

Facts You Should Know About Christmas!



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Know About
Christmas!*

Millions of us have grown up with fond memories of Christmas trees, bulging stockings, gaily wrapped gifts, jolly old "Saint Nick," Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, yule logs, turkey or goose dinners, mistletoe, and Bing Crosby singing "I'm dreaming..."

It's a major "Christian holiday—a barometer for business; the most important commercial season of the year in the Western world.

Yet, for all its importance to millions, most remain *completely ignorant* of its *true origins*. Where did we get Christmas? What about the original Christmas tree, the exchanging of gifts, the yule log, Christmas dinners, mistletoe and Santa Claus? You will be *astounded* to read the *truth* about Christmas!

In a world filled with enormous problems, millions will take time out to celebrate Christmas by traditional trappings such as gaily decorated trees, brightly wrapped packages, and perhaps one too many at the eggnog bowl.

What is the *meaning* of all this revelry as millions plunge into the annual floodtide of Christmas shopping, endless traffic jams, neighborhood and office parties, Tom and Jerrys, blaring, monotonously repeated Christmas carols, exchanging of gifts and all the trappings of Christmas?

Most suppose they are honoring the Lord Jesus Christ, the "little babe away in a manger," as millions hear the oft-told tales of shepherds keeping watch in their fields by night, the Magi and the star, Mary in the manger, and the birth of the Christ child.

But be honest with yourself. Have you ever really *researched* any authoritative sources about Christmas?

And—*what difference does it make?*

Probably, you have never bothered to go to a public library, obtaining help from the librarian with the card file, or using *Reader's Guide* to obtain information from various historical and current sources about Christmas. *If you should do so, you would be in for some great shocks.*

You would discover that the origins of "Christmas" are *utterly pagan*; Jesus was not born on or anywhere near December 25th; and that everything from mistletoe, "wassailing," exchanging of gifts, holly wreaths, Santa Claus, Christmas trees, gaily decorated lights and bulbs, eggnog bowls and Rudolph's red nose are merely heathenish, pagan *inventions of men*, and have nothing to do whatsoever with Jesus Christ of Nazareth or His birth!

Naturally, none of this makes *any difference whatever*—IF THERE IS

NO GOD!

For, *if there is no God*, then it is entirely *man's own choice* as to how he worships whatever god of his choosing. But if God *does exist*, if that great Creator God who gives us every breath of air we breathe has NOT given man the prerogatives as to "*how*" he will worship God—only left it up to us as to *whether* we will acknowledge and revere our God—then it is another matter altogether.

Are Pagan Customs All Right, So Long as Used in Honor of Christ?

Americans have always been smitten with the "quaint" customs of peculiar people in other nations. Gum-chewing, camera-toting American tourists take endless pictures, smiling at the "quaint" costumes, architecture, music, customs and religion of other nations. But Almighty God sternly warns His people not to *copy* pagans and heathens; wondering *how* they worshiped their pagan gods (which are merely figments of the imaginations of superstitious minds) and then *adapt* those "quaint" heathen and pagan customs, wrapping them in tinsel, whitewashing them, packaging them in gay colors, and *calling* them "Christian"!

Notice this! When God dispossessed the pagan nations before the advancing hosts of Israel, He explained to His people that these heathens were *losing* their lands because of the hideous *abominations* they practiced; including every perversion, depravity and bestial practice known to man. They worshiped nonexistent "gods" of the host of the heavens, of the sky, earth, water, rain, the sun and the seasons. They worshiped *fertility*, indulging in orgiastic celebrations and ceremonies in harvesttime, in springtime and at the winter solstice, begging their "sun god" to resume his northward journey across the sky, warming the heavens towards spring and summer once again. The trappings of their various and sundry religions included everything from ritualistic worship of sex objects to human sacrifice!

God said, therefore, "When the Eternal your God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;

"Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods?' even so will I do likewise.

“Thou shalt *not* do so unto the Eternal thy God; for every abomination to the Eternal, which He *hateth*, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

“What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt *not add* thereto, nor *diminish* from it” (Deuteronomy 12:29-32).

God strictly commanded His people NOT to become inquisitive about the *manner* of worship of these heathens; wondering what various accouterments and paraphernalia of their worship service “meant,” in symbol—becoming curious about their “quaint” ways; their temples, decorations, feasts, orgies, practices and customs—and then *adapting* such heathen customs to the worship of the true God!

Yet, godless, sinning mankind has done *exactly that!*

If a time machine could suddenly catapult ancient pagan Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Huns, Scandinavians, Druids and others onto the streets and into the homes of modern, so-called “Christian” America, these pagans would *immediately recognize* the trappings of “Christmas”!

While they would no doubt see many modern innovations, the underlying symbols would remain the same!

They would see symbols having to do with the worship of life, fertility, sex and reproduction, Nimrod and his mother-wife, orbs and eggs, logs and trees, wreaths and berries, and the cheerful “ho, ho, ho” of jolly old “Saint Nick.”

