



Should a Christian Celebrate Christmas?

There is *no* Biblical warrant, precedent, nor precept for remembrance of the day of Christ's birth as a day of special religious celebration. This is *not* to say that we shouldn't remember Christ's birth and its significance, but for religious commemorations or celebrations, we must have Biblical command or precedent! The fact of the matter is this -- the early church did *not* celebrate Christ's birth, but such celebration only came into the church with the "Christianization" of pagan rites as Catholicism was made the state religion by Constantine in the fourth century A.D. Since the Word of God does *not* support the tradition of Christmas, a Christian's conscience ought *not* and must *not* be bound.

The following outline describes the origin of Christmas (with its associated pagan customs, symbols, and terminology), details the Scriptural support *against* celebrating Christmas, attempts to show that celebrating Christmas violates the spirit of every one of the ten commandments, attempts to demonstrate that celebrating Christmas does *not* fall in the realm of Christian liberty, and attempts to debunk eight of the major rationalizations Christians put forth for celebrating Christmas.

I. The Origin of Christmas

A. A Long Evolution

Christmas customs are an evolution from times long before the Christian period -- a descent from seasonal, pagan, religious, and national practices, hedged about with legend and tradition. Their seasonal connections with the pagan feasts of the *winter solstice* relate them to ancient times, when many of the earth's inhabitant's were sun worshipers. As the superstitious pagans observed the sun gradually moving south in the heavens and the days growing shorter, they believed the sun was departing never to return. To encourage the sun's return north (i.e., to give the winter sun god strength and to bring him back to life again), the sun gods were worshipped with elaborate rituals and ceremonies, including the building of great bonfires, decorating with great evergreen plants such as holly, ivy, and mistletoe, and making representations of summer birds as house decorations. The winter solstice, then, was the shortest day of the year, when the sun seemingly stood still in the southern sky. Observing the slowdown in the sun's southward movement, and its stop, the heathen believed that their petitions to it had been successful. A time of unrestrained rejoicing broke out, with revelry, drinking, and gluttonous feasts. Then, when the pagans observed the sun moving again northward, and a week later were able to determine that the days were growing longer, a new year was proclaimed.

B. Not Among the Earliest Christian Festivals

Christmas was *not* among the earliest festivals of the Church. It was not celebrated, commemorated, or observed, neither by the apostles nor in the apostolic church -- not for at least the first 300 years of church history! History reveals that about 440 A.D., the Church at Jerusalem commenced the celebration of Christmas, following the lead of Roman Catholicism (see I.C.). [It was sufficient for the early Christians that Jesus, their Lord and Savior, had been born. They praised God that Jesus Christ had, indeed, come in the flesh. The day and the time of His birth had no relevance to them, because Jesus was no longer physically on earth. He had returned to heaven. And it was the *risen, exalted* Christ whom they looked to, and that by faith -- not a babe laid in a manger. Jesus Christ is *no longer* a baby; *no longer* the "Christ-child," but the exalted Lord of all. And He does NOT somehow return to earth as a baby every year at Christmas-time -- though this is the impression given even in certain hymns sung in Protestant services.]

C. The Role of Religion in Ancient Rome

Seemingly forgotten is the essential role religion played in the world of ancient Rome. But the Emperor Constantine understood. By giving official status to Christianity, he brought internal peace to the Empire. A brilliant military commander, he also had the genius to recognize that after declaring Christianity the "state" religion (Constantine forced all the pagans of his empire to be baptized into the Roman Church), there was need for true union between paganism and Christianity. The corrupt Roman Church was full of pagans now masquerading as Christians, all of which had to be pacified. What better way than to "Christianize" their pagan idolatries. Thus, the *Babylonian mystery religions* were introduced by Constantine beginning in 313 A.D. (and established a foothold with the holding of the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.). The Constantine-led Roman Church was more than willing to adapt and adopt pagan practices in order to make Christianity palatable to the heathen. Constantine used religion as a political tool, totally devoid of any true spirituality:

- Pagan rituals and idols took on Christian names (e.g., Jesus Christ was presented as the *Sun* of Righteousness [Malachi 4:2] replacing the sun god, *Sol Invictus*).
- Pagan holidays were reclassified as Christian holidays (holy-days).
- December 25th was the "Victory of the Sun-God" Festival in the pagan Babylonian world. In the ancient Roman Empire, the celebration can be traced back to the Roman festival *Saturnalia*, which honored Saturn, the harvest god, and Mithras, the god of light; both were celebrated during or shortly after the winter solstice (between the 17th and 23rd of December).

To all ancient pagan civilizations, December 25th was the birthday of the gods -- the time of year when the days began to lengthen and man was blessed with a "regeneration of nature." Moreover, all of December 25th's Babylonian and Roman festivals were characterized by 5-7 day celebration periods of unrestrained or orgiastic revelry and licentiousness.

December 25th was particularly important in the cult of Mithras, a popular deity in the Old Roman Empire. Robert Myers (a proponent for celebrating Christmas) in his book *Celebrations* says: "Prior to the celebration of Christmas, December 25th in the Roman world was the *Natalis Solis Invicti*, the Birthday of the Unconquerable Sun. This feast, which took place just after the winter solstice of the Julian calendar, was in honor of the Sun God, Mithras, originally a Persian deity whose cult penetrated the Roman world in the first century B.C. ... Besides the Mithraic influence, other pagan forces were at work. From the seventeenth of December until the twenty-third, Romans celebrated the

Celebrate Christmas

ancient feast of the Saturnalia. ... It was commemorative of the Golden Age of Saturn, the god of sowing and husbandry."

In order to make Christianity palatable to the heathen, the Roman Church simply took Saturnalia, adopted it into Christianity, and then eventually many of the associated pagan symbols, forms, customs, and traditions were reinterpreted (i.e., "Christianized") in ways "acceptable" to Christian faith and practice. (In fact, in 375 A.D., the Church of Rome under Pope Julius I merely announced that the birth date of Christ had been "discovered" to be December 25th, and was accepted as such by the "faithful." The festival of Saturnalia and the birthday of Mithras could now be celebrated as the birthday of Christ!)

The pagans flocked into the Catholic places of worship, because they were still able to worship their old gods, but merely under different names. It mattered not to them whether they worshiped the Egyptian goddess mother and her child under the old names (Isis and Horus), or under the names of the "Virgin Mary" and the "Christ-child." Either way, it was the same old idol-religion (cf. 1 Thes. 1:8-10; 5:22

Paul says to turn from idols, not rename them and Christianize them). Roman Catholicism's Christmas Day is nothing but "baptized" paganism, having come along much too late to be part of "the faith *once* delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

D. "Christianization" of Pagan Customs, Symbols, and Terminology

Christianity had to undergo a transformation so that pagan Rome could "convert" without giving up its old beliefs and rituals. The actual effect was to paganize official Christianity. "'A compound religion had been manufactured, of which ... Christianity furnished the nomenclature, and Paganism the doctrines and rights.' The idolatry of the Roman world, though deposed from its ancient pre-eminence, had by no means been demolished. Instead of this, its pagan nakedness had been covered with the garb of a deformed Christianity" (W.E. Vine).

