

The Truth about Christmas!

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Christmas - Definition

- "**Christmas** /'krɪsməs/ n. (also Christmas Day) annual festival of Christ's birth, celebrated on 25 Dec. [Old English: related to Christ, Mass] "
- Christmas, The Oxford Dictionary of Current English
- "An annual church festival (December 25) and in some States a legal holiday, in memory of the birth of Christ, often celebrated by a particular church service, and also by special gifts, greetings, and hospitality."
- Christmas, Webster Dictionary
(<http://www.webster-dictionary.net/definition/Christmas>)

The Christmas Celebration

- You would have to be living under a rock to have not heard of Christmas. It is celebrated across the globe by Christians and non-Christians alike.
- Traditions and celebrations vary and are influenced greatly by a person's nationality, culture and religious background.
- However, a few things I've noticed are fairly common during this winter festival:
 - Celebrating the Birth of Jesus
 - Putting up and decorating a Christmas Tree
 - Decorating Homes, Churches, Schools, Workplaces, etc..
 - Exchanging gifts, going to parties, spending money, etc..

And then there's Santa Claus...



"Aren't we forgetting the true meaning of Christmas?
You know... the birth of Santa." - Bart Simpson

What's the Santa – Jesus connection?

- I'm certain most people don't believe in Santa Claus (at least not anymore), and some don't include him in their Christmas celebrations.
- However, even casual research confirms that there's a few things that have come to be associated with Christmas that really have nothing to do with the birth of Jesus.

The Christian Frustration

“Let's put Christ back in Christmas”

and

“Jesus is the Reason for the Season”

are just some of the slogans Christians have come up with over the years to combat the secularization and commercialization of Christianity's biggest holiday.

The Christian Frustration

- The following quote shows the frustration some Christians feel:

"As a devout Christian, I am alarmed at the way a few people are trying to take Christ out of Christmas and I'm calling on all fellow Christians to take a stand."

- Yes, let's DO put Christ back into Christmas!,
by Russell King, Dec 16, 2009

(<http://www.streetprophets.com/story/2009/12/15/223334/86>)

The Primary Goal of Christmas

- The primary goal of this whole Christmas celebration (at least from a Christian point of view) is to bring honour and glory to Jesus for what He came to earth to accomplish.
- If this is really the case, then we should at least take a step back every once in a while to see if we are, in fact, doing what Jesus wants us to do.

The Goal of this Presentation

- You don't need a Ph.D. to figure out that lying to your children year after year about Santa Claus isn't exactly something Jesus would promote. On the contrary, it is clearly taught in the Bible that lying is wrong. It's even one of the 10 commandments (Exodus 20:16).
- The point of this presentation is to figure out exactly how much of this celebration of Christ's birth that we call Christmas actually falls in the category of **acceptable worship** to God and to Jesus Himself.

Origin of the word - Christmas

- Let us start off with the origin of the word Christmas:

"The word for Christmas in late Old English is Cristes Maesse, the Mass of Christ, first found in 1038, and Cristes-messe, in 1131"

- Christmas, Catholic Encyclopedia

(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03724b.htm>)

- The word "Christmas" is just a contraction of "Christ's Mass" or "Mass of Christ", which was a special Catholic Mass to celebrate Christ's birth.
- I wonder if Christmas Eve communion services in protestant churches today also stem from this practice?

The Mass of Christ...

"The Catholic practice of celebrating Christ's birth through a special Mass on "Christmas' Eve," technically speaking is a contradiction, since the Mass for Catholics is a re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice. Honoring Christ's birth, by re-enacting His atoning sacrifice, obscures the significance of His birth."

- The Meaning, Celebration and Date of Christmas,
by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, p.2

- Ok, so they didn't pick the best name for the holiday. It's not that big of a deal for most people. Christmas has the word "Christ" in it and that's what's important, right?
- Let's continue...

Christmas: December or January?

"While most countries celebrate Christmas on December 25 each year, some Eastern Orthodox national churches... celebrate the Great Feast of the Nativity on January 7... On the other hand Armenian Apostolic Church celebrates Christmas on January 6."

- Christmas (subheading: Orthodox churches), Wikipedia
(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas>)

"by the end of the third century Christmas in Rome was held on December 25, which coincided with a major pagan feast, while in the Eastern churches it was observed on January 6. The Armenian Church has maintained that ancient tradition to this day, whereas the Greek-speaking Christian world switched to the Latin tradition at the end of the fourth century."