Conversely, if modern Americans could be catapulted back in time to some of the ceremonies of the pagan Germanic races—the Scandinavians, Druids in Scotland and Ireland, or Babylonians, Egyptians and Greeks—they, too, would *immediately recognize* many of the trappings of the pagan ceremonies of these peoples: decorated trees, wreaths and berries, eggs and orbs, the “yule log,” exchanging of gifts and presents, roast goose and family meals, bonfires and celebrations, drinking and kissing under the mistletoe.

But wait! The modern American, Canadian or Briton, propelled *backward* in time, would find some important ingredients of his modern “Christmastime” celebrations *missing* if he suddenly found himself in the streets of ancient Babylon, or observing a ceremony of the Druids in Scotland. He would find, *nowhere* amidst all these familiar trappings and surroundings, mention of *Jesus Christ!*

Conversely, the ancient pagans, transported *forward* in time, would see all the paraphernalia and revelry associated with their ancient orgies to the *sun god*, and would perhaps *marvel* that the professing “Christian” world had managed to subtly and cleverly *substitute* all of these methods

of sun worship for worship of their “Son of God,” Jesus Christ, rather than the “sun-god,” Nimrod, or “Tammuz.” Others would think it a ceremony to “Mithra,” or Horus. *None* would assume the festival honored Christ!

But let’s understand, *from history*, the true origin of the trappings of “Christmas,” and see whether it is something Christians should do.

The Yule Log

The origins of the “yule log” are buried in dimmest antiquity—stemming from pagan superstitions surrounding Nimrod (Horus or Osiris) and his mother-wife, Semiramis.

Like the Christmas tree, it has its origins among pagan worshipers of trees, and a universal cult of tree worshipers, found in practically every nation in ancient times.

However, the term “yule” stems mostly from the tree worshipers of Denmark and Sweden, for whom two months of the year, December and January, were called “the former yule” and “the after yule,” stemming from the word “geol,” meaning coming before or after the *winter solstice*. The “yule log” merely meant the “solstice log,” or the ceremony of cutting trees out of the forest, and burning their bases and trunks in the fires, while stationing the smaller trees inside the homes, gaily decorated in commemoration of the solstice. Actually, the word has its origin common with the English word “joy” and properly means “noise, clamor; a season of rejoicing at the turn of the year before Christmastime.” The custom of burning the “yule” (pronounced “yool”) was apparently begun by Scandinavians who worshiped the god “Thor,” their “god of thunder.” Universally, the Babylonish mystery religion always allowed pagan peoples coming into the so-called Christian church to *preserve* their pagan ceremonies, merely *adapting* such customs and ceremonies into their new “Christian” religion. So it was with the Scandinavians in their “yule” log! As they burned their “yule” logs once each year at the solstice in honor of their “god of thunder,” Thor, it was only a matter of time until the word “yule” would connote the entire season, with all its festivities. Hence, the ancient English considered it good luck to retain an unburned part of the log from year to year, thus preserving, as it were, an unbroken chain of burnable materials from the original “yule log” which might have been originally lit by their ancestors.

From these ancient pagan tree worshipers who celebrated their winter solstice in honor of their pagan gods with noise, clamor, feasting and rejoicing, the word “yule,” first attached to their *log* stemming from ancient tree worship, gradually came to connote the *season*, and today is

found in music poetry, as “yuletide,” or the “Christmas season.” The origins and preservation of the custom are completely *pagan*, and soundly *condemned* by the Eternal God in His Word!

The Christmas Tree

Perhaps a greater wealth of literature exists on the subject of tree worship than any other pagan custom.

Primitive man was utterly dependent upon the growth of trees in literally dozens of ways. In the Tigris-Euphrates valley, a tremendous variety of the palm tree gave man a great variety of food, shelter and even clothing, woven from bark. In the northern latitudes, entire cultures were built around the harvesting of trees from the forest. The logs made homes and forts, and the lumber was planed and adzed into the hulls of Viking ships. The tall pines and spruce made excellent masts, and the gums and resins from their sap were used to make the ships watertight.

Ancient man, observing the growth cycle of trees, their obvious reaction to weather and seasonal changes, their marvelous elasticity, strength and almost endless utility—and bereft of the knowledge of the true God—ascribed godlike qualities to these great plants.

But it was not only superstitious “heathens” of the more primitive cultures who ascribed godlike powers to trees! Even the vaunted Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plutarch believed trees possessed *reason* like human beings; taught that they had perceptions and passion! Once having reasoned that trees “thought” and reasoned, it was no great stretch of these ancient imaginations to see a direct connection between the life of a man and that of a tree. Ancient tree worshipers believed that, when the tree suffered, withered or was injured in some way, a man’s life, connected to the tree, also suffered sickness, or even death. This idea is originally encountered in the Egyptian “tale of the two brothers,” which is probably more than three thousand years old!

