

**The
Case
Against
Christmas**

You Must Decide

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*This exhaustive study has been republished from **The Sacred Name Broadcaster** magazine, a monthly publication that boldly proclaims the sound doctrines of Bible Truth. Additionally, the feature section of each issue makes an application by relating the biblical Word to the times in which we are now living. You may request a free subscription by writing to:*

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The Case Against Christmas

The summer season has drawn to a blissful end. Fall's colorful days gradually yield to a drab gloominess of winter. What can be done to alleviate the hardship of the depressingly cold weather, the short days, and being shut up indoors? Will the sun ever return north again to reheat the earth, and to rejuvenate the dead vegetation?

The ancient pagan people were very superstitious. They believed that the sun was leaving them when the fall of the year approached. Was this the end of the world? Would the penetrating cold ever subside to give way again to the warmth of summer? It seemed no one could predict with reliability that the earth would recover from such depressing darkness and cold. When the shortest day of the year arrived, things looked very bleak and dismal.

Consequently, many superstitious practices and customs began to attach themselves to the winter solstice. This is the term applied to the shortest day of the year, when the sun seemingly stands still in the southern heavens, and then begins a new journey north.

To encourage the sun's return,

by

Elder Jacob O. Meyer

traditions such as building bonfires, decorating with evergreen plants such as holly, ivy, and mistletoe, making representations of summer birds as decorations around the house, reminded people steeped in mythology of the hope that the sun would again return. The pagan peoples steeped in superstition sang to their mighty ones, imploring them to give them the new sun.

The Advent of Christmas

When the Messiah came into the world, He came to His own—the Jewish people (Hebrews 7:14). Alone, this enclave of religious people carried the torch of Truth in the midst of spiritual darkness and pagan decadence. His message was one of eternal salvation for sinful mankind. He came to tell the world that Almighty Yahweh had extended grace to all who were sincere. *Grace* means *unmerited kindness and mercy* from our Heavenly Father, the forgiveness of past sins, and an opportunity to begin a new life through the cleans-

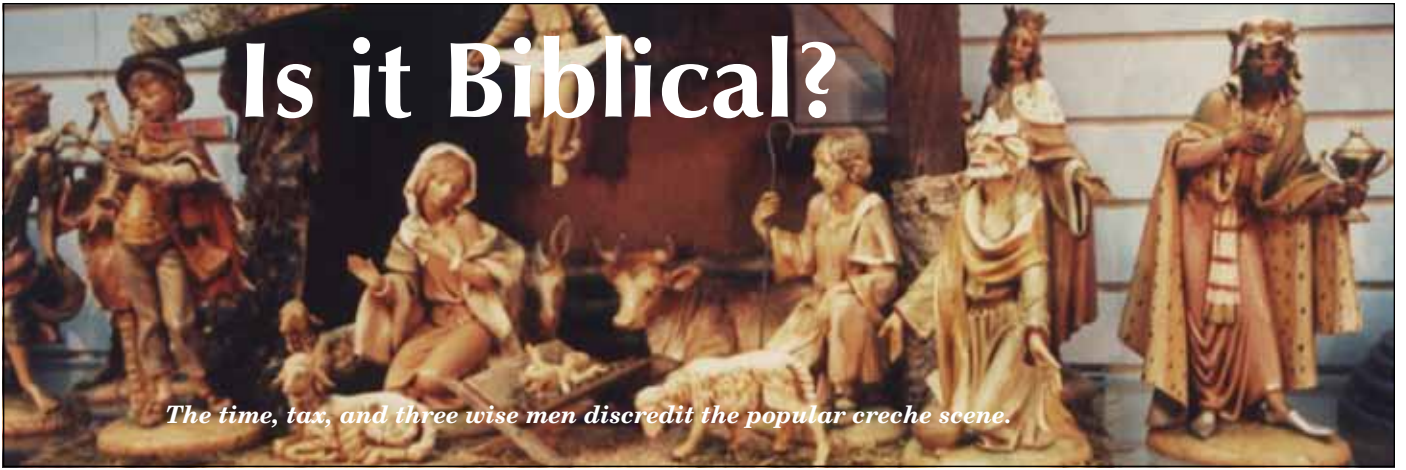
ing in the blood of Yahshua the Messiah. It means receiving a new life within through the power of the Holy Spirit of Yahweh and Yahshua the Messiah living in the heart of the converted believer.

The Apostolic Assembly began zealously to witness the Truth of the Messiah's advent to the world. They took this message into the far reaches of the known world. Especially outstanding was the Apostle Paul, who accomplished much through his extensive travels, preaching throughout the Roman Empire.

But a very strange thing took place. Ancient ethnic peoples could not maintain sound doctrine. The pagan people appropriated the account of the supernatural person of Yahweh's true Messiah, and superimposed His life upon their pagan customs and practices. Worldly people prefer their pagan practices, but they want salvation also.

Few people in the world, except diligent Bible students today, realize where the traditions of Christianity have originated. Very few people even care to learn. They want only to maintain the *status quo*. Pagan

Is it Biblical?



The time, tax, and three wise men discredit the popular creche scene.

traditions are pleasing to unconverted, sensual people. But, for the True Worshiper who desires to serve our Heavenly Father in Spirit and in Truth, we study, research, and compare the biblical account with what worldly religion practices. Astoundingly, the similarity between the recorded life of Yahshua the Messiah and the traditional observances of churchianity cannot be harmonized.

Why Celebrate Christmas?

With unreasoned abandon, the people of the Western World spend lavishly for gifts which they cannot afford. They indulge in parties featuring alcoholic beverages. They feast on a variety of seasonal delicacies. All of these traditional practices are done in the name of celebrating the birthday of the one they profess to be their King. As a matter of fact, the reverse is true. Through false doctrine, the Messiah becomes subservient to their own human concepts. Would Yahshua the Messiah approve of such loose conduct to celebrate His birth? Obviously not!

The traditional practices of nominal churchianity never find a foundational basis in the Scriptures. Decorative lights displayed upon colorfully trimmed Christmas trees, the hanging of evergreen leaves and mistletoe, are never mentioned in the sacred Scriptures, much less commanded. Holding a boar's head

festival, sending Christmas cards, and having midnight masses or church services on December 25 cannot be found anywhere in the sacred Word of Almighty Yahweh.

The Origin of the Name

The meaning of the word **Christmas** is a product of Roman Catholicism, and means *the mass of Christ*. Such a term is unscriptural. Without stopping to examine the root source of this observance, ministers cry out against the excesses of the winter holidays. Slogans appear, which urge that we should "Put Chr-st Back in Christmas." Actually, these well-meaning people are attacking the effect, rather than the cause. Strangely enough, ministers themselves have been known to capitalize on the holiday by urging that contributions be sent to them as a birthday present for the Savior.

Commercialism—That's the Game!

Commercialization of the observance of Christmas is appalling to knowledgeable people who view it objectively. At one time, a former president of the United States even went so far as to set the Thanksgiving observance ahead one week, so that a greater length of time could be devoted to Christmas shopping and, thereby, stimulate the economy. Throughout the winter holiday season, commercials on radio, tele-

vision, and advertisements in the newspapers, continue to drum away at urging the public to purchase their particular products as gifts. Credit is frequently extended until after the holidays—but the headaches and heartaches begin when the bills arrive.

If you are one of those people who wonder why you are forced to buy so many presents every year which strain your budget beyond its limit, or why your marriage almost disintegrated due to a wild office party, it should become imperative to investigate the observance of Christmas carefully. You may be surprised and alarmed with what you will learn if you follow the facts to their conclusion.

However, do not conclude that the opinions of a biased author are expressed in this article. The astounding fact remains that many of the answers to your questions can be found in an encyclopedia you may have in your own home! Authors readily admit to the intrinsic paganism of the modern Christmas observance. Even newspapers and other publications, and programs on radio or television will freely acknowledge the fact that the traditional practices of Christmas are proven to trace from ancient, pagan, superstitious mythology. Why, then, do people who profess to believe in the Bible engage in them? Why practice obvious paganism and then refuse to obey what is clearly commanded in the Bible?

When Was the Messiah Born?

The primary point at which to begin our study is to prove the day of the Messiah's human birth. Generally people will state that no one knows for certain the day when He was born, so we can choose a day that suits us to celebrate His birthday. Your Bible never mentions the specific day of His birth, so it is true that no one knows for certain when He was born. Nowhere can you find within the pages of your Bible any statement designating a certain date for the Messiah's birth.

Actually, the diligent Bible student already knows that nowhere within the pages of our Bibles can you ever find any commandment to observe a birthday, especially that of the Messiah. As a matter of fact, three times birthdays are mentioned in the Bible, and on each of these occasions a violent death occurred. Please verify this from Genesis 40:9-22, Job 1:4 and 19, and Matthew 14:3-12.

The celebration of birthdays was unknown in primitive Judaism, so it is certain that the Messiah never celebrated His birthday. Apparently Almighty Yahweh did not wish it to be observed, and, consequently, we can readily understand the reason for omitting mention of a specific day in the Scriptures.

