

# The Shocking Pagan Origin of Christmas

What is the TRUE ORIGIN of Christmas? Where did it come from? Did you know Yeshua the Messiah was born nowhere NEAR December 25, but that was the “birth day” of the sun- god, “Sol Invictus” or “Mithras”? Did you know December 25 was the concluding day of the pagan winter festival called the “Saturnalia”? Where did “Santa Claus” come from? The “Christmas tree”? How did this pagan feast become connected with “Christianity”? Here is an amazing “whale of a tale”!

**by Hope Of Israel Ministries Staff**

Although the whole world celebrates Christmas as a “Christian” holiday, including millions of non-Christians, is Christmas really “Christian” at all? Consider this fact: Look high and low throughout the pages of the Bible, and you will find not ONE WORD of “Christmas” being celebrated by any of YEHOVAH’s people! It is not even mentioned once! Neither the Messiah nor any of his apostles ever observed this holiday, nor the New Testament Church!

Yet on the other hand the pagan, heathen world observed this day for thousands of years before the Messiah was even born!

Where did the mysterious rites and ceremonies that surround this day come from? What about the “Christmas tree” and the “Yule log” and the mistletoe and Holly wreaths? Are ANY of these customs truly “Christian” in origin? And what about fat and jolly old “Saint Nick” — or Santa Claus?

It’s high time we addressed these questions, and took a new look at “Christmas.” A church I was formerly a member of, which condemned Christmas observance as paganism, for almost sixty years, today has turned its back on its former beliefs, and encourages its members to observe this pagan mid-winter festival “in honor of Christ”! Many are doing so, heedless of the severe warnings in Scripture of what their eternal fate and destiny will be if they continue to embrace this ancient custom.

Is it wrong to celebrate “Christmas”? What is the truth about this popular and widespread holiday?

## The Origin of Christmas

Before one gets carried away with Christmas worship, there are a few things you should know. Let’s take an honest and objective look at the origins of this holiday.

We read in Werner Keller’s book *The Bible as History* the following admission:

“December 25 is referred to in documents as Christmas Day in A.D. 324 for the first time. Under the Roman emperor Justinian [A.D. 527-565] it was

recognized as an official holiday. An old Roman festival played a a major part in the choice of this particular day. December 25 in ancient Rome was the 'Dies Natali Invictus,' 'the birthday of the unconquered,' the day of the winter solstice and at the same time, in Rome, the last day of the Saturnalia, which had long since degenerated into a week of unbridled carnival..." (p. 331).

Doesn't it seem rather strange that the so-called "Christian church" should choose a day to celebrate the Messiah's birth which was identified as the day of the birth of the unconquered sun, the day of the winter solstice, the "shortest day of the year," when the sunlit part of the days start becoming longer again? What does this have to do with the Messiah, anyway? Was Yeshua the Messiah born anywhere near December 25? Keller goes on:

"Meteorologists as well as historians and astronomers have something of importance to contribute to this question of fixing the date of the birth of Jesus. According to St. Luke: 'And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night' (Luke 2:8).

"Meteorologists have made exact recordings of the temperature at Hebron. This spot in the southern highlands of Judah exhibits the same climatic conditions as Bethlehem, which is not far distant. The temperature readings show over a period of three months that the incidence of frost is as follows: December — 2.8 degrees; January — 1.6 degrees; February — 0.1 degrees. The first two months have also the greatest rainfall in the year: approximately 6 inches in December, and nearly 8 inches in January. According to all existing information the climate of Palestine has not changed appreciably in the last 2,000 years, consequently modern meteorological observations can be taken as a basis.

"At Christmas-time Bethlehem is in the grip of frost, and in the Promised Land no cattle would have been in the fields in that temperature. This fact is born out by a remark in the Talmud to the effect that in that neighborhood the flocks were put out to grass in March and brought in again at the beginning of November. They remained out in the open for almost eight months.

"Around Christmas-time nowadays both animals and shepherds are under cover in Palestine.

"What St. Luke tells us points therefore to the birth of Jesus having taken place BEFORE the onset of winter..." (p. 331-332).

How interesting! How fascinating! As we explore the time for the birth of the Messiah, we find he was born nowhere near December 25, the very date the world has chosen to "celebrate" supposedly, his "birthday"! But there is much more to the story than this. Let's go on.

## **When Was Yeshua Really BORN?**

Millions of ostensible "Christians," or "nominal" Christians, who think they

are followers of the religion of Yeshua the Messiah, have been deceived. Not only have they foolishly embraced erroneous “traditions” as if they were “Christian,” but they have been lied to, misled by preachers and ministers and priests, and have ASSUMED that they were worshipping the Messiah! Yet Yeshua the Messiah himself warned: “Howbeit IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, teaching for doctrines THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye HOLD THE TRADITION OF MEN...” (Mark 7:7-8).

The gospel of Matthew also records similar words spoken by the Messiah. Notice! “Ye HYPOCRITES, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths, and honoreth me with their lips; but THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. But IN VAIN do they WORSHIP me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of MEN” (Matthew 15:7-9).