In this Egyptian fable, one of the brothers allegedly leaves his heart on the top of the flower of an acacia tree and falls dead when the tree is cut down.

Rather than the concept of an “internal” immortal soul, these heathens developed the idea of an *external* “soul,” which could be, in some way, directly attached to the life of a tree.

In various cultures, dozens of tree-worshipping rituals and beliefs are found. Sometimes, a newborn child is associated with a newly planted tree, and it was supposed the two lives were inextricably intertwined. On ceremonial occasions, such as marriages, personal success, royal appointments or betrothals, a tree would be planted—and the personal

fortunes and the career of the individual in whose honor the tree was planted were supposedly interrelated between that individual and the tree.

Sometimes, certain boughs or branches were selected and the individual drew omens of life and death from the condition of them. In many cultures, including those of Europe and early America, a man would put himself into relationship with a tree by depositing upon it something that had been in close personal contact with the man. This could include fingernail clippings, bits of hair or articles of wearing apparel.

Like the black arts of witchcraft and voodoo, in which it is supposed the piercing of a doll with pins can bring about the affliction of an individual far distant from the doll, tree worshipers believed there was a real interconnection between human life and trees. Hence, they believed it was possible to transfer disease or sickness from men to trees. Bits of hair, nail clippings, clothing and other personal items of the sick person would be affixed to the tree, or even inserted into a hole in the trunk. Sometimes, the tree would be split, and the patient actually passed through the aperture! The injured tree would nevertheless recover, and it was supposed this was a sure omen of the certain recovery of the patient. Customs have been preserved in practically every part of the world of hanging objects upon trees in order to establish some relationship between the gift giver and the tree.

In 19th century Europe, one could see bits of food, rags and other objects tied to the branches of trees by supplicants. In India, a sick person, supposedly tormented by a demon, would be provided a ceremony in which a tree could be planted nearby wherein the demon was supposed to dwell peacefully without further molesting the patient, so long as its tree was left unharmed!

It was in India that the Korwas hung rags on trees which formed the shrines of their various village gods.

In early America, Nebraskans believed hanging objects on the branches of trees propitiated supernatural beings, procured good weather, and insured good hunting.

The inventor of modern evolutionary geology, Darwin, recorded a tree in South America festooned with various offerings, including rags, meat, cigars and so on. Not only were libations made to this tree, but even horses sacrificed before it!

Many Arabs had sacred trees they believed were haunted by angels or the “Jinn.” They sacrificed to these trees, and it was believed the sick who slept beneath them would receive prescriptions in their dreams. Throughout Africa, in Burma, Central and South America and all over

the world, for that matter, there were various beliefs connecting human life, various deities and trees.

In early Buddhism, it was decided that trees had neither thought nor feeling and might lawfully be cut down. But it was believed that certain spirits might reside *in* the trees, though the trees themselves were devoid of mind or thought.

African woodmen placed a fresh sprig upon a hewn stump as a new home for the spirit they believed resided in the tree.

Trees were planted around graves in ancient Greece, and in Roman tradition planted groves of trees were associated with the vaunted dead.

Anciently, the races disinherited by the advancing Israelites, including the Hivites, Amalakites, Amorites, Perizites, Philistines and others, worshiped under the "groves." Sometimes, the trees were stripped of their branches and limbs, though left upright in the soil with their roots undisturbed. Then weird caricatures of their "gods" would be carved on the trunks, and the trees left upright, as phallic symbols and objects of worship.

On other occasions, the upper branches were left intact, and the heathen worshiped among the "groves," which are mentioned many times in the Old Testament.

These "Asherah" were "groves" and usually located on a knoll or hill, and left upright in the ground, *among* other larger green trees. The 17th chapter of II Kings is an indictment against the Israelites, explaining in great detail *why* the Eternal removed Israel out of His sight, allowing Shalmanezar, the king of Assyria, to carry them away captive!

Read it!

"And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Eternal their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

"And they set them up *images* [pillars] and *groves* [Asherim] in every high hill, and *under every green tree*:

"And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Eternal carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Eternal to anger:

"For they served *idols*, whereof the Eternal had said unto them, 'Ye shall not do this thing!'" (II Kings 17:9-12).

Notice the direct connection between the golden calf of Israel's original rebellion and the later practices after hundreds of years had gone by!

"And they left all the commandments of the Eternal their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and *made a grove* [trees

stripped to their branches and left in the ground, as upright obelisks!], and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal!

"And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used *divination* and *enchancements*, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Eternal, to provoke His anger" (II Kings 17:16,17).

When Gaal, the son of Ebed, saw Abimelech approaching the city of Shechem, he said, "See, there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the *diviners' oak*" (Judges 9:35-37).

In the Hebrew, the word *meonenim* in verse 37 should be rendered "the diviners' oak." This famous oak tree was used by the diviners of the pagan city which Abimelech and his forces destroyed, completely beat to the ground, and sowed with salt as the judgment of God.