But such omission did not deter Christian theologians from establishing a day on which to observe the Messiah's birthday. Would you believe they actually broke the Law

of Yahweh by adding to His Word? With impunity they invented doctrines to justify their unscriptural practices. Please read Deuteronomy 4:2, Proverbs 30:6, and Revelation 22:18-19. How can any man sanctify a day which our Heavenly Father has not sanctioned?

Many times authors will confess sheepishly that December 25 is not the Messiah's birthday. Did you know that it was over 200 years after the birth of the Messiah before anyone ever fixed December 25 as His birthday? Apparently the first one to set the date of December 25 for the Savior's birth was Julius Sextus Africanus, a historian from Alexandria, Egypt, who composed a chronicle of events of the world to 221 Common Era. Did you notice that date? It took historians two and a quarter centuries after the Messiah's birth to decide upon the date of December 25 as His birthday.

Competing closely with this historian are two other accounts. The first one is thought to be spurious, and found in the work of Theophilus of Antioch (Common Era 171-183). The second is Hippolytus' **Commentary on Daniel** (Common Era 202).

Apostolic Fathers Resisted Christmas at Winter Solstice

Nevertheless, various sincere patriarchs in the Apostolic Assembly

continued to resist observing the Messiah's birthday on December 25. As late as 245 C.E., Origen declared that it was a very sinful act to celebrate the birthday of the Messiah as though He were a King Pharaoh.

Clement of Alexandria mentions several accounts of setting Messiah's birth date, and condemns them as superstitions. He says some chronologists allege that His birth occurred in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus, on the twenty-fifth of Thoon, the Egyptian month (the twentieth of May). Chrysostom, in a sermon he preached in Antioch on December 20th, 386 or 388 C.E., says that some believe the feast of December 25 to have been first held in the west, and then it spread quickly eastward from Thrace as far as Caddus. Notice the lack of agreement and gross confusion between these writers.

Gradually, as time continued on, in the post-Nicene era, the pagan corruption of assimilating unscriptural doctrines to please unconverted people and, thereby, gain numbers, introduced into the Apostolic Assembly a substantial admixture of paganism.

All of these historical declarations should alert the truth seeker to ask probing questions. If there was such widespread disagreement among the post-Nicene fathers regarding when the Savior was born,

Is it Biblical?

Tradition states that the flocks of Israel were grazing in open fields at the end of December. However, this is biblically proven to be untrue.



we should scrutinize the origin of December 25 very carefully. Perhaps we should go along with one authority who straightforwardly declared that the earliest mention of December 25 as the day of the Savior's birth was in C.E. 354, placed in a popular Latin chronograph without justification.

The Messiah Not Born December 25

Several scriptural passages prove that the Messiah could not have been born in the winter, on December 25th.

The first point to prove this can be ascertained from the priestly courses. As recorded in Luke chapter 1, the succession of the orders of the priestly service militate against the winter birth of Yahshua the Messiah.

Zachariah the Priest was a member of the course or section of AbiYah. If we calculate correctly, the Messiah would have been **conceived** around the middle of December, rather than being born at that time. Such information is quite staggering, when you realize that Luke pinpoints the time of

the conception of John to have occurred two months after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which occurs in the spring. The course of AbiYah was the eighth priestly section to serve in the Temple, 1 Chronicles 24:10. These priests served eight weeks after the conclusion of the spring sacred season.

Additionally, Luke records that when the Messiah was born, a taxation had been imposed. The Roman government ordered all of the people to appear in their native cities to register for the census, Luke 2:1-3. The Jews were very sensitive people. Their nation was, at that time, occupied by Roman military authorities, which they hated. Had those Israelites been forced to leave their homes in the dead of winter to pay a resented tax, a full-scale rebellion would have been launched by this subjugated nation. Less than two centuries previously, the Jews had rebelled against the hated rule of Antiochus Epiphanes and his Syrian army. They were known to have coerced Roman occupation forces in later times to capitulate before their demands. They were tenacious fighters, as the resistance

of the Masada defenders (only 70 years later) will testify.

Messiah's Birth Not in Winter

The common month of December, today, falls after the Jewish month called *Marchesvan* (the scriptural Hebrew name is *Bul*). During this month animals are not pastured in the fields. Soon after the Feast of Tabernacles, the cold, rainy season begins. Sheep and cattle were driven to the homes of their owners, and sheltered in folds during the night. No shepherd or herdsman encamped in the fields with his flocks during the rainy season.

The following is a quote from **The Two Babylons** (Chapter 3, Article *Festivals*), "At the time that the angel announced His birth to the shepherds of Bethlehem, they were feeding their flocks by night in the open fields. Now, no doubt, the climate of Palestine is not so severe as the climate of this country; but even there, though the heat of the day be considerable, the cold of the night, from December to February, is very piercing, and it was not the

custom for the shepherds of Judea to watch their flocks in the open fields later than about the end of October.”

Yet another quote from this article says, *“The first rain falls in the month Marchesvan, which answers to the latter part of our October and the former part of November... From whence it appears that [the Messiah] must be born before the middle of October, since the first rain was not yet come.”*

Here we discover accurate historical information set forth by an objective writer. Ample proof that the Messiah was not born during the dead of winter, but at a time when shepherds were still grazing their flocks out in the fields near Bethlehem, can be read in Luke chapter 2.

Undoubtedly these shepherds were grazing their flocks in fields already harvested, but not yet replanted with the new crop. The Greek word used for field is **agros**, and means *a field in the country*. Planting began after the fall rains arrived to moisten the soil for cultivation.

A major point not to be overlooked

here is that churchianity believes the Messiah was born in an inn stable because there was no room in the inn. Actually, it is not stated that the Messiah was born in a stable, but that He was laid in a manger after his birth.

Such a huge throng of people moving simultaneously would be descriptive of the great crowds of feast day observers who pressed into the Jerusalem area. Remember, Bethlehem is about five miles south of Jerusalem. The vast crowds described in the New Testament had not traveled exclusively to register for the census. They were traveling to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem; those who lived at a distance from their ancestral homes registered enroute.

The mere fact that the Messiah was born somewhere other than in a house would, in itself, necessitate our looking for a time of moderate temperatures. Yahshua’s parents would hardly have jeopardized His health by sleeping in such primitive surroundings. Certainly they could have been accommodated somewhere in a dwelling by the

innkeeper, or relatives, or some concerned inhabitant of Bethlehem, if the weather had been inclement, as it usually is during the winter months. But Joseph, unable to find hostel accommodations for his wife, perhaps pitched a tent (tabernacle) along the way, and the Messiah was born there that night.

The Roman authorities would have planned for their taxation registration to take place in the fall of the year. At that time the summer harvest had been sold. They would not have imposed a tax when poor people would have found it difficult to obtain currency during the off season.

Logically, the only timeframe suitable to accommodate all facts of evidence concerning when our Savior was born would be the fall of the year. The crops had been harvested, people were traveling to the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem anyway, the weather was still agreeable enough to impose no extreme hardship upon the women and children, and revenue was readily available to pay the tax. All of these points combined will direct the Bible student to focus his attention upon the fall of the year, around the annual feast days of the seventh month which are legislated in Leviticus 23.

It is then no coincidence that we should encounter the confirmation of John 1:14, where **The Sacred Scriptures, Bethel Edition**, translates; ***“And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.”*** Yahshua the Messiah took upon Himself a human existence. He came to tabernacle (live temporarily) with the human family He was appointed to save.

Frequently, at the winter holiday season, we discover obvious similarities between the Christmas traditions and the ancient Roman Saturnalia. When we understand that this ancient Roman observance



Christmas Traditions Reflect Ancient Saturnalia

was celebrated close to the winter solstice, the association between Christmas and the feast of the ancient pagans becomes more obvious.

December 25th has been celebrated as a holiday in pagan worship from antiquity. In fact, one of the names given to the Saturnalia series of royal festivals in mythology was *Paganalia*! Possibly this is the origin of the term *Pagan Worship*, that is often conferred upon false, unscriptural worship of any kind. Please see **Larousse's Encyclopedia of Mythology**, page 219.

The Saturnalia was a festival popular in ancient Rome, and observed for a duration of from five to seven days, beginning with December 17. This pagan festival was characterized by unrestrained festivity. It began with a religious ceremony to honor Saturn, which was followed by an immense, gluttonous feast. The etymology of the name *Saturn* means *abundance*.

People often took precautions to bathe before the festivities began in the morning, so they could spend the entire day eating and drinking. Slaves were given liberty during this time, and, often, were served by their masters at the feast. Public affairs were generally suspended. Courts did not sit. Schools were closed. Commercial and all military activities were suspended (does that sound like a familiar celebration?).

From the **McClintock and**

Strong's Bible Cyclopedia article **Christmas**, we find the following: "*Prynne says, in his strong way (in *Histrion-Mastix*), 'Our Christmas lords of misrule, together with dancing, masks, mummeries, stage-players, and such other Christmas disorders, now in use with Christians, were derived from these Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalian festivals, which should cause all pious Christians to eternally abominate them.'*"

At the Saturnalia, among the dishes most often served for breakfast and supper on Christmas eve was a boar's head stuck with rosemary, with an apple or an orange in the mouth, plum porridge, and minced pies. How strange it is that such customs, which today are traditional to the Christmas celebration, were conceived originally by pagan worshipers to honor their false, idol, mighty ones. This just couldn't be coincidental, as some of the apologists declare.