Pagan customs involving vestments, candles, incense, images, and processions were all incorporated into church worship and continue today. The following customs and traditions associated with Xmas all have pagan/heathen origins. ("Xmas" is the more preferable form for the day, since it at least leaves the name of our Savior out of the heathen observance.) Naturally, Christians would not keep these customs for such evil and perverse reasons, but the fact of their origins remain -- "the customs of the people are vain" (Jer. 10:3), and should thereby be carefully considered by all who know and love the Lord:

1. The blasphemous "Christ's Mass" shortened to "Christ-mas" -- The Roman Catholic "Christ's Mass" is a special mass performed in celebration of Christ's birth. In this mass, Jesus is considered both the priest and the victim, represented by the Catholic priest who offers Him as a sacrifice each time the mass is performed. In offering this "sacrifice," the priest believes he has the power to change the bread and the wine of the Communion into Jesus' literal flesh and blood, requiring the people to worship these elements as they do God Himself. This is obviously a denial of the gospel, and thereby, a false gospel (a re-doing of the sacrifice for sin -- Heb. 9:12, 24-26; 10:10,12,14). Yet, many who cry out all year long against the blasphemous Roman Catholic system, at year-end embrace Rome's most blasphemous abomination of them all -- Christmas!

2. Nativity Scenes (tainted with paganism) -- Nearly every form of pagan worship descended from the Babylonian mysteries, which focus attention on the "mother-goddess" and the birth of her child. This was adapted to "Mary-Jesus" worship, which then easily accommodated the multitude of pagans "converted" to Christianity inside Constantine's Roman Catholic Church. [If anyone were to erect statues

Celebrate Christmas

(i.e., images) of Mary and Joseph by themselves, many within Protestant circles would cry "Idolatry!" But at Xmas time, an image of a little baby is placed with the images of Mary and Joseph, and it's called a "nativity scene." Somehow, the baby-idol "sanctifies" the scene, and it is no longer considered idolatry!] (cf. Exodus 20:4-5a; 32:1-5; 9-10a)

3. Christmas Tree -- Evergreen trees, because of their ability to remain green through-out the winter season when most other forms of vegetation are dormant, have long symbolized immortality, fertility, sexual potency, and reproduction, and were often brought into homes and set up as idols. The full mystical significance of the evergreen can only be understood when one considers the profound reverence the ancient pagans had for all natural phenomena -- "To them, Nature was everywhere alive. Every fountain had its spirit, every mountain its deity, and every water, grove, and meadow, its supernatural association. The whispering of the trees ... was the subtle speech of the gods who dwelt within" (W.M. Auld, *Christmas Traditions*). This is nothing but nature worship or Animism.

The custom of bringing the tree into the home and decorating it as is done today has legendarily been attributed to Martin Luther. In truth, the modern custom has been lost in obscurity, but almost every culture has some such tradition. For ages, evergreen trees would be brought into the house during the winter as magic symbols of luck and hope for a fruitful year to come, It may also be that the star with which many of today's trees are topped did not originate as a representation of the star that the wise men followed, but rather a representation of the stars to which the ancient Chaldean astrologers looked for guidance.

The first decorating of an evergreen was done by pagans in honor of their god Adonis, who after being slain was brought to life by the serpent Aesculapius. The representation of the slain Adonis was a dead stump of a tree. Around this stump coiled the snake -- Aesculapius, symbol of life restoring.

From the roots of the dead tree, then comes forth another and different tree -- an evergreen tree, symbolic to pagans of a god who cannot die! In Babylon, the evergreen tree came to represent the rebirth/reincarnation of Nimrod as his new son (Sun), Tammuz. In Egypt, this god was worshiped in a palm tree as Baal-Tamar. (Heathen people in the land of Canaan also adopted tree worship, calling it the Asherah -- a tree with its branches cut off was carved into a phallic symbol.) The fir tree was worshiped in Rome as the same new-born god, named Baal-Berith, who was restored to life by the same serpent.

A feast was held in honor of him on December 25th, observed as the day on which the god reappeared on earth -- he had been killed, and was "reborn" on that day, victorious over death! It was called the "Birthday of the Unconquered Sun." Thus, the annual custom of erecting and decorating evergreen trees was brought down to us through the centuries by the pagan Roman Catholic Church -- the paganism of Tammuz and Baal, or the worship of the sun, mingled with the worship of Aesculapius the serpent. Whether erected in private homes or in churches, decorated or not, the evergreen tree is a glaring symbol of this false god.

4. Christmas Wreaths -- In pagan mythology, evergreen means eternal life and a never-dying existence. Made from evergreens, Christmas wreaths were most frequently round, which symbolized the sun (just as do halos in most religious art). Hence, the round Xmas 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. Because of these pagan associations, the Christian church was initially hostile towards the use of wreaths and other evergreen derivatives. But in the same way it Christianized other pagan traditions, the church soon found a way to confer its own symbolic meanings. For example, the sharp pointed leaves of the "male" holly came to represent Christ's crown of thorns and the red berries His blood, while the "female" ivy symbolized immortality (Sulgrave Manor, "A Tudor

Celebrate Christmas

Christmas," p. 6). Such wreaths now not only adorn churches at Christmas time, but are also appearing during the Easter season.

5. Mistletoe -- The use of the mistletoe plant (which is poisonous to both man and animals) can be traced back to the ancient Druids. (The Druids were pagan Celtic priests who were considered magicians and wizards.) It represented the false "messiah," considered by the Druids to be a divine branch that had dropped from heaven and grew upon a tree on earth. This is an obvious corruption of God's prophetic Word concerning Christ, "the Man the Branch," coming from heaven.

The mistletoe symbolized the reconciliation between God and man. And since a *kiss* is the well known symbol of reconciliation, that is how "kissing under the mistletoe" became a custom -- both were tokens of reconciliation. The mistletoe, being a sacred plant and a symbol of fertility, was also believed to contain certain magical powers, having been brought to earth from heaven by a mistle thrush carrying it in its toes (hence the name).

It was once known as the "plant of peace," and in ancient Scandinavia, enemies were reconciled under it (yet another reason why people came to "kiss under the mistletoe"). It was supposed to bring "good luck" and fertility, and even to protect the house in which it hung from witchcraft. A *kiss* is also something which is, at times, associated with lust. So the practice of "kissing under the mistletoe" also had roots in the orgiastic celebrations in connection with the Celtic Midsummer Eve ceremony. At the time the mistletoe was gathered, the men would kiss each other as a display of their homosexuality. (The custom was later broadened to include both men and women.) Kissing under the mistletoe is also reminiscent of the temple prostitution and sexual license proliferating during Roman Saturnalia.

6. Santa Claus -- *Santa Claus* or "Father Christmas" is a corruption of the Dutch "Sant Nikolaas." ("Saint Nicholas" was the 4th century Catholic bishop of Myra in Asia Minor, who gave treats to children; he was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, "regarded as a special friend and protector of children." The red suit comes from the fact that Catholic bishops and cardinals in Italy wear red.) Santa Claus was also known as "Kris Kringle," a corruption of the German "*Christ Kindl*" -- *Christ Child*. This has to be one of the most subtle of Satan's blasphemies, yet most Christians are unaware of it.

Originally, the Santa Claus concept came from the pagan Egyptian god, Bes, a rotund, gnome-like personage who was the patron of little children. Bes was said to live at the North Pole, working year-round to produce toys for children who had been good and obedient to their parents. In Dutch, he was called "Sinter Klaas." Dutch settlers brought the custom to America. In Holland and other European countries, the original Santa Claus was actually a grim personage who traversed the countryside, determined to find out who really had been "naughty or nice." Those who had been acting up were summarily switched.

The association of Santa Claus with snow, reindeer, and the North Pole suggests Scandinavian or Norse traditions of the Yuletide season. [In Babylonia, also, the stag (reindeer) was a symbol of the mighty one, Nimrod. The symbolism of antlers worn on the head of a noble leader would demonstrate his prowess as a hunter, and thereby, influence people to follow him.]