Tree worship, in its many forms, is found again and again in the Bible as God's people would adopt some to the filthy and pagan customs of the heathen races with whom they came in contact.

Even in ancient Prussia, the chief sanctuary of the old Prussians was a "*holy oak*" around which the priests dwelt, and a high priest who was known as "God's mouth." A prominent English name is "Holyoke" or "Holyoak."

When a so-called "sacred tree" died, in west equatorial Africa, it led to the abandonment of the entire village site, and the migration of the inhabitants to a different region.

When in Rome, the sacred fig tree of Romulus in the forum withered, it caused considerable fear and consternation!

From Asia, across the land bridge to Alaska and the Yukon, came tree worshipers, who believed their sacred trees contained the spirits of all sorts of gods, and carved intricate caricatures of frogs, snakes, men and spirits, eagles and other creatures into the trunks of their trees, even adorning them with wings, legs and other appendages, setting them upright around their villages as their sacred "totem poles," or Ashera!

No doubt, a certain amount of pagan mythology stems from the simple fact that the further earliest members of the human race migrated *away* from the original centers of knowledge and truth, the more bizarre and grotesque became their beliefs and customs, and the less accurate their retention of original knowledge.

Hence, because of the Genesis account of God placing His first two human beings in the *midst of a garden*, and discussing with them the two great opposites of *eternal life* on the one hand and *death* on the other, as represented by *two trees*, it requires no great stretch of the imagination to understand how early Babylonians and others could come to associate

spirit beings (Satan appears in ancient art as coiled *around* the *tree* of the knowledge of good and evil) with *trees*.

Perhaps the earliest origin of the "Christmas tree" comes from the fable of "St. Boniface" (Bonifacius), who allegedly destroyed the *great oak of Jupiter* at Geismar in Hesse, Germany, and supposedly built of the wood a chapel to "St. Peter." The legend says Boniface (actually, an early English missionary named Winfrid), while traveling through northern Germany, found a group of heathens at their sacred oak preparing to sacrifice little Prince Asulf to their god, Jupiter. Allegedly, Winfrid stopped the sacrifice and cut down the tree. As the fable grew, the oak allegedly fell, not without protest, and instantly a *young fir tree* appeared! Winfrid told the heathens that the fir was the "*tree of life*" and represented *Christ!*

Thus, one of the first historical accounts of a so-called "Christian" missionary *adapting* pagan beliefs concerning tree worship into some form of "Christianity" is preserved.

The pagans were *delighted* to believe in this new myth, which is an almost identical replica of the ancient fable concerning the cutting down of a huge oak representing the life and death of *Nimrod* (Tammuz, or the sun god), and the idea that a young tree sprang out of the ancient log *overnight*, thus representing the rebirth or reincarnation of Nimrod as "Tammuz," or the god of the sun!

Because the people in Scandinavia were tree worshipers, it was only natural that evergreen trees, their boughs and other evergreen plants (such as the holly tree, ivy and the like) should become part of their early "Christian festivals."

In this fashion, the growing universal church allowed massive numbers of pagans and heathens to come right into the so-called "Christian" religion, while retaining their ancient superstitions, festivals and objects of worship!

Long before these pagans were ever introduced to so-called "Christianity," they decorated their homes with evergreens and boughs.

The season of the year?

At the winter *solstice of the sun!*

Even the Romans exchanged green tree branches for "good luck" on the *calends*, or the first day of January!

Early Englishmen adopted this custom for "Christmas," taking it from the Romans, who built the first known towns and villages in the British Isles.

This ancient pagan custom of Scandinavians and other dwellers in the northern hemisphere came easily into the United States in the very

earliest stages of European immigration into the New World. Finally, with the march of "civilization" westward, as American settlers continued their practice of hewing evergreen trees out of their forests and taking them into their log cabins in the west, while the Indians of Alaska, British Columbia, the Yukon and Pacific Northwest displayed their colorful "totem poles," the ancient tree-worshipping cultures of both ends of the earth were at last united.

Almighty God *condemns* these heathen rituals and customs in His Word!

But modern Americans, utterly devoid of the awesome *fear of God*, use only *human reason* and concern themselves with the nostalgic memories of family, children and the "Christmas spirit."

Thus, they attempt to *justify* the use of utterly pagan and heathen customs in a so-called "Christian" holiday!

Trees are beautiful. They are among the most important and useful of all the plants the Eternal Creator has given to mankind. Perhaps nothing looks fresher, more symbolic of youth, vigor, symmetry and beauty than a young Douglas fir or blue spruce tree. So why *destroy* this vitally important plant, which someday could provide enough lumber for a *home*, fastening it to an upright stand, and bringing it inside the home, while it withers and dies?

Indeed, *why?*

The answer?

Custom. Tradition. "We have always done it." Our forebears did it. Everyone else is doing it.

Amazing. Millions upon millions of human beings delightedly gather around their "Christmas trees" each year, without the slightest knowledge whatsoever of the utterly Babylonish, pagan, heathen and demoniacal *origin* of the custom!