Note also the reference to masks and mummeries, today depicted in the Pasadena Rose Parade, and the Philadelphia Mummers Parade. Could the True Worshipers take part in such idolatrous revelry when the facts stand proven that these traditions were invented to honor pagan idols? Absolutely not! If we wish to please Almighty Yahweh, we must evict every vestige of idolatry from our spiritual lives (Revelation 18:4).

Pork and Christmas

Traditionally, hogs were slaughtered, and the eating of the carcass was one of the central festivities of the Saturnalia. **Encyclopedia Britannica**, 11th Edition, under the article **Saturnalia**, states that each man offered a pig. The reason given for this sacrifice was that a boar was said to have killed the sun deity Adonis. Today, Christians still, traditionally, eat pork (ham) on Christmas day and New Year's Day.

During the Saturnalia, distinctions of rank were laid aside (obviously the origin of informal office parties). Gambling with dice, illegal at other times, was now allowed. All classes exchanged gifts. The most frequent gifts were waxed tapers and clay dolls.

Christmas Dolls

Have you ever wondered why giving little girls dolls as gifts at Christmas is so traditional? Pay special attention to the following quote from the **Encyclopedia Britannica**, 11th Edition, article **Saturnalia**. "*These dolls were especially given to children, and the makers of them held a regular fair at this time. Varro thought these dolls REPRESENTED ORIGINAL SACRIFICES OF HUMAN BEINGS to the infernal g-d. There was, as we have seen, a tradition that hu-*

man sacrifices were once offered to Saturn, and the Greeks and Romans gave the name of Cronus and Saturn to a cruel Phoenician Baal, to whom, e.g. children were sacrificed at Carthage." It may be conjectured that the Saturnalia was originally a celebration of the winter solstice. Hence, the legend that it was instituted by Romulus under the name of Brumalia (**bruma** = winter solstice). The prominence given to candles at the festival points to the custom of making a new fire at this time.

How utterly horrifying are these statements from renowned research materials. You may see them for yourself by obtaining the use of the research volumes to which we refer, or look in your own dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Think about it. Society has been guilty of perpetuating the memory of human sacrifice with our contemporary traditions like giving Christmas dolls to little girls. That should chill us to the very bone! How do you think Almighty Yahweh views such base activities that occur at this time of year? Do you suppose He smiles benignly on such abominable practices, even though the people who hang tenaciously to the customs hide their idolatry innocently by saying, "It's only for the kids."

Origin of Christmas Gifts

Incidentally, the giving of gifts by the wise men for the Savior (Matthew chapter 2) has no connection whatever with the current gift-giving, as we have already seen. The wise men arrived weeks after the Messiah's birth. He was then living in a house, Matthew 2:11. There is no commandment in the Bible that we should give gifts to other people to celebrate the birthday of the Messiah. The wise men gave their gifts to Him after He was born, just as many people today give the family of a newborn infant gifts to assist in raising the child. Christmas presents do not emulate the wise men's gifts, but

the biblical episode only serves to lend credence to a pagan custom.

Now read Revelation 11:10 in this context. This prophecy deals with the time in the near future when the two witnesses will be executed for their testimony. We should fear Almighty Yahweh and not men. By eliminating from our worship such evil customs as these, let that catharsis be complete, so that we shall offer pure worship to Almighty Yahweh, our Heavenly Father, at all times. The wise men were not necessarily practicing sound doctrine with their gifts since they were of pagan background.

Sun Worship Holiday— December 25

Historians have clearly established that December 25th was anciently a pagan sun worship observance. Let us view the following quote carefully.

"The choice of December 25 was probably influenced by the fact that on this day the Romans celebrated the Mithraic feast of the Sun-g-d (natalis solis invicti), and that the Saturnalia also came at this time." (Article, **Christmas, Collier's Encyclopedia**).

Almost every reference work confirms, without hesitation, that holiness attached to the December 25th celebration does not come from the Bible, but must be traced to ancient idolatrous sun worship.

For example, the following quote comes from the article **Christmas**, in the **Encyclopedia Britannica**, 11th Edition. *"In Britain the 25th of December was a festival long before the conversion to Christianity, for Bede (De temp. rat. ch. 13) relates that 'the ancient peoples of the Angli began the year on the 25th of December when we now celebrate the birthday of the [Messiah]; and the very night which is now so holy to us, they called in their tongue modranecht (môdra niht), that is, the mothers' night, by reason we suspect of the ceremonies which in that*

night-long vigil they performed."

When secular writers join with the ecclesiastical writers to label the observance of Christmas as totally pagan, should not the True Worshiper, who wants to serve the Heavenly Father faithfully, feel deep revulsion? When they freely acknowledge that the Savior's birth never occurred on December 25th, should we then perpetuate such a gigantic hoax and outright falsehood? If you have wondered why a myth like Santa Claus, with such prevaricated deception that accompanies it, could have taken firm hold on society, you should now be able to discern that the entire observance is false from start to finish.

Yahshua the Messiah was never born on December 25th. Observance of the winter solstice was derived entirely from ancient pagan superstitions. Christmas is not named in the Scriptures. It has never been sanctified by Almighty Yahweh. Mankind cannot make it holy, however fervently the people observe it.

Further Historical Proof

In his book **The Golden Bough**, Sir James George Frazer makes the following candid statement. *"What considerations led the ecclesiastical authorities to institute the festival of Christmas? The motives for the innovation are stated in great frankness by a Syrian writer, himself a Christian. 'The reason,' he tells us, 'why the fathers transferred the celebration of the sixth of January to the 25th of December was this. It was a custom of the heathen to celebrate on the same 25th of December the birthday of the sun, at which time they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians also took part. Accordingly, when doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true nativity should be solemnized on that day, and the festival of Epiphany on the*

6th of January. Accordingly, along with this custom, the practice has prevailed of kindling of fires till the 6th."

Why should the apostolic Faith of Yahshua the Messiah capitulate before the onslaught of paganism? Somewhere along in the years intervening between the Messiah's day and the era of Constantine, nevertheless, this abominable corruption set in. Rather than teach and stand firmly for the truth, the elders apparently allowed error into the apostolic worship, undoubtedly to gain numbers, freely mixing error with truth. However, such deviation will never be blessed by Yahweh. By this pagan practice the entire structure of Messianic worship was weakened until, today, the Christian church can hardly be recognized as Messiah's Body.

Today, the heathen practice of kindling fires to encourage the sun is symbolized by colored lights and candles, perhaps a yule log burning on the hearth. The twelve days of Christmas extend now from December 25th to January 5th, with the sixth day of January being a separate festival, Epiphany.

From this same passage in **The Golden Bough**, Frazer shows that Augustine and Leo the Great both explained away the concept that the sun was being worshiped, although they admitted tacitly in their writings that many "Christians" were given to associate the **SUN** with the **SON**.

Can you see how many of the traditions, which have clung so tenaciously to contemporary religion, are exposed by these noted authors as the heathen practices they really are?

Mithraism and Christmas

Many people who have no religious inclinations whatever, fervently celebrate Christmas. Previously we have uncovered mention of the association of Mithra worship

to the Christmas celebration. Let us take a closer look at it.

The worship of Mithra was especially popular with the Roman legions, which explains why the Christmas celebration became so widely popular in the Western World. Additionally, it explains why it is so popular with people who have no interest in the Faith of the Scriptures.

Mythology depicted Mithra in the act of sacrificing a bull. Above the head of the idol appeared the chariot of the sun (2 Kings 23:11), linking him closely to sun worship. From the blood of the bull which was being sacrificed sprang up luxurious plant growth, depicting the warm sun causing vegetation to grow. His worship was actually a fertility rite, according to **Larousse's Encyclopedia of Mythology**.

The etymology of this name, **Mithra**, means *friend*, but it could also mean *dead ruler*, which is what happened on December 25th at the winter solstice (the sun standing still). The old sun ended its southward journey and, seemingly, a new sun was born. The worship of Mithra was the veneration of light, calling attention to the unconquerable sun (**sol invictus**).

Another notable characteristic which appealed to the Roman soldiers was that Mithra worshipers were called *soldiers of the faith*. This term led to a belligerent attitude among the devotees of Mithra, especially suitable to the Roman army. The Roman army considered themselves invincible, just like the sun which was accounted to be invincible also. Here, apparently, is a direct tie-in to Constantine and the vision he is supposed to have had: **in hoc signo vinces** (in this sign conquer).

Ignorant ethnic peoples were attracted to nature worship, and, thereby, we may discover some of the superstitious origins of pagan worship. Sadly, in this modern day of enlightenment, the old heathen customs continue to shackle the

people of this world, who blindly stumble toward the judgment of Almighty Yahweh. They never question whether traditional practices are scriptural.

