

## Behind the Scenes at #AmFest2025 PLUS Fascinating Christmas Traditions with Bill Federer

(December 23, 2025)

### **FRANK:**

Ladies and gentlemen, Merry Christmas. We're just two days prior to the big day and I just got back from America Fest out in Phoenix, Arizona. That, of course, is the amazing event that TPUSA runs every year just prior to Christmas. Some of you may have seen some of the clips online, but the lineup of speakers was incredible. There were 30,000 people there. Of course, Erica Kirk was there, and I'll tell you a little bit about-- Had a couple conversations with Erica.

She's doing well, but she still needs our prayers. Of course, Vice President Vance was there. Ben Shapiro, Michael Knowles, Tucker Carlson, and Tucker Carlson and Ben Shapiro had a little bit of a disagreement, you know of. But that's okay. As conservatives, we can air out our disagreements and hopefully come to the right conclusion. One thing that TPUSA doesn't tend to do is censor people. They wanted all these people to show up because Charlie invited every one of them.

So Erica was not going to disinvite anyone. And so, both Ben Shapiro and Tucker Carlson were there, even though they disagree on quite a bit. The great Allie Beth Stuckey was there. It was a privilege being with Allie. In fact, my wife and I had dinner with Allie and her husband after the event there on Saturday night. They're just great people, a great couple. Bryce Crawford. Do you know who Bryce Crawford is? A young 22 year old YouTuber who does a lot of on the street evangelism.

I was able to do his podcast. He spoke the same night I did as well. We're going to have him on the show early next year. You'll enjoy him. Graham Allen, a Christian influencer was there. The great Greg Laurie, got to see Greg again. He was backstage. He spoke the same night I did. Megyn Kelly was there, Jesse Waters from Fox News, Greg Gutfield, Steve Deace. You may know Steve is with Blaze, along with Glenn Beck. Dr. James Orr, do you guys know James Orr is?



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I'm going to have him on the show at some point. He teaches at Cambridge. He was a mentor to Charlie as well. And he is trying to lead a reform movement in the UK to rescue them from too much immigration. Because if immigration trends continue, the UK will probably have Sharia law at some point. So Dr. James Orr is also a Christian and an apologist. He came to faith through some apologetics. Had a conversation with him at the hotel.

Very nice gentleman. Riley Gaines was there. Lucas Miles, of course, Mikey McCoy, Doug Wilson. You guys know Doug Wilson from Idaho. And he's a post millennialist. So there are all sorts of different Christians who were there. Tulsi Gabbard was there, Don Jr. was there. And Nicki Minaj, she was a surprise guest. Now look, I'm 64 years old. I don't know a lot about Nicki Minaj, apparently a rapper, probably doesn't have the—

At least in her past, the Christian lyrics. But she came out claiming she was a Christian and also expressed her support for the current administration, which is something that takes a little bit courage to do. In fact, a week or two ago, she was talking about, the genocide of Christians, the jihad that's taking place against Christians in Nigeria. So thankfully there are celebrities that will speak out against that. So she did and Erica interviewed her. You can see all this on the TPUSA YouTube channel if you want to see any of this.

I was able to do several interviews. We'll put the links that we have to those interviews. I was on Fox News twice. Once with Fox Nation with Rachel Duffy, and then on Fox News with Kayleigh McEnany, who's a great Christian lady as well. I was on the Daily Wire, that's Ben Shapiro's group. I was interviewed by Mary Margaret and Tim there. I was also on Bryce's show, as I mentioned, and several other interviews. Also, when I was there, I did a main session with a gentleman who started Saturate USA.

Saturate USA is a nonprofit that is trying to recruit churches to evangelize door to door. Not necessarily meaning you have to talk to people but just put door hangers to get people to know the gospel and come to a local church. You may want to check into Saturate USA because Lucas Miles, and myself, and the gentleman that is the CEO of it, did a main session on the main stage about it. And it's a great idea to try and get more people involved in local churches, to get more people to become Christians and to disciple them.

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And that's really important. We want to make disciples, ladies and gentlemen. That's the purpose of the church, by the way. In fact, in that 20 minute session that we had, I brought up an observation that the great Dennis Prager made many years ago. Dennis, not a Christian, Jewish man, conservative man, as you know, a mentor to Charlie as well. Please pray for Dennis. He had an awful accident. He's paralyzed right now. He's still with us, but it's difficult.

Anyway, Dennis, many years ago pointed this out. He asked this hypothetical question of people who are against Christianity. He said this. He said, suppose that you are in the worst part of a major city at midnight when your car breaks down. Your cell phone is dead. You get out of the car, and as you get out of the car to see what's wrong with your car, you see 10 men walking out of an alley and they suddenly start walking toward you.

Would you, or would you not be relieved to know that those men had just come out of a Bible study? Of course you would be relieved to know that. What's Prager's point? Even if you're not a Christian, you should want a very strong Christian influence in your community. And I made the point that if the alleged killer of Charlie Kirk, Tyler Robinson, had been a Christian and been in a Bible study, Charlie Kirk would be alive today.

Yeah, somebody who's following Jesus is not going to pick up a rifle and shoot my friend in the neck. So if for no other reason we ought to-- If you're not a Christian, you ought to want a strong Christian influence in your community is because it tends to civilize people. So check out Saturate USA. I also did an hour long Q & A called Prove Me Wrong. They brought a truck into the Phoenix Convention Center, and they had the truck set up, and the big podium set up, kind of a big stage.

And then people would gather around, and they would just ask questions. Just like it was a college event. There had to be at least a thousand people standing around asking questions. I probably took, I don't know, 15 or so questions, 10 to 15 questions in the hour. And most of them were from Christians, but there was one from a Calvinist in the very beginning. He was predestined to ask me a question about it. And I was asking him, are you suggesting that God pulled the trigger?

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And he tried to dance around that a little bit. Hopefully they'll put that interaction up on YouTube at some point. I don't have the file for that. And then there were other questions related to Catholicism, and questions related to veneration of saints, questions that came from all different angles. So hopefully that'll be posted at some point. I don't think it's up right now. Also, I wasn't the only one that did Prove Me Wrong. Erica did a Prove Me Wrong session as well, as well as Allie Beth Stuckey and Michael Knowles.

And that's going to continue by the way, the Prove Me Wrong tour to college campuses is going to continue from TPUSA. I'll probably be involved in some of that, although we have already have nearly 15 schools set up for this coming spring semester. And by the way, that's why I want to remind you we do have a \$300,000 matching gift as we come toward the end of the year. That \$300,000 matching gift will help us pay for the security that we need moving into 2026.