Let’s look into this matter honestly. Let’s examine the evidence, seeking the truth. When was Yeshua the Messiah born, anyway? Was it anywhere NEAR December 25? And if not, then why believe a lie, and practice and perform a lie?

The birth of the Messiah is not known for certain, but we can know the approximate time of year when he was born! In the book of Luke we read that the father of John the Baptist was Zacharias, and he was a priest who served at the temple in Jerusalem. He was “of the course of Abia” (Luke 1:5). While serving at the temple, he was informed by an angel that his wife was to have a son, who was to be named “John.” After this, Zacharias finished “the days of his ministration,” and “departed to his own house” (v.23). “And after those days, his wife Elizabeth conceived...” (v. 24).

The names of the different courses of priests that served at the Temple are given in I Chronicles 24:1-19. “Abia” or “Abijah” was the EIGHTH course. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, each one of these courses served at the Temple for one week, the first course serving the first week of Nisan, in the spring (compare I Chronicles 27:1-2), and then each course in its own order. All the priests served during the annual festivals (Passover in spring, Pentecost, and then Tabernacles in the fall). After six months, the order would be repeated, thus each “course” would serve two weeks during a year.

The course of Abijah, then, would have served the eighth week in the rotation. The eighth week from Nisan 1, leaving out the week of Passover, when all the priests served, would have been IYAR 27 TO SIVAN 5. He returned home shortly after this, and his wife then conceived. This would have been about the middle of June. If we add nine months to this date, the normal time for the gestation of a human baby in the womb, John the Baptist would have been born about the middle of March, in the spring, shortly before the Passover.

Yeshua was conceived about six months after John (Luke 1:24-31, esp. verse 26). This would suggest that Yeshua the Messiah was conceived about the middle of December. This would place his birth nine months, or 270 days, later — or the month of September!

## **Who WAS Born on December 25?**

If Yeshua the Messiah was not born on December 25, who was? In other

words, whose birthday is the whole “Christian world” really celebrating on December 25, though they call it the birth of “Christ”? Or, to put it another way, what “Christ” are they talking about? The word “Christ,” remember, is merely the translation of the Greek word Christos, which literally means “Anointed one” — it comes from the Hebrew word Moshiah, from whence we get the word “Messiah.” So what “anointed one” was born on December 25? Let us take out our magnifying glass, and like Sherlock Holmes, do some careful detective work, and see if we can solve the mystery — the puzzle of why the whole world observes the birthday of Yeshua the Messiah on a day on which he was not even remotely born! In the book ***History of Rome***, by Michael Grant, we read this startling revelation:

“Yet there was also another pagan belief during this same epoch, that much more nearly competed with Christ for the control of the Western world. This was the cult of the Sun, which was revered by millions of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, and its religion for a time even became the state worship....

“In Rome, the divinity of the Sun came very early on; and then, centuries afterwards, in the superb dome of Hadrian’s Pantheon, the central opening, surrounded by star-like rosettes, represented the solar orb....Before long, the emperor Aurelian established a massive temple of the Unconquerable Sun as the central and focal point of the entire religious system of the state (274). The birthday of the god was to be on DECEMBER 25, AND THIS, TRANSFORMED INTO CHRISTMAS DAY, WAS ONE OF THE HERITAGES THAT CHRISTIANITY OWED TO HIS CULT” (p. 391- 392, emphasis mine).

Notice! Christianity took over the birthday of the sun god, the cult of the sun, and transformed it into CHRISTMAS DAY, the “birthday” of Yeshua the Messiah! It was in reality the birth day of the pagan sun god, worshipped by millions throughout the Roman Empire!

We read more about this novel and profound “plot” to turn paganism into “Christianity” in a book by historian Jack Finegan, ***Myth & Mystery: An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World***. Finegan writes:

“...But the worship of the sun-god continued widely throughout the empire, and under Aurelian (A.D. 270-275) the cult was restored to its former high estate. In the year 274 Aurelian declared the god — now called Deus Sol Invictus — the official deity of the Roman Empire; he built a splendid temple of the sun in Rome...and set the sun’s birthday celebration (naturalis solis invicti) ON DECEMBER 25, the date then accepted for the winter solstice (also in his solar character the BIRTHDAY OF MITHRAS). In the time of Constantine the cult of Deus Sol Invictus was still at its height, and the portrait of the sun-god was on the coins of Constantine....Likewise it must have been in this time and with the intent to transform the significance of AN EXISTING SACRED DATE that the birthday of Jesus, which had been celebrated in the East on January 6...was placed in Rome ON DECEMBER 25, THE DATE OF THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SOL INVICTUS. This date appears in a list of dates probably compiled in A.D. 336 and published in the Roman city calendar, edited by Filocalus, for the year

354" (Finegan, p. 211-212, emphasis mine).