In Frazer's **The Golden Bough** we find the following quote: "*Now Mithra was regularly identified by his worshipers with the sun, the unconquered sun, as they called him; hence, his nativity also fell on the 25th of December.*"

Our research has led us to discover that **many** different mighty ones of the nations had their birthdays on December 25th. Almighty Yahweh never intended that we celebrate the birthday of His Son, Yahshua the Messiah, but, rather, that we remember His death each year at Passover time. Those pagan deities were "Saviors" which could not save. But we worship Almighty Yahweh and His Son, Yahshua the Messiah. It is His shed blood that will save us, not the celebration of His birth.

From **McClintock and Strong's Bible Cyclopedia**, article *Mithra*, comes the following quote: "*The most important of his many festivals was his birthday, celebrated on the 25th of December, the day subsequently fixed—against all evidence—as the birthday of [the Messiah]. In the early days of the [Messianic assembly] it was not an uncommon occurrence to find an apologist of the inspired teacher laying undue stress on some points of resemblance between Mithraism and [Messianic worship], and thus the triumphant march of the latter was much retarded. In modern times Christian writers have been again induced to look favorably upon the assertion that some of our ecclesiastical usages (e.g. the institution of the Christmas festival) originated in the cultus of Mithraism. Some writers, who refuse to accept the [Messianic] religion as of supernatural origin, have even gone so far as to institute a close comparison with the founder of [the Apostolic Assembly]... The ablest reply to these theories we have from*

Is it Biblical?

A harmless custom? Yahweh declares, "Learn not the way of the nations." (Jeremiah 10:2).

Creuzer and Hardwick."

Where did the merger of truth and error lead the theological world? The Truth of Yahweh has been brought into disrespect (Romans 1), and people have become confused. But knowing that the Messiah was not born on December 25, and that the pagan traditions attached to this observance and applied to Him are faulty, you may personally reject the error and return to sound doctrine. We can prove that True Worship from the Scriptures is supernatural and true.

Again, from the same article in **McClintock and Strong's Bible Cyclopedia** comes the following quote: *"From Persia the cultus of Mithra and the mysteries were imported into Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, etc., and it is not unlikely that in some parts human sacrifices were connected with this worship. In the days of the emperors the worship of Mithra found its way into Rome, and thence into the different parts of the Roman empire."*

Historians have shown that the origin of the Christmas festival is rooted in pagan Mithraism. Since this corrupt worship held that gratification of the physical was a high motive, it caught on at various places, soon spreading to the limits of the Roman Empire. History records that paganism strongly opposed the Messianic religion. That opposition was eventually put to rest by Constantine, who combined the religions of his realm into one. The reason for Sunday worship and the other Mithraic festivals in nominal

Christianity was because Constantine **merged** the Messianic worship with Mithraism and other unscriptural doctrines, thereby forming a new state religion, although such an action constituted an apostasy from the Messianic Faith.

We must never forget that as late as 375 C.E. (fifty years after the Council of Nicaea), elements of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5) still existed. They kept the scriptural seventh-day Sabbath, the feast days of Leviticus 23, and the other sound doctrines of the Bible, while maintaining a faith in Yahshua the Messiah. These dedicated believers, the remnants of the Apostolic Assembly of Jerusalem, had rejected the hybrid, false religion fostered by Constantine, holding tenaciously to the Faith which was once and for all time delivered to the saints of Yahweh, Judah 3.

Paganism Imitates Truth

The ancient pagan peoples saw the sun gradually moving south in the heavens and the days growing shorter. With their superstitious minds, they believed that the sun was departing never to return. By using decorations and religious ceremonies, they believed their devotion would influence the sun to return.

When they beheld the sun slowing down in its southward movement and then stopping, the heathen believed that their petition to it had been successful. A time of unrestrained rejoicing broke out. Feasting and revelry were indulged.

Drinking alcoholic beverages heightened the excitement.

Then when the pagans saw the sun moving again northward and, a week later, were able to determine that the days were growing longer, a new year was proclaimed. The ancient people were known to plant poles or stones in the earth to mark the shortest and longest days (Stonehenge in England, for example).

Our society today has not eliminated such pagan practices. The customs of our time closely emulate the practices of the pagans and such conduct is not biblical, although portions of the Sacred text are used to justify the modern celebrations. We must seriously question how Almighty Yahweh feels about this celebration. Jeremiah 10:1-10 gives us the answer.

The pagans, apparently, somewhat copy the festival Almighty Yahweh has legislated for the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:33-43). This is also an eight-day observance, but it is designated for worship, not revelry. It takes place at the end of the harvest season, while the pagan celebration of Christmas falls in the winter and is predicated upon heathen practices. Yahweh Himself has established the new year to fall in the spring, Exodus 12:2. To prove to yourself the confusion (Babylon) of the modern calendar, ask why the month of December (Latin, **Decem**=10) should be the 12th month. Needless to say, by keeping the scriptural calendar, marking time will correspond to Yahweh's wishes.

Christmas Traditions Trace to Nimrod

Doctor Hislop proves conclusively in his book **The Two Babylons**, that the boar slain at Christmas time represented ancient Nimrod. Essentially, the Christmas celebration can be traced to this arch-opponent of Yahweh, who is described in Genesis 10:8-12. Let us

Christmas Customs— Why Are They Popular?

see this clearly for ourselves.

Nimrod was such a wicked man that his great-uncle Shem is reported to have ordered his execution. After his demise, his wife Semiramis conceived and gave birth to a child, which she represented to be Nimrod reincarnated. The child was also called Tammuz. Consequently, Semiramis was both wife and mother to Nimrod.

The boar's head festival cannot be derived from the Word of Yahweh, since there is no scriptural direction for doing it. As a matter of fact, the biblical dietary laws plainly reject the eating of pork.

The meaning of the boar's head was that the tusk of a boar had killed Nimrod. Allegorically, ancient people held the boar's tusk to be "power in the mouth." Shem had used his influence verbally to turn Nimrod's people against his apostasy. Since Nimrod was considered to symbolize the Sun mighty one, it was supposed that a boar killed him. Since the sun (Adonis) dies at the winter solstice, the boar's head was eaten on the eve of December 25 (the evening of December 24th), signifying the death of the old sun, and the new sun Tammuz returns.

In recent years, some churches have resumed the abominable heathen practice of holding the boar's head service, in which a boar's head is taken into the church, and a service held over it. Such veneration of

the head of an unclean animal must be extremely obnoxious to Almighty Yahweh. Read Isaiah chapters 65 and 66. The people who eat swine's flesh are sentenced to death by Almighty Yahweh (death by being consumed in fire, another symbol of pagan sun worship). Almighty Yahweh will turn pagan ideas against idolaters, Revelation 16:8-9.

When will mankind ever learn to read the inspired Scriptures and obey what they teach? When will they serve Almighty Yahweh, and refrain from clinging tenaciously to the pagan traditions of men? Eventually Yahweh's wrath will explode, and He will send Yahshua back to this earth in judgment. Repent now before it is too late! If you persist in idolatry you will certainly have your part in Gehenna, the lake burning with fire and brimstone (sulfur).

The Mother and Child

At the celebration of Christmas each year, you will observe the mother-and-child figures in the nativity scene frequently in use. Almost every pagan culture, however, yields the historical record of the veneration of a mother and child. This traces back to Nimrod, who was said to be reincarnated in his new son (sun), Tammuz.

How often have you heard the Christmas carol containing the phrase "Round yon virgin,

MOTHER AND CHILD?" Yahshua the Messiah was indeed born of a virgin. The Scriptures declare this to be a fact. Note Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:34. But, He was not born at the season of December 25th. Furthermore, why make an idol out of the Mother-and-Child crib nativity scene, anyway?

It was not the birth of Yahshua the Messiah that will save us, but His death upon the tree of Calvary and His righteous life which was lived as an example for us. A child cannot save the world, but the righteous, dynamic teacher of Nazareth will be the Captain of our salvation.

Christmas Trees

Have you ever puzzled over the reason why a pine tree is brought into the house at Christmas time and decorated with bright tinsel and lights? Nowhere can you find a command to do this in the Bible. This heathen custom also stems from the worship of Nimrod.

When Nimrod was executed by Shem (Noah's son) for his apostasy against Almighty Yahweh and His ruling Kingdom, he was depicted in mythology as a dead tree that had been cut down. Mythology represented him with the serpent symbol, Aescalapius (the life restorer), that twisted itself around the dead stump. By the side of the dead stump, a new tree springs

forth to life from the dead roots. Actually, we must remember that the serpent in the Bible stands for Satan the Devil, Revelation 12:9 and Genesis chapter 3.

This pagan mythology (the dead tree and a new shoot) symbolizes the dying sun, and the new sun restored to splendor at the December 25th solstice each year. Today, people, not knowing what they're doing, are perpetuating such heathen practices. The pine tree or evergreen represents the renewal of life; therefore, it is usually used.

Heathen people in the land of Canaan had also adopted tree worship, calling it the Asherah. This worship necessitated that a live tree, with the branches cut off, was carved into a phallic symbol. Sadly, the Israelites adopted this abominable worship (of the phallus) also, sometime after they entered the Land of Promise.

The word **Asherah** has been translated *Groves* in the **King James Version**. Absorbing this heathen worship was one of the reasons why Yahweh evicted the ten northern tribes from the Holy Land and sent them into Assyrian captivity, 2 Kings 17:10-12.

