.

Citation: Antonia Noori Farzan, "A hiker in the Cascades thought she would die in a snowstorm. But a stranger was looking out for her." The Washington Post (11-2-18)

**The life saving rescue of Katharina Groene reminds us of the "Real Christmas story" — We were hopelessly lost and in great need when God stepped into the world He created and made His dwelling among us in order to save us from our sins.**

Today as we examine God's Word we are going to discover the significance of "The Real Christmas Story."

## Scripture

For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

<sup>18</sup> Anyone who believes in him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God. CSB

## Quote Of The Day

“The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity—hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory—because at the Father's will Jesus Christ became poor and was born in a stable so that thirty years later he might hang on a cross.” —J. I. Packer

The significance of “**The Real Christmas Story**” is found in **John 3:16-18**.

**John 3:16-18** is a powerful passage of Scripture when it stands alone—

However, when we understand the context of **John 3:16-18** these verses have even greater meaning and influence.

Every passage of Scripture has Context, Truth and Application.

In the Context of **John 3:16** Nicodemus came to Jesus at night.

**There is more to life than just going through the motions. Nicodemus was educated, he was wealthy, he was a man of authority, he was a man who was well respected. Nicodemus was one of, if not the most influential man in Israel. He was a deeply religious man but he was not satisfied— there must be more!**

**Nicodemus came to Jesus at night— Searching for Truth!**

The Real Christmas Story is about:

- 1. A Serious Problem**
- 2. A Significant Promise**
- 3. A Series of Prophecies**
- 4. A Special Person**
- 5. A Selfless Plan of Salvation**

The Real Christmas Story is about:

## **1. A Serious Problem**

**Genesis 3** reveals a Serious Problem we all have.

Genesis 3 reveals:

### **a. We All Have A Sin Problem vv.6-7**

**Genesis 3:1-13** describes in vivid detail the problem we all share in common.

**Sin means to miss the mark, to cross the line, to fail and fall short!**

Genesis 3 reveals:

### **b. We All Have A Separation From God Problem vv.8-10**

Sin is a problem because it separates us from God!

God desires to have a meaningful relationship with His dearest creation!

Because we have willfully crossed the line of sin and disobedience we are separated from God!

Genesis 3 reveals:

### **c. We All Have A Significant Problem vv.7-11**

Sin is a Significant Problem because we cannot save ourselves.

We are helpless and powerless to solve our sin problem on our own!

Serious problems require effective solutions!

At the age of 38, Bonnie Booth took extreme measures to solve on of her problems. In February of 1996, The Muncie, Indiana, resident had unsuccessfully tried to remove a callous from her foot with a razor so she resorted to more drastic measures. She drank a bottle of Vodka and had a few beers before doing “surgery” in the backyard with a .410 shotgun. Because of the pain in her foot she was afraid the callous was getting infected so she opted to try shooting the callous off with a shotgun. Needless to say, she not only ended up in the emergency room, she also ended up in the psychiatric center as well. Bonnie Booth’s attempt to solve her problem was not only strange it was tragic and ineffective. Citation: [The Orlando Sentinel February 1996](#).

Often times people seek to solve the serious problem of sin by our own extreme measures and we have the same tragic and ineffective result!

**THE SCRIPTURE CLEARLY TEACHES WE CANNOT COVER UP OR TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN SINFULNESS!**

Satan has convinced many people that we can cover up our sin and be right with God by doing more good things than bad things!

The Real Christmas Story is about:

## **2. A Significant Promise**

**Psalm 119:160** “The entirety of your word is truth, each of your righteous judgments endures forever.” CSB

**Genesis 3:15** “I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” CSB

When God said there would be one who would once and for all destroy Satan— He meant what He said.

The Real Christmas Story is about:

### **3. A Series of Prophecies**

**We know without a doubt Jesus, the baby born the virgin Mary, is the Messiah— the One sent from God to save people from our sins.**

We know Jesus is the Messiah because:

#### **The prophecies are numerous**

The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies about the Messiah, the Savior who would deliver God's people from oppression. These prophecies include details about the Messiah's birth, lineage, and life.

Scholars have different ways of counting the number of prophecies, but the range is generally between 200 and 400. For example, J. Barton Payne lists 191 prophecies that he considers to have a "personal reference to Christ". Alfred Edersheim estimates that there are at least 456 passages in the Old Testament that have been interpreted as being about the Messiah.

Peter Stoner in his book "Science Speaks" (1958) sought to illustrate the improbability of one person fulfilling even a handful of specific Messianic prophecies by chance.