As we said, our costs have tripled from \$5,000 a campus to about \$15,000 a campus, largely due to security. So if you give a dollar, it's going to be doubled to \$2. If you give 100, it's going to be 200. If you give 10,000 it's going to be 20,000 all the way up to 300. So some donors have gotten together and put together that matching gift. So as you make your year-end donations, please consider [Crossexamined.org](http://Crossexamined.org). We're going full steam ahead. Jesus wants us to do this.

Of course, Charlie would want us to do it as well. So in honor of him, we're going to continue this tour and try and bring as many people into the kingdom as possible and to make disciples of all nations. We're going to try and make heaven crowded with your help. Because you know we don't charge students everything. Everything's funded by the donor, by you. So you're giving through us to reach these kids on these very hostile campuses. And by the way, 100% of your donations go to ministry, 0% to buildings.

We don't have any buildings. You're not paying for the electric bill. You're not paying for rent. You're not paying for some desk somewhere. You're paying for us to go out and do ministry. So thank you for that. I also want to mention that TPUSA is going to continue the college tour as I mentioned. They also announced a Make Heaven Crowded tour. They're going to be going to cities around the country in 2026. They're going to bring speakers like me and others, and they're going to bring bands, worship bands.

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So it's going to be quite an event. You need to look out for that as well. You also may want to sign up to be part of a TPUSA chapter. They're all over the place now. Let's keep this momentum going, that the tragic death of Charlie has sprung upon us. There's always a ripple effect. In Charlie's situation, it's been a tsunami, and we have to keep moving forward and seize this moment now while hearts are tender. I also had a keynote there at TPUSA.

It was Saturday night, Faith Night, along with Allie Beth Stuckey, and Greg Laurie, and Lucas Miles, and Bryce Crawford, and Pastor John Amanchukwu. And there was one other presentation that night Greg Laurie did, I mentioned. And my keynote we'll put in the show notes as well. But I told something I haven't really told anybody yet. It's something related to what happened that day when Charlie was murdered.

I was relating to people the fact that the folks that saw the resurrection witnessed an impact event. And I asked them if they remember the day that Charlie was murdered. And of course, everybody does. They remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard that Charlie had been murdered. It's what we call an impact event. It's a psychological event that is emblazoned on your heart, mind, and soul.

And in some cases, events like this, not only can you remember forever, but it can change your perspective. And I'll never forget that once we did get him to the emergency room, they did get a pulse, as we had mentioned. And the doctor later told us, despite the fact that Charlie was killed instantly, that they did get a pulse because he was healthy, and young, and you can do that with a healthy, young body. But he was killed instantly and didn't feel a thing.

After they got him into the emergency room and then into the OR, had to be, I don't know, 20-30 minutes later. The doctor came out and he came into the hallway where I was, and Mikey was standing right next to me. And with the subtlety of a brick, all he said was, he's dead. He didn't say, I'm sorry. He didn't say, we tried everything. He just came out and said, he's dead. I can't—

Can't get that voice out of my mind. But I said in the keynote, yeah, he's dead. But if Christianity is true, and it is, people don't die. They just change location. Charlie went from this life to the next life, and we can join him there at some point as well. I also pointed out, as you'll see, that

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this isn't just what the Bible talks about, the New Testament talks about, but there's actually near death experiences and death visions that confirm that we're not just a body, we're also a soul.

That there's such a thing as remote viewing, that souls do leave bodies when somebody has clinically died. And Charlie may have even seen us tending to him. He may have seen Erica collapse in the parking lot when she got the call from Mikey. Because you're not just a body, you're also a soul. I also in the keynote, pointed out that Jesus and the other New Testament writers-- Jesus was not a writer, but you get the idea.

Jesus and the New Testament writers call Satan a murderer, liar, slanderer, and accuser. And I want to point out over the past three and a half months after the murder, what we've seen are lies, slander, and accusations without evidence. Yeah, I'm talking to you, Candace Owens, and others. Stop lying, stop slandering, stop accusing. Oh, it's not lies.

We're just asking questions. Yeah, you're asking the complex question, like, when did you stop beating your wife? You're implying something by the question. You're accusing people without evidence. You're slandering people. That's not biblical. It's not moral. You can ask questions all you want, but don't intimate that people are guilty without evidence. I don't know how many different ways I can say this, but I just need to reiterate it.

If you don't see this as spiritual warfare, I don't know what else I can do to convince you. It's exactly what the Bible says, that Satan is a murderer, liar, slanderer, and accuser. And we have a grieving widow like Erica Kirk, being implicated somehow through lies, slander, and accusations in the murder of her own husband, and her organization as well. It's crazy.

The people of TPUSA are some of the finest people I've ever met. They're certainly the most professional. You would not believe how amazing that event at America Fest was in terms of organization, in terms of punctuality, in terms of just beauty, how beautiful the set was, how professional everyone was backstage. And they did all this just like they did that amazing memorial, while in mourning.

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These people are devoted. That's why TPUSA is going to continue, because Charlie handpicked a lot of these people, and he said that if anything ever happens to me, Erica can take over. A lot of people think Erica, oh, she's just a housewife. No, just a housewife. That's the hardest job in the world. But she was also a successful business owner long before she met Charlie. And she has wisdom, and grace, and class, just like Charlie did.

So, personally, I'm behind her a thousand percent, and I think you should be too, and reject all the slander, and the accusations going on. Enough said about that. I've spoken about it in other videos. And look, I pray for Candace Owens. I think she has a great talent for many things. But what she's doing now, even after Erica told her to stop, there's a lie right there.

If Erica told me to stop, I'd stop. She hasn't. Erica flew all the way to Nashville to meet her. A grieving widow has to go. She can't-- Oh, Candace can't come to see Erica. A grieving widow has to fly all the way across the country to see Candace to extend an olive branch. And seems like she's rejected that. Hopefully I'm wrong, but that's what it seems like. Friends, I don't mean to be all negative here.

It is Christmas, but I did want to give you an update from America Fest. It's full speed ahead in 2026, and it's full speed ahead with their ministry, and it's full speed ahead with ours. And we're going to do whatever we can to make heaven crowded, whatever we can to encourage, and engage people in some of the hostile real estate in the country, and that is the college campus. But right now, what we're going to do is get real Christmassy. One of our favorite podcasts of all time—

And when I say our, I mean you the listener. You guys have said the podcast we're about to play right now is one of the best of all times. And it's with the great Bill Federer. And what we're going to do is answer some questions here. How did we go from the birth of Jesus to Santa, to stockings, to reindeer, to the North Pole, to Christmas trees and Kris Kringle? Does any of that come from Christianity or real world historical events?