Judah also committed these abominations, 2 Kings 21:7, by erecting an abominable image (or Asherah) in the Temple of Yahweh. As we have shown in previous issues of **The Sacred Name Broadcaster**, this identical pagan image has been retained in the churches of nominal Christianity (a steeple), with each one trying to erect the highest and most magnificent one.

Tree Worship Condemned

Let us hear Almighty Yahweh speak to us in Jeremiah 10:2-8.

“Thus says Yahweh, Learn not the way of the nations, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the nations are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are vanity; for one

cuts 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 moves not. They are like a palm tree, of turned work, and speak not: they must necessarily be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.

“There is no one like you, O Yahweh; you are great, and your name is great in might. Who should not fear you, O King of the nations? For to you does it pertain; since among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their royal estate, there is no one like you. But they are together brutish and foolish: the instruction of idols! It is but a stock.”

The True Worshiper must never be apprehensive at the changes of the seasons or other signs in the heavens as are the pagan worshippers. We must serve and obey Yahweh, trusting Him for salvation. We must not become foolish and degenerate in our thinking by worshipping the creation rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). We shall serve the mighty King of the universe, Yahweh Elohim, and fear Him and His Son as the Creator of all.

Yahweh condemns tree worship with all its symbolism. Yet, how many people obey Him? Today the people of society continue to cut a tree out of the forest. Just like heathen, they bring it into the house and fix it in an upright position. They decorate it with silver and gold tinsel, placing upon it the lights used in Saturn and Mithra worship, idolatrous worship, similar to ancient times.

But how about an even more literal interpretation? How many churches bring a tree into the sanctuary and decorate it with gold and silver (dollars and jewelry)? Many of them do, and this constitutes an

abomination in the eyes of Almighty Yahweh.

In antiquity, people decorated a fir tree in honor of the newborn *Baal-beriyth*. You will find in **The Two Babylons** that Doctor Hislop mentions this to be a part of Saturnalia. Laurel, other greens, and winter flowers were used for processions and the house decorations. In northern Europe, evergreens, because they did not die in the wintertime, became symbolic of eternal life and were almost objects of worship, he points out.

From **The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church** (article: **Christmas**) comes this quote: *“The popular observance of the feast has always been marked by the joy and merrymaking, formerly characteristic of the Roman Saturnalia and the other pagan festivals it replaced. It developed considerably in England in the 19th Century through the importation of German customs by the prince consort (e.g. Christmas trees), and the influence of Charles Dickens.”*

McClintock and Strong's mentions the following: *“The houses and churches were dressed with evergreens, and the former especially with mistletoe—a custom probably as old as the Druidical worship.”* Nothing in the entire Bible commands anyone to decorate a Christmas tree for the observance of a holiday on December 25th. In fact, as you have already seen in the quote from Jeremiah 10, it is forcefully condemned as a heathen practice which the True Worshiper shall take pains to avoid learning.

Here is a further quote from **Collier's Encyclopedia** (article: **Christmas**): *“After the suppression of these plays, the tree was used in the home, and gradually there evolved the custom of decorating it with cookies, fruit, and eventually candles. Some authorities consider the Christmas tree a survival of pagan tree worship and trace it to ancient Rome and Egypt. By the beginning of the nineteenth cen-*

ture the custom had spread from Germany to most of the countries of Northern Europe. It was introduced in England in 1841 by Prince Albert of Saxony, husband of Queen Victoria. German immigrants brought it to the United States and it was adopted enthusiastically throughout the country. The custom of setting up lighted Christmas trees in public places originated in this [the U.S.A.] country."

Consequently, the evidence from every research volume explains that the modern United States society has attained some dubious distinction of restoring ancient pagan tree worship to public practice! We have taken an antiquated, pagan, heathen custom relating to immorality, and restored it to a public practice.

The author can recall that in my youth, our local church frowned upon making a lavish celebration out of Christmas. Today, the members of that same church no longer maintain such sincere conviction; but they engage in celebrations just like their worldly neighbors, putting up decorations, and engaging in the raucous customs associated with the holiday. One must ask: "Who has really departed from the Truth?"

The Yule Log

Another form of ancient pagan tree worship is the burning of a special log during the winter solstice. In ancient pagan worship, a log was usually dragged into the house, and lighted on Christmas Eve. This practice long antedated the advent of the Messiah.

The yule log has various meanings. The word *yule* in the Chaldee means *Child* (Hebrew is **yalad**). Some authorities claim that the word *yule* means *wheel*, and that burning the yule log honored the mighty one Woden, and the rebirth of the wheel-shaped sun (for example, Frazer in **The Golden Bough**). During the two weeks of rejoicing when the yule logs were burnt, no one worked. To use anything with a

wheel, such as wagons or spinning wheels, would be an insult to the sun, implying that it was not moving fast enough. All traps, snares, and fish nets were removed for the duration of the yuletide season, so that even fish, birds, and animals might find it a time of peace.

Lighting the yule log was a major religious ceremony for the ancient pagan Druids. In some agricultural areas of Europe, the yule log today is still blessed by the priests. The charred remains of the previous year's log were used to light the new fire, which symbolized the perpetual fire of the sun that was kept burning. The burning fire also symbolized the home and safety. Teutons and Indo-Iranian tribes thought of the hearth as sacred, the dwelling place of their ancestors. Russians were forbidden to break up smoldering faggots in a stove, because it might cause ancestors to fall through into hell. What abject superstition man has employed! Those who would serve the true Elohim Yahweh must meticulously eliminate every last vestige of unscriptural practices from our Faith.

The significance of burning the old, dead logs reaches way back to Nimrod's time. It represented the old sun, who, upon being burned, will be reincarnated as the new sun (son), Tammuz. From the flames of the old, dead logs the ancient pagans believed would arise the flame of the new son. The old log would be reborn as a new tree to take the place of the old. New life, they thought, would arise from death, symbolic of the new returning sun and a new year.

Again, we may discern a rather interesting application between paganistic thinking and nature worship. We observe obvious connections between modern theological interpretation and the ideas of the ancient pagans. The yule log is rarely burned in the United States today, for which we can be thankful to Almighty Yahweh, because to perpetuate such evil traditions will insult the Most High.

Sometimes the actual Christmas tree was saved, and its trunk used to begin the burning of the yule log the following year. Even today, the modern custom of a town collecting all their Christmas decorations for the *burning of the greens* may be a throwback to the burning of the yule log. Strangely, a religious service today frequently accompanies the burning of the greens. How could any true minister perform such a ceremony knowing the paganism involved?

Xmas Wreaths

To the one who has researched and studied ancient mythology with the intention of extirpating every vestige from our worship, the Christmas wreath is especially repulsive.

Becoming seemingly more popular with each passing year, we now see them everywhere at the winter holiday season. Strangely, wreaths are now, also, appearing at Easter time.

Made from evergreens, the wreaths are most frequently round. Evergreen means eternal life, a never-dying existence in pagan mythology. The round form stands for the sun, just as do the halos in most religious art. Consequently, the round Christmas wreaths stand for an eternal sun, a never-dying or self-renewing sun. In addition, the round form can also relate to the sign of the female which stands for the regeneration of life. Such symbols appear throughout Christian art and were copied from the ancient Canaanite religion. Please study Numbers 25, among other passages.

One who would come out of Babylon must eliminate such rank paganism from our lives as is memorialized in religious art and pagan holiday symbology. We must root out all that could possibly displease our Heavenly Father.

For corroboration of the above assertions, the evidence in fact appears in the books **The Two Babylons**,

Is it Biblical?



Ancient mythological sources confirm that Christmas wreaths represent the eternal sun.

The Golden Bough, Larousses's Encyclopedia of Mythology, and The Cross in Religion and Art.

Poisonous Christmas Plants

Many household plants popular at the winter holiday season contain deadly poisons that can sicken, or even kill a child or a pet curious enough to taste it. Frequently, around the winter holiday season, people purchase poinsettia, holly, and mistletoe as decorations. Doctors frequently warn that such plants must be considered toxic.

Mistletoe, for example, contains poisons called **amines** in its berries. Botanists call the plant *Phoradendron*. The toxic poisons of mistletoe cause acute gastroenteritis, often followed by cardiovascular collapse. Deaths have been reported to occur ten hours after the onset of the symptoms.

Poinsettia plants used as Christmas decorations have sap so poisonous that one leaf may prove fatal to a child.

Holly contains an alkaloid substance called **ilicin** that is violently and medically purgative.

Other plants found as Christmas decorations include the

Jerusalem Cherry, and Dumb Cane, both of which are poisonous.

Why, then, should the people of this world bring into their houses poisonous plants at the winter holiday season? If the plants are proven to be so poisonous, is it too radical to conclude that perhaps the customs of this pagan holiday will also poison one spiritually? Let's look a little more carefully at them before engaging in them.

Mistletoe

Kissing under a suspended sprig of mistletoe usually provides one of the most delightful distractions of the holiday season. To catch a girl under the mistletoe is the high point of revelry. The author, however, has never engaged in this practice, and never shall.