The Saturnalia

When Voyager satellites began sending back astounding pictures of the planet Saturn, with its impressive rings of debris and its many moons, the planet *Saturn* was much in the news.

One of the greatest festivals of the pagan calendar was that of *Saturn*, originally celebrated near the end of December.

The festival began, anciently, on the 19th, and extended for *seven days*, which would include the 25th and 26th of December!

All classes of the ancient Romans *exchanged gifts* during this celebration of the solstice of the sun, one of the more common forms of gifts being that of a *clay doll*. The dolls were especially given to children,

and it was believed they represented the original sacrifices of *human beings* to the “infernal god.” There was a tradition that human sacrifices were once offered to Saturn, and Greeks and Romans gave the name of “Cronus” and “Saturn” to a cruel Phoenician *baal* to whom children were sacrificed at Carthage!

The Saturnalia was finally instituted by Romulus, the founder of Rome, under the name of “Brumalia,” which meant “winter solstice.” A solemn custom of *kindling fires* has prevailed in parts of Europe, with the “yule log” a prominent feature, just as fireside dinners and the exchanging of gifts are still prominent features of modern American celebrations of “Christmas.”

Santa Claus

Early Dutch settlers in New York brought the traditions of “St. Nicholas,” the bishop of Myra, in Lycia, to early America.

Though the cult of this supposed “saint” in history is obscure, and nearly everything that has come to us today is of a purely legendary character, it is believed he was bishop of Myra during the reign of the emperor Diocletian, and was persecuted and tortured for his faith. He was allegedly present at the Council of Nicea.

Today, there are nearly four hundred churches in England dedicated to “St. Nicholas.” “He” is the patron saint of Russia, the special protector of children, scholars, merchants and sailors, and is sometimes invoked by travelers to protect them from crime.

Strangely, ancient art depicts this “St. Nicholas” of legend with three children *standing in a tub* by his side. There is no certain interpretation of this phenomenon, but one story says the three youths had been murdered, cut up and sealed in a salting tub by an innkeeper, in whose inn they had been lodging, and were supernaturally rescued and restored by “St. Nicholas.” Another legend told of his surreptitious bestowal of dowries upon three daughters of an impoverished citizen who was at the point of giving his girls over to a life of harlotry. A custom of giving presents on the “eve of St. Nicholas” was finally transferred to Christmas day.

This is how the association of Christmas with “Santa Claus” (merely an American corruption of the *Dutch* form “San Nicolaas”) occurred. It was not until 1823 that an American minister and sometime poet, Clement C. Moore, wrote his poem “A Visit From St. Nicholas,” which was later changed to “The Night Before Christmas.” It is in this poem the “jolly St. Nick” of today, with his huge pack of toys, coming down the chimney, is described! As in all the other trappings of Christmas, the

origins of “Santa Claus” have nothing whatsoever to do with the birthday of Jesus Christ, are buried in antiquity, and belong only to the Babylonish mystery religion.

Was Christ Born on December 25th?

How did the professing Christian church come to arrive at the date of December 25th for the birth of Christ? The earliest Gospel writers, Matthew and Luke, began their accounts, not with the *birth* of Jesus Christ, but with His baptism. Actually, the Bible carefully *conceals* the date of Jesus’ birth for the obvious reason that God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son intended no special celebration surrounding His *birth*, but *did* clearly sanctify the occasion of His *death*; Jesus Christ *changing* the old symbols of the paschal lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs into the wine and unleavened bread of “the Lord’s Supper.”

This does not mean that the birth of Jesus Christ was not the most important birth in all of history, nor that it was not accompanied by great signs, wonders, and miracles, or made important by the visit of the shepherds and the Magi.

The *timing* was not so important as the *fact* of Jesus’ birth, that a Savior had come into the world!

Many fables and false suppositions surround the birth of Jesus Christ. Traditional Christmas stories picture the Magi with their precious gifts standing before the mother and child in the *manger*. Actually, as Matthew’s second chapter portrays, the Magi may have required up to *one full year*, or, at the very least, several *months* to make their journey, and by the time they arrived in Jerusalem it was to “come into the *house*, [where] they saw the *young child* with Mary his mother...” (Matthew 2:11).

Read the whole chapter, and notice carefully that Herod inquired of the Magi *what time the star appeared*, knowing they had required some considerable time for their journey from Persia to Bethlehem. Notice also that, in attempting to insure he killed Jesus Christ, Herod commanded that all the children born in Bethlehem and the whole region be slain “*from two years old and under* according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men” (Matthew 2:16).

Luke’s account shows the shepherds still “in the fields” keeping watch over their flocks *by night*.

It has long been recognized by historians and scholars that this placed the birth of Jesus Christ sometime in the *autumn*, and *not* in the winter, when shepherds would already have driven their flocks into the

sheepfolds, where they could be given shelter. Jerusalem is in the higher elevations and enjoys cool nights, even in summer. In the winter, temperatures fall considerably lower at nighttime, and, therefore, the account of the shepherds coming to the manger had to take place some months *earlier* than December—likely in September, or at the very latest early October.