Are we beginning to get the picture? This was in the fourth century AFTER the Messiah! At this time, the Church moved to incorporate the birthday of the sun god into the so-called "Christian" calendar, and converted his "birth day" into the birth day of THE MESSIAH himself! That which was distinctly and definitely pagan now was "baptized," and by some act of "magic" was transformed into something "Christian"! At least, to the observer, it appeared to be "Christian." It was now called "Christian." But in truth, it still had a pagan heart and core!

## The Influence of Constantine

When Constantine became Emperor of Rome, he nominally at least became a "Christian." But being the head of a far-flung political Empire, he was concerned about the unity and coherence and stability of his Empire. As a sagacious politician, he sought to reconcile and blend and mesh pagan practices with "Christian" beliefs, to merge paganism with the Roman church. Constantine promulgated the "Edict of Toleration" in A.D. 313. He became emperor in A.D. 323, and "then Christianity was enthroned" (Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *The Story of the Christian Church*, p. 74). From this time, for the next two hundred years, all persecutions of Christians of the Roman church, and its adherents, ceased. The sword of persecution was "not merely sheathed; it was buried" (*ibid.*, p. 75).

But Jesse Hurlbut laments the results of Constantine's making Christianity the state religion, free from all persecution. From that time, he points out, the church became totally subverted by politics and self-seeking opportunists.

"...the establishment of Christianity as the state religion became a CURSE.

"Everybody sought membership in the church, and nearly everybody was received. Both good and bad, sincere seekers after God and hypocritical seekers after gain, rushed into the communion. Ambitious, worldly, unscrupulous men sought office in the church for social and political influence....

'The services of worship increased in splendor, but were less spiritual and hearty than those of former times. The forms and ceremonies of PAGANISM GRADUALLY CREPT INTO THE WORSHIP. Some of the OLD HEATHEN FEASTS BECAME CHURCH FESTIVALS WITH CHANGE OF NAME AND OF WORSHIP" (Hurlbut, *The Story of the Christian Church*, p. 79, emphasis mine).

How did it happen? Obviously, something strange and weird was going on! Will Durant, renowned historian, in his massive work *The Story of Civilization*, wrote in volume III, entitled Caesar and Christ, that in the new "church" that developed in the Roman Empire, the Jewishness of Yeshua was lost or rejected, and replaced with Greek philosophy and thought; the "Law" of the Jews was rejected, and, he writes,

"...the god Christ was assimilated to the religious and philosophical traditions of the Hellenistic mind. Now the PAGAN WORLD — even the anti-

Semitic world — could accept him as its own.

“CHRISTIANITY DID NOT DESTROY PAGANISM; IT ADOPTED IT. The Greek mind, dying, came to a transmigrated life in the theology and liturgy of the Church...the Greek mysteries passed down into the impressive mystery of the Mass. Other PAGAN cultures contributed to the syncretistic result. From Egypt came the idea of a divine trinity...from Egypt the adoration of the Mother and Child...From Phrygia came the worship of the Great Mother....The Mithraic ritual so closely resembled the eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass that Christian fathers charged the Devil with inventing these similarities to mislead frail minds. Christianity was the last great creation of the ancient PAGAN world” (p. 595).

These historical observations ought to make us sit up and take notice! The ‘Christianity’ that we see around us in the world today is but a “spin-off” of this ancient syncretism or ‘blending’ and “merging” of PAGANISM into the professed Church of Yeshua the Messiah, which had lapsed into political apostasy, profligacy and impurity. The descendants of the once chaste and pure virgin of the Messiah, the New Testament Church, had seemingly become, for all intents and purposes, the religious WHORE of Babylon — a bejeweled and bedecked and bedeviled slut and trollop, a “shady lady,” a spiritual PROSTITUTE!

“Paganism” was not defeated by the Church. It invaded the church, infiltrated it, and seduced it from within! The professing Christian Church became the “new face of paganism”! Only the “names” were changed. And in some cases — as in “Easter” Sunday — even the old pagan names were left in place!

H. G. Wells, in his ***Outline of History***, discusses the transformation of the teachings of the Messiah into the pagan worship of the heathen, calling itself “Christian.” He notes:

“The observance of the Jewish Sabbath, again, TRANSFERRED TO THE MITHRAIC SUN-DAY, is an important feature of many Christian cults...He [Jesus] did not say a word about the worship of his mother Mary in the guise of ISIS, THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN. Much that is most characteristically Christian [so-called] in worship and usage, he ignored. Skeptical writers have had the temerity to deny that Jesus can be called a Christian at all” (p. 445, emphasis mine, of course).

How did this happen? How did Mithraism, with its December 25 worship, and Sun-day worship, contribute these prominent “holidays” to the established “Christian” Church? How did paganism overtake, overcome, and subdue, the original teachings of the Church of Yeshua the Messiah, and his apostles, and replace Biblical holy days with pagan “holy days”? Should all true Christians be concerned about this historic truth — this reality? Doesn’t it really matter? What should these facts mean to us, today, who seek to obey YEHOVAH God, and follow the Messiah of the Bible, who seek to be TRUE followers of the Word of YEHOVAH GOD?