And actually, the surprising answer is, yes! Well, much of it anyway. The great Bill Federer is going to show us where these traditions came from and how they relate to Christianity. This show is very fascinating. It's the story of how so many Christmas traditions originated and have

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been passed down to us this day. This is an evergreen show. We recorded it a few years ago, but people loved it so much, we like to play it at Christmas time. Pull up the kids to listen to this. You're going to be fascinated by where all these traditions came from, and what they mean. So here we go, the great Bill Federer.

Ladies and gentlemen, Merry Christmas. This is going to be a fun show. We've done a program like this before. It was many years ago, and we got so many great comments on it, we're doing it again. And I'm going to introduce our guest in a minute. But what we're going to talk about is when was Jesus born?

What does the Bible say? What is the real meaning of Christmas? And where do Christmas holiday traditions come from? How about St. Nicholas, Santa Claus, gift giving, presents, stockings, Christmas, you know, Xmas, you hear that? Nativity scenes, the North Pole, reindeer, elves.

Where does it all come from? Is it all pagan? Is there any truth to these, any Christian truth to any of these traditions? Well, there's nobody in the world better to talk about, more qualified to talk about than my guest today, Bill Federer. Bill has been on the program many times, although not recently, and he's written over 30 books.

In fact, one of the books he's written is called 'There Really is a Santa Claus.' And he is the most well informed historian I know on so many issues. And so, we're just going to jump right in, the great Bill Federer. Bill, it's wonderful having you on the program. Let's start with the first question is, was Jesus really born on December 25th? What do we know about that?

**BILL:**

So the early church was concerned about the date of Passover. And so that's when they would go to the rabbis once Passover this year. But when Greeks, matter of fact, the Hebrews did not celebrate birthdays, which is fairly common in Asia.

But when the Greeks started converting to Christianity, they did celebrate birthdays. And around the second century is when the interest is when was Jesus born. And we have a detective story, and it goes to the book of Luke where it says in the time of King Herod of Judea,

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there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. Now what is that? King David divided the Levites into 24 family groups and Abijah is number eight. And also, we want to make note that the group number one is Jehoiarib.

And that'll come in in a moment. So we have these 24 groups, but we don't know when and how they were serving. And so the Dead Sea Scrolls are discovered. And in 1962 in Caesarea, the Hebrew University discovers the sacerdotal system. It's the document with the 24 families. And lo and behold, each family served two weeks a year, six months apart. And the eighth and the 32nd week was the one that Abijah was serving. But we still don't know when it actually started until we go to when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

And the records are it was the first week of August of 70 AD. First week of August is the 9th of Av in the Jewish calendar. And the Jerusalem Talmud said that the 9th of Av, that it was Jehoiarib that was on duty. And it says the Levi family that was on duty when the Temple was destroyed was Jehoiarib of the first course. And so if Jehoiarib is on duty the first week of August and we know that Abijah was the eighth family group, then it would be the end of September, right?

You got four months, four weeks in August and four weeks in September. So the last week of September is in the month of Tishrei in the Hebrew calendar. It's a very important week. The Day of Atonement at the first of the week and the Feast of Tabernacles at the end of the week. And this would have been the week that Zachariah is ministering in the Temple. It says the angel appears to him, tells him that his wife's gonna conceive, he goes back home and Elizabeth conceives.

So the last week of September, is the date that the Byzantine Rite Church celebrates the conception of John the Baptist. And then many, the Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, all celebrate June 24 as the birthday of John the Baptist. So John the Baptist is conceived the last week of September. Now why is this important to know? Because the book of Luke says that the angel appeared to Mary and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

And the angel says, your cousin Elizabeth is in her sixth month. So if Elizabeth conceives the last week of September, six months after that is the last week of March. And so, March 25th has

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been celebrated as the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. It's called the Annunciation, when the angel announced to Mary. And so, nine months after March 25th is December 25th. And so, St. John Chrysostom, who was an early church father, counts off the months of Elizabeth's pregnancy, and then dates Mary's conception to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, then counts off another nine months to arrive at the birth date of Christ.

And sort of interesting, another book in the fourth century on solstices and equinoxes, says that our Lord was conceived in the month of March, March 25, which is the day of the Passion of the Lord, and of his conception. For on the day he was conceived is the day he suffered. And so, Andrew McCowan wrote in 'How December 25th Became Christmas', Biblical Archaeological Review. He says it was a common belief that the Messiah fulfilled his mission on the anniversary of its inception.

So lo and behold, a lot of these early church fathers, even St. Augustine wrote in 417 A.D. on the Trinity. For Jesus is believed to have been conceived on 25th March, upon which day he also suffered. So Augustine goes on to the womb of the virgin in which he was conceived, where no one of mortals was begotten, corresponds to the new grave in which he was buried, wherein was never man laid neither before him or since. So Jesus goes into the womb March 25, and Jesus goes into the tomb on March 25.

That's the traditional way of calculating it. People say, well, wasn't it the Roman Saturnalia? Saturnalia was on December 22nd. And it was the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. There was no Christian writer prior to the 12th century that suggested December 25th was picked to replace the Sol Invictus, the worship of the sun. Matter of fact, many church fathers, one was Saint Hippolytus of Rome. He wrote in 204 A.D. this.

He says, for the first advent of our Lord in the flesh when he was born in Bethlehem, was the December 25, a Wednesday, while Augustus was in his 42nd year. So in the year 204, you have a church father saying it's December 25. It was in 274 that Roman Emperor Aurelian instituted the cult of Sol Invictus. And so it was, maybe it's the other way around. Maybe that the Roman emperors picked December 25th to try to stamp out the Christian date.

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But one of the other things people say is what about sheep in the field? It was wintertime. Well, Bethlehem's six miles from Jerusalem. And they needed sheep every day to sacrifice for the daily, and morning, and evening sacrifices. And lambs are often born in the winter.

I went online just to double check. And in Maryland, Westminster, Maryland in America, there's the Carroll County Farm, and they have an article, 'Why Lambs are Born in the Winter.' I have another article. It's called 'The Warhorse Valley Country Farm Park in England, UK', and it says lambs are born 145 days, about 4.5 months after the ewe falls pregnant.

