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## CHRISTMAS IS NOT GOD'S HOLY DAY: IT IS A CULMINATION OF PAGAN PRACTICES



CHRISTMAS IS THE MOST CELEBRATED HOLIDAY IN CHRISTIANITY. SOME CONSIDER IT THE MOST 'HOLY' DAY OF THE YEAR.

The exaltation of Christmas is in itself a travesty. Most historians, and Christian scholars know that Jesus was not born on December 25th. They realize that his birth date was probably in the fall. This is backed up by circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth.

People knowingly follow a false date – set aside to exalt Jesus. Not only is the date a fraud, but also so are the practices. Many manmade traditions have been mixed in with the worship of God. This is like mixing ‘dung with balsam’.

The majority of the activities associated with Christmas have no relationship to Jesus. Sure there is an adopted religious (paganish) Nativity scene about Christ. But there are many more adopted pagan customs that are totally unrelated.

Christmas originated in Rome in the 4th century. The tradition came after the Council of Nicaea met in 325 C.E. For kingdom unification, the Council adopted the idea that Jesus was God. Christmas was a Christian substitute for the pagan celebration of winter solstice.

The winter solstice usually occurred around December 25th on the ancient Julian calendar. This celebration was a part of another Roman celebration called Saturnalia. Saturnalia began each year on December 17th. At that time the Romans honored Saturn, the ancient god of agriculture. Also celebrated was the lengthening of daylight following the winter solstice. Romans did this by glorifying Mithra, the ancient Persian god of light. These and other winter festivities lasted until January 1.

The Roman Catholic Church chose December 25 as the day for the Feast of the Nativity. This was in order to give Christian meaning to existing pagan rituals. The Church replaced festivities honoring the birth of Mithra by commemorating the birth of Jesus. They called Jesus the light of the world. The Church hoped to draw pagans into its religion by overlapping their revelry.

Traditionally, the sacred Christmas season starts with Advent. Advent continues to Christmas Day. During Advent, Christians make preparations for commemorating Jesus' birth on December 25th. They also look forward to the Second Coming of Christ.

About 600A.D., Pope Gregory I decreed that Advent start the fourth Sunday before Christmas. He decreed that the season end on Epiphany, January 6th.

Over the next 1200 years, Christmas observances followed the expansion of Christianity. It expanded throughout Europe, into Egypt, and eventually into America. Along the way, Christian beliefs combined with other pagan feasts and winter rituals. This created many distorted long-standing Christian traditions of Christmas celebrations. Some examples are:

- 1) The ancient Europeans believed that the mistletoe plant held magic powers to bestow life and fertility, to bring about peace, and to protect against disease. They associated the plant with the Norse goddess of love, Freya, and developed the custom of kissing underneath mistletoe branches.
- 2) The Roman Catholic Church first introduced the midnight Mass in the 5th century. The dramatization of the biblical story of Jesus' birth was a practice begun by Saint Francis of Assisi in the 13th century.
- 3) Many cultures continue the pre-Christian custom of burning Yule logs during the midwinter season; the Yule log symbolizes the victory of light over the darkness of winter. According to ancient tradition, the ashes provide protection against bad luck during the year.
- 4) The German custom of decorating an evergreen tree at Christmastime has become one of the most popular images of Christmas around the world. At one time, Germany supplied the world with almost all of the decorative glass ornaments for Christmas trees. On the evening of December 5th, children wait for a visit from Saint Nicholas, who brings them gifts. Most children also receive gifts on Christmas Eve. In some parts of Germany, Santa Claus distributes gifts, but in other regions Knecht Ruprecht, a mythical figure dressed in animal skins, delivers children's treats. On Christmas Eve, families traditionally gather around Christmas trees decorated with lights, ornaments, and *Lebkuchen*, which are spiced cookies cut into decorative shapes. Worshippers holding candles illuminate Church services on Christmas Eve. The Advent wreath, which consists of four candles anchored in a circle of evergreen branches, originated with German Lutherans; many churches and families have adopted the tradition. At the beginning of each of the four weeks preceding Christmas, Christians light an Advent candle as they say a prayer.
- 5) In Italian folklore Santa Claus is not a prominent figure. Instead, Italian children wait for *La Befana*, a good witch who rides her broom to their homes on Epiphany to distribute gifts. According to folk belief, La Befana—whose name refers to the word *Epifania* (Epiphany)—was too busy to accompany the Three Wise Men on their journey to visit the infant Jesus in Bethlehem. Now, to atone for her failing, she visits all

good children, leaving treats. She also visits bad children and leaves them lumps of coal or bags of ash.