Then *why* the custom of observing the birthday of Christ on December 25th?

December 25th fell near the end of the ancient pagan seven-day ceremony of “the Saturnalia,” later changed to “the Brumalia” by imperial Roman decree.

This riotous festival was in celebration of the winter *solstice of the sun*, and honored Tammuz, or Nimrod, the “sun god.” But notice how this pagan festival *gradually* became inserted into the professing “Christian” calendar!

The very earliest known mention of December 25th as the birthday of Christ is in a passage written by Theophilus of Antioch, probably around A.D. 183, and is held to be very likely spurious.

That this comment was mostly unknown is upheld in a statement by Origen in A.D. 245 in his eighth homily on Leviticus, wherein he repudiates as *sinful* the very concept of keeping the birthday of Christ!

The first *valid* mention of December 25th was published in A.D. 354 by a Latin chronographer who mentions nothing concerning any “festive occasion” but, falsely, states the date of Jesus’ birth as being “on a Friday and the fifteenth day of the new moon” and links it to December 25th.

Many were speculating toward the close of the second century about the date of Jesus’ birth, and another of the “antenicene fathers,” Clement of Alexandria, mentions such speculations, condemning them all as mere superstition!

Interestingly enough, Clement maintained that many believed Jesus was born about the 20th of May or on the 19th or 20th of April! Clement himself leaned toward the 17th of November, 3 B.C.

It was not until A.D. 242 when an author of a Latin tract called “De Pascha Computus” believed that a connection began to be drawn between the festivities in honor of the “sun god” and the birthday of Jesus Christ as “the Sun of Righteousness.”

The author argued that, since the world was created perfect, it must have been created in the *springtime* with all the flowers in bloom and trees in leaf, and also at the equinox, with the moon created as in its full stage. Continuing his reasoning, and following the creation account of Genesis 1 (that the moon and the sun were “created” on a Wednesday), he

believed the 28th of March suited all these considerations. Since he referred to Jesus Christ as “the Sun of Righteousness,” he deduced Christ must have been born on the 28th of March, and claimed “private revelation” for this amazing discovery!

It was apparently on such grounds that early Latins (in about 354) transferred the birthday of Jesus from the 6th of January to the 25th of December. The Latins called the 25th of December “Natalis invicti solis,” or the birthday of the “unconquered son.” Siprian called Jesus Christ “sol verus,” or “the true sun.” Ambrose spoke of Jesus as “Sol novus noster,” or “our unique sun.” Many other writers of this period waxed eloquent, utilizing such rhetoric in supposed honor of Jesus Christ, linking him to the “sun” of the heavens.

Syrians and Armenians clung to the 6th of January as the alleged birthday of Jesus Christ, and accused the Romans of sun worship and idolatry, saying that their feast on the 25th of December had been invented by disciples of Serinthis.

With the gradual growth and development of the Roman Catholic Church, the “great patriarchs” of Constantinople, Rome, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and elsewhere expressed various opinions concerning the celebration of “Christian” feasts (such as Epiphany and others). Several writers from A.D. 375 to 450, including Basil, Jerome and Epiphanius, contrasted the new festival being observed around December 25th with those celebrating the baptism of Jesus which was regarded “as a birth according to the spirit.” Apparently, the earliest acceptance of December 25 as “Christ’s birthday” occurred in the West and traveled eastward from there. It was about A.D. 400, in Rome, that an imperial writing included Christmas among the three important feasts of Christendom (the other two being “Easter” and “Epiphany”) and said theaters must be closed on those days.

Christmas was not made “official” in the so-called Holy Roman Empire until A.D. 534. Bishop Juvenal did not officially introduce the festival of the birth of Christ on the 25th of December in Jerusalem until A.D. 440! At about the same time, the festival was established in Alexandria. Actually, the grounds upon which the church introduced the Christmas festival as a “Christmas feast” (which until then had been completely *unknown*) are found in arguments over adult and infant baptism!

The transition from adult to infant baptism was proceeding rapidly in the East, and had nearly been completed in the West. It was believed, previously, that the divine life in Jesus dated *from His baptism*, which naturally led to the regarding of Epiphany (celebration of Christ’s

baptism) as the festival in honor of Jesus' "spiritual rebirth." With the gradual adoption of infant baptism, this concept had to be altered.

Therefore, the earlier custom which had prevailed for hundreds of years, i.e., the linkage *together* with the physical, fleshly birth of Christ and His "spiritual rebirth" on *Epiphany*, or the celebration of Christ's *baptism*, was abandoned, and it was now easier to separate the two events, celebrating one occasion of His *physical birth*, or "Christmas," and His "spiritual rebirth," or "Epiphany."