This little innovation at the winter holiday season was borrowed from the Druids. The mistletoe was regarded as a branch that dropped from heaven, and grew upon a tree on the earth. Obviously the symbolism relates to the dead tree, Nimrod, reincarnated as little Tammuz, with a new life upon it. Thus, heaven and earth have merged, the kiss serving as the token of reconciliation and forgiveness, Psalm 85:10-11.

Nevertheless, we must conclude that the mistletoe plant itself is parasitic. It is dangerous and poisonous. We must view kissing under the mistletoe as a heathen practice which cannot be justified from the Scriptures, because it directly originated from pagan customs.

In pagan Europe, the practice of hanging mistletoe over the doorway was a message of peace and goodwill to all who entered the house. A kiss under the mistletoe was interpreted as a sign of love and a promise of marriage. It was also believed to be an omen of happiness, fertility, good fortune, and long life when lovers announced their coming marriage standing under the mistletoe. No wonder so many tragic situations develop from a custom derived from ancient paganism. Only those with loose morals enjoy such corrupt practices.

Cookies

You may notice that various research works reveal that cakes or cookies held a central position in pagan worship. Christmas cookies, as well as the traditional Easter hot cross buns, can be candidly detected from the description in Jeremiah 7:18. ***"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings to other elohim, that they may provoke me to anger."***

The queen of heaven was symbolic of Semiramis (Nimrod's mother-wife). Modern-day Christians have only recently made Miriam, the mother of the Messiah, into the queen of heaven. Thereby, they have assigned to her the same dubious distinction of a heathen deity. Incidentally, the name *Mary* is derived from the heathen *Ma Rhea*, the queen of heaven in the Roman Pantheon. (Yahshua's mother's name was Mariam or Miriam.) As to Rome, Juvenal says, "that Osiris, if offended, could be pacified only

by a large goose and a thin cake.” Dr. Hislop, in **The Two Babylons**.

It was the practice to bake *nur-cakes* (birth cakes), and serve them during *Chag-Meni*. (ibid).

Baking cakes to the queen of heaven is proven to be a practice of heathen derivative, and should never be incorporated into Messianic True Worship. They are dedicated to the queen of heaven and her child, the new son (sun). At the winter solstice when the new sun is born, we must never participate in ancient pagan traditions, baking cakes to the queen of heaven in honor of the birth of her new sun.

The Hogmanay Festival

Presently, Scotsmen greet the new year with a celebration called *Hogmanay*. Do you know its origin?

Traditional Hogmanay feasting begins at midnight, with the arrival on the doorstep of a tall, dark, handsome stranger. He is to carry something to drink. Malt whiskey is recommended. He should bring something to eat, especially something like a cake or sweet bread. Shortbread, made from fresh, farm-churned butter, or cakes, thick, dark and fruity, are also acceptable.

It has also been the tradition to bring something to keep the party fire burning. Traditionally, it was a lump of coal, but a commercial fire log, or birch wood can also be brought today.

Music is indispensable. When the stranger arrives, the guests should be greeted with a *guid ne'ergay*. (Did you recognize the relationship to the word *nur*)?

Almighty Yahweh forbids engaging in such heathen practices dating from ancient Babylon. Let us consider Isaiah 65:11-12. ***“But you that forsake Yahweh, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for Fortune, and that fill up mingled wine to Destiny; I will destine you to the sword, and you shall all bow down to the slaughter; because when I***

called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear; but you did that which was evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.”

Remember that the center column references in your Bible for the word **troop** is **gawd**, and for the word **number** is **mene**. Obviously these were proper names applied to pagan festivals of Christmas and New Year. Remember, this prophecy is for our time, although it was written almost 3,000 years ago.

The term *Chag Meni* in Hebrew or Chaldee means, *The Feast of the Numberer*. From the Hebrew term comes the corruption **Hog-Manay**. Can we engage in a celebration Almighty Yahweh condemns as paganism?

This heathen festival, the Feast of the Numberer, or **Chag Meni (Hogmanay)**, is still being observed today in a supposedly converted society in Scotland. Authorities believe that it migrated to the British Isles from the continent and the nation of France, but we have traced it etymologically to ancient Babylon, making it a throwback to heathen worship, and a remembrance of apostate Nimrod.

Bacchanalia

We have previously noted that the Bacchanalia has a close relationship to the winter holidays, and the Saturnalia.

In ancient mythology, Bacchus was represented as the eternal boy. His worship consisted of heavy drinking bouts (the Greek term is **comus banquets**).

Characteristic of the Christmas celebration is a time of imbibing (the spirit of Christmas). During the winter holidays, it is imperative that each person engaging in that celebration take a drink of alcoholic beverages. Many Christmas bottles are given as gifts. Frequently, imbibing in the bottled Christmas spirit leads to tragedy.

“The feast, as regulated by Cal-

*igula, lasted five days; loose reins were given to drunkenness and revelry [the Saturnalia]...This was precisely the way in which, according to Berosus, the drunken festival of the month Thebeth, answering to our December, in other words, the festival of Bacchus, was celebrated in Babylon.... The wassailing bowl of Christmas had its precise counterpart in the “Drunken festival” of Babylon; and many of the other observances still kept up among ourselves at Christmas came from the very same quarter.” **The Two Babylons**, by Alexander Hislop, page 96-97.*

Where in the Scriptures can you find a passage to support taking an alcoholic drink with your colleague at a Christmas party? Can you imagine the apostles staging an office party to celebrate the birthday of the Messiah? Certainly no Scripture can be found that even remotely alludes to such loose conduct among the Apostles whose singular goal in life was to fulfill the Great Commission.

Many authorities have stated that the office party at Christmas is one of the prime factors resulting in many divorce suits. An excess of alcoholic indulgence at the winter holidays causes people to forget their moral standards, and fall into temptation, which would not normally occur. The quote, “But this is the Christmas Spirit!” provides the lame, evasive excuse offered by those who would gratify the physical lusts of the flesh.

Sadly, the human family will never learn its lesson. Consequently, it continues to pay the price for rebelliousness. Let us who strive to serve our Heavenly Father Yahweh and keep His commandments eliminate all vestiges of retained paganism from our daily practices.

Candles

As Dr. Hislop clearly points out in his book **The Two Babylons**, the lighting of candles and placing them before their deity constituted

one of the prominent pagan practices of the ancient world (read **The Two Babylons**, chapters entitled *Christmas* and *Wax Candles*).

"The candles, in some parts of England, lighted on Christmas-eve, and used so long as the festive season lasts, were equally lighted by the Pagans on the eve of the festival of the Babylonian [deity], to do honour to him: for it was one of the distinguishing peculiarities of his worship to have lighted wax-candles on his altars."

"When every Egyptian on the same night was required to light a lamp before his house in the open air, this was an act of homage to the sun, that had veiled its glory by enshrouding itself in a human form." (Both of the above quotes from Dr. Hislop's **The Two Babylons**.)

Some writers believe that the burning wax candle represented the phallic symbol. Be that as it may, the Hebrews of biblical times did not use wax candles, but, rather, oil lamps with wicks, which were suspended on the menorah (lamp stand) in the Tabernacle, and, later, the Temple. See Exodus 25:31-40 and 27:20-21, etc.

Nevertheless, in modern days, lighting candles comprises a very central part of the Christmas observance. There is no scriptural precedent for using them. They are obviously a throwback to pagan sun worship.

Christmas Carols

The word *carol* originally meant a *ring dance*—joyous, bouncy movements. During the early days of the apostolic assembly, such levity could not exist together with religion, and, therefore, officials banned all frivolous songs as "evil."

In 1645, Oliver Cromwell's Puritan Parliament banned all usual holiday festivities, including Christmas, along with the songs that went with them. St. Francis of Assisi, in the early 13th century, tried to make the Roman Catholic Church less

formal. He is the one who introduced the nativity scene, and Christmas carols into the church. Some of the ancient pagan songs that now serve as Christmas carols were allowed into the church over the centuries. They were, *The First Noel*, *I Saw Three Ships*, and *G-d Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*.

In Dicken's **A Christmas Carol**, interest was revived in the yuletide season. Music for the season was brought back to popularity. Thereafter, a number of different authors put together the most popular Christmas carol pieces.

During the late Dark Ages, bands of beggars would roam the streets, singing Christmas carols. In England, yule serenaders, known as *Waits*, walked the streets, waiting to be invited into the homes for warmth and to eat delicacies. These heathen practices continued to dominate the singing of Christmas carols during the celebration of the pagan holidays.

Christmas Cards

It was Sir Henry Cole, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, who invented the Christmas card in 1843. As early as 1840, a Christmas card folder was already sent through the mails.

Christmas stationery today represents big business. Millions of cards are produced and sent out each year. Interestingly, the first appearance of Santa Claus on a card was in the 1850s (where was he before then?). Many of the symbols on Christmas cards represent a throwback to ancient heathen practices, so the True Worshiper will avoid using them.