- 6) In England religious customs of Christmas celebrations center on recounting the story of Christ's birth. Most people who celebrate Christmas also participate in such secular customs as watching Christmas plays, feasting, singing, and helping the poor. Before Christmas Day, children write wish lists to Father Christmas, who is the British version of Santa Claus. They then throw these letters into the fire. Children believe that if a draft draws the letter up through the chimney, their wishes will be fulfilled. Children open their gifts on Christmas afternoon. Many people in England also make charitable contributions to churches and to the needy on the day after Christmas, known as Boxing Day. They also give small gifts known as Christmas boxes to those who have performed personal services throughout the year.
- 7) America has become a melting pot for many world Christmas traditions, with many new customs, many of which started in the 19th century. Before then Christmas had been an ordinary workday in many communities, particularly in New England, where early Puritan objections to Christmas celebrations remained highly influential. Families almost never exchanged Christmas gifts among themselves.

These early Christmas traditions in America quickly changed. Among some groups, Christmas became an especially boisterous event, characterized by huge feasts, drunkenness, and raucous public revelry. In an English tradition that survived in some parts of North America, Christmas revelers would dress in costume and progress from door to door to receive gifts of food and drink. Most holiday gifts were limited to small amounts of money and modest presents passed from the wealthy to the poor and from masters to their servants. The rapidly expanding industrial economy of the 19th century flooded the market with new goods for sale, and also helped establish a new middle class. Christmas gained increased prominence largely because many people believed it could draw families together and honor children. Giving gifts to children and loved ones eventually replaced the raucous public celebrations of the past, and Christmas became primarily a domestic holiday. Capitalizing on gift giving, the marketplace exerted greater influences on holiday celebrations. Department stores and mass advertising shaped the Christmas giving traditions. Christmas became mainly commercial with no ties to Christian denominations. Each of America's different cultural groups celebrated Christmas in their own ways. Many holiday celebrants regretted these changes and began voicing the now common gripe that Christmas has become too commercial.

Christmas, the most 'Holy' Day of Christianity, has many built-in errors and influences. Although it has become a Day to reflect on goodwill toward mankind, the core of Christianity's foundation (Jesus' birth) has pagan roots. Just imagine how many more pagan customs are embedded into other Christian holidays and beliefs.

With Christmas, like other holidays, Christians give reverence to images and symbols. With Christmas there is the symbol of the Christ child. In Rome this image is called 'Santo Bambino Jesu'.

There are also other adopted pagan images. Some of these images include: mistletoe, prayer cloths and beads, people, spirits, Crucifixes, etc. To include the worship of any image or object is an abomination. God wants our total dedication to Him only, in spirit only.

*Biblical Scriptures read:*

“Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:” – Deut. 5:8.

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” – Deut. 6:5.

*Jesus said:*

“Have ye ever seen dung mixed with balsam?”

“Now I tell you that there be in the world greater madmen, because with the service of God they mingle the service of the world. So much so that many of blameless life have been deceived of Satan, and while praying have mingled with their prayer worldly business, whereupon they have become at that time abominable in the sight of God. Tell me, when ye wash yourselves for prayer, do ye take care that no unclean thing touch you? Yea, assuredly. But what do ye when ye are making prayer? Ye wash your soul from sins through the mercy of God. Would ye be willing then, while ye are making prayer, to speak of worldly things? Take care not to do so, for every worldly word becometh dung of the devil upon the soul of him that speaketh.” – GB: 84.

More is revealed on this subject of: False holidays and customs, as well as on the subjects of: God’s Knowledge and Worship, and the Judgments of God, in the Guide Book: *ONE GOD ONE WORD: The TRUTH About The KNOWLEDGE and WORSHIP of GOD*. Visit website: <http://www.OneGodOneWord.com/>