- Christmas, The Armenian Church
(<http://www.armenianchurch.net/worship/christmas/index.html>)

Which date is the correct one?

- Right off the bat, we see that there's already some sort of discrepancy regarding the dates that are observed.
- Most of the world celebrates Christmas on December 25th on our standard Gregorian calendar.
- The Eastern Orthodox churches also celebrate it on December 25th, but on the traditional Julian Calendar, which falls on January 7th on our standard Gregorian calendar.
- Then there's the Armenian Church that still celebrates Christmas on January 6th, claiming that the date was changed to December 25th in the late 4th century.
- Let's try to find out which date is actually the correct one.

Which date is the correct one?

"Christmas is an annual Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. It is celebrated on December 25, but this date is not known to be Jesus' actual birthday"

- Christmas, Wikipedia, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christmas>)

"There was no consensus among third and fourth century scholars as to the birthday of Jesus. Different scholars gave many different dates. It seems that January 6th was one of the more popular choices during that time period."

- Christmas, by Richard Rives, author of the book "*Too Long in the Sun*" (<http://www.toolong.com/pages/christmas.htm>)

"Inexplicable though it seems, the date of the [Messiah's] birth is not known. The Gospels indicate neither the day nor the month,"

- The New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, p. 656.

Which date is the correct one?

"The month and day of Jesus' birthday is also unknown. However, we can be fairly certain that it was not DEC-25"

- When was Jesus born?, by B.A. Robinson
(http://www.religioustolerance.org/xmas_date.htm)

"The Bible itself therefore hints strongly at the falsehood of Yeshua's birth occurring on, or even near December 25 as this would be during Kislev/Tebeth, the dead of winter. "

- The Messiah's True birth date, by Hilke Dokter
(<http://www.members.shaw.ca/hdokter/birth.htm>)

"it is important to note that the date of December 25 is totally devoid of Biblical meaning and is grossly inaccurate as far as the actual time of Christ's birth."

- The Meaning, Celebration and Date of Christmas,
by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, p.15

Which date is the correct one?

"Based on the biblical passages that record the nativity story and related events, many scholars reject December 25 as the date when Jesus Christ was born. The Bible appears to indicate that Jesus was most likely born in late September; however, December 25 has become so entrenched as Christmas Day that it will likely never change."

- Date of the Birth of Jesus Christ, by Ronald G Falconberry,
(http://biblestudies.suite101.com/article.cfm/the_birth_of_jesus)

"And, as these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks [when Christ was born in Bethlehem], it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that, consequently, our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields; nor could He have been born later than September, as the flocks were still in the fields by night. On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up. The feeding of the flocks by night in the fields is a chronological fact . . . See the quotations from the Talmudists in Lightfoot."

- Adam Clarke, Commentary, Vol. 5, p. 370.

No evidence for December 25th?

"There is no contemporary evidence of the exact date of Jesus' birth."

- Jesus, Wikipedia, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus>)

- Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any evidence that either December 25th or January 6th was actually the day that Jesus was born on.
- The biblical account of the nativity is silent regarding the date and most scholars agree that the exact date of Jesus' birth is not known.
- Furthermore, the probability of Jesus being born on either December 25th or January 6th is slim to none, making us wonder how they came up with those dates in the first place.
- Let's try to find out when the celebration of Jesus' birth first began.

No Christmas in the early church?

“The fathers of the first three centuries do not speak of any special observance of the nativity. No corresponding festival was presented by the Old Testament ... the day and month of the birth of [the Messiah] are nowhere stated in the Gospel history, and cannot be certainly determined,”

- Christmas, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, by Rev. John McClintock and James Strong, p. 276.

"In the first two centuries of the Church, Christmas was not a feast day. None of the lists of feast days compiled during that time include Christmas"

- *Why is That in Tradition?*, by Patrick Madrid. p. 176

"Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. Irenaeus and Tertullian omit it from their lists of feasts"

- Christmas, *Catholic Encyclopedia*,
(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03724b.htm>)

No Christmas in the early church?

"There is no historical evidence that our [Savior's] birthday was celebrated during the apostolic or early post-apostolic times,"

- The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,
"Christmas," p. 47.

"There is no record of a December 25th celebration of the birth of Christ in Rome earlier than 336. In Constantinople, no record of a celebration before 378. In Alexandria, not before 400; and in Jerusalem, not before 425. "

- Christmas, by Richard Rives, author of the book "*Too Long in the Sun*"
(<http://www.toolong.com/pages/christmas.htm>)

"There are no indications that during the first two centuries the early church ever celebrated Christ's birth. The event that was widely celebrated was the death and resurrection of Jesus at the annual Passover."

