

THE TESTIMONY OF

Saint Nick

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On a snowy December night, Angela begrudgingly approached a large manor home for a company holiday party. The large house and the grounds surrounding it were lit up with white Christmas lights. Glowing gold reindeer, bright snowmen in top hats, and spiraling green and red lighted cones were spread out in the gardens. It was a beautiful sight but Angela hardly noticed it. She quickly knocked at the front door, from which hung an ornate green wreath wrapped in red ribbons. A concierge answered the door and beckoned Angela into a large foyer. The foyer of the home was filled with chattering guests dressed in classy suits and beautiful gowns. A decorated twenty-foot Christmas tree stood next to a grand staircase that had the railing lined with garland and lights.

Angela stood there for a moment in her elegant red dress as she took off her black coat and handed it to the concierge to place in the closet. The dress fit nicely to her short slender frame. Her auburn pixie cut hair left her expensive diamond earrings apparent for everyone to see. It also matched nicely with her silver diamond necklace. Her brown eyes exposed feelings of annoyance. She didn't particularly like Christmas parties and she did not want to be there for longer than an hour. However, for once her attendance the entire evening was mandatory. She was expected to accept an end of year award for her contributions as Vice President of Operations. The home hosting the party belonged to the president of the company.

Angela walked further inside listening to the laughing guests and the music of Christmas carols in the air. She could hardly stomach it. There was nothing worse to her than phony holiday pomp and the fake pleasantries among her peers, who in January would go back to being cut-throat and ruthless. She quickly made her appearances to the important heads of the company before rushing out the back of the house. Just fifteen minutes in and she couldn't take it anymore. She hated pretending to enjoy herself. There wasn't anything she hated more than Christmas. Everything about it made her sick. The barrage of sales and companies pushing people to buy stuff they don't need. The over the top decorations and songs that play for a month straight. She hated more than just Santa, elves, reindeer, or snowmen. She hated the season to the core.

Outside, she finally found herself alone standing on a balcony. The night was dark with no moon in the sky. Snow was lightly falling. The backyard, to her delight, was not adorned with a further barrage of Christmas lights or decorations.

"Everything alright?" a deep male voice asked from behind her.

Angela turned around to see an old man dressed in a gray suit with a red tie dotted with white snowflakes. His body was round. He had thick white hair, a neatly trimmed beard, and sparkling brown eyes. His cheeks were slightly rosy, and he had a friendly look about him.

"Not now Santa," she said sarcastically to the man, "I can't handle more of the

excessive Christmas spirit in there...”

The old man chuckled. “Yes, well that’s good because neither can I.”

“Too much for you?” She asked as she eyed the old man up and down. She couldn’t believe it. This guy seemed to be the epitome of Christmas.

The old man nodded. “That party in there is a little over the top isn’t it? Misses the whole point of Christmas altogether.”

Angela laughed. There it was. “Don’t tell me you’re one of those people who says Christmas is supposed to be about love, family, or the spirit of giving.”

The old man shrugged, “I just know it’s something more than parties.”

The man extended his hand. “My name is Nick.”

“Nick? Really? You look like Santa Claus and you are telling me that your name is Nicholas?” Angela laughed again.

“I prefer to be called just Nick.” The old man chuckled back.

“Well Nick, my name is Angela.” she replied as she shook his hand.

“So why don’t you like Christmas, Angela?” Nick asked her.

Angela sighed. “It just seems so fake to me. People are kind to each other for one month out of a whole year. Everyone becomes cheerful, and happy, only to go back to their cynical ways the moment the season is over. It’s a holiday about getting more stuff - usually things you don’t need. I don’t see anything worth celebrating.”

“Well, I would suggest that you don’t see anything worth celebrating because you don’t understand what it’s all really about.”

“You mean how it’s about some baby boy born more than two thousand years ago?”

“No,” Nick answered, “it’s about so much more than just a baby.”

“Well whatever Christmas is supposed to be about.” Angela said, “ I know I won’t find it back at that party.”

“And, I would agree with you. “ Nick replied, “Would you mind if I showed you something?” he asked her.

“Depends on what it is.” Angela replied with a questioning look.

“I don’t bite. I promise you’ll enjoy it.” The old man extended his hand to her.

“Sure, why not, I have time to kill.” Angela decided, “I’ll go with you as long as we’re back by 10PM so I can receive my award and then get the heck out of here.”

“Agreed. We’ll be back so fast it will be like we never left.” Nick replied.

Angela reached out and grasped the old man’s hand. The moment that she touched Nick’s hand, she felt an amazing sensation. Her whole body felt like it was being pulled in a hundred different directions. Her surroundings started to go blurry and then disappear for a moment before she found herself standing with Nick in a large open white room. The room was nearly empty except for two doors directly in front of her. The door to her right was old, ornate, and painted red. The door on the left was silver with a mirrored finish.

“What is this?” Angela said in fright as she started to realize that she wasn’t at the party anymore.

Nick looked at her kindly. “It’s alright, I promise that you are alright.”

