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The story behind the story

Just about all of us know well the Christmas story of Jesus' birth. So, I want to tell you the story behind the story of God's greatest gift to mankind.

It might surprise you to learn it begins way back with Adam and Eve, when they blew things up with God. I realize the story sounds like a fairy-tale to some, but that's because we are blind to the

Almighty God and the spiritual realm He operates from... and we humans tend to reject or be suspicious of what we personally cannot yet see or comprehend.

The Bible records how The Creator made the first man and woman in His own image, which tells us they were perfect beings. So perfect they had no fear of Him, and were able to see, hear, and talk with Him face to face as He walked in the Gardenⁱ ... until they failed to continue trusting and believing Him, which led them to reject His command and warning of what would happen if they partook of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*.ⁱⁱ

When they ate of the forbidden fruit, the tree's very name tells us what they foolishly unleashed on themselves and us, their future off-spring. They now had first-hand knowledge of the spiritual darkness of evil. Their seemingly innocent act contaminated their very being, which took away their perfectness, immediately causing them to now be impure. Like dominos, it set off a chain reaction of consequences they did not expect. They were doomed to now die. And the part that had enabled them to physically see and be in the presence of God, was gone. Like when a physical body dies, it was gone forever.

Genetically, we know it is impossible for imperfect beings to have perfect offspring, it then makes sense that we too were doomed to bear and pass on the curse of being separated from God.

But the good news is, out of perfect compassion and love, God didn't want mankind to remain trapped, unable to reach Him. He already had a plan, that if we accepted it, would

break the curse and once again enable us to have a type of relationship with Him that would eventually lead us to His eternal Kingdom.

When the time was right, He sent a part of himself to live among us for a while.ⁱⁱⁱ He was on a mission like no other, and willingly left the Light of perfection and indescribable wonders of His heavenly Kingdom so he could fulfill it.

He came in a humble way too, which allowed us to be able to relate to Him, and subjected Him to the same type of joys, sorrows, and pain and suffering that we are.

For many the Christmas story stops there with Him in a manger. But in reality, this amazing story had only begun. The birth of Jesus triggered the unfolding of The Father's amazing plan.

Jesus came to open up **The Way**^{iv} that The Father had prepared for us, the offspring of Adam and Eve, which takes us back to Him and the amazing wonders of His Kingdom.

But He first had to break the hold of what was blocking our way to Him. From this side of heaven, we know them as the darkness of *Sin* and *Death*. Their pull on us being so strong they keep us separated from God, our Creator, and from even being able to see His Light. We are then hopelessly blinded to Him and Kingdom life.

With our extremely limited minds and understanding of God's realm, we don't understand why the only way to break their hold on us was to be born so He could die, giving His very life-blood so we could be freed from their blinding curse of darkness. But thankfully this wondrous story didn't end with His cruel death.

It seems that to prove to us hard-headed humans that His birth, life and teachings were truly of God, the impossible happened.

After three days He rose from the dead. It's true. We know with certainty He had died one of the most cruel, guaranteed deaths known to man, yet now lives! For over a month – 40 days to be exact – he would appear and walk, talk and eat with many who knew Him, and shared more about the Kingdom of God before returning back to the Father.^v Paul the Apostle even tells us how one time, after His death, Jesus dropped in on a gathering of 500 people, many of them still living when he wrote about it so they could attest to the truth of it happening.^{vi} His disciples amazingly witnessed Him literally ascending into heaven too!^{vii}

What happened is mind-boggling. There has truly been nothing like it before or since.

This true story is there for all to read in the Bible, how Jesus opened up The Wayⁱⁱ to our Heavenly Father so we can eternally live with Him. The good news is when we personally believe and accept this precious gift God prepared for us, and follow Jesus' lead^{viii}, we can know with certainty that we are on the right path to Him and His Kingdom.

EXTRA: Still having trouble believing it's true?

You're not alone. Throughout history there

have been skeptics who insisted these unbelievable events surrounding Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension were all made up by His disciples.

But were they?

Let's consider this: except for Judas who had betrayed Him, and then killed himself, and John, who had been exiled to the island of Patmos, all of them died tortuous deaths for they never stopped spreading the Kingdom message Jesus had given them, and shared the stories surrounding His death and resurrection, never recanting of them like the authorities demanded they do.

Many have then presented the revealing question we all need to answer for ourselves, **“Would they have chosen to die such horrible ways just to maintain what they knew was a lie?”** That's a thought-provoking question, isn't it.

Have you discovered *The Way* yet? Are you following Christ? If in doubt about doing so, it might help to know that when on their death-bed, we know of none who expressed regret with their choice to follow Him. In fact, some have even expressed much gladness they did! But sadly, it is known that many have expressed much regret and sorrow they had not. I hope none of us ever face eternity with that kind of regret ... as I know does God too^{ix}

You can read about it in the Bible for yourself:

ⁱ Genesis 3:8-11 — “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” (NIV)

ⁱⁱ Genesis 2:16-17 — “And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” (NIV)

ⁱⁱⁱ The Bible identifies “The Word” as being God, who came and lived among us. (John 1:1 & 14)

^{iv} John 14:6 — “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (NIV)

^v The Bible tells us after He rose from the dead, for 40 days Jesus would appear to people, giving proof that was alive, and teaching about the Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3)

^{vi} 1 Corinthians 15:6

^{vii} Acts 1:9-11 — “... He was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

^{viii} John 12:26

^{ix} 2 Peter 3:9 — “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (NIV)