- The Meaning, Celebration and Date of Christmas,
by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, p.7

No Christmas in the early church?

"Indeed, it is admitted by the most learned and candid writers of all parties that the day of our Lord's birth cannot be determined, and that within the Christian Church no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of until the third century, and that not till the fourth century was far advanced did it gain much observance."

- The Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop, p. 92-93

"So again Origen had evidently some similar thought before him when he insists that "of all the holy people in the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a great banquet on his birthday. It is only sinners (like Pharaoh and Herod) who make great rejoicings over the day on which they were born into this world below" (Origen, in Levit., Hom. VIII, in Migne P.G., XII, 495)."

- Natal Day, Catholic Encyclopedia,
(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10709a.htm>)

No Christmas in the early church?

"The day [Christmas] was not one of the early feasts of the Christian church. In fact the observance of birthdays was condemned as a heathen custom repugnant to Christians"
- The American Book of Days, George W. Douglas, p. 658.

- Once again, there is no record of Jesus, the apostles or even the early Christian church ever celebrating such an event.
- What is even more interesting is that the mere observance of birthdays in general was considered a heathen custom.
- So that begs the question, when did people start celebrating the birth of Jesus and how did they come up with the dates that we have (Dec 25 and Jan 6)?

Why December 25th?

"The December 25th birthdate is that of the sun, not a "real person," revealing its unoriginality within Christianity and the true nature of the Christian godman. "Christmas" was not incorporated into Christianity until 354 AD/CE. In reality, there is no evidence, no primary sources which show that "Jesus is the reason for the season.""

-The Christmas Hoax: Jesus is NOT the "Reason for the Season",
by Acharya S. and D.M. Murdock

(<http://www.stellarhousepublishing.com/christmas.html>)

"The adoption of the 25th of December for the celebration of Christmas is perhaps the most explicit example of Sun-worship's influence on the Christian liturgical calendar. It is a known fact that the pagan feast of the dies natalis Solis Invicti—the birthday of the Invincible Sun, was held on that date."

- The Meaning, Celebration and Date of Christmas,
by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, p.23

Why December 25th?

"A feast was established in memory of this event [Christ's birth] in the fourth century. In the fifth century the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ's birth existed."

- Christmas, Encyclopedia Americana (1944 edition),

"in [C.E.] 354, Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun. Christians honored Christ in-stead of Saturn, as the Light of the world,"

- Christmas, The World Book Encyclopedia (1962), p. 416.

Why December 25th?

"Prior to the celebration of Christmas, December 25 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."

- Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays
by Robert J. Myers

"In the Roman Empire, Mithra became associated with the sun, and was referred to as the Sol Invictus, or unconquerable sun. The first day of the week -- Sunday -- was devoted to prayer to him. Mithraism became the official religion of Rome for some 300 years. The early Christian church later adopted Sunday as their holy day, and December 25 as the birthday of Jesus."

- The Philosophies and Religions of the Roman Empire, by Dr. C. George Boeree, (<http://webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/romanempire.html>)

Why December 25th?

"... that date of the pagan festival for the birthday of Helios, December 25, was taken over by Christians for the birthday of the Christ."

- The Harvest of Hellenism, by F.E. Peters (New York, 1970) p.443

"Why, we may ask, did the Church choose December 25 for the celebration of her Founder's Birth? No one now imagines that the date is supported by a reliable tradition; it is only one of various guesses of early Christian writers. As a learned eighteenth-century Jesuit has pointed out, there is not a single month in the year to which the Nativity has not been assigned by some writer or other. The real reason for the choice of the day most probably was, that upon it fell the pagan festival just mentioned [the birthday of the unconquered Sun]."

- Christmas in Ritual and Tradition, Christian and Pagan, by Clement A. Miles, p.22

Why December 25th?

"Moreover, hundreds of millions continue to celebrate the 25th of December as the birth of Jesus Christ, completely oblivious to the notion that this date does not represent the 'real' birthday of the Jewish son of God. Lest 'Christmas' eventually end up being acknowledged widely as the birthday not of the Jewish messiah but of the sun, it needs to be immortalized that for hundreds of years that day was celebrated as the birthday of Jesus Christ."

- Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection,
by D. M. Murdock and Acharya S., p.80

"The bottom line is that there are no reliable historical documents that would place the birth of Jesus on December 25th. On the other hand, there is overwhelming documentation that the birthday of many of the sun gods of antiquity was recognized as December 25th."