## The Seduction of the Church

Admits the *Worldbook Encyclopedia*, "The exact date of Christ's birth is not known. The early Christians did NOT celebrate His birth, because they considered the celebration of anyone's birth to be a pagan custom. The first mention of the observance of Christ's birthday appears about A.D. 200. For many years, several dates were used. December 25 was first mentioned in 336" (article "Christmas").

This common reference work acknowledges, "For many years, people observed Christmas as a religious festival only. But they GRADUALLY ADOPTED MORE AND MORE CUSTOMS UNRELATED TO THE CHURCH. Most of the customs originated in cultures that existed before Christianity....In 1643, the Puritans, who regarded such celebrations as pagan, outlawed the observance of Christmas in England." Colonists in New England followed the English laws and also outlawed Christmas. But immigrants to the New World brought Christmas customs from many lands and the old festivities were soon restored.

All of the popular customs and traditions surrounding Christmas actually were celebrated at pagan mid-winter festivals thousands of years before the Messiah was born. Admits this same encyclopedia, "The custom of burning the Yule log began with the ancient Scandinavians, who once a year burned a huge log in honor of their god Thor. After the Scandinavians became Christians [sic], they made the Yule log an important part of their Christmas ceremonies."

## Where Did the Christmas Tree Come From?

One of the most pervasive customs of Christmas, today, is the bringing home and decorating of a "Christmas tree." Where did this custom come from? Coffin in *The Book of Christmas Folklore* tells us:

"Most people have heard that the Christmas tree originates in the tannenbaum and is some sort of vestige of Teutonic vegetation worship. THIS IS PARTIALLY TRUE. However, the custom of using pine and other evergreens ceremonially was well established at the ROMAN SATURNALIA, even earlier in Egypt" (p. 209).

Writes Alexander Hislop in *The Two Babylons*,

"The Christmas tree, now so common among us, was equally common in Pagan Rome and Pagan Egypt. In Egypt that tree was the palm tree; in Rome it was the fir; the palm tree denoting the Pagan Messiah, as Baal-Tamar, the fir referring to him as Baal-Berith. The mother of Adonis, the Sun-God and great mediatorial divinity, was mystically said to have been changed into a tree, and when in that state to have brought forth her divine son. If the mother was a tree, the son must have been recognized as the 'Man the branch.' And this entirely accounts for the putting of the Yule Log into the fire on Christmas Eve, and the appearance of the Christmas tree the next morning" (page 97).

Tree worship was very common among the ancients. Says ***Festivals, Holy Days, and Saints' Days***,

"The Christmas tree...recapitulates the idea of tree worship...gilded nuts and balls symbolizing the sun...all the festivities of the [heathen] winter solstice have been absorbed into Christmas Day...the use of holly and mistletoe to the Druidic ceremonies; the Christmas tree to the honours paid to Odin's sacred fir...." (p. 236).

Writes Collins in ***Christmas Folklore***:

"This idea of decorating homes on holidays is both worldwide and age-old....So the Saturnalian laurel, the Teutonic holly, the Celtic mistletoe, and the Mexican poinsettia have all attached themselves to this polyglot ceremony...

"Many of the plants used at Christmas are SYMBOLS OF FERTILITY. Certainly any evergreen (fir, yew, laurel) with its ability to return verdure in the barrens months is appropriate, but by far the most interesting are the holly, the ivy, and the mistletoe. Holly, with its pricking leaves, white flowers, and red berries symbolizes the male reproductive urge. In fact, in the English carols...the holly is the male and the ivy is the female. This use of the plants was most likely BORROWED by the Christians along with other customs of the ROMAN SATURNALIA" (p. 22-23).

Ivy, holly's mate, in ancient Grecian rites took its name from the girl who danced with such abandon and joy before Dionysius that she fell dead at his feet. The pagan god, moved by her dance, turned her into the ivy that she might entwine whatever is near. Dionysius, of course, was the Greek version of the god of wine and revelry, another form of Bacchus, Tammuz, or Nimrod! Mistletoe, since the earliest of times, has been regarded as mysterious and sacred, the symbol of the sun, bestower of life, an aphrodisiac, and protector against disease and poison. The plant was especially sacred to the Celtic Druids who offered it in prayer to the gods. The mistletoe was referred to by pagans as the "golden bough." The two great holidays when the pagans gathered mistletoe were Midsummer Day, the summer solstice, and December 25, the winter solstice. It was supposed to possess the power of revealing treasures in the earth, and was formed into a "divining rod." It was also looked upon as the "seat of life" of the sacred oak, and as an emanation of the sun's fire. Kissing under the mistletoe is a survival of Saturnalian sexual licentiousness and bawdy immoral behavior, which was commonplace at the Saturnalia.

## What about Dear Old "Santa Claus"?

Even Santa Claus has a not-so-benign origin! This fat and jolly elf can be traced back to another ancient pagan Norse legend! Admits the ***Worldbook Encyclopedia***,

"Some of Santa Claus's characteristics date back many centuries. For example, the belief that Santa enters the house through the chimney



developed from an old Norse legend. The Norse believed that the goddess Hertha appeared in the fireplace and brought good luck to the home."