The Coin Illustration: Stoner suggested imagining the state of Texas covered two feet deep in silver dollars— approximately 268,597 square miles. Covering it two feet deep in coins represents an enormous number.

The probability Stoner calculated for one man fulfilling eight prophecies was 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000— 100 quadrillion. The illustration asks

you to mark one of those silver dollars, mix them all thoroughly, blindfold a person, and ask them to pick up one silver dollar at random. The chance of them picking the marked coin is the same as one person fulfilling all eight prophecies.

Stoner used this illustration to underscore his argument that the fulfillment of these prophecies by Jesus is beyond reasonable probability if left to chance. This illustration the fulfillment of these prophecies provides strong evidence that Jesus is the Messiah.

Joseph in **Matthew 1:18-25** believed only one of the prophecies— he took Mary to be his wife and became the earthly father of Jesus.

We know Jesus is the Messiah because:

### **The prophecies are clear**

**Isaiah 7:14** “Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.” CSB

We know Jesus is the Messiah because:

### **The prophecies are descriptive:**

**Isaiah 9:6-7** “For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. He will reign on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now on and forever. The zeal of the Lord of Armies will accomplish this.” CSB

The Real Christmas Story is about:

#### 4. A Special Person

**John 1:14 says** “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” CSB

Christmas is a time to recognize Jesus is the Messiah, He is the Christ—the One sent from God to save the world from their sins.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) a Danish theologian and philosopher wrote this story to help people understand the significance of Jesus the Christ.

There was no question he loved her. He was absolutely bedazzled by her. Surprising, really, because she was plain, maybe even... well, (to someone else perhaps) disappointing. But then, he himself was a poor man who didn't have even two coins to rub together. He wasn't especially handsome, either. But he was good... a good and godly man, and he swept her off her feet, and won her heart. What makes that ordinary story extraordinary is the rest of the story.

This story actually begins, “Suppose there was a king who loved a humble maiden.” He was a great king and he could have whatever he wanted. Every statesman feared his wrath, every foreign state trembled before his power; they would have all sent ambassadors to the wedding. He realized that if he asked his courtiers they would say, “Your majesty is about to confer a favor upon the maiden for which she can never be sufficiently grateful her whole life long.” That was the problem! Even if she wanted to come with him, he would never know for certain if she would have loved him for himself. So he wrestled with his troubled thoughts alone. Finally, he decided. If she could not come up to his high station and be sure to love him freely, he must descend to hers. And he must descend stripped of his royal power and wealth, for only then would he know if his beloved loved him freely, as equals. So he laid aside all his power and privileges, and came to her as her equal, to win her love. Citation: Soren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2009), Page 21

**Isaiah 53:1-12** “Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>2</sup>He grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He didn’t have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at him, no appearance that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like someone people turned away from; he was despised, and we didn’t value him. <sup>4</sup>Yet he himself bore our sicknesses, and he carried our pains; but we in turn regarded him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. <sup>6</sup>We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished him for the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth. <sup>8</sup>He was taken away because of oppression and judgment, and who considered his fate? For he was cut off from the land of the living; he was struck because of my people’s rebellion. <sup>9</sup>He was assigned a grave with the wicked, but he was with a rich man at his death, because he had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully. <sup>10</sup>Yet the Lord was pleased to crush him severely. When you make him a guilt offering, he will see his seed, he will prolong his days, and by his hand, the Lord’s pleasure will be accomplished. <sup>11</sup>After his anguish, he will see light and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will carry their iniquities. <sup>12</sup>Therefore I will give him the many as a portion, and he will receive the mighty as spoil, because he willingly submitted to death, and was counted among the rebels; yet he bore the sin of many and interceded for the rebels.” CSB

The Real Christmas Story is about:

## **5. A Selfless Plan of Salvation**

**Luke 22:42** “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me—nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” CSB

**Philippians 2:5-11** “Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as



something to be exploited. <sup>7</sup> Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, <sup>8</sup> he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—<sup>11</sup> and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. CSB

**The Real Christmas Story is about Jesus**— A. W. Tozer said this about Jesus: “Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, is the Eternal One, for in the fullness of time He humbled Himself. **John 1:14** is clear: the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. I confess I would have liked to have seen the baby Jesus. But the glorified Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, was the baby Jesus once lying in the manger straw. Taking a body of humiliation, He was still the Creator who made the wood of that manger, and he even made the straw.” [Citation: A. W. Tozer in Renewed Day by Day. Christianity Today, Vol. 38, no. 14.](#)