Santa is the blasphemous substitute for God! He is routinely given supernatural powers and divine attributes which only GOD has. Think about it. He is made out to be *omniscient* -- he knows when every child sleeps, awakes, has been bad or good, and knows exactly what every child wants (cf. *Psa. 139:1-4*). He is made out to be *omnipresent* -- on one night of the year he visits all the "good" children in the

Celebrate Christmas

world and leaves them gifts, seemingly being everywhere at the same time. He is also made out to be *omnipotent* -- he has the power to give to each child exactly what each one wants.

Moreover, Santa Claus is made out to be a *sovereign judge* -- he answers to no one and no one has authority over him, and when he "comes to town," he comes with a full bag of rewards for those whose behavior has been acceptable in his eyes. Santa Claus has become one of the most popular and widely accepted and unopposed myths ever to be successfully interwoven into the fabric and framework of Christianity.

It is a *fact* that Christ was born, and that *truth* should greatly rejoice the heart of every Christian. But the Santa Claus myth distorts the *truth* of Christ's birth by subtly blending *truth* with the *myth* of Santa Claus. When Christian parents lie to their children about Santa Claus, they are taking the attention of their children away from God and causing them to focus on a fat man in a red suit with godlike qualities. All of this teaches the child to believe that, just like Santa, God can be pleased with "good works," done in order to earn His favor. Also, they teach that no matter how bad the child has been, he will still be rewarded by God -- just as Santa never failed to bring gifts. Even in homes of professing Christians, Santa Claus has clearly displaced Jesus in the awareness and affections of children, becoming the undisputed spirit, symbol, and centerpiece of Christmas.

7. Christmas Eve -- "Yule" is a Chaldean word meaning "infant." Long before the coming of Christianity, the heathen Anglo-Saxons called the 25th of December "Yule day" -- in other words, "infant day" or "child's day" -- the day they celebrated the birth of the false "messiah"! The night before "Yule day" was called "Mother night." Today it is called "Christmas Eve." And it wasn't called "Mother night" after Mary, the mother of our Lord -- "Mother night" was observed centuries before Jesus was born. *Semiramis* (Nimrod's wife) was the inspiration for "Mother night," and "Child's day" was the supposed birthday of her son (Tammuz), the sun-god!

8. Yule Log -- The Yule log was considered by the ancient Celts a sacred log to be used in their religious festivals during the winter solstice; the fire provided promises of good luck and long life. Each year's Yule log had to be selected in the forest on Christmas Eve by the family using it, and could not be bought, or the superstitions associated with it would not apply. In Babylonian paganism, the log placed in the fireplace represented the dead Nimrod, and the tree which appeared the next morning (which today is called the "Christmas tree") was Nimrod alive again (reincarnated) in his new son (sun), Tammuz. (Still today in some places, the Yule log is placed in the fireplace on Christmas Eve, and the next morning there is a Christmas tree!)

Today's Yule log tradition comes to us from Scandinavia, where the pagan sex-and-fertility god, Jule, was honored in a twelve-day celebration in December. A large, single log was kept with a fire against it for twelve days, and each day for twelve days a different sacrifice was offered. The period now counted as the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany was originally the twelve days of daily sacrifices offered to the Yule log. (What, then, are we really doing when we send "Yuletide greetings"? Are we really honoring Christ by sending greetings in the name of a Scandinavian fertility god? These are the *same customs* being practiced today as in ancient paganism! Only the names have changed.)

9. Candles -- Candles were lit by the ancient Babylonians in honor of their god, and his altars had candles on them. And as is well known, candles are also a major part of the ritualism of Roman Catholicism, which adopted the custom from heathenism. Candles approached the Yule log in ritual importance. Like the Yule log, they had to be a gift, never a purchase, and were lighted and extinguished only by the head of the household. Such candles stood burning steadily in the middle of the table, never

Celebrate Christmas

to be moved or snuffed, lest death follow. The Yule candle, wreathed in greenery, was to burn through Christmas night until the sun rose or the Christmas service began (Sulgrave Manor, "A Tudor Christmas," p. 9). Obviously, candles should have no part in Christian worship, for nowhere in the New Testament is their use sanctioned.

10. Giving of Gifts -- The tradition of exchanging gifts has nothing to do with a reenactment of the Magi giving gifts to Jesus, but has many superstitious, pagan origins instead. One prominent tradition was the Roman custom of exchanging food, trinkets, candles, or statues of gods during the mid-winter Kalends (the first day of the month in the ancient Roman calendar). This custom was transferred to December 25th by the Roman Church in keeping with the Saturnalian festival and in celebration of the benevolent St. Nicholas. [Is it not the height of ridiculousness to claim that giving one another presents properly celebrates Jesus' "birthday" (not that there is anything necessarily wrong in giving each other presents)? But what are we giving *Him*, if indeed we are specifically celebrating His incarnation?]

11. Christmas Goose -- The "Christmas goose" and "Christmas cakes" were both used in the worship of the Babylonian "messiah." The goose was considered to be sacred in many ancient lands, such as Rome, Asia Minor, India, and Chaldea. In Egypt, the goose was a symbol for a *child*, ready to *die!* In other words, a symbol of the pagan "messiah," ready to give his life (supposedly) for the world. This is obviously a satanic mockery of the truth.

12. Christmas Ham -- Hogs were slaughtered and the eating of the carcass was one of the central festivities of the Saturnalia. Each man would offer a pig as a sacrifice because superstition held that a boar had killed the sun deity Adonis. Hence, the tradition of the Christmas ham on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

13. Christmas Stocking -- According to tradition, a poor widower of Myra, Turkey, had three daughters, for whom he could not provide a dowry. On Xmas-Eve, "Saint Nicholas" threw three bags of gold down the chimney, thereby saving the daughters from having to enter into prostitution. One bag rolled into a shoe, and the others fell into some stockings that had been hung to dry by the fire. Hence, the beginning of the tradition of the "Christmas stocking" or "boot."

14. Christmas Cards -- The first British Xmas card can be dated back to 1843. The first cards featured pictures of dead birds! Evidently, the popularity of hunting robin and wren on Christmas Day made the dead bird image an appropriate one for "holiday" cards. Often the text of the cards would also have a morbid tone. Later, the cards displayed dancing insects, playful children, pink-cheeked young women, and festively decorated Christmas trees. The first actual Xmas cards were really Valentine's Day cards (with different messages) sent in December. Mass production of Xmas cards in the United States can be traced back to 1875. Initially, the manufacturers thought of Xmas cards as a sideline to their already successful business in playing cards. But the "tradition" of sending cards soon caught on, leading to a very profitable business by itself.

15. Christmas Carols -- What do you suppose the reaction would be by a church's leaders if its pastor were to propose that the following hymns be introduced into the church to commemorate the birth of Christ? After all, the tunes are quite lovely.

Hymn #1 -- A hymn by a Unitarian (rejects the Trinity and full deity of Christ) minister that does not mention Jesus Christ and reflects the liberal social gospel theology of the 19th century.

Hymn #2 -- A hymn by an American Episcopal priest, the fourth verse of which teaches Roman Catholic superstition about Christ coming to be born in people during the Advent season.

Celebrate Christmas

Hymn #3 -- A song, the words by an Austrian Roman Catholic priest, the music by a Roman Catholic school teacher, containing the Roman Catholic superstition about halos emanating from holy people, with no gospel message.

Perhaps you would expect the church's leaders to be very upset. It might surprise you to learn that they were upset when they suspected that the pastor might somehow *prevent* them from singing them. You see, those three hymns were already in the church's hymnals! The pastor did not have to introduce them. The three theologically incorrect "Christmas carols" referred to above are *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, and *Silent Night*. (See the [appendix](#) for an evaluation of some of the most popular Xmas carols found in church hymnals today.)