- Christmas, by Richard Rives,
(<http://www.toolong.com/pages/christmas.htm>)

Why December 25th?

"Before Christmas was ever invented, December 25th was known as "the birthday of the unconquered sun" and it was celebrated as the birthday of pagan gods such as Mithras, Attis, Sol, Dionysus and others."

- Pagans Celebrated Dec. 25th BEFORE Christmas Was Invented, News Article from Tuesday, December 16, 2008, (<http://themoralcollapseofamerica.blogspot.com/2008/12/pagans-celebrated-dec-25th-before.html>)

- Wow! Apparently, the Christian Church in the fourth century decided that they are going to start celebrating the birth of Jesus on December 25th, which happened to be the same date that the pagans were celebrating as the birth of numerous sun gods.
- Why in the world would they do such a thing?

Why the same date as the pagans?

"Long before the fourth century, and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen, at that precise time of the year, in honor of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven. It may fairly be presumed that, in order to conciliate the heathen, and to swell the number of the nominal adherents of Christianity, the Roman Church, giving it only the name of Christ adopted the same festival. This tendency on the part of Christians to meet Paganism halfway was very early developed; and we find Tertullian, even in his day, about the year 230, bitterly lamenting the inconsistency of the disciples of Christ in this respect, and contrasting it with the strict fidelity of the Pagans to their own superstition"

- Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, p. 93

"December 25 was the date of the Roman pagan festival inaugurated in 274 as the birthday of the unconquered sun which at the winter solstice begins again to show an increase in light. Sometime before 336 the Church in Rome, unable to stamp out this pagan festival, spiritualized it as the Feast of the Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness."

- New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, p. 223

Why the same date as the pagans?

"After the peace the Church of Rome, to facilitate the acceptance of the faith by the pagan masses, found it convenient to institute the 25th of December as the feast of the temporal birth of Christ, to divert them from the pagan feast, celebrated on the same day in honor of the "Invincible Sun" Mithras, the conqueror of darkness."

- Manuale di Storia Liturgica, by Mario Righetti, 1955, II, p. 67.

"Historians agree that through the subsequent centuries, traditions from ancient pagan (non-Christian) religions became intertwined with those of Christianity, and depending upon one's point of view, either paganism became Christianized, or Christianity became paganized."

- Christmas in America becomes battleground, by Joe Kovacs, (<http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=16242>)

Why the same date as the pagans?

“The pagan Saturnalia [an eight-day December 17-24 festival] and Brumalia [The December 25 celebration] were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christian influence,”

- Christmas, New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, p. 48.

"But let your works shine, says He; Matthew 5:16 but now all our shops and gates shine! You will now-a-days find more doors of heathens without lamps and laurel-wreaths than of Christians."

- On Idolatry, by Tertullian (2nd-3rd century Christian writer), Chapter 15 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0302.htm>)

"The conflict is keen at first; the Church authorities fight tooth and nail against these relics of heathenism, these devilish rites; but mankind's instinctive paganism is insuppressible, the practices continue as ritual, though losing much of their meaning, and the Church, weary of denouncing, comes to wink at them, while the pagan joy in earthly life begins to colour her own festival."

- Christmas in Ritual and Tradition, Christian and Pagan, by Clement A. Miles, p.25

Why the same date as the pagans?

"Certain popular holidays, such as Yule, and customs such as lighting candles and offering small sacrifices under certain holy trees could not be easily suppressed, so they were given new meanings. Yuletide rituals were incorporated into Christmas. The candles were lit to remember Christ as light of the world. The holy offerings came to symbolize the gifts the wise men brought."

- The Solstice Evergreen: The History, Folklore and Origins of the Christmas Tree, by Sheryl Ann Karas (Fairfield: Aslan Publishing, 1998). p. 91

"1st century believers, taught personally by Christ, did not celebrate His birthday. 2nd century theologians condemned the thought. Only after severe persecution, destruction and inaccessibility of biblical scripture and the blending of pagan doctrine with the worship of God was the Mithraic celebration of December 25th proclaimed to be "Christian" in nature."

- Christmas, by Richard Rives, (<http://www.toolong.com/pages/christmas.htm>)

Why the same date as the pagans?

"It was a custom of the Pagans to celebrate on the same 25 December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and revelries the Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnised on that day."