The ancient British writer Bede proves that in Britain the 25th of December was a festival *long before* the conversion of the British Isles to "Christianity." He said, "The ancient peoples of the Angli began the year on the 25th of December when we now celebrate the birth of the Lord; and the very night which is so holy to us, they called in their tongue 'the Mother's night' by reason we suspect of the ceremonies which in that night-long vigil they performed." As late as 1644, the Puritan movement in England forbade any merriment or religious services on December 25th by an act of Parliament! Their grounds were that it was a *heathen* festival, and they ordered, instead, that the Puritans *fast* on that day!

Those who suppose Jesus' birthday was known, that the events depicted in the early chapters of Matthew and Luke were "the first Christmas," and who confidently and ignorantly assume that Jesus' birthday was celebrated on December 25th down through the ages, are utterly and totally deceived!

The process of gradually adopting the ancient pagan rituals of the *Saturnalia*, on the 25th of December, and calling it the "birthday of Jesus Christ," span hundreds and hundreds of years, and is thoroughly *condemned* of God in the Bible!

There is no mention *whatever* in any New Testament passage that early Christians took any note of the date of Jesus' birth, or held any celebrations in honor of that day. Rather, the Bible carefully *conceals* the date of Jesus' birth, for God never *intended* that His birthday be an important "Christian" festival!

While the FACT of His birth was an event of great importance, the *date* was hidden!

Mistletoe

Mistletoe is a species *Viscum*, of a botanical family called the *Loranthaceae*. The entire genus is parasitical, containing about twenty species, distributed throughout many parts of the world. The parasite commonly used in connection with Christmastime is a native of Europe and England, forming an evergreen bush thickly crowded with forking

branches and opposite leaves, and small, whitish berries filled with a viscous semitransparent pulp.

In ancient Scandinavian legend, mistletoe figured in the fable about Balder (the sun god) being slain by the blind god Hoeder, with an arrow furnished from mistletoe. It is the ancient Scandinavian word for the plant which is retained in the English pronunciation "mistletoe." Pliny writes that mistletoe was held in reverence by the Druids, the pagan priests of ancient Scotland, who prepared the pulp into a draft and used it as a cure for *sterility*.

In any event, the use of a *parasite* for decoration in the northern hemisphere was perhaps natural to these pagans, for whole forests of deciduous trees lay naked of their leaves in December, and except for conifers and holly, there were few green things to be seen. Along with other winter-blooming plants of the northern hemisphere, mistletoe produces its berries *in the winter*."

The Christmas Dinner

It is only natural that festive celebrations stemming from ancient paganism would feature lavish banquets. This custom was known in every ancient society, from Babylon to Rome. However, both riotous orgies (as we have seen, even the word "yule" meant *clamor*, or *noise*, for the riotous nature of the festival) and *abstinence*, such as *fasting*, are found in history in association with the winter solstice of the sun.

In Eastern Europe, roast goose is often served as a famous Christmas dinner. In Scandinavia, various forms of puddings or pastry are featured, and in the United States the custom usually includes goose or turkey. In ancient Yugoslavia, the Serbs sacrificed and then ate roast *pig* in honor of their "Bozhitch," their name for the *sun god*, whose name in modern Serbia means "Christmas."

Traditional Christmas dinners in the Western nations are only natural improvisations of modern times, though these too have pagan origins. There is nothing "wrong" with a family dinner! There is certainly nothing "wrong" with a turkey dinner! But doing it *at a specific time*, for a *specific purpose*, in association with all the paraphernalia of paganism, is a different matter entirely!

The Exchanging of Gifts

It is supposed our modern custom of *exchanging gifts* comes from the fact that the Magi arrived at Jesus' birth site bearing "gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

From this tradition, it is supposed there were *three* wise men!

Actually, *Satan the devil* is a member of a famous “triumvirate,” since there are only *three* archangels mentioned in the Bible: Lucifer, Michael and Gabriel. God the Father and Christ the Son represent *duality* in the Godhead, and the principle of *duality*, not a three-way form of government or a triumvirate, is represented throughout creation. (Write for the booklet *God is Not a Trinity*, for further study).

There are two sexes, two magnetic poles, and man is designed with two eyes, two arms, two legs, etc.

There is “the first man Adam and the second man Adam” (I Corinthians 15), and *duality* is illustrated throughout the Bible. There are the former and the latter prophets, physical and spiritual Israel, physical birth and spiritual rebirth, the old and the new covenants, and type and antitype!

Though Christmas carols speak of “the three wise men,” there could have been twelve, twenty or even one hundred twenty or more!

It is supposed there were three only because *three categories* of gifts are mentioned. The *amounts* of those gifts are not specified.

Notice, however, that these priests (they may have been priests of the religion of Zoroaster) gave their gifts *directly to CHRIST!* In honor of the newly born King of the universe, they paid homage to Jesus as a *King*, by presenting *HIM*, not *each other*, with gifts.

