

Should A Christian Celebrate Christmas

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| SECTION | PAGE |
|---|------|
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | 3 |
| 1. THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS | 5 |
| A. Long Evolution..... | 5 |
| B. Not Among the Earliest Christian Festivals..... | 6 |
| C. The Role of Religion in Ancient Rome..... | 6 |
| 1. Pagan rituals and idols took on Christian names..... | 6 |
| 2. Pagan holidays were reclassified as Christian holidays..... | 6 |
| 3. December 25th was the "Victory of the Sun-God" Festival in the pagan Babylonian world. In the ancient Roman Empire..... | 6 |
| D. "Christianization" of Pagan Customs, Symbols, and Terminology..... | 7 |
| 1. The blasphemous "Christ's Mass"..... | 8 |
| 2. Nativity Scenes..... | 8 |
| 3. Christmas Tree..... | 8 |
| 4. Christmas Wreaths..... | 9 |
| 5. Mistletoe..... | 9 |
| 6. Santa Claus..... | 10 |
| 7. Christmas Eve..... | 11 |
| 8. Yule Log..... | 11 |
| 9. Candles..... | 11 |
| 10. Giving of Gifts..... | 11 |
| 11. Christmas Goose..... | 12 |
| 12. Christmas Ham..... | 12 |
| 13. Christmas Stocking..... | 12 |
| 14. Christmas Cards..... | 12 |
| 15. Christmas Carols..... | 12 |
| E. European Xmas Traditions..... | 13 |
| F. American Xmas Traditions..... | 13 |
| II. SCRIPTURAL SUPPORT AGAINST CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS--UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP | 14 |
| A. 2 Chronicles 33:15-17..... | 14 |
| B. Deuteronomy 12:29-32..... | 14 |
| C. Leviticus 10: 1,2..... | 15 |
| D. I Samuel 15:1-3, 7-9, 21-23..... | 15 |
| E. 2 Samuel 6:2-7..... | 15 |
| F. I Kings 12:26-33..... | 15 |
| G. 1 Corinthians 8:4-13; Romans 14:1-13; 1 Corinthians 10:14, 18-21..... | 15 |
| III. CHRISTMAS AND VIOLATION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS | 16 |
| A. Do Not Covet..... | 16 |
| B. Do Not Bear False Witness..... | 16 |

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| C. | Do Not Steal. | 16 |
| D. | Do Not Commit Adultery. | 17 |
| E. | Do Not Murder. | 17 |
| F. | Honor Father and Mother. | 17 |
| G. | Remember the Sabbath and Keep It Holy. | 17 |
| H. | Do Not Take the Lord's Name in Vain. | 17 |
| I. | Do Not Make Yourself Any Carved Image. | 17 |
| J. | Have No Other gods Before Me. | 17 |
| IV. IS A CHRISTIAN'S DECISION TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS | | |
| A PART OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY? | | |
| A. | Romans 14:1-13. | 18 |
| B. | 1 Corinthians 8:4-13. | 18 |
| C. | Galatians 4:9-10; Colossians 2:16-17. | 18 |
| D. | James 4:11. | 19 |
| V. THE RIGHT RESPONSE. | | |
| A. | Quench Not the Holy Spirit. | 19 |
| B. | Avoid Traps of the Devil: | 19 |
| 1. | Lack of Zeal: | 19 |
| 2. | Lack of Truth: | 19 |
| 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: | 19 |
| 1. | Baptism Celebration : | 19 |
| 2. | Ascension Celebration : | 19 |
| 3. | Miracle Celebration : | 19 |
| D. | Avoid the Rationalizations that: | 20 |
| 1. | "Christmas Provides a Festive Time to Share the Gospel": | 20 |
| 2. | "Christmas is Merely the Honoring of Christ's Birth": | 20 |
| 3. | "All I'm Doing is Putting Christ Back into Christmas ": | 20 |
| 4. | "I'm Using Christmas to Witness for Christ, Just Like the Apostle Paul Did": | 20 |
| 5. | "It Doesn't Mean Anything to Me": | 21 |
| 6. | "The 'Connection' 'Has Been Broken": | 21 |
| 7. | "There Are Hundreds of Other Items of Daily Life that Have a Pagan Origin": | 22 |
| 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?" | 22 |
| E. | Abstain From the Observance of Christmas. | 22 |
| VI. CONCLUSION. | | |
| BIBLE REFERENCES (King James Bible). | | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY/SOURCES. | | |

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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:

1. 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).

2. Pagan holidays were reclassified as Christian holidays (holy-days).

3. 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 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 (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. Exo. 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 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 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 god-like 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 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 statuettes 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.