- Syriac bishop Jacob Bar-Salibi, cited in *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*, Ramsay MacMullen. Yale: 1997, p. 155

"In 375 A.D., the Church announced that the birth date of Christ had been discovered to be December 25, and allowed some of the light-hearted customs of the older celebration, such as feasting, dancing and the exchange of gifts, to be incorporated into the reverent observance of Christmas. The use of greenery, however, popularly used to decorate homes and holy places during Saturnalia, was still prohibited as pagan idolatry."

- *The Solstice Evergreen: The History, Folklore and Origins of the Christmas Tree*, by Sheryl Ann Karas (Fairfield: Aslan Publishing, 1998). p. 88

Why the same date as the pagans?

"The Baal-fire feast, or meeting, was a great festival in Ireland, on the 25th of December, and midsummer eve. Baal, or Bel, was a name of the sun all over the east."

- The Christian mythology unveiled, lectures by Logan Mitchell, p.80

"The Irish have ever been worshippers of Fire and of Baal, and are so to this day. This is owing to the Roman Catholics, who have artfully yielded to the superstitions of the natives, in order to gain and keep up an establishment, grafting Christianity upon Pagan rites."

- Rev. Donald M'Queen, of Kilmuir, in the Isle of Skye, on ancient customs preserved in that Island in The Gentleman's Magazine for February 1795:--

Why the same date as the pagans?

"The pagan festival with its riot and merrymaking was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit and in manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Near East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ's birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and sun worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival."

- Christmas, New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, p. 48.

"The Mithraic Christians actually continued to celebrate Christmas Day as the birthday of the sun, despite the censures of the Pope; and their Sunday had been adopted by the supplanting faith."

- Pagan Christs, by John M. Robertson p.332

Why the same date as the pagans?

- It's almost unbelievable that the Christian church would allow this to take place. Why was this time of year so sacred to the sun worshipping pagans anyways?

"The ancient winter solstice, December 25, signifies the rebirth of the Unconquered Sun (Sol Invictus). At this point in the year the days grow longer and light re-enters the world. As we noted in the last chapter, this festival of the Reborn Sun was initially associated with the solar divinity Mithras and like, so many other ancient religious customs and celebrations, was taken over by the early Christians to maintain a sense of continuity between the old and the new."

- Jesus Christ, sun of God: ancient cosmology and early Christian symbolism, by David R. Fideler, p.159

Why the same date as the pagans?

"The largest pagan religious cult which fostered the celebration of December 25 as a holiday throughout the Roman and Greek worlds was the pagan sun worship -- Mithraism... This winter festival was called 'the Nativity' -- the 'nativity of the sun' "

- The Golden Bough, by James George Frazer, p. 471

"the time at which we fix the birth of Jesus Christ, the 25th of December, when the sun has risen one degree above the solstitial point: which answers to a moment to the births of the Egyptian Osiris, the Grecian Bacchus, and the Mithra of the Persians. These mystic births are manifestly identical, being metaphorical of the Sun's annual birth at the winter solstice, after which he gradually becomes, not only figuratively, but positively, the Savior of the world."

- The Christian mythology unveiled, lectures by Logan Mitchell, p.86

Why the same date as the pagans?

"...another birthday celebrated on the same date by the Romans of the Empire, that of the unconquered Sun, who on December 25, the winter solstice according to the Julian calendar, began to rise to new vigour after his autumnal decline. ...The 'Dies Natalis Invicti' was probably first celebrated in Rome by order of the Emperor Aurelian, an ardent worshipper of the Syrian sun-god Baal."

- Christmas in Ritual and Tradition, Christian and Pagan, by Clement A. Miles, p.23

"In the calendar of Canopus, 239 C.E., the notation 'Birthday of the Sun. Light will increase' appears at the date of the solstice, indicating some notion of the sun dying and being reborn as a child."

- Toward the origins of Christmas, by Susan K. Roll, p. 33

Why the same date as the pagans?

"And not only was Mithra, the sun-god of Mithraism, said to be born at this time of the year, but Osiris, Horus, Hercules, Bacchus, Adonis, Jupiter, Tammuz, and other sun-gods were also supposedly born at what is today called the "Christmas" season, the winter solstice!"

- Babylon mystery religion, by Ralph Woodrow

"Many people celebrate Semiramis (using the name 'Ishtar', among others) on the 1st day of spring, which is either March 20th or 21st. If we count from 'Ishtar's Day' (say, March 20th) for the length of the average pregnancy (40 weeks), we come to December 25th, the day celebrated as Tammuz's (the sun god's) birthday!"

- Babylon Religion, by David Daniels, p. 67

Why the same date as the pagans?