How *ludicrous* it would have seemed if, after arriving in the house where the young child was, the Magi had *turned their backs on Jesus*, began noisily partaking at the Tom and Jerry bowl, slapping one another on the back and singing drunken carols, and then began exchanging their gifts *among themselves!*

Yet, that is *precisely* what the professing “Christian” world does today!

Completely IGNORING Jesus Christ of Nazareth and *His work*, they frantically rush about, withdrawing an annual savings account and spending a great deal of money (which oftentimes they cannot afford) and *exchange gifts* among themselves.

Finally—Whose Opinion Counts?

Over the years, I have gotten a few pieces of “hate mail” from outraged mothers and housewives who accuse me of “taking away Christmas” from their children!

Plaintive and wistful bits of nostalgic Americana would be included, such as what Christmas *meant* in the memories of these young mothers; recalling their childhood fantasies concerning Santa Claus, the big family dinners with grandparents present, the excitement of going to bed

knowing the first thing they would do in the morning was rush to the mantle to see if their sock was filled with candy and toys; gathering around the Christmas tree to open gifts; or even such memories as sewing together strings of popcorn and other homemade Christmas tree decorations.

To these few, I was the “Grinch” of the famous Christmas tale who “stole Christmas.” If it is our childhood recollections and the *opinions of babes* that really *count*, then I suppose all these arguments are valid.

But if Almighty God, the Creator who gives us every breath of air we breath, *thunders* from His high heavens that these man-made pagan customs are an *abomination* in His sight, then perhaps *His* opinion should count!

What about you? Do you believe and *know*, in your heart, that your Creator God *does exist?*

Is He *real* to you?

Does it make any difference in your life whether or not you *please* God, or whether you please your little children with *lies*, fables, fairy tales and paganism? God says, “hear ye the word which the Eternal speaks unto you, O house of Israel:

“Thus says the Eternal, *learn not the way of the heathen*, and be not dismayed at the *signs of heaven* [such as the winter solstice!], for the *heathen* are dismayed in them.

“For the customs of the people are *vain*: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.

“They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not” (Jeremiah 10:1-4).

In *spite* of this plain command of God, *millions* of professing “Christians” will journey into the forest, or go to the parking lots and shopping centers where millions upon millions of young conifers are sold, carrying them home and gaily decorating them with bits of tinsel as if with silver and gold; or brightly colored orbs and bulbs representing the ancient signs of fertility.

Millions of parents will tell tiny children about “Santa Claus,” little realizing they are perpetuating an ancient myth, and *concealing* from their children the real *truth of God*, by supplanting it with a fable.

Instead of being told about the Creator God and the soon-coming Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who will rend the heavens and come to earth as *conquering King*; or about King David, Moses, Daniel, Samson, or the apostle Paul, millions of tiny children are led to believe that the *kindest*, friendliest, most generous and most *interesting* character in the universe is the elfish “Santa Claus,” who allegedly dwells at the North Pole,

making toys all year round, and then on Christmas eve, supposedly visits countless millions upon millions of homes within only hours, transported about by his reindeer, including "Donner and Blitzen," with Rudolph and his famous red nose leading the way!

Millions of fathers will quietly sneak into closets and other hiding places, bringing out presents for their delighted children to "discover" on Christmas morning, and then *lie* to their children and say "Santa" brought them.

Thus is the ancient pagan custom kept alive year by year as young parents, equipped with their own childhood memories, perpetuate the myth.

As unbelievable as it may seem, *thousands know better*. But they fear *what people should say*; fearing the scorn of other *people* who might notice they have no Christmas tree or gaily decorated lawns and eaves this year, and question them about it!

To these people, it is clear *whose opinion counts!*

It is the opinion of tiny children, or the opinion of so-called "friends" and neighbors!

When, in the lives of *millions* of professing "Christians," will the opinion of Jesus Christ and God the Father truly count?

Years ago, it was said that one disgruntled little fellow, terribly upset when he finally learned (as all children eventually do) there *was no Santa Claus*, reportedly said, "Well, I guess I'd better look into this 'Jesus Christ' business too!"

About the Church of God International

This literature is published by the Church of God International, based in Tyler, Texas. Incorporated in 1978, the CGI has ministers and congregations scattered throughout the United States and Canada. We also have churches in Jamaica, the Philippines, and Australia.

The CGI's mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world (Matthew 28:19). We are blessed with four basic tools to accomplish this:

- 1. Personal and local church evangelism.*
- 2. Television and radio broadcasting.*
- 3. Booklets, brochures, and study tapes.*
- 4. The Internet.*

How You Can Help

All our materials and services are offered to the public free of charge. Many naturally ask us how we can afford to send out thousands of booklets and study tapes each month. The answer is simple.

On a regular basis, prayerful friends and members of the Church of God International voluntarily support us with tithes and offerings to further the advancement of the gospel to the world. No financial obligation is ever demanded, but if you are moved to support this work of God, donations are gratefully accepted at the addresses listed. (Contributions in the United States and Canada are tax deductible.) Giving to and through us is an effective way for people like you to help spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.