Lambing can start as early as December and go as late as June. And the temperature of Jerusalem is very moderate. A low of 42 in December, and the high of close to 60. So whatever the date was, we don't want to get dogmatic because there's enough things for Christians to argue about. But there is a legitimate evidence and timeline that it very well could be December 25th. But—

**FRANK:**

Well, you can see, I just love the way you piece that all together. It's a great detective approach you need to take to figure this out, Bill. The Bible doesn't explicitly say it. Yet, when you talk about all this other information that you piece together, you do make a great case that it really was December 25th or thereabouts, even though the Bible doesn't explicitly say it.

Now when we come back from the break with the great Bill Federer, we're going to talk about St. Nicholas, Santa Claus, gift giving, stockings, Xmas, nativity scenes, the North Pole, reindeer, elves, the whole nine yards, ladies and gentlemen.

You're not going to want to miss it. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, on the American Family Radio Network. We're back in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

Welcome back to I Don't have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist this Christmas season. You're probably listening on the American Family Radio Network. For those of you that are, this is also a podcast. It's called I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist. So you can also listen to our

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midweek podcast, which is not on the American Family Radio Network. Just wherever you find podcasts, go to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist.

And you will see all of the podcasts that we do, whether they're broadcast on the radio or not. My guest today is the great Bill Federer, who is just a wonderful historian and can tell a story in order to inform you about something regarding history. And we just in the previous segment talked about why December 25 became Christ's birthday. Even if we don't have the date precisely down, there's pretty good evidence it was about that time. Now we want to transition and talk about St. Nicholas.

Was there really a St. Nicholas? And then maybe we can get into talking about how did St. Nicholas become Santa Claus? So Bill, talk about this St. Nicholas character. Where did he come from? Was he a real person? And I know you unpack that in your book, 'There Really is a Santa Claus', but kind of give us a summary of that, would you?

**BILL:**

Right. So the church was born into a one world anti-Christian government, the Roman Empire. I mean, if you and I were going to start a group, it'd be like, give them a couple years of reprieve. No, immediately they're persecuted. Eleven of the 12 apostles are martyred. And there's three centuries of persecution. Christians are thrown to the lions. I went to church in Rome, Italy and toured the catacombs.

And three centuries they'd meet in these caves they dug out of the earth. And every time you met, you're risking your life. And so it was during this time that Nicholas was born. And he is in Asia Minor. Today, that's Turkey, and the emperor is Diocletian. And Diocletian lost some battles with Persia.

And he asked his generals why. And they said, well, it's your fault. You've neglected having the Roman army worship the Roman gods. So Diocletian says, okay, everybody in the army worship Roman gods. Well, there's a problem. There's Christians in the military because the previous emperor, Galerius had been, Galenius had been lax, been a little tolerant. And the Christians couldn't return to worshiping the Roman gods, so they were purged. We're sort of familiar with

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purging the military. Once the Christians are out of the military, Diocletian decides to use the military to force the entire Roman Empire to worship the Roman gods.

And he sends them province by province, arresting pastors, closing churches, burning the scriptures, cutting out their tongues, boiling them alive. And this is the time Nicholas lived. So a movement swept through Christianity called pietism. Now, for those not familiar, St. Nicholas is the most popular Greek Orthodox saint.

He is to the Greek Orthodox what St. Peter is to Roman Catholics. He's sort of the founding father of the Greek Orthodox Church. There are more Greek Orthodox churches named after Nicholas than anybody else. And the story is that this pietism movement swept through Christianity.

And it was, if you really became a Christian, you would give away all your money and live in a cave the rest of your life as a hermit, enjoying your personal relationship with Jesus. Or you'll join a monastery and even take vows of silence, so you'll just enjoy your own personal relationship with Jesus.

And so, Nicholas is in this. He gets saved. He decides to give away all his money, but he doesn't want to do it and get the credit for it. So he decides to go into town at nighttime and throw money in the window of poor people, and would throw it in.

Maybe it landed in a shoe or a stocking that's drying by the fireplace. And one story that became popular was a merchant in the town had gone bankrupt. The town is Patara Asia Minor. And the merchant's bankrupt. The creditors were going to come and not only take his house and lands, but they would take his children. Sort of sex trafficking, I mean.

And the father had three daughters. He knew if they were taken, it would be a terrible life. And so, he had an idea that he would hurry up and marry them off. But he did not have money for a dowry, which was needed in that area of the world for a legally recognized wedding.

Nicholas hears the problem late one night, throws money in the window, provides the dowry. The oldest daughter gets married. Big buzz, talk of the town. Throws money in for the second

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daughter. She gets married. When he throws it in for the third, by this time, the dad is expecting it, runs outside, catches Nicholas, and Nicholas makes the father promise not to tell where the money came from because he wants the credit to go to God and not to him.

That is the origin of the tradition of secret gift giving. On the anniversary of Nicholas's death, which was December 6, 343 A.D. The midnight visits, the stocking by the fireplace, and so forth. And so, the three bags of money that Nicholas threw in the window, he is often depicted in church artwork as holding three bags of gold or three gold balls. And so Nicholas became the patron saint of pawn brokers, seriously.

**FRANK:**

Pawn brokers, really?

**BILL:**

Pawn brokers will have three gold balls hanging outside to represent the three bags of gold that Nicholas threw in the window. And they say, well, we're helping families out in their time of financial need. It's like, it's a little bit of a stretch, but whatever.

Anyway, and so Nicholas has given away his money. He decides to join a monastery in Zion, in Jerusalem, and take his vows of silence. But right before, somehow, the Lord tells him not to hide his light under a bushel. So he goes back to Asia Minor. Today, that's Turkey. And he lands at the city called Myra. Today, that's Demre, Turkey. It's a lot of ruins there. And unbeknownst to him, the bishop had died. And the church leaders could not decide who the next bishop was going to be. And one had a dream.

The first person to church the next day would be named Nicholas, and he was to be their bishop. Well, Nicholas, sure enough, is the first one in the door. They asked his name, and they say, you're supposed to be the bishop. Well, he was not too thrilled because the Roman Emperor Diocletian was arresting bishops and killing them.

So you be the bishop. No, no, you first. No, no, seriously, you be the bishop. But he finally agrees. He's arrested, he's put in jail. And while he's in jail, Diocletian is struck with an intestinal disease so painful, he abdicates the throne on May 1, 305 A.D.

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You have to appreciate this. Emperors had been declaring themselves a god. They would have the imperial cult, and they would sprinkle gold dust in their hair, and demand their image be worshiped. And so, this was sort of like a God resigning, when Diocletian stepped down. The next emperor was Galerius. He continues the persecution. He's struck with an intestinal disease. He dies in 311 A.D. Now there's no emperor. Four generals decide to fight it out. Two are defeated. Comes down to Constantine and Maxentius.