E. European Xmas Traditions -- In the early days of Christianity, as it moved north and west into Europe, many pagan celebrations were encountered. For example, in the late-6th century in England, the Angles and Saxons were found celebrating Yule. The Christian evangelists thought they would fail in any attempt to rival, suppress, or stamp out such long held customs, so they simply adopted popular dates for their own "special rituals and hallowed services." In other words, it was easier to establish a festival celebrating the birth of Christ if it conveniently coincided with an existing popular feast day. In this way, the pagan peoples (albeit potential converts to Christianity), could continue with their usual celebrations at this time of year, but the reason for the merrymaking could be redefined and attributed to Christ's birth rather than to any pagan rituals. As paganism eventually died out and Christianity became widespread, Christmas became increasingly more associated with its religious foundations than any others (Sulgrave Manor, "A Tudor Christmas," p. 2).

It was left to the Puritans to denounce everything. For them, Christmas was rightfully part popish, part pagan, and was forbidden to be kept as a holiday or feast day. The attack began in 1644 when the Puritans controlled the Parliament; December 25th was changed to a Fast Day. By 1647, even the Fast Day was abolished as a relic of superstition, synonymous with the Church of Rome. *No* observation on December 25th was any longer permitted, but the day was to be observed as a normal market-day. Christmas was accurately depicted by such names as the Profane Man's Ranting Day, the Superstitious Man's Idol Day, the Papist's Massing Day, the Old Heathen's Feasting Day, the Multitude's Idle Day, and Satan-that Adversary's-Working Day. In those days, any Christmas celebrations would be broken up by troops, who would tear down decorations and arrest anyone holding a service. Some who celebrated it in Europe were also thrown into prison. Because of the riots that broke out following the banning of Christmas, the celebrations and revelry were restored in 1660 by King Charles II, a Catholic (Sulgrave Manor, "A Tudor Christmas," p. 3).

F. American Xmas Traditions -- America's settlers (the "founding fathers" of so-called [Protestant America](#)) rightfully considered Christmas a "popish" holiday. In fact, it was only in the early 1800s that several founding members of the New York Historical Society "invented" Christmas. Before then, it was illegal in colonial Massachusetts to even take December 25th off work. Christmas was forbidden as unseemly to ye spiritual welfare of ye community." (It was banned in Massachusetts in 1659, and this law remained on the books for 22 years. In Boston, public schools stayed open on December 25th until as late as 1870!) It wasn't until 1836 that any state declared Christmas a holiday (Alabama), and then there were no more state declarations until the Civil War.

It was not until 1885 that all federal workers were given Christmas Day off. The so-called Xmas customs and traditions were later concocted more for commercial purposes than for religious. Quoting from a 12/23/83 *USA TODAY* article about Christmas: "A broad element of English Christianity still considered Christmas celebration a pagan blasphemy. The Puritans, Baptists, Quakers, Presbyterians, Calvinists and other denominations brought this opposition to early New England and strong opposition to the holiday

lasted in America until the middle of the 18th century." Henry Ward Beecher, a Congregationalist, wrote in 1874 of his New England boyhood:

"To me Christmas is a foreign day, and I shall die so. When I was a boy I wondered what Christmas was. I knew there was such a time, because we had an Episcopal church in our town, and I saw them dressing it with evergreens, and wondered what they were taking the woods in the church for; but I got no satisfactory explanation. A little later I understood it was a Romish institution, kept by the Romish Church."

II. Scriptural Support Against Celebrating Christmas

-- Unacceptable Worship

A. 2 Chron. 33:15-17 -- The Israelites had kept the old pagan form (the high places of Baal), but had merely introduced the worship of God into that form -- a refusal to let go of pagan worship forms (i.e., God was to be worshiped in the Temple, not on the high places). This was unacceptable worship because the right object of worship was mixed with wrong forms of worship; i.e., the mixing of godly worship with ungodly form. [Likewise, is not the celebration of Christmas the taking of a celebration established *by* pagans and *for* pagans, and then introducing the worship of Christ into that pagan form?]

B. Deut. 12:29-32 -- God warned His people Israel to destroy all vestiges of pagan worship that they found in the "Promised Land." Not only did God want to prevent His people from being enticed to worship false gods, but He specifically revealed that He did not want His people to worship Him in the same manner in which the heathen worshiped their gods. We know, therefore, that our Lord is displeased by practices which profess to honor Him, but which are copied from the tradition of false religions. The command here was to worship God only in His way, i.e., do only what God commands -- not adding to God's commands nor taking away from them. [Is not "putting Christ back into Christmas," worshipping "the Lord *your* God *their* way"? Is there any command in the Bible to give special reverence to the Scriptural account of Christ's birth more so than to any other Scripture, let alone even a suggestion to celebrate or commemorate His birth in any way whatsoever? God never intended for His people to be imitators of the pagan customs of the world, but has called us to be separate and set apart.]

C. Lev. 10:1, 2 -- Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire to the Lord. [Is not the celebration of Christmas, with all its pagan symbols and forms, a "strange fire" unto the Lord, and is not this form of worship contrary to what God commands?]

D. 1 Sam. 15:1-3, 7-9, 21-23 -- Saul disobeyed God's prophet in order to worship God in his way. [Is not the celebration of Christmas one of man's ways of worshipping Christ? There is certainly no Biblical command to offer worship in this manner.]

E. 2 Sam. 6:2-7 -- David attempts to transport the ark on a "new cart" instead of using the rings and poles as the Law required (Exo. 25:12-15). Additionally, the "transporters" of the ark were not even authorized to carry it (1 Chron. 15:2, 13-15); i.e., the ark was not only transported in the wrong way, but was transported by the wrong people! [Is not the celebration of Christmas the wrong way (pagan forms and tradition) with the wrong people (the heathen of the world join right in with the professing Christians)?]

F. 1 Ki. 12:26-33 -- In order to unify the northern ten tribes of Israel, ungodly King Jeroboam set up pagan idols, *not* in place of God, but as new focal points for directing worship to God. He even instituted

Celebrate Christmas

a new festival on a new day; i.e., a new religious holiday of his own choosing. Even though the true God of Israel was still to be the object of worship in the new religious holiday, both the holiday and the worship were not authorized by God nor accepted by Him (1 Ki. 13:1-3; 15:29,30). Why? Because the concocted mixture of error with truth constituted false religion! [Is not the celebration of Christmas a religious holiday of man's own choosing, replete with pagan symbols and forms, all under the guise (by sincere Christians at least) of worshiping the one true God and Savior? But does not this worship form and system still constitute false religion, and thereby, make it unacceptable to God? And besides, where in the Bible do Christians have the right to add a new holy day to the so-called Christian calendar, any more than King Jeroboam had the right to add a new holy day to God's theocratic calendar?]

G. 1 Cor. 8:4-13; Rom. 14:1-13; 1 Cor. 10:14, 18-21 -- These passages concerning Christian liberty are discussed in more detail under Roman numeral IV. [Christian liberty can best be defined Biblically as "the freedom to engage in practices *not prohibited* by the Scriptures or *denying oneself what is permitted* (i.e., a moral choice of selfdiscipline) in order to be a more effective witness for God." So the question must first be answered, "Is Christmas permitted?"] Briefly, some claim that Paul is teaching that the participation in pagan forms condemns no one, and therefore, participation in Christmas and its forms, even though arising out of pagan idolatry, is inconsequential.

However, Paul nowhere approves participation in *acts* of idolatry, of which the participation in the pagan forms of Christmas comes dangerously close to doing. Instead, Paul is speaking of the liberty to continue in Jewish days of worship/festival that had been previously ordained under the Jewish law. There is certainly no liberty to bring outside pagan forms into the church's worship services. Likewise, there is no liberty to Christianize Babylonian/Roman pagan holy days as special days.