"The birthday of Adonis (Tammuz) was celebrated on December 25, and this celebration is mentioned by Tertullian, Jerome, and other early Fathers of the Church, who agree that the ceremonies took place in a cave"

- Secret of Regeneration, by Hilton Hotema, p.131

"The Madonna and child theme, which is universal or evident in hundreds of religions down through the centuries, had its origin in Babylon. Nimrod's wife was Semiramis, the first deified queen of Babylon. She is also known variously as Diana, Aphrodite, Astarte, Rhea, and Venus. Her son was Tammuz, also called Bacchus, Adonis, and Osiris. He was the supposed reincarnated Nimrod. He came back to life when the dead yule log was cast into the fire and the evergreen tree appeared as the slain king-deity reborn at the winter solstice"

-The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, p. 98

Why the same date as the pagans?

"In Epiphanius's writings appear important details about the Alexandrian festival celebrating the winter solstice, when the days and sun's light begin to increase, and culminating with an image being carried forth of a child with a golden cross who was born at that time of a virgin! Nowhere does Epiphanius apparently attempt to claim that this widely celebrated non-Christian virgin birth at 'Christmas' had been copied from Christianity, leaving us to conclude that any borrowing occurred in the opposite direction"

- Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection,
by D. M. Murdock and Acharya S., p.87-88

"Vishnu, being moved to relieve the earth of her load of misery and sin, came down from heaven, and was born [as Krishna] of the virgin Devaki, on the twenty-fifth of December."

- Aryan Sun Myths, by Sarah Elizabeth Titcomb, p.37

Why the same date as the pagans?

"Apollo and Dionysus were considered by ancient writers such as Pindar, Aeschylus, Euripides and Plutarch to be 'different forms of the same god.' Like Dionysus, Apollo also had his birthday at the winter solstice or December 25th. From Macrobius it is clear that the Egyptians brought out an image of a baby god, lying in a shrine or 'manger,' on the 'shortest day,' around December 25th."

- Suns of God, by Acharya S., p.112

"It is obvious that Horus, as the morning sun born every day, was also born on 'December 25th' or the winter solstice".

- Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection, by D.M. Murdock and Acharya S., p.92

Why the same date as the pagans?

"... the winter solstice in Egypt was not only widely recognized but also viewed as the birthday of the new sun, which in turn was 'Horus the Child' or Harpocrates, the very popular god during the Greco-Roman period whose birth was well known".

- Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection,
by D.M. Murdock and Acharya S., p.95

"...at the winter solstice the sun would seem to be a little child, like that which the Egyptians bring forth from a shrine on an appointed day, since the day is then at its shortest and the god is accordingly shown as a tiny infant"

- Saturnalia, 1:18,19; Percival Vaughan Davis, ed. Macrobius: the Saturnalia (New York, 1969): 129, cited in TALLEY, Origins, 107 note 37.

Why the January 6th date?

- Ok, I think we've got enough information about the December 25th date. What about the January 6th date?

"After the triumph of Constantine, the church at Rome assigned December 25 as the date for the celebration of the feast, possibly about A.D. 320 or 353. By the end of the fourth century the whole Christian world was celebrating Christmas on that day, with the exception of the Eastern churches, where it was celebrated on January 6. The choice of December 25 was probably influenced by the fact that on this day the Romans celebrated the Mithraic feast of the Sun-god (natalis solis invicti), and that the Saturnalia also came at this time." - Colliers Encyclopedia

Why the January 6th date?

"Certain Latins, as early as [A.D.] 354, may have transferred the birth day from January 6th to December 25, which was then a Mithraic feast . . . or birthday of the unconquered sun . . . The Syrians and Armenians accused the Romans of sun worship and idolatry."

- Encyclopedia Britannica, (1946 ed)

"the date of Christ's birth did not become an issue until sometime in the fourth century. At that time the dispute centered primarily over two dates for Christ's birth: December 25 promoted by the Church of Rome and January 6, known as the Epiphany, observed by the Eastern churches. "Both these days," as Oscar Cullmann points out, "were pagan festivals whose meaning provided a starting point for the specifically Christian conception of Christmas."

- The Meaning, Celebration and Date of Christmas, by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, p.14 (quoting from The Early Church, by Oscar Cullmann, 1956, p.35.)

Why the January 6th date?

"January 1, the main festival of the Roman divinity Janus, also represents the rebirth of the cyclical year and the renewal of time. Before the adoption of December 25 as the birthday of Jesus the Spiritual Sun, the Nativity was celebrated on January 6, the day of 'Epiphany' or 'manifestation of the Lord'".