“Where are we? What did you do?” She asked, still afraid but also awestruck.

“You’ll start to understand in just a moment.”

“You really are Santa Claus, aren’t you?” Angela asked.

“Some call me by that name. Some call me Saint Nicholas; others call me Chris Kringle. I have dozens of names in dozens of languages. I’ve taken a liking to being called Nick over the last few decades. Yet, who I am is not as important as who I come on behalf of. I’m a messenger sent to people at Christmas time who have lost their way and need to understand the true meaning of the season.”

“But why me?” Angela asked. “Why are you doing this for me? So many people in the world, especially back at that party, don’t know or care about what Christmas is supposed to mean. It’s just a fun time for them. So why pick me?”

“Because you do care.” Nick replied. “Your dislike for the season comes from not understanding it; you see it as something silly, and based on how many celebrate it, you’re right. Those other people don’t care; they are content where they are; you are not. Thus, you have an opportunity to learn the truth of it all.

“Now, you can go back the way you came by entering the door to your left. But, If you want to understand something in a way that you never have before, then you should enter the door on your right. It is your choice.”

Angela stood there for a moment, unsure of what to do. She was still a little frightened, but Nick also made her feel safe, and that red door piqued her curiosity. She stood there deliberating for a few minutes before stepping up to the red door and pushing it open. She stood in the doorway and let out a gasp as she found herself staring into a vast space filled with an infinite number of stars and planets swirling

around.

“Go on, it’s all right. It won’t hurt you to go inside” Nick said.

Angela took a deep breath and stepped inside. For a moment she thought that she might begin to fall or float away, but she didn’t. It was like she was standing on solid ground although nothing was beneath her feet. Nick followed behind her and closed the red door, which vanished from sight.

“This is the great universe.” Nick told her.

“Why are we here?” she asked him, “What does this have to do with Christmas?”

“Watch.” he replied.

A being appeared in this vastness of space. The being had the likeness of a man wearing a white robe. He was cloaked in an amazing splendor of glory and power. The brightest light emanated from Him; indeed, He was the light. The being stood in the middle of pure space, manipulating elements to bring forth the creation of a planet. Behind him stood another being enwrapped in equal or greater glory. He was wearing a marvelous crown that glistened with a brightness that could not be found in the uniting of ten thousand suns. He watched the other with love and pride as the first continued the task of creation.

“That is Jehovah, the creator of our world. He is the God of Israel, and a God of great miracles. Directing Jehovah is His Father, Elohim. He is the creator of our spirits and our Heavenly Father.

The vision shifted to a new setting from which the Great Jehovah and His Father were standing in the midst of a congregation nearly infinite in size. The venue in which this group gathered was glorious to behold. It was a large hall inside the Palace of Heaven. The hall was lined with gold columns burning like fire. Elohim moved and sat upon a sapphire-like throne that rested on a crystal platform high above the multitude. The throne burned with an even greater brightness than the pillars. The hosts of heaven stood before their God, anxiously waiting to hear His words.

“Notice the counsel being held. A long time ago a plan was presented to Heavenly Father’s children. This plan offered great opportunities, but also peril, and required enormous sacrifice. It was put forth to all of Heavenly Father’s children to decide if they would be willing to participate.”

“What was the plan?” Angela asked.

“The plan was for all the spirit children of our Heavenly Father to be sent to Earth and be tested to see if they would be moral and righteous creatures relying on God, without having memory of their lives in Heaven. If the test was passed, then it would enable His children to become like unto Him, as gods and goddesses.”

“Humans were sent to earth to become gods?” Angela asked.

Nick nodded.

“It’s a pretty spectacular reward for obedience, isn’t it?”

Angela didn’t answer. She was dumbfounded at the idea.

“This reward also comes at an enormous price; there was a sacrifice that had to be paid.”

“What was the sacrifice?”

“First let me explain something. The laws of the universe are unrelenting, and unbending. They require absolute obedience and cannot be broken. The law of justice requires exactness on the actions of every person sent to Earth. If they make one single mistake while they live, then all rights to godhood are forfeited immediately...”

“Well, wait,” Angela exclaimed, “We all make mistakes, that’s part of life. So how can any of us live up to this potential to become as gods? That means we are all doomed to fail.”

“A payment was set forth to satisfy the law of justice.” Nick answered, “ One individual would stand in place of all mankind and suffer the penalties of sin to make right those who broke the law.”

“Who would do that? Who would choose to suffer for the actions of everyone else?” Angela asked.

“Jehovah would.” Nick answered.

“How does that work? A God chooses to pay the price for mortals? How can He do that?” She asked him.

“Because Jehovah volunteered to do the most remarkable thing. He chose to condescend below all things, and remove Himself from His place of glory and godhood and submit Himself to the same mortal experience as the rest of mankind.”

Angela looked to find themselves removed from the confines of Heaven and back down to Earth. They stood outside a small stable near the bustling town of Bethlehem. Inside the stable, lying in a manger was a helpless baby being watched over by His mother Mary and her husband Joseph. Angela watched as shepherds approached, begging the mother to allow them to pay homage to their Messiah and God.