Although most people assume that the original "Santa Claus" was a bishop by the name of St. Nicholas of Asia Minor of the fourth century, this is not really true. Although some of this bishop's deeds later came to be associated with "St. Nick," the original "Nicholas" was once again Nimrod, the "mighty one against the Lord." The word "Nicholas" means "mighty one, powerful." Traditions of a "god" who gave gifts under an evergreen tree antecede the Asian Minor bishop by thousands of years! Among the Scandinavians it was the god Odin or Woden who left special gifts during the Yuletide season under the evergreen tree, his sacred tree!

Tony van Renterghem writes in ***When Santa Was a Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree***:

"In newly Christianized areas where the pagan Celtic and Germanic cults remained strong, legends of the god Wodan were blended with those of various Christian saints; Saint Nicholas was one of these. There were Christian areas where Saint Nicholas ruled alone; in other locations, he was assisted by the pagan Dark Helper (the slave he had inherited from the pagan god Wodan). In other remote areas...ancient pockets of the Olde Religion controlled traditions. Here the Dark Helper ruled alone, sometimes in a most confusing manner, using the cover name of Saint Nicholas or 'Klaus,' without in any way changing his threatening, Herne/Pan, fur-clad appearance. (This was the figure later used by the artist Nast as the model for the early American Santa Claus)" (page 96).

The Catholic Saint Nicholas also had a confusing past. Says van Renterghem, "He was a compilation of two separate saints (one from Myra in Asia Minor, the other from Pinora), both of whom were — as the Church nowadays admits — nothing more than Christianized water deities (possibly related to the Greco-Roman god Poseidon/Neptune)" (*ibid.*). In the 1970s, the Second Vatican Council formally stated that no Roman Catholic bishop by the name of Nicholas had ever existed! Vatican II further confessed that the legends attributed to this "saint" had no Christian origin, and probably came from pagan traditions!

Says van Renterghem, further:

"By absorbing such PAGAN FEASTS AND TRADITIONS, the Christian Church could subtly bring in its own theology: in this case, establishing the good Saint Nicholas, bringer of love and gifts, while grudgingly allowing the presence of the Olde Religion's Herne/Pan, but only as a slave to Saint Nicholas. Thus, in parts of Europe, the Church turned Herne into Saint Nicholas' captive, chained Dark Helper; none other than Satan, the Dark One, symbolic of all evil....

"In Holland and several other European countries, the Saint Nicholas figure is still highly esteemed. He appears as a tall, dignified, bearded, white-haired old man, dressed as a Catholic bishop, complete with cloak, mitre, and pastoral staff, a seemingly genuine Catholic saint, but with a bizarre, quite unsaintly habit of riding through the skies on a white horse, followed by his Dark Helper. It seems that our Catholic saint inherited some of these

customs from the pagan god Wodan, who had also been a BEARDED, WHITE-HAIRED OLD MAN, also dressed in a hat and cloak, carried a staff (or spear), rode a white horse, and dragged along the same dark slave/helper on a chain" (p. 97).

So much for old "Santa Claus"! This mythological figure, also, is pagan to the core!

The Dutch "Sinterklaas" brings gifts to good children, while bad children are harrassed by the "Dark Helper," called Zwarte Pier, or "Black Pete," who brandishes a broom-like rod. Like Santa Claus, Sinterklaas also had the habit of entering homes through the chimney! His helper, "Black Pete," is today, still horned, fur-clad, scary, and less than kind to children. Although portrayed as the slave helper of Saint Nicholas, the two are, in many villages, blended into one character, who often has the name Nikolaas or Klaus. Thus "Santa Claus" is blended with, and is none other than, that old enemy of mankind, Satan the devil!

"In Germany, Saint Nicholas' Dark Helper is a swarthy, horned, frightening little man, always brandishing the besom [broom]. He is known by many names: Knecht Ruprecht (servant Ruprecht), or in Bavaria, Pelz Nickel, meaning 'fur-clad Nick.' In Tyrol, the picture is even clearer; there the Dark Helper is Kllaubau, a scarier version of the British Herne the Hunter, a chained, furry, black-faced horned creature" (p. 103-105).

Who was this Odin, or Woden, the original "Santa Claus"? He was the chief god of Norse mythology, a fierce fighter who carried a spear as his special weapon. He was renown as a mighty hunter, and for his magical powers. This same author declares, further, of the connection between Odin/Wodan and Saint Nicholas:

"Wodan/Odin: ...man's friend, the mysterious Schimmel rider. Dragging his dark and devilish slave Eckhart along on a chain, he rides through the stormy skies. He leads the Wild Hunt, eluding, and finally subjugating, the powers of evil. He also wears a broad-brimmed hat, a wide mantel, holds his spear, and rides through the skies (replace his hat with a bishop's mytre and the spear with a crozier, and we have the Dutch Saint Nicholas)" (p. 111).