- Jesus Christ, sun of God: ancient cosmology and early Christian symbolism, by David R. Fideler p.159

"In the Orient, however, the birth and the baptism of Jesus were celebrated respectively on January 5 and 6. B. Botte, a Belgian Benedictine scholar, in a significant study concludes that this date also evolved from an originally pagan feast, namely Epiphany, which commemorated the birth and growth of light."

- The Meaning, Celebration and Date of Christmas, by Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, p.24 (quoting from B. Botte, "Les Denominations du dimanche dans la tradition chrétienne," *Le Dimanche*, *Lex Orandi* 39, 1965, pp. 14ff.)

Why the January 6th date?

"Significantly, January 6 was a major pre-Christian holy day in the ancient world. In Alexandrian Egypt it was the birthday of "Aeon" - the personification of Infinite Time. According to the church father Epiphanius, the birth was celebrated in Alexandria at the Korion, a pagan temple of the divine maiden or Virgin. After ritually processing with an effigy of the divine child, which bore the image of a golden cross, the celebrants exclaimed at dawn: "Today, at this hour, the Kore, that is to say the Virgin, has given birth to the Aeon".

- Jesus Christ, sun of God: ancient cosmology and early Christian symbolism, by David R. Fideler p.159-160

Why the January 6th date?

"The feast of Aion is attested most clearly in Egypt where it seems to have been a local festival with deep roots in the Hellenistic city of Alexandria, of which Aion was the mythical founder and patron deity. The most detailed account concerning the ritual which took place in the night of 5-6 January comes from Epiphanius, whose description explains how a small wooden statue of the baby god of time was carried in procession at the hour on which he had been born of the virgin Kore."

- Toward the origins of Christmas, by Susan K. Roll, p. 34

Why the same date as the pagans?

- Great! More of the same on January the 6th as well. What about some of the other things that are associated with Christmas? Where did they come from?

“The authors whom we consulted on this point are unanimous in admitting the influence of the pagan celebration held in honor of Deus Sol Invictus on the 25th of December, the Natalis Invicti, on the Christian celebration of Christmas. This influence is held to be responsible for the shifting to the 25th of December of the birth of Christ, which had until then been held on the day of the Epiphany, the 6th of January. The celebration of the birth of the Sun god, which was accompanied by a profusion of light and torches and the decoration of branches and small trees, had captivated the followers of the cult to such a degree that even after they had been converted to Christianity they continued to celebrate the feast of the birth of the Sun god.”

- The Cult of Sol Invictus, by Gaston H. Halsberghe, 1972, p. 174.

The Christmas Tree...

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

- The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, p. 97

The Christmas Tree...

“...tree worship is well attested for all the great European families of the Aryan stock. Amongst the Celts the oak-worship of the Druids is familiar to everyone. Sacred groves were common among the ancient Germans, and tree-worship is hardly extinct among their descendants at the present day”

- The Golden Bough, by James George Frazer, p. 58

“Therefore, the 25th of December, the day that was observed at Rome as the day when the victorious god reappeared on earth, was held at the *Natalis invicti solis*, 'The birthday of the unconquered Sun.' Now the Yule Log is the dead stock of Nimrod, deified as the sun-god, but cut down by his enemies; the Christmas-tree is Nimrod *redivivus* -- the slain god come to life again”

- The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, p. 98

The Christmas Tree...

"Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. Just as people today decorate their homes during the festive season with pine, spruce, and fir trees, ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows. In many countries it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness... Early Romans marked the solstice with a feast called the Saturnalia in honor of Saturn, the god of agriculture. The Romans knew that the solstice meant that soon farms and orchards would be green and fruitful. To mark the occasion, they decorated their homes and temples with evergreen boughs. In Northern Europe the mysterious Druids, the priests of the ancient Celts, also decorated their temples with evergreen boughs as a symbol of everlasting life. The fierce Vikings in Scandinavia thought that evergreens were the special plant of the sun god, Balder."

- Evergreen Traditions, History.com,
(<http://www.history.com/content/christmas/christmas-trees/evergreen-traditions>)

The Christmas Tree...