Constantine is a general in York, England. In Britain had been a Roman colony since Julius Caesar, 55 B.C. And so, Constantine starts marching with his army toward Rome. And it's the battle of the Milvian Bridge against Maxentius. And the day before the battle, Constantine reportedly sees the sign of Christ in the sky. And this was the first two Greek letters of the name Christ. And we abbreviate states oftentimes with two letters.

Well, the Greeks abbreviated names with two letters. And Hebrew is Messiah. But in Greek, Christ is a Greek word. And so the letter that makes the 'kuh' sound is written as an X, and it is called the chi. And the letter that makes the 'er' sound for Christ is written as an R, and it's called rho. So it's called a chi rho. It's written as an X and a P. And so, supposedly Constantine heard the words "in hoc signo vinces." In this sign, you'll be invincible.

So he puts this XP, this Chi Rho on all of his shields and symbols. He wins. And little rabbit trail, over the centuries, the chi rho got shortened to the chi, just the x. It was called the Christ's cross, or as we say today, crisscross. And that's where you get Xmas. So X is not crossing out Christ. It is the Greek letter chi that stood for Christ. And it became an oath where you would swear to tell the truth. Cross my heart. What's the cross?

Well, that's an X. That's you're swearing before Christ. And then it became a form of a written oath. So you would sign your name at the Christ cross to show you're going to keep your pledge in this document. And so, today that's signed at the X. And then it's on the bottom of the Valentines, the X's and the O's. You're swearing before Christ, you're going to keep your pledge to this person. And the O is a kiss to show sincerity. Anyway, back to the story. Constantine wins the battle. And in 313 A.D., he issues the Edict of Milan, stopping the persecution of Christians.

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Nicholas is let out of jail. Now that he's out of jail, Nicholas preaches against paganism. Nearby is the temple to Diana. It's one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, twice as big as the Parthenon, 127 huge pillars and temple prostitutes. It was the Las Vegas of the Mediterranean. The apostle Paul preached against Diana worship in Acts, chapter 19. Nicholas preaches against this so much that the people tear the temple to Diana down. So he's--

**FRANK:**

Bill, is this in Ephesus?

**BILL:**

Right. Well, he was in Myra and people tore the local temple to Diana down. And then later, John Chrysostom, sort of a contemporary, preaches. And that's when they tear the big one down. And so then, Nicholas preaches against exposure of unwanted infants. It was their version of abortion. The Roman practice was the mother would bear the child and lay it at the father's feet. If he picked it up and liked it, they'd keep it.

But if the father did not pick it up, thought it looked unhealthy, they didn't have enough money, the mother would have to put the baby in a basket, and set it out in the woods, and expose it to the elements, and let it die. And as the Christians became more prevalent, the Roman women would put their baby in a basket and lay it on a Christian's doorstep and knock the door, knock on the door and run away.

And so, you had the Christians were rescuing these babies, and they were sort of like the pro-life movement today. And Nicholas preached against exposure of unwanted infants. He preached against the Olympics. Why? Because they ran them naked. The word gym is the Greek word for naked. And the Greeks had all these naked statues. And then there's the Arian heresy. So, first three centuries of Christianity, you didn't really live long enough to argue over doctrine. But now that Constantine stopped the persecution, a bishop named Arius started the first heresy.

He said that Jesus was a little less than God, a created being. And it's splitting not just the church, it's splitting the Roman Empire since Constantine had made the Christian Church the de facto religion. And so, Constantine orders and pays for all the bishops to meet and settle it. It's

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called the Council of Nicaea. They write the Nicene Creed and they excommunicate Arius. And in the artwork, he's like, thrown in a pit. And you know when they draw the painting. And this tradition is that Nicholas was there, because Nicaea is close to Myra, and that Nicholas slapped Arius across the face for starting the Arian heresy.

So, Jolly Old St. Nick had a little temper. You better watch out. He's coming to town. Then the Greeks have lots of stories. Some are more believable than others. One is there was a famine. He goes down to the docks, talks the sailors into unloading grain to feed his people, promising God would bless them. On their return trip, the sailors say, what grain was left had multiplied, sort of like Elijah and the little widow with their meal barrel. And then another story is there was a storm. The sailor's fishermen could not get back to the dock. They get Nicholas. He prays.

The sea becomes calm. So he's the patron saint of sailors in addition to pawnbrokers. And there was a corrupt governor who was going to execute some soldiers to cover up his corruption. We're familiar with corrupt politicians and a body count list of people suspiciously being suicided. And Nicholas hears about this execution, goes down to the square, breaks through the crowd, grabs the sword out of the executioner's hand, throws it down, and in front of everybody, by the Holy Spirit, tells what this corrupt governor was doing. And anyway, so he dies on December 6, 343 A.D.

**FRANK:**

Well, we're going to talk more about St. Nick and how he turned into Santa Claus with the great Bill Federer. Isn't it great listening to Bill go through all this? You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek. We'll give you Bill's website right after the break. You want to sign up for what he puts out every day. It's amazing. Back in two minutes.

How did St. Nicholas become Santa Claus? Where did this come from? Well, we're talking to Bill Federer and his website you need to go to. It's called AmericanMinute.com. That's AmericanMinute.com. And if you sign up for his email, as I do, you will get this kind of teaching in an email. And it's just great stuff. It has a lot of graphics in it as well, so it's easy to follow. Bill is a wonderful historian and storyteller, as you can see.

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And if you want to know about history in-- And you just get a little dose of this every day, or every week, whenever he sends his email, you'll find it very interesting and very helpful. And right now, we're talking about the origins of Christmas, since this is the Christmas season. And in the last segment, we talked about the real St Nicholas, who, as you say, Bill, died in—

Did you say 374?

**BILL:**

343.

**FRANK:**

343. He died in 343 A.D. So, that's when the real St. Nicholas died. How did this guy become Santa Claus? And what does Santa Claus even mean?

**BILL:**

Well, Santa Claus is the Dutch pronunciation of Saint Nicholas. So Saint Nicholas, Sant Nicholas, Santa Claus. So basically, we're using the Dutch pronunciation of St. Nicholas. So, he dies, December 6th. And the Greeks give presents on the anniversary of his death because he's generous. The Emperor Justinian in the sixth century, he's the one who has the Hagia Sophia, that huge church in Constantinople.