“See here the great Jehovah now called Jesus being born into the world as an innocent baby boy.” Nick said, “He chose to be born into a feeble infant body and live a mortal life.”

“This is why we celebrate Christmas.” Angela acknowledged, “because He came down to Earth.”

“It’s part of the reason,” said Nick, “but it’s what He did on Earth that inclines us to want to celebrate His birth.”

The vision shifted again for Angela to see a man in his early thirties traveling about the land of Israel performing great miracles and preaching the word of God. The blind could see, the lame could walk, and lepers found their illness gone.

“Here is Jesus the Christ as He starts His ministry among men. He is loved by some and hated by others. Not all wished to accept His teachings. Still, these miracles and teachings were only meant to manifest His divine origins. His purpose on earth was much more magnificent than that.”

Angela watched as day turned to night and she found herself standing in the middle of a mount of olive trees. There, Christ humbly knelt as He prayed to the Father. It seemed as if the weight of the world was upon His shoulders.

“Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Christ said.

As the Son of God prayed, great agony came upon Him. The sins and sorrows of the world were placed upon Him to suffer and pay the penalty. He began to sweat great drops of blood as He continued to bear a burden of fathomless suffering.

“This is where Christ suffered for the sins of mankind. He was able to do so because He had lived a perfect life; the only one capable of it.” Nick said with strong emotion in his voice.

Angela found herself crying as she watched the great Jehovah bear upon Himself the sins of the world. A god had chosen to descend into the moral realm and offer Himself up as payment for her mistakes; hers as much as anyone else.

She watched as Christ arose from His time of suffering and returned to His apostles. There came before Him one of His followers named Judas Iscariot. Judas betrayed his master and had Christ arrested by the Jewish authorities.

“After bearing all of that great suffering, Christ was quickly betrayed by one who had been called to a high and sacred office.” Nick said sadly.

Angela watched teary eyed as the vision changed again. She saw Christ standing before Roman officials and was cast into prison. He was rejected by His people who demanded His execution for doing no wrong. He was whipped and abused by the prison guards before being sent to a hill called Calvary to die. He had His hands, wrists, and feet nailed into the wooden beams of a cross before being risen up to suffer in great pain. At this moment of great distress and suffering, Christ called out, “My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?”

“In this terrible moment, Jehovah found that His father had withdrawn His presence from His Son. This was done so that Christ could experience the misery of the wicked when they are cut off from God.” Nick explained, hardly able to speak the words.

Angela wept heavily.

Christ hung there still longer before finally declaring, “It is finished. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” After which, the spirit of Jehovah left His mortal body and departed to the spirit world.

“After all of that? He just died?” Angela asked, confused and broken hearted.

“No.” said Nick in a voice full of power and excitement, “Look.”

The vision changed again and Angela found herself standing inside a small room where ten of Christ’s apostles were present. Appearing before them was the resurrected Christ now emanating the glory and light Angela had seen before.

“He rose from the grave allowing mankind to one day also be reunited with their bodies and return to the presence of God. There, mankind will be able to stay if they choose to accept Jesus Christ and use His sacrifice to repent. Death and sin have no power over the mighty Jehovah.”

“So He suffered and died; He did all of that for us?” Angela asked.

“Yes.” Nick answered. “Now you see that we celebrate Christmas. We celebrate the birth of the Messiah. Jesus Christ, the Great Jehovah, suffered for our sins, died for us, and then rose again to lead His people forth. We celebrate His great sacrifice that enables us to be redeemed and return to our Heavenly Father and become glorified like unto them both. We celebrate Christ who is the Savior of the world.”

In the midst of this joyous moment, the red door reappeared and Nick led her inside back to the white room.

“I can’t believe it...” Angela exclaimed, almost out of breath.

Nick lightly chuckled before leading Angela through the glossy silver door that led her back to the balcony of the party she had left.

She stopped to look at Nick again.

“So many people take part in those Christmas festivities without the slightest real understanding of what Christ did for them. To that end, Christmas is what we make of it and what we choose to focus on. You can choose to focus on what it really represents now that you know. You can choose to celebrate the Great God who redeemed us all!” Nick exclaimed.

“How can I not?” Angela asked, “I know the truth now. I can’t ever look at

Christmas the same. Knowing that it is the day we celebrate that the birth of our Savior into the world. Christ removed Himself from His glory above to come down to Earth to fulfill His mission to save mankind.... It's remarkable."

Nick smiled. "It is."

"Thank you for showing me." Angela said to the old man.

"Just doing my job."

"And here I thought that Santa was all about elves and toys."

"Well, I have more than one task to keep me busy," he laughed, "but none more important than the job I did tonight."

"Well Santa, do I get a gift before you leave?" Angela teased Nick.

"I already gave you the most valuable gift I am able to give. You know the true meaning of Christmas. You know what you are capable of becoming if you turn to Christ. Go celebrate, and share that gift with everyone you can."

With that, Nick turned and left, disappearing into a dark snowy night.

The End.