In other words, Odin was another name for Nimrod, who, the Bible says, was "the mighty hunter before [the Hebrew word for "before" also means "against"] the LORD" (Genesis 10:9). Nimrod's reputation as a mighty hunter was widespread.

Says Alexander Hislop, "The Wodan or Odin of Scandinavia can be proved to be the Adon of Babylon" (*The Two Babylons*, p. 133-134). Nimrod, Adon, or Adonis, of Babylon was the great "war-god." Odin was the same. Nimrod, in the character of Bacchus, was the god of wine. Odin was said to partake of no other food but wine. The name of one of Odin's sons, Balder, indicates the meaning of Odin's own name. Balder is a form of the Chaldee Baal-zer, "The seed of Baal." The Hebrew "z" in the later Chaldee frequently became a "d." Baal and Adon both signify "Lord." Since Balder is the "son of Baal," as well as the "son of Adon," or "Odin," then Baal, Adon, and Odin must be the same

person — representative of Nimrod, the first human to be deified and proclaimed by the pagans as a “god” after the Deluge!

“Santa Claus,” then, is not so innocent and cherubic a figure after all! Why do parents take their young children, sit them on “Santa’s lap,” and insist on teaching them Santa Claus myths? The word “Santa,” rearranged, spells “S-A-T-A-N,” and “Claus” is reminiscent of “Claws” — in other words, “SATAN’S CLAWS”! Do you want Satan, the arch-enemy of mankind, to get his “claws” into your children? By teaching them Santa Claus myths, and taking them to “Christmas parties,” with “Santa Claus” handing out “gifts,” you are subtly teaching your children to worship Satan the devil, the great impostor!

## The True Origin of “Christmas”

It is indeed strange that a day never mentioned or sanctioned in the Bible should become the chief so-called “Christian” holiday of the entire year — a day never celebrated by Yeshua the Messiah, or his apostles, or the early New Testament Ecclesia of YEHOVAH God!

What is the actual origin of the celebration of December 25? A careful look at the word “Christmas” itself ought to tell us something. Notice! It itself is a mixture. Though it includes the name of Christ, it also mentions the “mass.” Where did the “mass” — with its rituals, elaborate ceremony, pagan prayers for the dead, transubstantiation rites, etc. — come from?

Alexander Hislop in his remarkable book *The Two Babylons*, points out that the “mass” is something that definitely goes back to ancient PAGAN customs and rites! He declares in plain and clear language:

“Therefore we find the women of Judah represented as simply ‘burning incense, pouring out drink-offerings, and offering CAKES to the queen of heaven’ (Jer. 44:19). The cakes were the ‘unbloody sacrifice’ she required....In the FOURTH CENTURY, when the queen of heaven, under the name of Mary, was beginning to be worshipped in the Christian Church, this ‘unbloody sacrifice’ also was brought in. Epiphanius states that the practice of offering and eating it began among `women of Arabia; and at that time it was well known to have been ADOPTED FROM THE PAGANS. The very shape of the unbloody sacrifice of Rome may indicate when it came. It is a small thin, round wafer; and on its roundness the Church of Rome lays so much stress....The importance, however, which Rome attaches to the roundness of the wafer, must have a reason; and that reason will be found, if we look at the altars of EGYPT. ‘The thin, round cake,’ says Wilkinson, ‘occurs on all altars.’ Almost every jot or tittle in the Egyptian worship had a symbolical meaning. The round disk, so frequent in the sacred emblems of Egypt, symbolized the sun” (*The Two Babylons*, p. 159-160).

The “sun-god” in ancient Egypt was Osiris. The round disk of the Egyptian “mass” symbolized the sun, and was an offering symbolizing the sun-god. He was considered the life and nourishment of the souls of men!

The “Christ-mass” therefore is nothing more than the celebration of the birth of the “sun-god” himself, the False Messiah, the False “Saviour” of the world, and the “mass” itself also represents the offering or “cakes” made to the

queen of heaven, the “Mother” of the pagan Saviour, the “unbloody sacrifice”! Again, “Christ-mass” is proved to be PAGAN to the core!

It is a fact that December 25 was celebrated for thousands of years before the birth of the Messiah as the birth day of an ancient pagan god — THE SUN GOD! Alexander Hislop points out the truth in these shocking words — at least, they ought to be shocking to anybody with a clear, undefiled, and conscientious mind:

“Indeed, it is admitted by the most learned and candid writers of all parties that the day of our Lord’s birth cannot be determined, and that within the Christian Church no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of till the third century, and that not till the fourth century was far advanced did it gain much observance. How, then, did the Romish Church fix on December the 25th as Christmas-day? Why, thus: Long before the fourth century, and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen, at that precise time of the year, in honour of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven; and it may fairly be presumed that, in order to conciliate the heathen, and to swell the number of the nominal adherents of Christianity, the SAME FESTIVAL WAS ADOPTED by the Roman Church, giving it only the name of Christ. This tendency on the part of Christians to MEET PAGANISM HALF-WAY was very early developed....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” (p. 93).