Christians in the first century churches had the liberty to observe Old Testament holy days and feasts (days that had previously been revealed by God) if they were so immature as to do so. The weaker brother, Paul wrote, was at that time not to be censured for continuing to attach some importance to the Old Testament holy days, as a clear knowledge of their abolition in Christ was not yet given to him (the weaker brother). But to *observe a pagan* holy day is something this passage does *not* sanction.

They certainly did not have the liberty to regard Babylonian/Roman pagan holy days (days that were invented by the devil) as special days. Again, that would have been idolatry, worldliness, and perhaps even a form of Satan worship on their part. Therefore, how can the observance of Christmas Day, or any other Babylonian/Roman Catholic holy day, be a matter of Christian liberty?

Yet when some of us refuse to regard the pagan holy days as special days, we are the ones often referred to as the "weaker brother" in this matter! Are we opposed to such days because we are "weak in faith"? Faith would be defined as believing what the Word of God says about a matter and acting upon it. It was by faith that we stopped regarding pagan holy days as special days. Would we be more mature Christians if we would start regarding such days again? It would certainly be much easier on us and our families.

III. Christmas and Violation of the Ten Commandments (reverse order)

A. Do Not Covet -- Children learn to covet the gifts of others, to drool over the Christmas catalog, to drag their parents endlessly through toy stores, all in the name of "the Christmas spirit."

B. Do Not Bear False Witness -- "Jesus is the reason for the season!" is the Christian battle cry to "put Christ back in Christmas," when in actuality, there is not only no Biblical warrant for Christmas, but its roots are in pagan worship systems. Nevertheless, professing Christians lie to their children about Santa Claus, the supernatural, sorcerous false "god" of Christmas, whose "gospel" is one of works salvation along with unconditional acceptance and rewards. Parents lie to their children for years about

Celebrate Christmas

the god-like character of Santa Claus, in effect asking them to *trust* in a false god and a lie, and then don't understand why later in life their children won't believe and *trust* in the true God, Jesus Christ.

C. Do Not Steal -- Christmas spending patterns could never stand the test of Biblical stewardship; i.e., Christians, in celebrating Christmas, "steal" the Lord's resources by ignoring their proper use; lavishly spend these resources on worthless and useless trinkets (in many cases); and withhold resources from those in need, while at the same time claiming to never have enough money to buy good Christian books, pay for home schooling, or buy Bible helps for their children. (Christians could also be helping the spiritually needy by buying and giving them tracts, books, etc.) We "steal" from our families what they need and what we owe them in order to buy gifts for those who don't need them.

D. Do Not Commit Adultery -- At this "special" time of the year, lustful thoughts are actually encouraged; e.g., teens are allowed to go to parties and stay out later, thereby having temptations put in front of them that otherwise wouldn't be there. Christmas parties for adults also encourage evil thoughts through the use of the mistletoe, etc. (According to Matt. 5, such thoughts constitute adultery. At the very least, *spiritual adultery* is encouraged by the "season.")

E. Do Not Murder -- Envy and hate of my brother (which, according to Matt. 5, is equal to murder) because he has more than me or because he receives a larger Christmas bonus than me, is encouraged at Christmas time. We also tend to spiritually sacrifice our children to the "god of Christmas" via greed, selfishness, etc.

F. Honor Father & Mother -- Christmas gift-giving is not an honor to parents; the term "exchanging" gifts (i.e., giving in expectation of a return) is a dead give-away of the mockery associated with this tradition.

G. Remember the Sabbath & Keep It Holy -- Although we recognize that the Lord's Day is not the "Christian Sabbath," clearly the Lord's Day is to be kept for worship and observed as such. Yet when Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, or the day after Christmas falls on a Sunday, most churches adjust the Lord's Day to accommodate Christmas, usually by cancelling the regularly scheduled Sunday evening service. Most of its members are too busy or too tired to attend services anyway. [Editor's note: Although this is written by a Sunday Keeper—the same thing happens with SDA and the Sabbath—Christmas; or New Years; or whatever—encroaches onto the Sabbath and everyone seems quite OK with it!]

H. Do Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain -- "Christ" and "mass" are two words that are totally opposite from one another, and to connect the two is to blaspheme the name of Christ. By taking a pagan celebration, "Christianizing" it, and calling it a celebration of the birth of Christ, is most certainly taking the Lord's name in vain. (A good example of the willingness of the professing church to profane the name of the Lord would be the title of a popular children's Christmas concert production -- *The Divine Ornament*. Imagine, identifying our Lord with a pagan ornament to hang on a pagan tree! What insult! What blasphemy!) In addition, some professing Christians use religion ("Christ's birthday") as a cloak to cover the evils of covetousness, idolatry, greed, immorality, etc. -- all excuses to give vent to evil lusts.

I. Do Not Make Yourself Any Carved Image -- Nativity scenes, "pictures" of Christ, Christmas cards with "pictures" of Jesus, etc., all violate this command. God has given us His Word, not images, to teach us about Christ (1 Pe. 1:23; Dt. 4:12, 15-19).

J. Have No Other gods Before Me -- The "god of Christmas" is idolatrous! Looking to the Christmas season for happiness, joy, and fulfillment, rather than through a pure, personal, and Biblical relationship with Jesus Christ, is idolatry.

K. Is a Christian's Decision to Celebrate Christmas a Part of Christian Liberty?

A. Romans 14:1-13 -- This passage is speaking of Jews who were observing the Old Testament Jewish holy days/festivals and dietary laws even though they were now believers in Christ; but they were also judging their Gentile brothers-in-the-Lord who did not observe the Jewish customs. Likewise, the Gentile Christians were judging their Jewish brothers who were seemingly caught-up in ceremonial law. Paul was thusly saying, "To you Gentile Christians -- leave the Jewish Christians alone, because they are *not* violating any Scriptural commands by their actions (i.e., it's a "disputable" matter [doubtful or gray area] and *not* a moral issue). To you Jewish Christians -- it's okay for you to observe the Jewish festivals and dietary laws because they were *given by God* in the Old Testament, and thereby, are considered to be *previously approved worship forms*, but don't judge your Gentile brothers because there is no Biblical command for either of you to continue to observe these things." (Actually, it wasn't "okay" [see IV.C. below], but Paul *allowed* it as an act of an immature/weaker brother [see II.G. above].)

If a moral issue is involved (i.e., a practice that is covered in Scripture), then this passage and its application to Christian liberty (i.e., the freedom to engage in practices *not* prohibited by Scripture) would obviously not apply. And as brought out earlier in this report, the celebration of Christmas appears to be such a moral issue, because its celebration is not only *not* from God, but is from ancient paganism itself!

B. 1 Corinthians 8:4-13 -- The Gentile Christians, who had been raised in an idolatrous system, were having a problem with their Jewish brothers who were eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols. (Apparently, this was the only "healthy" meat available.) Similar to the Romans 14 passage above, Paul says that eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols is *not* a moral issue, and thereby, is *not* prohibited. However, Paul does *not* say that it is okay to go into the pagan temple itself; in fact, in other passages (1 Cor 10:14, 18-21), Paul specifically *prohibits getting involved with* the pagan feasts. In other words, it's not a moral issue to partake in the *byproducts* of a pagan religious system (note, however, that there is no indication here that the Jewish Christians were using the "idol meat" as part of their worship), but it is *not* okay to partake in the religious system itself (because the corrupt character of the participants would be harmful for believers). Rather, we must be separate from the worldly system (2 Cor 6:14-7:1).

