

The Apostolic Assembly, at its inception, 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 travel, preaching throughout the Roman Empire.

But a very strange development 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; nevertheless, they want salvation also!

With unreasoned abandon at the Chr-stmas season, 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 christianity never find a foundational basis in the Scriptures. Decorative lights displayed upon colorfully trimmed Chr-stmas trees and the hanging of evergreen branches and mistletoe are never mentioned in the sacred Scriptures, much less commanded. Holding a boar's head festival, sending Chr-stmas cards, and having midnight masses or church services on December 25 cannot be found anywhere in the sacred Word of Almighty Yahweh.

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, on the three instances where birthdays are mentioned in the Bible, on each of these occasions a violent death occurred. Please verify this fact 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; consequently, we can readily understand the reason for omitting mention of a specific day in the Scriptures for the Messiah's birthday.

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 C.E. 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.

The Messiah Not Born on December 25

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

Turn in your Bible to Luke 1:5. Zachariah the priest was a member of the priestly course or section of *AbiYah*. If we calculate correctly, the Messiah would have been conceived near the middle of December, rather than being born on December 25. Such information is quite staggering when you realize that Luke pinpoints the time of the conception of John the Baptist 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. Read Luke 1, following every specified mention of time. You will note that the Messiah was conceived six months after the conception of John.

"The first rain falls in the month of 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." From **The Two Babylons**, Alexander Hislop, Page 91-92.

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.

Logically, the only time frame that can 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 Roman 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 no coincidence that we should encounter confirmation of the fall time for the Messiah's birth in 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 Chr-stmas traditions and the ancient Roman Saturnalia. When we understand that this ancient Roman observance was celebrated close to the winter solstice, the association between traditions relating Chr-stmas to 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*.

From the **McClintock and Strong's Bible Cyclopedia**, article "Chr-stmas," we find the following: *"Trynne says in his strong way (in histrio-mastix), 'our Chr-stmas lords of misrule,' together with dancing, masks, mummeries, stage-players, and such other Chr-stmas disorders, now in use with Christians, were derived from these Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalian festivals, which should cause all pious Christians to abominate them!"*

Sun Worship Holiday—December 25

"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 was celebrated about this time." (article, "Chr-stmas," **Collier's Encyclopedia**).

Yahshua the Messiah was never born on December 25th. Observance of the winter solstice was derived entirely from ancient pagan superstitions. **CHR-STMAS IS NOT EVER NAMED IN THE SCRIPTURES**. It has never been sanctified by Almighty Yahweh! Mankind cannot make it holy, however fervently the people seek to observe it.

In his book **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 "Chr-stians" were given to associate the terms **SUN** with the **SON**.

Paganism Imitates Truth

The ancient pagan peoples saw the sun gradually moving south in the heavens and the days grow-

ing 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 stop, the heathen believed that their petition to the sun 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 again begin to move 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 of the year and how the sun would travel from north to south and then north again (Stonehenge in England, for example).

The Mother and Child

At the celebration of Chr-stmas 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 tradition traces back to Nimrod, who was believed to be reincarnated through his new son (sun), Tammuz.

Furthermore, why make an idol out of the Mother-and-Child crèche, 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 must be the Captain of our salvation, along with His atoning blood.

Chr-stmas Trees

Have you ever puzzled over the reason why a pine tree is brought into the house at Chr-stmas 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, and the Bible actually forbids the custom!

When Nimrod was executed by Shem (Noah's son) for his apostasy against Almighty Yahweh and His ruling Kingdom, Nimrod 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 had 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.

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 by keeping His commandments, 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.

Xmas Wreaths

Made from evergreens, the wreaths are most frequently round. Evergreen means eternal life, a never-dying existence in pagan mythology. The round form symbolizes the sun, just as do the halos in common religious art. Consequently, the round Chr-stmas 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 ancient Canaanite religion. Please study Numbers 25, among other passages.

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

Chr-stmas Spirits?

Characteristic of the Chr-stmas celebration is a time of imbibing (the spirit of Chr-stmas). During the winter holidays, it is imperative that each person engaging in that celebration take a drink of alcoholic beverages. Many bottles of alcoholic beverages

are given as Chr-stmas gifts. Frequently, imbibing in the bottled Chr-stmas spirit leads to tragedy.

"The feast, as regulated by Caligula, lasted five days, loose reins were given to drunkenness and revelry (the Saturnalia). This was precisely the way, in which, Berosus, the drunken festival of the month of Tebeth, answering to our December, in other words, the festival of Bacchus, was celebrated in Babylon... the was-sailing bowl of Chr-stmas had its precise counterpart in the "drunken festivals" of Babylon, and many other observances still kept up among ourselves at Chr-stmas came from the very same quarters." **The Two Babylons**, by Alexander Hislop, pages 96-97.

Where in the Scriptures can you find a passage to support taking an alcoholic drink with your colleague at a Chr-stmas 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.

Santa and His Reindeer

Where did the man in the little red suit, who is to represent the Spirit of Chr-stmas, 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.

Why must parents tell children a lie like the Santa Claus myth at Chr-stmas time? 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.

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 Nicolaus is mentioned in Acts 6:5, where he was ordained 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, and 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 Nicolas (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 Nike can be seen today 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 J-sus Chr-st. Obviously, there exists another very remarkable, close association here with paganism.

Pilgrim Fathers Rejected Chr-stmas

Many of the original immigrants came to the New World with the intention of re-establishing 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 the Heavenly Father and Yahshua the Messiah in Spirit and in Truth.

The following is quoted from the **Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition**: "In 1644 the English Puritans forbade any merriment or religious act by act of parliament, on the ground that it was a heathen festival, and ordered it to be kept as a fast. Charles the 2nd revived the feast, but the Scots adhered to the Puritan view."

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 to serve 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, such as the Nazarenes, the Waldenses, and the Pilgrim Fathers, do make historical headlines.

Why do people in our modern times continue to cling tenaciously to customs which were derived from ancient 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 sacred Scriptures? □

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Christmas As the Bible Teaches It

by
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