Santa and His Reindeer

Dr. Hislop, in **The Two Babylons**, proved that the stag was a symbol of the mighty one, Nimrod. The symbolism of antlers worn on the head of a notable leader would demonstrate his prowess as a hunter and, thereby, influence people to follow him. It also referred to the branches of a live tree. From antiquity, the stag was venerated in this manner. So, it is hardly a wonder that we hear songs at the winter holiday season to honor *Rudolph the Red-Nosed (drunk?) Reindeer*, or the poem, *The Night Before Christmas* mentioning eight tiny reindeer.

But where did the man in the little red suit, who is to represent the Spirit of Christmas, originate? He was called Saint (?) Nicholas, shortened to St. Nick! Have you ever considered who "Nick" really is? It is a "nick" name for **Satan the Devil!**





Prove this fact to yourself from any good dictionary.

Could Satan be represented as a saint? That's what the Apostle Paul indicated in 2 Corinthians 11:14. Satan represents himself as an angel of light, perhaps a saint of the assembly! Inasmuch as the appellative St. Nick is linked to pagan worship, that is exactly what it means!

Why must parents tell children a lie like the Santa Claus myth at Christmastime? The deception in telling children that a little elf named Santa Claus (St. Nicholas) will leave the presents under the tree is a prevarication that will psychologically damage a child.

One child was heard to say, "If Santa Claus is a lie, I'd better look into this Messiah's birth thing also!"

Do you see how the corruption of Messianic worship has led to a spirit of agnosticism and skepticism rampantly saturating the world today? Let us be truthful to the Scriptures and accept what they teach, obeying the Word as closely as possible. Then, we can reestablish a firm foundation in these last days

to support True Worship. Don't take worship lightly.

Santa Claus is reputed to have been a contraction of the name Saint Nicholas. However, from research a strange fact emerges. Little is known about this saint from the fourth century. A Nicolaüs is mentioned in Acts 6:5, where he was ordained as one of the first deacons, but nothing is known of him except that he is described as a proselyte. In **Webster's New World Dictionary** we read, "4. Saint, 4th century A.D.; bishop of Myra: patron saint of Russia, of Greece, & of young people, sailors, etc.: his day is December 6: cf SANTA CLAUS."

One can readily tie in the term Nicolaitanes here. Commentators assert that this must have been an apostate sect founded by Nicolaüs (perhaps the one in Acts or another), but they readily admit to their uncertainty. By checking the Lexicons we learn that **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance** lists it as #3531 (the 1901 **American Standard Version** corrected the spelling to Nicolaitans). The word is then traced to #3534 **Nikos**. If

this is true (and there is no reason to disbelieve it), then the root of the word "Nicholas" is **Nike**. The latter part of the word would then be #2992 **Laos**—a people.

Let us also remember that the term *Nicolaitanes*, Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, was a doctrine **hated** by Yahshua the Messiah and Almighty Yahweh our Heavenly Father.

Who was Nike? The word Nike could form the basis of the word Nicholas. It was the pagan winged victory, the evangelist of Zeus. Many times you can still see Nike portrayed on trophies even in our modern times. Look for it. Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, or St. Nick, brings gifts to herald (proclaim) the advent of the birth of Jesus Christ. Obviously, there exists another very remarkable, close association here with paganism.

During the winter months, the Jews also observe a festival. On the 25th day of Chisleu (corresponding to December 25) begins an eight-day observance. The central theme of the celebration revolves around the nine-branched candelabra. The center candle is lit, and from this light the remaining candles are lit each night during the festival. Gifts are exchanged, sometimes one each day. Festive decorations and delicacies are featured. In fact, ironically, some Jews today set up and trim an evergreen tree which they call a Hanukkah bush!

The Feast of Hanukkah (the feast of lights) is said to relate to the inter-testamental era of Judah Maccabeus. It was his valiant effort as a freedom fighter and guerrilla commander of the Jewish resistance forces that succeeded in driving out the Syrian army during the reign of the pagan Antiochus Epiphanes. After Antiochus initiated the apex of insults against the Temple worship in an effort to stamp out the Israelite Faith by sacrificing a young sow on the altar and erecting a statue of himself in the Temple, the Maccabees fought to drive out the pagan army and cleanse the Temple for the

CHRISTMAS CROSSES CULTURAL LINES

restoration of pure worship. After three years, the Jews were once again in control of Jerusalem and the Temple was cleansed. During the eight days of cleansing, tradition says that a small flask of oil (the only one available) maintained the menorah light.

The account of this period in the history of the Jews can be found in the apocryphal books of Maccabees. The following quotes will give you some idea of the gravity of the situation they faced.

2 Maccabees 6:1-11

“Not long after, the king sent an old Athenian to force the Jews to forsake the laws of their forefathers and cease to live according to the laws of Yahweh, but to pollute the temple in Jerusalem and to call it that of the OLYMPIAN ZEUS, and to call the one in Gerizim that of ZEUS the Hospitable, in keeping with the character of those who lived there. This harshly and most grievously intensified the evil. For the heathen filled the temple with profligacy and revelry, amusing themselves with prostitutes and lying with women within the sacred precincts, and bringing into it things that were forbidden. The altar was covered with abominable offerings, which the laws forbade. A man could



Under the guise of another, historic celebration (Hanukkah), Christmas is even being incorporated into Judaism, which rejects the Messiah! This insidious holiday is not restricted by any cultural boundaries.

not keep the sabbath or celebrate the festivals of his forefathers, or admit he was a Jew at all. On the monthly celebration of the king's birthday, they were taken by bitter necessity to taste the sacrifices, and when the festival of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled to wear wreaths of ivy and march in procession in his honor. At Ptolemy's suggestion a decree was issued to the neighboring Greek towns, that they should adopt the same policy toward the Jews and make them taste the sacrifices, and that they should slay any who would not agree to adopt Greek customs. So anyone could see how their misery was intensified. For two women were brought in for circumcising their children, and they led them publicly about the city with their babies hanging at their breasts, and then threw them down from the top of the wall. Others who had gathered in caves near by, to keep the seventh day in secret, were betrayed to Philip and all burned together, because they had scruples about defending themselves, in their respect for the dignity of that most holy day."

1 Maccabees 1:41-64

"Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that they should all become one people, and everyone should give up his particular practices. And all the heathen assented to the command of the king. And many from Israel agreed to his kind of worship and offered sacrifice to idols and broke the sabbath. And the king sent word by messengers to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah to follow practices foreign to the country and put a stop to whole burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings at the sanctuary, and to break the sabbaths and profane the feasts and pollute sanctuary

and sanctified; to build altars and sacred precincts and idol temples and SACRIFICE HOGS and UNCLEAN CATTLE; and to leave their sons uncircumcised and defile themselves with every unclean and profane practice, so that they might forget the Law and change all their religious ordinances; and anyone who did not obey the command of the king should die. He wrote to his whole kingdom, to this effect, and he appointed inspectors over all the people, and he ordered the towns of Judah every one of them to offer sacrifice. And many of the people and everyone who was ready to forsake the Law joined with them and they did wrong in the land, and forced Israel to hide in every hiding-place they had.

"ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF CHISLEV, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, he erected a dreadful desecration upon the altar, and in the towns of Judah round about they built altars, and at the doors of their houses and in the squares they burned incense, and wherever they found the hook of the Law, they tore them up and burned them, and if anyone was found to possess a book of the agreement or respected the Law, the king's decree condemned him to death. The Israelites who appeared from month to month in the towns they treated with force. ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH OF THE MONTH THEY OFFERED SACRIFICE UPON THE ALTAR WHICH WAS SET UP ON THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING. The women who had circumcised their children they put to death under the decree, hanging the babies around their necks, and destroying their families and the men who had circumcised them. Yet many in Israel stood firm and resolved in their hearts not to eat what was unclean; they preferred death to being polluted

with food or profaning the sacred agreement, and so they died. And Israel suffered intensely."

1 Maccabees 4:42-60

"And he appointed priests that were without blemish and adherents of the Law, and they purified the sanctuary and carried out the stones that had defiled it to an unclean place. And they deliberated as to what they should do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been polluted. And a good idea occurred to them—to take it down, so that it might never be thrown up to them that the heathen had polluted it; so they took down the altar, and deposited the stones in the temple mountain, in a suitable place, until a prophet should come and declare what should be done with them. And they took whole stones, as the Law required, and built a new altar like the former one. And they built the sanctuary and the interior of the temple and consecrated the courts. And they made new holy dishes and they brought the lampstand and the altar of incense and the table into the temple. And they burned incense on the altar, and lighted the lamps on the lampstand, and they lighted the temple. And they put the loaves of bread on the table and hung up the curtains, and completed all the work they had undertaken.

"And they arose early on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, that is, the month of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-eighth year, and offered sacrifice according to the Law upon the new altar of burnt offering which they had made. At the time and on the day the heathen had polluted it, it was rededicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. And all the people fell on their faces and blessed heaven which

had prospered them. And they celebrated the rededication of the altar for eight days and offered burnt offerings with joy, and offered a sacrifice of deliverance and praise. And they decorated the front of the temple with gold crowns and small shields and rededicated the gates and the priests' quarters, and fitted them with doors. And there was very great joy among the people, and the reproach the heathen had cast upon them was wiped out. And Judas and his brothers and all the congregation of Israel decreed that the days of the rededication of the altar should be observed at their season, every year, for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth of the month of Chislev, with gladness and joy."