Hislop goes on,

“That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival, is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, ‘about the time of the winter solstice.’ The very name by which Christmas is popularly known among ourselves — Yule-day — proves at once its Pagan and Babylonian origin. ‘Yule’ is the Chaldee name for an ‘infant’ or ‘little child;’ and as the 25th of December was called by our Pagan Anglo- Saxon ancestors, ‘Yule-day,’ or the “Child’s day,’ and the night that preceded it, ‘Mother-night,’ long BEFORE they came in contact with Christianity, that sufficiently proves its real character” (pp. 93-94).

December 25th was observed far and wide among the ancient world. This day was “The birth-day of the unconquered Sun.” The Yule log represented the dead stock of the slain Nimrod, arch-apostate rebel against the Lord after the flood (see Genesis 10:8-10), and the Christmas-tree was supposedly Nimrod reborn — the slain god come to life again!

In Europe, the Saxons offered a boar in sacrifice to the sun, to propitiate the queen of heaven on Christmas day. The boar, in pagan mythology, was supposed to have slain the false pagan Messiah. The boar was also a major article of the feast of Saturn at Rome. The boar’s head is still a standing dish in England at Christmas dinner. Says Hislop: “There can be no doubt, then, that the Pagan festival at the winter solstice — in other words, Christmas — was held in honor of the birth of the Babylonian Messiah” (p. 102).

The largest pagan religious cult which fostered sun worship in the Greek and Roman worlds on December 25 was the cult of Mithraism. They called it “the Nativity of the Sun.” Mithras, the sun-god, was supposed to have been born at this time, but so were Osiris, Horus, Tammuz, Hercules, Bacchus, Adonis, Jupiter — all the pagan Messiahs! This fact alone would seem to indicate that all these pagan sun-gods and deities trace their roots back to the original sun-god of ancient Babylon — Nimrod!

This popular winter festival became such an established custom that in pagan Rome and Greece, Egypt, and throughout Europe, the period of the winter solstice was a time of great revelry and festivity. In Rome it became known as the “Saturnalia,” in honor of the god Saturn, “the hidden one.” Saturn was another name for Nimrod, who late in his apostasy went into hiding from Shem, the son of Noah. The “feast of Saturn,” Hislop adds, “lasted five days; loose reins were given to drunkenness and revelry, slaves had a temporary emancipation, and used all manner of freedoms with their masters. This was precisely the way in which, according to Berosus, the drunken festival of the month Thebeth, answering to our December, in other words, the festival of Bacchus, was celebrated in Babylon” (p. 96-97).

Writes T. G. Crippen in *Christmas and Christmas Lore*,

“Now in December and the beginning of January there were several festivals which were intimately associated with the daily life of the Roman people. First, from the 17th to the 21st December, was the Saturnalia, the great Roman holiday....One might call it the Feast of Topsy-turveydom; when slaves were allowed for a few days to enjoy the semblance of freedom, were waited upon by their masters, and chose from amongst themselves a mock king to preside over their revels. Next, on the 22nd, came Sigillaria, the Feast of Dolls, when a fair was held, and dolls and other toys, mostly of earthenware, were given to children. Then, on 25th, came Brumalia, otherwise Dies Natalis Invicti Solis, The Birthday of the Unconquered Sun, when the days began to lengthen after the solstice....It is believed to have been instituted ... by the emperor Aurelian, in honour of Mithras, the Persian sun-god...” (p. 8-9).

Clearly, the pagan customs of Christmas had nothing remotely to do with the Messiah, or the Word of YEHOVAH God, the Scriptures. Clearly, they had nothing to offer to the Church of YEHOVAH God, as they were the very antithesis of true Christianity! Yet, somehow, this ancient pagan festival wormed its way into the established “Christian” Church and became its most prominent holiday of the year! What a monstrous mystery!

The Catholic Church took the excitement which surrounded the Roman Saturnalia, with its excesses, delights, debauchery, and wantonness, and called them the celebration of the birth of the Son of YEHOVAH God, Yeshua. Most people today still think of December 25 as the birth day of Yeshua, even though this is definitely not the case.

This pagan “bash” was transformed by the Catholic Church into the festivities of Christmas, in honor of the Madonna and Child. Thus the pagan Semiramis (Egyptian Isis) and Tammuz (Horus) were “transformed,” by sleight of hand, by the “magicians” of the Roman Church, into Mary and Yeshua. In this manner, the pagan practices of the past centuries became outwardly

“Christian” in name and character! For almost 300 years after the time of Yeshua, the Church showed no concern for the date of the Messiah’s birth. The apostles and leaders of the New Testament Church never bothered to find out when Yeshua was born, as the date was not important to them. It was not until the fourth century that Christmas began to be observed by the Roman Catholic Church. Says the *Encyclopedia Americana*:

“Christmas — it was according to many authorities not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian Church as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the death of remarkable persons rather than their birth. A feast was established in memory of the birth of the Saviour in the Fourth Century. In the Fifth Century the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman Feast of the birth of Sol.”