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 Chronicles 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. Deuteronomy 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," worshiping "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. Leviticus 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 Samuel 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 worshiping Christ? There is certainly no Biblical command to offer worship in this manner.]

E. 2 Samuel 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 Kings 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 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. Corinthians 8:4-13; Romans 14:1-13; 1 Corinthians 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 self-discipline) 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 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 Christ-mas falls on a Sunday, most churches adjust the Lord's Day to accommodate Christ-mas, usually by cancelling the regularly scheduled Sunday evening service. Most of its members are too busy or too tired to attend services anyway.

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 vane. (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.

IV. 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. [In 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 worshipping 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 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 home-town 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 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 which 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 obey or 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 (6000 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?" That's not what we're saying at all. 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.

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 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 was a date set by God to remember the birth of Jesus, you could be sure 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 the late 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. ...

"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 *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 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: "God forbid that I should glory in anything except in the cross [not the manger] of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14). We find no salvation in the birth of the Lord Jesus by itself, 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.

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.

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(King James Bible)

The Sections in the Book are given
where the verses are mentioned

Section I.C.3--1 Thessalonians 1:8-10; 5:22

1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, [even] Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Section I.D.1--Hebrews 9:12, 24-26

Hebrews 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us].

Hebrews 9:24-26 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, [which are] the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Section I.D.2--Exodus 20:4-5a; 32:1-5, 9-10a

Exodus 20:4-5 Thou shalt not make unto 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 water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation] of them that hate me;

Exodus 32:1-5 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for [as for] this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which [are] in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring [them] unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which [were] in their ears, and brought [them] unto Aaron. 4 And he received [them] at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These [be] thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5 And when Aaron saw [it], he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow [is] a feast to the LORD.

Exodus 32:9-10 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it [is] a

stiffnecked people: 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

II.A--2 Chronicles 33:15-17

2 Chronicles 33:15-17 And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast [them] out of the city.

16 And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

17 Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, [yet] unto the LORD their God only.

II.B--Deuteronomy 12:29-32

Deuteronomy 12:29-32 When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;

30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31 Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. 32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

II.C--Leviticus 10:1-2

Leviticus 10:1-2 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

II.D.--1 Samuel 15:1-3, 7-9; 21-23

1 Samuel 15:1-3 Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee [to be] king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember [that] which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid [wait] for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

1 Samuel 15:7-9 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah [until] thou comest to Shur, that [is] over against Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all [that was] good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing [that was] vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

1 Samuel 15:21-23 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. 22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For

rebellion [is as] the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness [is as] iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from [being] king.

II.E--2 Samuel 6:2-7

2 Samuel 6:2-7 And David arose, and went with all the people that [were] with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth [between] the cherubims. 3 And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that [was] in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which [was] at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. 5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of [instruments made of] fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. 6 And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth [his hand] to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook [it]. 7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for [his] error; and there he died by the ark of God.

II.F--1 Kings 12:26-33

1 Kings 12:26-33 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: 27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, [even] unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves [of] gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went [to worship] before the one, [even] unto Dan. 31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that [is] in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, [even] in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

III--General Applications

1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for [the LORD seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

1 John 3:15 1 John 3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Matthew 15:19 Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

IV.A & II.G--Romans 14:1-13

Romans 14:1-13 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, [but] not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day [alike]. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth [it] unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard [it]. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, [As] I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in [his] brother's way.

IV.B & II.G--1 Corinthians 8:4-13

1 Corinthians 8:4-13 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol [is] nothing in the world, and that [there is] none other God but one. 5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) 6 But to us [there is but] one God, the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [are] all things, and we by him. 7 Howbeit [there is] not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat [it] as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. 8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. 10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; 11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ 13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

1 Corinthians 10:14, 18-21

1 Corinthians 10:14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

1 Corinthians 10:18-21 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I [say], that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

2 Corinthians 6:14--7:1

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

IV.C--Galatians 4:9-10

Galatians 4:9-10 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Colossians 2:16-17

Colossians 2:16-17 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days]: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ.

IV.D--James 4:11

James 4:11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of [his] brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

V.A--1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 Quench not the Spirit. 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Romans 14:23

Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because [he eateth] not of faith: for whatsoever [is] not of faith is sin.

V.D.2--John 4:24

John 4:24 God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.

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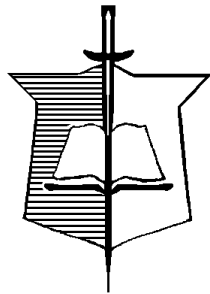
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“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” Titus 1:9

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