Therefore, when items (*byproducts*) associated with a pagan religious system not only develop religious associations of their own, but have been integrated into what would otherwise be true Christian worship (as the celebration of Christmas has clearly become in our culture), then we should pull away from them so that there is no confusion over our allegiances.

C. Galatians 4:9-10; Colossians 2:16-17 -- Both these passages of Scripture refer to the *Jewish* holy days under Old Testament law. If Christians were not even to observe the *Old Testament* holy days -- days which *did* have divine sanction, for a time -- they certainly don't have the liberty to observe *pagan* holy days!

D. James 4:11 -- James is saying that Christians may only judge a brother on matters determined in God's Word (i.e., moral issues). If a matter is not covered in the Word, then these are matters of Christian liberty (à la Rom. 14:1-13 and 1 Cor 8:4-13), and he who judges in these areas of Christian liberty is, in effect, judging and condemning the Word of God as being an imperfect standard to which the judge, thereby, refuses to submit. On the other hand, since we have clear Scriptural precept that

condemns the things that go on around December 25th in the name of Christ, the celebration of Christmas does not appear to be a matter of liberty, but one of moral conduct.

V. The Right Response

A. Quench Not the Holy Spirit (1 Thes 5:19-22) -- Test all things against the Scripture and line-up beliefs and actions with what is true (i.e., do not treat with contempt the Word of God). If one is convinced that to celebrate Christmas is sin, then he and his family must not compromise with the world or the church by participating in any Christmas celebrations (Rom. 14:23).

B. Avoid Traps of the Devil:

1. Lack of Zeal -- One who never considers why he does certain things, but he just does them because he always has or because his parents always have; one who acts on emotions rather than on facts.

2. Lack of Truth -- One who does things for good reasons and right motives (i.e., plenty of zeal), but not in truth.

C. Realize that Christians Celebrating Christmas as the Day of Christ's Birth Makes No More Sense than Adding Any of the Following Days as Special Days of Christian Celebration: -- (Remember, the Bible's focus on the birth of Christ is for the sole purpose of documenting his virgin birth, his incarnation, and the fulfillment of His prophetic Messiahship. Like the tongue-in-cheek suggestions below, one must also remember that there is *no* Biblical warrant, precedent, nor precept for the remembrance of the day of Christ's birth as a day of special religious celebration.)

1. Baptism Celebration -- Why not have three days of swimming parties in the summer in order to celebrate/symbolize Christ's three days in the grave? We could even pick a time based upon our *speculation* of when John the Baptist baptized Jesus!

2. Ascension Celebration -- Why not have one day set aside every year for hot-air balloon rides in order to celebrate Christ's ascension to heaven?

3. Miracle Celebration -- There is considerable Biblical focus on Jesus' miracles (even *more* than on his birth), so why not have one day set aside every year to celebrate the first of Christ's miracles? And since that was the turning of water into wine (Jn. 2), why not have "Christian" wine-tasting parties?!

D. Avoid the Rationalizations that:

1. "Christmas Provides a Festive Time to Share the Gospel" -- One cannot take something condemned in God's Word and "use it" to spread the Gospel; neither will God bless it to spread His Word. Unacceptable worship and the "mixing-in" of unholy/pagan forms is surely not the normal means through which God blesses the faithful. Satan works to blend together his system with God's system, because when unacceptable worship (paganism) is blended with true worship (God's truth), true worship is destroyed. In fact, any time one mixes pagan ideas and practices with the pure religion of Christ, it is condemned in Scripture as the heinous sin of idolatry! God has always detested taking those things dedicated to idols and using them to worship Him. [As a matter of fact, this "special time of the year" is probably more a *hindrance* to the receptiveness of the gospel message than a help. Much of the celebration observed by our contemporary society deludes people into assuming that God is pleased, when in reality, He is offended by false religion, pseudo-worship, and

alien philosophies. The ecumenical spirit and a counterfeit "love" under the guise of "peace and goodwill among men," more than likely dulls one's sensitivity to his desperate need to repent of sin and be reconciled to a holy God.]

2. "Christmas is Merely the Honoring of Christ's Birth" -- Someone says, "I know Christmas is of pagan origin, but I still think it's not wrong for a church to have a special time for honoring Christ's birth." But since when did Protestants believe that Christians have the right to add to the Bible? Is the church a legislative body? Are we to follow the Bible in our faith and practice, or the thinking of fallible men? If we have the right to add a special holy day to the Christian economy, then we can add 10,000 other things. Then we will be no better than the false cults and the Roman Catholics who follow heathen traditions! [Besides, celebrating Christ's birth is a form of worship. But since Christmas is a lie, those who celebrate it are not worshiping in "spirit *and* truth" (Jn. 4:24).]

3. "All I'm Doing is Putting Christ Back into Christmas" -- The modern conservative cry to put Christ back into Christmas is absurd. As detailed earlier in this report, Jesus Christ was never in Christmas. It's a lie to say He was. He has no part in a lie. When anyone takes the truth and mixes a lie with it, they no longer have the truth. They have changed the truth into a lie. Neither is it possible to take a lie and mix enough truth with it to change the lie into the truth. You still come out with a lie. One may say, "Well, I know it's not the truth, but I'll put Christ back in Christmas and glorify God in it then."

No, you won't. Christ never was in Christmas. You cannot change a lie into the truth. It should in reality be called Baal-mass, Nimrod-mass, Tammuz-mass, Mithras-mass, or Mary-mass. Christ-mass is a lie. Why use a lie as a good time for a cardinal truth (the incarnation) of the Christian faith?

4. "I'm Using Christmas to Witness for Christ, Just Like the Apostle Paul Did" -- Some say that all they are doing is taking the "truth" from Christmas (i.e., the incarnation of Christ) and "cultivating" it as the Apostle Paul did (Acts 17/Mars Hill), taking the opportunity of the season to witness to a lost world. This would be fine if these Christians were actually doing *only* as Paul did. Paul, in addressing the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill, proclaimed to them that their "unknown god" to whom they had erected an altar, was none other than "the God who made the world and all the things therein." Paul was not intimidated by the pagan surroundings and symbolisms, nor did he berate the Greeks for their error, but merely showed them the truth of the gospel of Christ.

But do Christians really use the "opportunity presented by the season" in the same way as Paul used the opportunity of the pagan altar? Do Christians personally stand in front of their hometown public displays of Xmas (Nativity scenes, etc.) and preach the gospel? To paraphrase Paul, do they say: "Men of Indianapolis, I see that in every way you are very religious; what you worship as something unknown, I am going to proclaim to you"?

Do they come out of the public schools where they have just attended their children's Xmas programs and preach to the attendees about the true God who has been grossly misrepresented in the program they have just witnessed? Hardly. Even to most of those who understand the true origin of Xmas, this "unique time of year" means inviting unbelievers into their homes to gather around the Xmas tree, to enjoy the beauty of the wreaths, absorb the heat from the Yule log, etc., reasoning that they are only using the pagan forms and the pagan festival season as an opportunity to witness.

If Paul meant this in Acts 17, he would have met the people in the Athenian temple or in his or their homes, gathering around their idols that he had Christianized and was now using as a part of his worship. Most of the people who decorate their homes and churches with Xmas trees, holly wreaths, Nativity scenes, etc., all supposedly to be used as "opportunities" via "Xmas coffees," neighborhood "grab bag" gift exchanges, Xmas concerts, etc., are thoroughly convinced that they're doing God a

service. And since they are not involved in the crass secular "commercialization" that the world revels in, but have instead "put Christ back in Xmas" (so to speak), they reason that all is Biblical and pleasing to God.