He builds a church in Myra, and it's dedicated to Nicholas. And then you have Vladimir the Great of Russia. In 988 A.D. he decides to get rid of his pagan Russian gods and convert to monotheism. And he sends some ambassadors to Constantinople, and they walk in the Hagia Sophia and they say, we thought we were walking into heaven. It's 165ft high, 102 foot across dome, 4 acres of gold mosaics. And they said, we speak Greek, the language of the New Testament.

Anyway, so Nicholas becomes the patron saint of Russia because of Vladimir the great in 988 A.D., and so there's more Russian churches and czars named Nicholas. And then the Muslims invade. And so we have Muhammad and his men raided caravans, and then they would raid on the Mediterranean. And in 846 A.D., 11,000 Muslims invaded Rome, Italy, and they trashed the

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Basilica of St. Peter's, and they trashed the bones of St. Peter himself. Then they go outside of Rome to St. Paul's outside the wall, and they trash the bones of St. Paul.

And so now, we got the year 1087, and they're coming through Asia Minor, turning it into Turkey. And all seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation are wiped out. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. And as they're coming through, the Christians move the grave of their famous St Nicholas over to Italy, a little town called Bari, B A R I. And the Pope Urban II dedicates the cathedral there. It's still there to this day.

I just talked to Richard Harris at Charis Bible School, and he said he had traveled over there, and he went in that little church. And so Pope Urban II dedicates this church. And you know him because he's the one that goes to the Council of Claremont, 1095 A.D. begs these European kings to send help to the Greeks. They do. It is called the First Crusade.

So in a backward sense, Western civilization would not have had St. Nicholas traditions had it not been for Islam invading. And so, you have, the gift giving in Italy becomes popular associated with St. Nicholas, so much so that St. Francis of Assisi, sort of in protest in the year 1223, creates the Nativity scene, the creche scene, saying the gift giving is fine, but we need to get back to the reason for the season. Jesus, the son of God, was born in a manger.

And then you have the Reformation, 1517, Martin Luther. And he, by this time, there is a saint's day for every day of the year. And churches are filled full of relics, and sepulchers, and statues, and side altars. And he decides this is a distraction from Christ.

And so, he ends all the saint's days in Protestant countries. But the Germans like the gift giving. And so, Martin Luther moves all the gift giving to December 25th and says, all gifts come from the Christ child. And the German pronunciation of Christ child is Chris Kendall. Like kindergarten, KinderCare. Kind means child, Chris means Christ. And over the years, Chris Kindle got pronounced Kris Kringle. So Kris Kringle is really Kris Kendall, which means the Christ child.

And my daughter worked in Germany for several years, and the area she was at, they would say, oh, the Chris Kindle is coming on December 25th. And then we have another little side trail. We're all familiar with St. Patrick from Britain evangelizing Ireland, using the three leaf clover to

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teach the Trinity. Well, from Britain in the 700s, you have St. Boniface, and he goes through the woods to Germany, and he brings the gospel to these pagan German tribes who worship Thor. And that's where you get the word Thor's Day or Thursday.

And the Quakers wouldn't say Thursday because Thor was a pagan God. So they called it Fifth Day. But anyway, the pagans worship Thor who lived in an oak tree. And St. Boniface pulls out an ax, and he chops down the Thor's tree. Somebody says, stop him. Somebody else says, well, if Thor's really a god, he can protect his own tree. And anyway, then St. Boniface points to a little evergreen tree and says, let this be the tree of the Christ Child. Let it shelter no deeds of blood. See how it points toward heaven and its leaves are evergreen.

And the triangular shape of the tree, he used to teach the Trinity similar to Patrick using a three leaf clover to teach the Trinity. And so, in Fritzlar, Germany, there is a St. Boniface church. And there's St. Boniface standing on the stump of an oak tree with a big ax and holding a church in his other hand because he brought the Christian faith to the Germans.

So the evergreen tree is symbolic of Germans becoming Christians. And the lights on the tree, that could have come from Hanukkah because by this time there's like 17 centuries of the Hebrews, the Israelites putting menorahs in their windows to celebrate the driving out the Assyrians there.

And so the story is that Martin Luther put the candles in the evergreen tree in his home and told his children this is like the sky above Bethlehem on the night of Christ's birth. And then-- So we have, St. Francis, we have Martin Luther, and then we have England. And Henry VIII is Catholic and then he wants to have another wife. And the Pope won't recognize his divorce, and so he decides to make himself his own Pope, goes on to have six wives. He brings the Reformation there not because of a spiritual experience like Martin Luther.

He just wanted another wife. And rather than refocusing back on the Christ child, Henry VIII brings back an old Roman holiday, Saturnalia. You have to remember Britain used to be a Roman colony from 55 B.C., and the Romans had the God of Saturn, who was their God of feasting, and plenty, and merriment, and the party. If you ever saw the Christmas Carol with Charles Dickens, there's the spirit of Christmas present. And he's this big guy with robes, a

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wreath in his hair, goblet of wine, the happy party guy. And you're looking at him asking yourself, who is this guy?

He sort of looks like Santa Claus, but he also sort of looked like some Roman God. Well, that was Saturn. But they Christianized him and called him Father Christmas. They couldn't call him St. Nicholas because saints were outlawed because of the Reformation. And Christmas in England during Henry VIII became a party time with drinking, and carousing, and gaming, and lewd parties, and you know, drunken and so the Puritans—

So people forget Mardi Gras used to be a religious day. It was the day before Lent when you would fast 40 days before Easter and celebrate the resurrection. Now it's a lewd party in New Orleans. That's sort of what happened with Christmas in England under Henry VIII.

And so, when the Puritans began to take over, they outlawed Christmas. Cotton Mather, a Puritan leader, said December 25, 1712, can you and your conscience think that our Holy Savior is honored by mad mirth, long eating, hard drinking, lewd gaming, rude reveling, a Mass fit for none other than a Saturn, or a Bacchus, or a knight of Muhammad and Ramadan?

You cannot possibly think so, that at the birth of our Savior for which we are high praises, we take time to please the hellish legions, to do actions that have much more of hell than of heaven in them.

And so the Puritans were so strict, they tore down Shakespeare's Globe Theater. They thought he was taking God's name in vain in his plays. And it was like, you know, dens of iniquity in these theaters. And so, the Pilgrims branched off of the Puritans, and they settled Massachusetts. And the captain of the Mayflower writes in his ship's log, December 25, 1620, at Anchor, Plymouth Harbor, Christmas Day. But not observed by these colonists, they being opposed to All Saints Days, etc.

