

## Origin Of The Word God

God is a root word scholars have connected with the names of three related Germanic tribes: the **Geats**, the **Goths** and the **Gutar**. These names may be derived from an eponymous chieftain **Gaut**. He also sometimes appears in early Medieval sagas as a name of Odin or one of his descendants, a former king of the Geats (*Gaut(i)*), an ancestor of the Gutar (*Guti*), of the Goths (*Gothus*) and of the royal line of Wessex (*Geats*) and as a previous hero of the Goths (*Gapt*). Some variant forms of the name Odin such as the Lombardic **Godan** may point in the direction that the Lombardic form actually comes from Proto-Germanic \**gudánaz*. Wōdanaz or Wōđinaz is the reconstructed Proto-Germanic name of a god of Germanic paganism, known as **Odin in Norse mythology**, **Wōden** in Old English, **Wodan** or **Wotan** in Old High German and **Godan in the Lombardic language**. **Godan was shortened to God over time and was adopted/retained by the Germanic peoples of the British isles as the name of their deity**, in lieu of the Latin word Deus used by the Latin speaking Christian church, after conversion to Christianity.

During the complex christianization of the Germanic tribes of Europe, there were many linguistic influences upon the Christian missionaries. One example post downfall of the western Roman Empire are the missionaries from Rome led by Augustine of Canterbury. Augustine's mission to the Saxons in southern Britain was conducted at a time when the city of Rome was a part of a Lombardic kingdom. The translated bibles which they brought on their mission were greatly influenced by the Germanic tribes they were in contact with, chief among them being the Lombards and Franks. The translation for the word deus of the Latin bible was influenced by the then current usage by the tribes for their highest deity, namely Wodan by Angles, Saxons and Franks of north-central and western Europe and Godan by the Lombards of south-central Europe around Rome. There are many instances where the name Godan and Wodan are contracted to God and Wod.

The development of English orthography was dominated by Christian texts. Capitalized, "G-o-d" was first used to refer to the Judeo-Christian disambiguate concept of a singular God, from pagan deities for which lower case g-o-d. Pronouns referring to G-o-d are also often capitalized and are traditionally in the masculine gender, i.e. "He", "Him", "His" etc. However, some people have referred to G-o-d in feminine terms, such as "She" and "Her".

## **How Odin Became Santa Claus: Symbolism and Pagan Origins of a Gift-Giving Saint**

The story begins in the northern regions of Europe where the supreme god Odin, also known as **Wodan** among the German tribes, reigned. (He still lives among us in Wednesday, which is Wodan's day).

Odin/Wodan was the god of wisdom, magick and occult knowledge, runes, poetry and war. His name means "the inspired one". Like a shaman he could travel in other worlds to gather more insight while his two black ravens Huginn (Thought) and Muninn (Memory) kept him informed about the news in the world. Odin was depicted as a tall, old man with a white beard and wearing a cloak. He rode the skies and the seas on his fast white horse Sleipnir with his 8 (the number of transformation) legs, while carrying his never missing spear Gungnir (clear and focused intent) in his hand.

He had one eye, for he had offered the other eye in exchange for gathering wisdom at the well of the head Mimir (Norse representation of the Source) and with that he became a shapeshifter, able of seeing in the outward world with his normal eye and understanding the inward worlds with his black, removed, eye.

Odin later became Sinterklaas; a kind and wise old man with a white beard, white dress, red cloak, a crosier and riding the skies and roofs of the houses on his white horse, accompanied by his Black Jacks. Sinterklaas will visit you on his birthday December 5 or 6 and donate gifts. His Black Jacks have miraculously gathered information about your behavior during the last year; if it were good you will now be rewarded with presents, if it were bad you will be punished by the Black Jacks who will beat you with their rods or even worse: put you in a big bag and take you with to Spain, said to be the residence of Sinterklaas.

When Dutch settlers arrived in New Amsterdam, they brought with them their practice of leaving shoes out for St. Nicholas to fill with gifts. In the 17th century Dutchmen emigrated to Northern America and brought their tradition of Sinterklaas. In the new English speaking world the name later morphed into Santa Claus. Although the Dutch version of St. Nicholas was written about by author Washington Irving around 1809, it was about 15 years later that the figure of Santa as we know it today was introduced.

In 1930 a designer for the Coca-Cola Company was asked to draw attractive advertisements for this drink that did not sell well in wintertime. He had to use the company colors red and white and create some cosy type. He remembered the Dutch Santa Claus with his white dress, red cloak, long white beard,

kindness and benevolence. The eight-legged horse was replaced for eight flying reindeer. A punishing Black Jack was inappropriate in this concept, so he disappeared. This new Santa Claus became a big hit. During the winter, children placed their boots near the chimney, filling them with carrots or straw as a gift for Sleipnir. When Odin flew by, he rewarded the little ones by leaving gifts in their boots. In several Germanic countries, this practice survived despite the adoption of Christianity. As a result, the gift-giving became associated with St. Nicholas -- only nowadays, we hang stockings rather than leaving boots by the chimney!