5. "It Doesn't Mean Anything to Me" -- Many Christians who routinely make a habit of picking-and-choosing which Biblical commands they will or will not obey, have likewise carried this practice over into a justification for celebrating Christmas. They claim, "but the Christmas tree, mistletoe, Santa Claus, etc., don't mean anything pagan to me, so I'll exercise my Christian liberty and partake in all of it." Obviously, if one were to take such a cavalier approach to the physical world (i.e., "I can drink rat poison because I choose not to regard it as poison"), it would likely lead to a quick physical death. Why then do Christians think they can avoid spiritual harm by ignoring God's spiritual warnings?

6. "The 'Connection' Has Been Broken" -- There are those who clearly recognize the pagan nature of the various Christmas worship forms and practices. Nevertheless, many of these Christians claim that because of the long passage of time from their pagan inception to the present (6,000 years?), the "connection" to paganism has been sufficiently diminished to allow the adoption of these forms and practices into our Christian worship and celebration. While it may be true that most symbols have lost their original demonic meaning and significance in a modern society, it is strangely bizarre and ironic that Christendom seeks to commemorate Christ's birth with the faded symbols of Satan. And even though some of God's people may be naive and ignorant about the source of these things, surely God is not. Can such things please Him? And think about this -- if it were possible to "disconnect" current practices from their pagan/occultic roots, why does Scripture not provide us any guidelines as to:

- (a) How much time is necessary for the "neutralization"/disassociation process to occur; and
- (b) Which of the hundreds of ancient pagan rites would then be acceptable for adaptation into Christian worship (since some are obviously much more pagan/occultic than others)?

7. "There Are Hundreds of Other Items of Daily Life that Have a Pagan Origin" -

- It is said, "Such things as the wedding ring, certain clothing customs, the modern division of time into hours and minutes, the names of the days of the week, etc., all have pagan connections in their origins, so isn't it a contradiction on your part to say that *their* meanings have sufficiently changed while Christmas's meanings have not?" But we are not saying that their meanings have changed. The question is one of using things of pagan origin in our worship of Christ. So we would ask the question back,

"Which of these pagan items do we focus on to celebrate the birth of Christ? Or which of these is 'Christianized' and brought into our weekly worship of, or our daily devotion to Christ, as you do with the pagan forms and traditions of Xmas?" The origin and meaning of a custom, tradition, or form does not take on significance unless it is somehow specifically incorporated into, or lined up with, our worship.

As we have already detailed in the section on Christian liberty (Section IV.B.), these rings, clothing customs, etc. would be merely the *byproducts* of paganism, *not* paganism itself, *and* they have developed no religious connotations or associations of their own, as have the Xmas customs and traditions. [Editor's Note: Historic SDA do not use the wedding ring or jewelry either]

8. "Baptism (and Circumcision) Have Pagan Origins and God Still Gave Their Use in Scripture, So What's Wrong With Using the Pagan Forms of Christmas?"

-- This argument is frequently made by pastors who say that to be consistent, those who would have us forbid the forms, symbols, and traditions of Christmas should also be calling for us to abandon believer's

Celebrate Christmas

baptism; i.e., shouldn't the would-be banners of Christmas be saying, "Since the ancient mystery religions practiced forms of baptism, therefore baptism is a pagan custom and should be outlawed for the believer in Christ"? This is a strange argument for anyone to make, particularly a theologian (and, in our opinion, reveals a low view of Scriptural admonitions). If baptism were absent from the Bible, as using pagan forms and traditions to celebrate or commemorate Christ's birthday are totally absent, there would then be no Biblical justification for baptism. But God has *not commanded* us to celebrate or commemorate Christ's birth in any way. He *has commanded* us to baptize (Matt. 28:19).

E. Abstain From the Observance of Christmas -- What, then, ought to be the Christian's response to this and other pagan and Roman inventions? It cannot be denied that they are pagan pure and simple, from beginning to end. God gives us specific instructions in His Holy Word: *Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen ...* (Jer. 10:2). These words are perfectly clear. What rational options does a Bible believing Christian have?

VI. Conclusion

The very popularity of Christmas should cause the Christian to question it. Anyone and everyone can celebrate Christmas without question -- outright pagans, nominal Christians, and even Buddhists and Hindus. If, in reality, December 25th were a date set by God to remember the birth of Jesus, there is no doubt that the world would have nothing to do with it. After all, God has commanded one day in seven - - the Lord's Day -- to worship Him. Does the world observe it? Of course not. As expected, the world loves Christmas, but hates the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 15:18, 23-25). It shuns anything pertaining to true religion.

Shouldn't the Christian be just a little suspicious of a celebration in which the whole sinful world can join without qualms? One way to test the Scripturalness of our practices is to reflect on what we would expect missionaries to teach new converts in a foreign culture. We assume that they would use the Bible as their guide book. If they could start new local churches without importing American culture encumbered with Roman Catholicism, liberal Protestantism, and crass commercialism, wouldn't it be wonderful?

Missionaries who have urged new converts to forsake all pagan superstitious relics have later been questioned about the apparent inconsistency of their own American Christmas customs. Nationals perceived them as idolatrous even though the missionaries were oblivious to that possibility! When Christmas is exposed for what it really is, this angers people. It angers *Protestant* people! And there is reason why it does so. When the pagan celebration of Christmas is rooted up, and rejected, then what has become a *Protestant tradition* is, in effect, being rejected! And *that* is why people become angry. It began as a Roman Catholic holy day, and then it became a Protestant holy day. And if anyone dares show it up for what it really is, they face the wrath of the Protestant religious machine. And these days, that can be very ugly.

Christmas is a thoroughly pagan holiday -- in its origin, in its trappings, and in all its traditions. Perhaps we should contemplate the words of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, delivered in a Lord's Day sermon on December 24, 1871: "We have no superstitious regard for times and seasons. Certainly we do not believe in the present ecclesiastical arrangement called *Christmas*: first, because we do not believe in the *mass* at all, but abhor it, whether it be said or sung in Latin or in English; and secondly, because we find no Scriptural warrant whatever for observing any day as the birthday of the Saviour; and consequently, its observance is a superstition, because [it's] not of divine authority. Superstition has fixed most positively the day of our Saviour's birth, although there is no possibility of discovering when it occurred...."

Celebrate Christmas

"It was not till the middle of the third century that any part of the church celebrated the nativity of our Lord; and it was not till very long after the Western church had set the example, that the Eastern adopted it. Because the day is not known, therefore superstition has fixed it; ... Where is the method in the madness of the superstitious? Probably the fact is that the holy days were arranged to fit in with the heathen festivals. ... We venture to assert that if there be any day in the year of which we may be pretty sure that it was *not* the day on which the Saviour was born, it is the twenty-fifth of December. ... regarding not the day, let us, nevertheless, give God thanks for the gift of His dear Son."

And from Dr. H. A. Ironside's *Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (1920: p. 301): "It is a lamentable fact that Babylon's principles and practices are rapidly but surely pervading the churches that escaped from Rome at the time of the Reformation. We may see evidences of it in the wide use of high-sounding ecclesiastical titles, once unknown in the reformed churches, in the revival of holy days and church feasts such as Lent, Good Friday, Easter, and Christ's Mass, or, as it is generally written, *Christmas*. ... some of these festivals ... when they are turned into church festivals, they certainly come under the condemnation of Galatians 4:9-11, where the Holy Spirit warns against the observance of days and months and times and seasons. All of them, and many more that might be added, are Babylonish in their origin, and were at one time linked with the Ashtoreth and Tammuz mystery-worship. It is through Rome that they have come down to us; and we do well to remember that Babylon is a mother, with daughters who are likely to partake of their mother's characteristics ..."