A large party went ashore to fell timber, began building their first building. And William Bradford, the governor of the Pilgrims, writes in his Plymouth plantation that a second boatload of Pilgrims came over in 1621. One more incident rather amusing. On Christmas Day, the governor called the people out to work as usual. But most of the new company excused

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themselves and said it went against their consciences to work on that day. So the governor told them if they made it a matter of conscience, he would spare them till they became better informed.

So he went with the rest to work. And on returning at work at noon, he found them playing in the street with pitching the bar and stool ball and such like sports. So the governor went, took away their games, and told them it went against his conscience that they should play while others work. If they made keeping the day a matter of devotion, let them remain in their houses, but there shall be no gaming and reveling in the streets. And so in 1659, the Puritans in New England had a five shilling fine for anybody caught celebrating Christmas.

Whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas, either by forbearing labor, feasting, or any other way, shall pay for each offense a five shilling fine. So where the Pilgrims, Puritans, and most Presbyterians did not celebrate Christmas, others did. The German, French, but especially the Dutch.

And so let's take apart the Dutch. So there's a Catholic saying, St. Peter's at the gates of heaven, while the Dutch do a take on the book of Revelation, where Jesus will return to the end of the world to judge the living and the dead riding a white horse, and the saints will come back with him riding white horses.

And St. Nicholas is a saint, so he will be one of those riding a white horse. But he's so special to the Dutch, he gets to come back once a year for a little mini judgment, a little checkup on the kids to see who's on the right track, see who's naughty, see who's nice. And so to this day, in Holland, they have St Nicholas, St Nicholas Sinterklaas, coming once a year dressed as a bishop, riding a white horse to do his judgment checkup with the kids.

And there's pictures of him holding the book, and the little kids are looking pretty serious. But over the years, the Lamb's Book of Life and the Book of Works turns into the Book of the Naughty and the Nice, and the angels turn into elves. And in Norway, they didn't have horses, so he's riding a reindeer. And saints come from where? Heaven. The celestial city, the New Jerusalem. Well, that turned into the North Pole Poles. So you can sort of see where things sort

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of diverge from their scriptural beginning. And so, one interesting thing that the Dutch add on is Santa's helper.

His name is Varte Pete. He's a Moor. He's a Muslim. And they tell the kids if you're good, St. Nicholas will give you a present. If you're naughty, his little helper, Varte Pete will put you in a gunny sack, take you back to Spain, and sell you into most slavery. [Unintelligible] start crying when you told them he's coming.

**FRANK:**

We've got a lot more with Bill Federer. This is fascinating stuff, the origins of Christmas traditions. It's no wonder Jesus said you nullify the word of God on account of your traditions. Much more. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek, back in two. What are the origins of Christmas traditions? The great Bill Federer has been taking us through the entire story.

We're up to about the 1700s and we're going to take it to modern day here in just a minute. But before we do, I want to thank all of you who have supported CrossExamined this year and over the years. As you know, we're about 93% donor funded. Everything you see that we do, 93% you are actually behind.

So thank you for partnering with us. And any money you give here at the end of the year, as you do throughout the year, is going 100% to ministry, 0% to buildings. We have no buildings. We all work out of our homes, we're very frugal and we get a lot out of the money that you provide to us. So thank you so much as you come up to the end of the year, considering CrossExamined.org.

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Now back to Bill Federer. His book 'There Really is a Santa Claus.' His website, [americanminute.com](http://americanminute.com). He's a great guest. I just give him one question, and he takes off and tells

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the story. All right, Bill, what happened from about 1700 to today? What are those Christmas traditions? Take it away, sir.

**BILL:**

Well, what we have in America is basically borrowed from the Dutch. And The Dutch pronounce St. Nicholas, Sant Nicholas. And I was sharing where they tell the kids, if you're good, Santa Claus will give you a present. If you're naughty, his little helper, Varte Pete put you in a gunny sack, take you back to Spain, and sell you into Muslim slavery.

People forget the Muslims controlled Spain for seven centuries and enslaved millions of Europeans. There were whole Catholic orders in Europe through the Middle Ages called the Trinitarians, and they would ransom back your friend from slavery. And so, I was doing a call in and somebody said, yeah, I was raised in Holland. And in our neighborhood, the night before St Nicholas visited, all the little boys would go to sleep with pocketknives in their pockets. I said, why is that?

He goes, that's to cut ourselves out of the gunny sack in case Varte Pete took us. So, I'd love to have tormented my little brothers with that one. [Laughter] But the largest cathedral in Amsterdam is the Basilica Van de Halega Nicholas, the Basilica of Holy Nicholas.

Saint Nicholas. So, in 1624, the Dutch settle New Amsterdam, which becomes New York, and they have a church they start in 1628, and it's called the St. Nicholas Dutch Reformed Church. It's the first church that's a Dutch build. And it's in Battery Park, New York where it was. And it went on to become the biggest church in America. It's called the Protestant Cathedral. And it was the longest continuous church congregation in America.

And it was so big, Teddy Roosevelt went there at the 42nd street and Fifth Avenue in New York. And then as the city became more of a financial district, the church membership dwindled, and the church elders sold it to Sinclair Co., who demolished it and built an oil building. And the remaining members of the congregation joined the Marble Collegiate Church, Dutch Reformed Church. And over the years, Vincent Peale, Norman Vincent Peale became the pastor, and many famous people went there, including Donald Trump.

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But New York is where a lot of the changes happen, from the St. Nicholas to the Santa Claus. So first you have Washington Irving. And he writes these fictitious history books like Rick Van Winkle, Legend of Sleepy Hollow, sort of like Paul Bunyan's Blue Ox. He did tell history, but he mixed in fanciful stories. He invented the name Gotham for New York City. And so in 1809, he writes Dietrich Knickerbocker. By the way, Knickerbocker was a made up name, but it was so popular you have the New York Knicks basketball team, the Knickerbocker.

Dietrich Knickerbocker's 'The History of New York from the Beginning of the New World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty.' And in there, he describes St. Nicholas no longer dressed as a bishop but dressed in a typical Dutch outfit of long trunk hose, leather Boots, leather belt, stocking hat. But he describes him in the book, "Saint Nicholas rode over the housetops, drawing forth magnificent presents. Dropping them down the chimneys of his favorites. Now he visits but one night a year. He rattles down the chimneys, confining his presence to children. The stockings found mysteriously filled in the morning.