That is how an ancient PAGAN CUSTOM became engrafted upon the unsuspected Christian world! But should true followers of Yeshua, the Messiah, participate in ANCIENT PAGAN CUSTOMS? Should true Christians celebrate “Christmas”?

The Puritans, who were Christians attempting to reform the Church during the 1600s, did not believe Christmas should be observed. This “baptism” of pagan rites and festivals by the Roman Catholic and the vast majority of the Protestant Churches, was totally rejected by the Puritans. One of them, William Prynne, during the time of king Charles I, wrote:

“Our Christmas lords of Misrule, together with dancing, masques, mummeries, stage-players, and such other Christmas disorders, now in use with Christians, were derived from these Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalian festivals; which should cause all pious Christians eternally to abominate them” (*The Book of Christmas Folklore*, p. 8).

Because of his attitude toward Christmas and pagan rituals still observed by the professing Christian Church, William Prynne was placed in a pillory and his ears were cut off.

## Should Christians Observe “Christmas”?

Should Christians today celebrate this ancient festival? Many today may think it is all right, but the opinions of men are not our standard or authority. What does the Word of YEHOVAH God itself say about this matter? It is a very serious question. Is it all right in the sight of YEHOVAH for men to take pagan customs and traditions, and to observe them, calling them “Christian”? Is it all right to merge and combine PAGAN practices with the truth of YEHOVAH God?

According to the prophet Malachi, YEHOVAH does not change (Malachi 3:8). His laws and commandments are eternal (Psalm 111:7-8). Does YEHOVAH say it is all right to observe the traditions and customs of the pagans?

YEHOVAH God commanded ancient Israel, “I am the Lord your God. You must NOT DO AS THEY DO IN EGYPT, where you used to live, and you must NOT DO AS THEY DO IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, where I am bringing you. DO NOT FOLLOW THEIR PRACTICES. You must obey my laws, and be careful to

follow my decrees" (Leviticus 18:2-4).

YEHOVAH God hates idolatry! He detests it with vehement passion. He tells us, "...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 worshipping their gods, they do all kinds of DETESTABLE THINGS the LORD HATES" (Deuteronomy 12:29-31).

Because of pagan idolatrous practices, YEHOVAH God cast the Canaanites out of the Promised Land. They were worshippers of Baal, or Nimrod, Tammuz, the sun god, the pagan Messiah, the god of wine and revelry. They worshipped the evergreen tree, and used it as a symbol of their god. They observed December 25, in worship of the waning sun, and their sun-god divinity. This whole religious system stemmed from ancient Babylon, the fount of all heresy and apostasy.

Their sensuality and gross lasciviousness was particularly displayed during the mid-winter festival, called the Saturnalia in Rome, with gift-giving, drunkenness, and sexual licentiousness. YEHOVAH says of such Bacchanalial rites,

"Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled, so I punished it for its sin, and the land VOMITED out its inhabitants....Anyone who does any of these DETESTABLE THINGS — such persons must be cut off from their people. Keep my requirements and do NOT follow ANY OF THE DETESTABLE CUSTOMS that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 18:24-30).

Even such idolatrous items as the "Christmas tree" are condemned in the Word of YEHOVAH God! Jeremiah the prophet wrote,

"Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord, LEARN NOT THE WAY OF THE HEATHEN, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them [such as the waning sun at the winter solstice!]. For the CUSTOMS of the people are VAIN [empty, useless, worthless]: for one CUTTETH A TREE out of the FOREST, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They DECK IT WITH SILVER AND WITH GOLD; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good" (Jeremiah 10:1-5).

Truly, the whole world has been deceived by Satan the devil and his clever masquerades and machinations (Revelation 12:9). YEHOVAH God Almighty thunders: "Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye POLLUTED after the manner of your fathers? and commit ye WHOREDOM after the manner of THEIR ABOMINATIONS?...ye POLLUTE yourselves with all your IDOLS, even unto this day....But as for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD: Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but POLLUTE YE MY HOLY

NAME NO MORE with your gifts, and with your idols” (Ezekiel 20:30-39).

The very name “Christmas,” combining the holy name of Christ with the pagan mass, POLLUTES and PROFANES YEHOVAH’s holy Name! The celebration of these ancient pagan festivals, calling them “Christian,” is an abomination in the sight of YEHOVAH God! YEHOVAH will not accept such pagan, superstitious worship!

Yeshua the Messiah said to his disciples, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will KNOW THE TRUTH, and the truth will set you FREE” — free from the shackles of error, superstition, mythology, and pagan deception! (John 8:32, NIV).

Christmas is pagan. There is no doubt about it. The question is: What are you going to do about it? May YEHOVAH God help you to make the right decision, so you can inherit eternal life, and reign with the saints forever (Revelation 2:26-27; 5:10; 20:4).

SOURCE: Hope Of Israel Ministries

**SEE ALSO:** The True Origin Of Christmas

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