The rededication of the Temple was a memorable occasion. It is observed today as a strictly Jewish festival. Yahshua the Messiah also attended an observance at Jerusalem, John 10:22-24.

However, this observance was not commanded by Almighty Yahweh in His list of Holy Days in Leviticus 23. Yahshua the Messiah kept those annual feast days of Yahweh, especially the seven-day observance of the Feast of Tabernacles and the eighth, Last Great Day (John 7).

Today, even the Jewish authorities express concern about the commercialization of Hanukkah. Orthodox and Conservative rabbis in New York inveigh against the obvious paganism of the decorations and the lavish gifts. Nevertheless, the customs of the Christmas celebration continue to infiltrate Hanukkah.

The True Worshiper seeks with all his heart and soul to exit from the Babylonish system, Revelation 18:4. We keep the commandments of Almighty Yahweh and cling closely to the Faith in Yahshua the Messiah, Revelation 12:17 and 14:12. Keeping the commandments of Yahweh includes keeping holy His sacred time of Leviticus 23. Because

of the evident pagan contamination of all the winter holidays—both Christian and Jewish—we avoid observing them.

Pilgrim Fathers Rejected Christmas

Many of the original immigrants came to the New World with the intention of reestablishing the true Faith of Yahshua the Messiah, and the Faith of the Apostles outside of Roman, papal persecution. The Pilgrim Fathers, who were essentially Puritans, came to the New World at an early date (1620) and settled in New England. It was their intention to serve their Heavenly Father and Yahshua the Messiah in Spirit and in Truth. William Penn and the Quakers immigrated to Pennsylvania for the same reason. The German ancestors of the author arrived for the same purpose. But, sadly, these noble intentions have almost disappeared now.

A most informative book which all True Worshipers should read is entitled **The History of the Plymouth Plantation**, by William

Bradford. Among the pleasant surprises in this volume you can find a reference to the Sacred Name, and it is spelled IAH. This book will also prove that some of the early settlers abhorred the worldly holidays and did not keep them.

From this book, we would like to quote from page 126.

"Herewith I shall end this year [1621] except to recall one more incident, rather amusing than serious. On Christmas Day¹³ the Governor called the people out to work as usual; but most of the company excused themselves, and said it went against their conscience to work on that day. So the Governor told them, if they made it a matter of conscience, he would spare them until they were better informed. So he went with the rest, and left them; but on returning from work at noon he found them at play in the streets, some pitching the bar, and some at stoolball, and such like sports. So he went and took away their games, and told them that it was against his conscience that they should play

Is it Biblical?



"I have spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people... that eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels." Isaiah 65:2, 4

and others work. If they made the keeping of the day a matter of devotion, let them remain in the houses; but there should be no gaming and reveling in the streets. Since then, nothing has been attempted in that way, at least openly."

Note 13 at the bottom of the page reads,

"The Pilgrims did not observe either Christmas or Easter, since as they said, they could find no authorization in the Scripture for such observance. They branded the celebration of these days as 'Roman corruption,' and declared that no one who participated in the customary rites could be called a true [worshiper]."

The following is quoted from the **Encyclopedia Britannica**, 11th Edition: *"In 1644 the English puritans forbid any merriment or religious services by act of Parliament, on the ground that it was a heathen festival, and ordered it to be kept as a fast. Charles II. revived the feast, but the Scots adhered to the Puritan view....In Latin countries... [gifts were] given on the 1st of January; this was in antiquity a great holiday, wherefore until late in the 4th century the [True Worshipers] kept it as a day of fasting and gloom,"* (article *Christmas*).

Additional quotes regarding the Pilgrim Father's refusal to accept Christmas as a biblical celebration may be found by perusing **Hastings Bible Dictionary** and **Shaff's History of the Christian Church**, among other volumes. All clearly state that many of the early colonists coming to our shores did so to find a new home free of popish, Roman Catholic influence, where they were free to worship the Almighty according to their conscience. These people had proven the fallacy of observing the pagan holidays.

Conclusion

When the author began writing

this article, his desk was loaded with reference books and materials, and numerous clippings from magazines and newspapers. It is an extensive article, but hardly exhaustive. Massive amounts of research material yet remain to be published. In future issues of **The Sacred Name Broadcaster** you will find some of this research.

Why do people today, in our modern times, continue to cling tenaciously to customs which were derived from pagan superstitions? Why do they never question from whence they came? Why not read the Bible and obey the inspired Scriptures rather than attempting to support traditional, unscriptural observances with the Scriptures?

The meaning of these idolatrous customs has not changed in the eyes of Almighty Yahweh. Even though people today may misapply their meaning to scriptural things, it is abundantly clear that ancient pagan worshipers took a small segment from the inspired Scriptures and corrupted it with their own ideas and incomplete knowledge, viewing the teachings of the Bible through unrepentant thinking. This led to the degeneration of the Messianic worship, as it may be seen on a broad scale throughout society.

In fact, for centuries the true Messianic worship was never large or extensive. It was always composed of a few people, perhaps one or two individuals or families, who earnestly sought Yahweh, and refrained from association with idolatry or false worship. Very little is heard from them through the reports of the world's historians. But, nevertheless, occasionally small groups do make historical headlines, such as the Nazarenes, the Waldenses, and the Pilgrim Fathers.

We have presented the irrefutable case against Christmas. Now **you** must make a personal decision. It must be **you** who decides how you will conduct your life. You must decide if you will continue blindly in false worship, or humbly serve

Almighty Yahweh and keep His commandments.

Why not use the following Scripture as your guide for basing a sound decision? "As for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh." (Yahshua 24:15). The author and his family have endeavored to evict paganism from our lives. The members of the Assemblies of Yahweh today have, as well, made a similar determination. Like the patriarchs of old, we faithfully seek to serve Him. We hope you do too!

□

The Sacred Scriptures

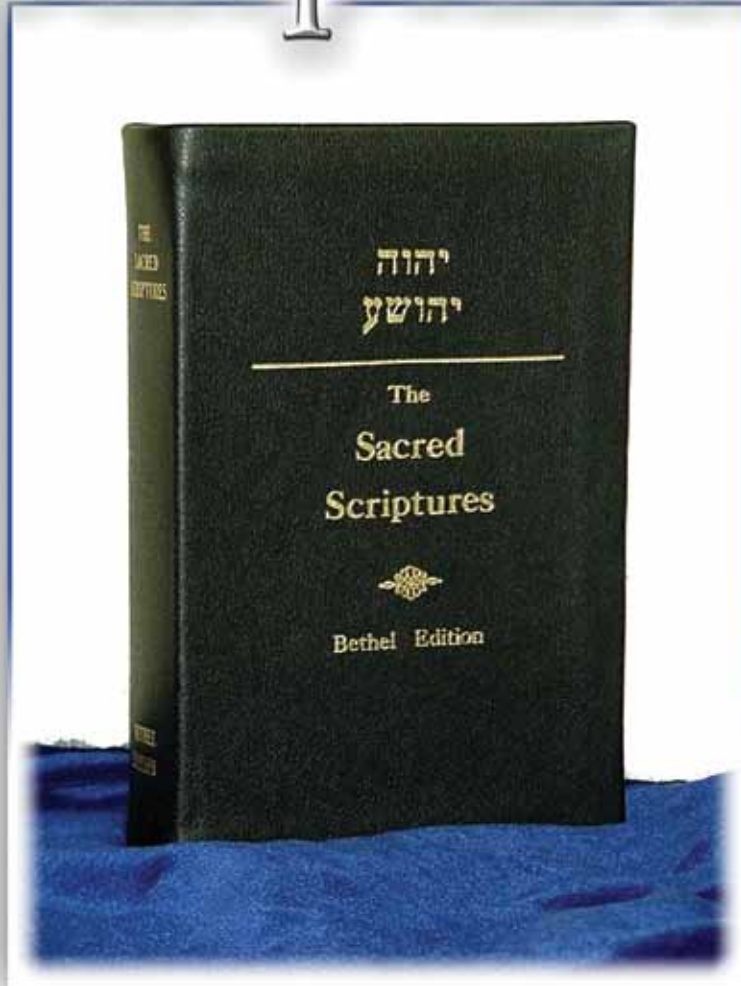
The Assemblies of Yahweh present this volume, The Sacred Scriptures, Bethel Edition, to the reader in our humble endeavor to give you a special gift of greater biblical knowledge. We have restored the Sacred Name, Yahweh (the Tetragrammaton) and proper titles to the English text of the Old Testament as well as returning the Name of Yahshua, our Savior, to the text of the New Testament.

The Sacred Scriptures, Bethel Edition, is based upon the translation work of the American Standard Version, 1901, known as the most accurate English version ever put into print. It maintains the delicate balance necessary to provide a very accurate, literal translation, while preserving the majesty of expression of the original texts.

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While striving to make the text of the Bible more understandable for the modern reader, the majesty with which the Bible should be comprehended was not sacrificed; therefore, this text emphasizes our need to think of our Heavenly Father and His Messiah on a higher level.

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