

Who's right, the dog or the cat? Do you believe in Santa Claus?

Unconsciously, most of us tend to view God in the same way we view Santa Claus, as some kind of magical being in the sky who watches over everything we do with a critical eye, deciding who's naughty and nice, and then withholding his gifts when we are naughty, and rewarding us when we are nice. When my children were young, my wife and I decided not to teach them about Santa Claus. We reasoned that if we lied to them about Santa, maybe they would be reluctant to believe us when we told them about God later on. Then, we unwittingly substituted the actual truth about God with a view of God that bears a striking similarity to Santa Clause.

Eventually, children discover that Santa is not real. They become suspicious that Santa's existence and behavior just doesn't seem to line up with known facts. How could one man, even with supernatural powers, visit billions of homes in a single night, and keep track of millions of individual requests for gifts? How could he be in so many different department stores and malls at the same time? How could his workshop at the North Pole be big enough, or sophisticated enough, to make billions of toys in a single year? How could those little elves be taught how to make those highly sophisticated electronic devices? Why hasn't anyone actually seen the real Santa? The only Santas people actually see are ordinary men dressed up as Santa in order to fool us. By the way, how come rich kids get more gifts than poor kids? It doesn't seem to be based on merit at all. Eventually, children figure out, through common sense and logic, that Santa doesn't actually exist.

The same thing happens when we teach children that God is like Santa Clause. We teach them that God lives in a far-away place called Heaven, and hides from us most of the time. We teach them that God keeps track of everything we do and hands out rewards and punishments accordingly. We teach them if they want something, they need to ask God for it, and God will give it to them if they deserve it. If trouble comes, often God gets the blame, and they think it's because they have been bad. We teach them that what they want out of life is something that is given to them by someone other than themselves.

There is the story about the dog and the cat. The dog's master was very kind, loving and generous towards him, and the dog thought to himself, "My master must be God." The cat was treated the same way by his master, and thought to himself, "I must be God."

What did Jesus believe? Was Jesus more like the dog or the cat? He was accused of blasphemy because He talked and acted like He was God. He believed Himself to a representation of God on this earth. Jesus also taught us that we also had divine natures (ie. children of God) and were equally capable of working the same miracles, if we exercised the right kind of faith. When asked if He believed Himself to be God, Jesus quoted an Old Testament passage which affirmed that we are all gods.

Is God like Santa Clause? If so, how is He able to be in a billion different places at once and watch over billions of people all at once? God is not like Santa Clause. He is not even a single person. He is more than just one person. He has divided His spirit impartially among all of us

and given each of us the ability to act on our own behalf, with the power of the universe behind us. I am an individual aspect of God, an aspect of God that is focusing uniquely on me and my immediate surroundings. When I pray to God the Father, I am actually praying to my own “higher nature,” or that aspect of God which is me. God literally loves me as I love (or should love) myself, because God is me. No one loves me, or knows and understands me, quite as much as my “higher self.” My true home is in Heaven. A small portion of my spirit, or true self, resides in a physical body and views my existence through the lens of a physical brain. My “higher self” resides in Heaven (with Christ) and views my life from an eternal vantage point. While in the flesh, I have lost the memory of who I really am. When I transition out of the flesh, I will awaken to my identity in heaven (in Christ).

Does this mean that I am alone and isolated from God, or should I say, from all other manifestations of God? Of course not. We are all parts of the same spiritual body, and we work together, not in isolation from one another. My “higher self” is not alone in the heavenly realms, nor am I alone in this earthly realm. Jesus Christ, in the person of many others, walks with me, not only in Heaven, but also here on earth. But that is a topic for another day.

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