And so laying his finger beside his nose, gave a significant look. Then mounting his wagon, he returned over the treetops and disappeared." And so that's New York. And then in New York, Clement Moore. In 1823, he's a Hebrew professor at the Episcopal seminary. Matter of fact, his family donated the land for the Episcopal seminary. And there is a park in New York at, 10th Avenue and 22nd Street called the Clementine Moore Park. And so he writes a poem for his children in 1823 called a visit from St. Nicholas.

And we've all heard it. Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, in hopes that St. Nicholas would soon be there. And what's my wondering eye should appear but a miniature sleigh and a tiny rear. And a little old driver so lively and quick. I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick. And so he's still St. Nicholas, but he's dressed in fur from his head to his foot. Clothes tarnished with ashes and soot. And he's not dressed as a bishop anymore. And he has the stump of a pipe.

He'll tighten his teeth. Smoking encircled his head like a wreath. It's like, when did he take up tobacco? Right? Indians. You know, the peace pipes. And then it says, a chubby, plump, right jolly old elf. I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself. So now he's shrunk in size, and he's an

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elf. And then we fast forward to the Civil War. And you have Harper's Weekly magazine and an illustrator, Thomas Nast, N A S T. And you know him because he invented the Republican elephant and Democrat mule.

And Thomas Nast does a cover of the Magazine of St. Nicholas, Santa Claus speaking to the Union troops. And he's giving out toys. And there's kids there playing with the toys. And in the background is a North Pole sign. And this was actually a political jab at the south to say St. Nicholas belongs to the North.

And then he does an illustrated version. And this is the first time he's painted red. And then you have Coca Cola, and they hire Haddon Sundblom, an artist famous for creating the Quaker Oats man and Aunt Jemima syrup. And Haddon Sundblom does a painting of St. Nicholas Sinterklaas, Santa Claus drinking Coke.

Now Coca-Cola pioneered mass marketing. It is the best known trademark name in the world. And for the next 33 years Haddon Sundblom is doing these paintings. It's spread around the world. So this is the image we have today. He's full grown size again. He's a nice huggable grandfather, rosy cheeks.

But we have to remind ourselves that if you peel back everything that's been added on, underneath of it all was a real man who loved Jesus in the third century. And he went into the ministry, became a bishop, and he was imprisoned under the government under the Roman Empire. And he gets out, and he preaches against the sexual immorality of Diana worship. He'd have been—

Today, he'd be preaching against all this alternative sexual agenda stuff. He spoke out against exposure of unwanted infants. He'd have been a pro-life speaker today. He confronts these corrupt politicians that are wanting to execute people. And he stood up for the Trinity, the doctrine of the Trinity at the Council of Nicaea. But most of all, we remember him because he was generous and wanted to give away his money to help the poor, but he did it anonymously so the credit would go to God and not to him.

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So just a fascinating story, and it's again, a lot easier to redeem his story and say he was a generous Christian person than trying to tell the kids that Santa is Satan. So you can change the letters around and try to-- The little kids are like, yeah, but look at my neighbors. They're getting presents.

**FRANK:**

And ladies and gentlemen, all this is in Bill's book called 'There Really Is a Santa Claus.' And you want to sign up for his email. It's called [americanminute.com](http://americanminute.com). That's his website. You can go there and sign up. You can see his bio. He's spoken all over the world and so many different venues. And as you can see, he's just an amazing historian. Bill, before we go, I do want to ask your opinion—

And this is just an opinion, you know, because Christians have different views on this. What is your view of telling young kids that there is a Santa Claus who literally comes in a sleigh and you know, leaves presents in the house? And then, yeah, of course later on you've got to say that, you know, it's not really true. What do you think about that?

**BILL:**

I leave it up to each parent. We didn't. We told our kids the truth and then my daughter, she's like, I feel cheated because I didn't get the fun when I was a little kid. And so it's like, okay, okay. Just let every parent decide what they want to do. One more thing I'd like to give the gospel. Why did God make us in the first place? I mean, he made the entire universe, 93 billion light years and still expanding at the speed of light. But it's almost like God said, you know, been there, done that. I can make everything.

I would really like someone in my image that could love me. And so, that's why he made us. But God is a just God, and he can't help it, which means he has to judge every sin. In mathematical equations, there's constants and variables. The constant in the equation of redemption is God is just, was, is, and forever will be just, which means he has to judge every sin.

The variable is who takes the judgment? You or a substitute? Jesus is our substitute. So God is completely just. He judges every sin, but he's loving, that he provided his own son to be the

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Lamb of God, to take the judgment in our place. The Lamb is God's way to love you without having to judge you.

So Jesus, the Lamb of God, came. He knew he was supposed to die on the cross and take the wrath of God. Isaiah 53 says it pleased the Lord to crush him, and then he rose from the dead to prove he was who he said he was. So this way, you and I can approach this universe creating omnipotent, all perfect, and all just God, and not have to worry about being judged. And so, that's why we celebrate Christmas, because God gave his own son to be the lamb. Moses—

Excuse me. Abraham and Isaac were going to the top of Mount Moriah. And Isaac says, father, we have the wood for the sacrifice. We have the coals for the sacrifice. Where's the sacrifice? And Abraham says, son, God will provide himself a sacrifice. And that's what happened.

Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, the only begotten Son of God, in the plan of redemption that was hidden from ages, it was a hidden plan. It says, if the princes of this world had known, they never would have crucified the Lord of glory. The Apostle Paul called the mystery of the Gospel. In this hidden plan, Jesus, the Son of God, became man. And only as a man could God die on a cross to pay for our sins.

Charles Wesley wrote the hymn "Amazing love, how could it be that thou, my God, should die for me?" So we can approach this perfect God and not have to worry about being judged. And we can love him and have him love us back for the rest of eternity because Jesus took the judgment that we deserve upon himself. And then he rose from the dead to prove he was who he said he was.

**FRANK:**

That's the real meaning of Christmas, Bill. I mean, you're so great at telling us about the history of how these traditions came about. But the real story of Christmas is what you just said. Ladies and gentlemen, there is hope out there. That's what Christmas is all about. God himself came to earth to take our sin upon himself. That's why he came. Bill, it's been wonderful having you on the show. Thank you so much.

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**BILL:**

Thank you, Frank. Bill Federer, ladies and gentlemen, Americanminute.com. You need to check him out. Sign up for his email. Get the book, 'There Really is a Santa Claus.' And again, friends, we're at the end of the year. Thank you so much for all your support. Your donations go 100% toward ministry, 0% toward buildings. Go to [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org), click on donate. Thank you so much. Lord willing, we'll see you here next week. God bless.

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