And, finally, from Alexander Hislop's 1916 classic, *The Two Babylons: Or the Papal Worship*: "Upright men strove to stem the tide, but in spite of all their efforts, the apostasy went on, till the Church, with the exception of a small remnant, was submerged under Pagan superstition. That Christmas is a Pagan festival is beyond all doubt. The time of the year and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin."

We can summarize by saying that nowhere in Scripture are we commanded to commemorate the birth of our Lord, and God the Father evidently deemed it unwise to make the date known. Hence, it will always remain unknown and is not to be ceremoniously remembered and celebrated. (In fact, God has warned us about getting entangled with any special days [Gal. 4:10]). Notice though, that we *are commanded* to remember Him in His death (but no special day was specified for this either):

"Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; this *DO* in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:18,19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). To commemorate His death is Scriptural. Any day of the year will do. To commemorate His birth is non-Scriptural, even extra-Scriptural (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:19), whether one chooses December 25th or any other day.

If God had desired us to remember Christ's birthday, He could have left us the precise date. But if He had, He would have vindicated every astrologer in the past 2,000 years. In occult circles, the anniversary of a person's birth is the most important metaphysical day of the year. The Bible recognizes no such significance. It is intriguing that there are only two birthday celebrations recorded in the entire Bible and they were both those of *ungodly* kings -- and both resulted in an execution (Gen. 40:16-22 and Matt. 14:6-10/Mark 6:21-27)!

The Apostle Paul says: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross [*not the manger*] of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). By itself, we find no salvation in the birth of the Lord Jesus, for salvation was only made possible through His death (i.e., His shed blood) and resurrection. Our focus should be on the cross and our ascended Savior, *not* in a cradle.

Celebrate Christmas

Those who love Jesus should certainly rejoice that He was born and lived amongst us as a man. But if we truly want to glorify Him and bear testimony of who He is, we must stop marrying that blessed gift with the debauchery of paganism. If we want to honor His birth, let it be done as He would have done it: year-round unselfishly serving our fellow man as an unending act of love for our God. Let us put away all of the mixture of pagan customs and take up His mantle and His pure worship, and show the confused world that there is a difference.

BIBLIOGRAPHY/SOURCES

1. Assemblies of Yahweh. *The Case Against Christmas*. Sacred Name Broadcaster, Bethel, PA, 23pp.
2. Becker, R.F. *The Truth About Christmas*. Chapel Library, Venice, FL, 36 pp.
3. Blanton, Raymond. *The Christmas Lie*. Highways & Hedges Tracts, Liberty, SC, 13 pp.
4. Buday, George. *The History of the Christmas Card*. Putman Pub., New York, 1954, 304pp.
5. Dager, Albert James. "The Origins of Christmas Traditions," *Media Spotlight* Special Report Redmond, WA, 1985, 2 pp.
6. Dickey, D.J. & Shetler, Earl. "Should A Christian Celebrate Christmas?" Grace Reformed Baptist Church, Vernonia, OR, 10/89: three-part sermon series -- each on a 90-minute audio cassette tape.
7. Dossey, Donald. *Holiday Folklore, Phobias and Fun: Mythical Origins, Scientific Treatments & Superstitious "Cures."* Outcomes Unltd. Press, Asheville, NC, 1995 (paper ed.), 232pp.
8. Elwell, Walter A. (Ed.). *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, pp. 218-221.
9. Halff, Charles. *The Truth About Christmas*. The Christian-Jew Foundation, San Antonio, TX, 13 pp.
10. Halff, Charles. "Is Christmas a Jewish Holiday?" *Message Of The Christian Jew*. November-December 1993, pp. cover, 1,2 & 7.
11. Helgerson, John C. *Considering the Christmas Issue*. The Church of the Open Bible, Burlington, MA, 12/31/90, 12 pp.
12. Hislop, Alexander. *The Two Babylons: Or The Papal Worship*. Loizeaux Bros., Neptune, NJ, 1959: Second Edition, 330 pp.
13. Kohler, John. *Our Baptist Heritage*. Heritage Baptist Church, Salem, IN, Vol. 2, No. 3, 11/92, 8 pp.
14. McCurry, Robert. *The God Man Has Made*. Heritage Press, Sharpsburg, GA, 8pp.
15. Pink, A.W. *Xmas*. Chapel Library, Venice, FL, 6 pp.
16. Schneider, Michael. *Is Christmas Christian?* Chapel Library, Venice, FL, 15 pp.
17. Spurlin, Ed. *Where Is The Christ In Christmas*. Voice in the Wilderness, Milford, NH, 11/92, 8pp.
18. Spurgeon, C.H. "Joy Born At Bethlehem," A Sermon: Delivered on Lord's Day Morning, December 24th, 1871. *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, pp. 697-698.
19. Unknown. *My Lord Has Not Told Me To Do It: The Christian and "Christmas."* Chapel Library, Venice, FL, 4 pp.
20. Unknown. *10 Reasons Why Christmas Is Unscriptural*. Chapel Library, Venice, FL, 8 pp.
21. (Vine, W.E.), Gospel Tract Publications. *The Collected Writings of W.E. Vine, Volume 5*. Glasgow, Scotland, 1986, pp. 436-439.
22. Willcock, Shaun. *The Pagan Festivals of Christmas and Easter*. Bible Based Ministries, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 1992, 76 pp.
23. Wilson, Greg. *Let's Keep Christ Out of Xmas*. Landmark Independent Baptist Church, Homestead, FL, 4

Should A Christian Celebrate Christmas? Bible References

I. C. 3.

1 Th 1:8-10; 5:22 - The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia-your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore, we do not need to say any-thing about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead-Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. ... Avoid every kind of evil.

I. D. 1.

Heb 9:12, 24-26 - He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. ... For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Heb 10:10,12,14 - And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ... But when this Priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God. ... because by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

I. D. 2.

Exo 20:4-5a; 32:1-5, 9-10a - "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of any-thing in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God ..."

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me." So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD." ... "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them."

II. A.

2 Chr 33:15-17 - He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the image from the temple of the LORD, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. Then He restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel. The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

II. B.

Deu 12:29-32 - The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, "How do

these nations serve their gods? We will do the same." You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods. See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

II. C.

Lev 10:1,2 - Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

II. D.

1 Sam 15:1-3, 7-9, 21-23 - Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over His people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'"

... Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt. He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs-everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

... The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, [witchcraft] and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king."

II. E.

2 Sam 6:2-7 - He and all his men set out from Baalah of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark. They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals. When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.

II. F.

1 Ki 12:26-33 - Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam." After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there. Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all

Celebrate Christmas

sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar.

This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.

III. (General Applications)

1 Sam 16:7 - But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 John 3:15 - Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

Mat 15:19 - For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

IV. A. (& II. G.)

Rom 14:1-13 - Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters [non-essential/nonmoral issues]. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike.

Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

IV. B. (& II. G.)

1 Cor 8:4-13 - So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but One. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Celebrate Christmas

But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol's temple, won't he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.

1 Cor 10:14, 18-21 - Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. ... Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. One cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

2 Cor 6:14-7:1 - Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people." "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

IV. C.

Gal 4:9,10 - But now that you know God-or rather are known by God-how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!

Col 2:16,17 - Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

IV. D.

James 4:11 - Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

V. A.

1 Th 5:19-22 - Do not put out [quench] the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.

Rom 14:23 - But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

V. D. 2.

John 4:24 - God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

PSALMS 12:6-8

The words of the LORD are pure words:
as silver tried in a furnace of earth,
purified seven times. Thou shalt
keep them, O LORD, thou shalt
preserve them from this generation
forever. The wicked walk on every
side, when the vilest men are exalted.

Revelation 17:5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Editor's Note: To me this scripture is even more conclusive for our time here at the end of the world:

Isaiah 22:12 And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

13 And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.

14 And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.