"Most 19th-century Americans found Christmas trees an oddity. The first record of one being on display was in the 1830s by the German settlers of Pennsylvania, although trees had been a tradition in many German homes much earlier. The Pennsylvania German settlements had community trees as early as 1747. But, as late as the 1840s Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols and not accepted by most Americans... In 1846, the popular royals, Queen Victoria and her German Prince, Albert, were sketched in the Illustrated London News standing with their children around a Christmas tree. Unlike the previous royal family, Victoria was very popular with her subjects, and what was done at court immediately became fashionable—not only in Britain, but with fashion-conscious East Coast American Society. The Christmas tree had arrived."

- Evergreen Traditions, History.com,

(<http://www.history.com/content/christmas/christmas-trees/evergreen-traditions>)

Gift Exchanges – pagan?

"The interchange of presents between friends is alike characteristic of Christmas and the Saturnalia, and must have been adopted by Christians from the Pagans, as the admonition of Tertullian plainly shows."

- The Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. 12, pages 153-155

- Wait a second, I thought giving gifts at Christmas time came from the story of the three kings that brought gifts to newborn baby Jesus in the manger, right?

The Real Story of the Magi...

- Wrong! First of all, that story is highly inaccurate biblically to begin with. Let's clear up a few details.

"And when they [the Magi] were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh"

- Matthew 2:11 (KJV)

The Real Story of the Magi...

- The 2nd chapter of Matthew tells us of an unspecified number (not necessarily three) of Magi (also translated as Wise men), who came to worship the young child (not newborn baby) Jesus in a house (not the manger).
- That's why when King Herod found out the Magi didn't report back to him, he didn't just have all the male newborns killed, he had all the male children under the age of two killed.
- The Bible also never mentions that the wise men were kings of any sort, this was an assumption made in later Christian writings.

The Real Story of the Magi...

"The Gospel of Matthew, the only one of the four Gospels to mention the Magi, states that they came "from the east" to worship the Christ, "born King of the Jews". Although the account does not tell how many they were, the three gifts led to a widespread assumption that they were three as well. Their identification as kings in later Christian writings is linked to Old Testament prophecies such as that in Isaiah 60:3, which describe the Messiah being worshipped by kings. This interpretation was challenged by the Protestant Reformation."

- Biblical Magi, Wikipedia

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Magi)

The Real Story of the Magi...

- So, why did the Magi give Jesus gifts if not for His birthday or as Christmas presents?

"Verse 11. (They presented unto Him gifts). The people of the east never approach the presence of kings and great personages, without a present in their hands. The custom is often noticed in the Old Testament, and still prevails in the east, and in some of the newly discovered South Sea Islands."

- Adam Clarke Commentary, Vol. 5, p.46

Giving gifts at Christmas Time...

- Clearly it was the custom at that time (and even now in some cultures) to give gifts when you were to meet with someone of great importance. Also, they only gave gifts to Jesus, not to each other or anyone else.
- The Magi giving Jesus gifts when they came to worship Him had nothing to do with the exchanging of gifts during the Roman pagan festival of Saturnalia during the winter solstice.
- The gift giving that was done during Saturnalia is where our modern Christmas gift giving originates.

"The festival was celebrated with similar customs (gift giving, feasting) that are done to celebrate Christmas today."

- Saturnalia, (subheading: Saturnalia's relation to Christmas),
Wikipedia, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturnalia>)

- Some might be thinking... But wait a second...
- Are you saying it is wrong to give gifts to people to show them that you love and care about them?

Giving gifts at Christmas Time...

- Nope! That's not what I am saying.
- There is nothing wrong with giving the ones you love gifts to show them that you care about them.
- Or even to complete strangers as an act of kindness.
- However, exchanging gifts every year during the winter solstice is a pagan practice in worship to the sun god.
- Also, giving gifts should be done unexpectedly and without obligation to reciprocate (a la Luke 14:12-14).
- Keep in mind that a gift exchange dictated by a calendar is not a message of love but a ritual of obligation.

And Valentine's Day too...

- I have personally been a witness to seeing a grown woman in her mid-to-late 20s cry hysterically on Christmas Day after opening all her presents (worth well over \$500 combined) and realizing that she didn't get what she wanted.
- So many people (kids, teens, and adults alike) are disappointed on Christmas for not getting what they had hoped for. Who set their expectations so high? How is it that we can come to expect others to buy us whatever we want at certain times of the year?
- Similarly with couples during Valentine's Day on February 14th?

Valentine's Day is connected to "a pagan Roman festival, Lupercalia... This festival came under the patronage of Juno, the goddess of marriage... St. Valentine replaced the pagan goddess Juno as a patron of love"

- Catholic Customs and Traditions: A Popular Guide, by Greg Dues (pg. 139f).

Giving gifts at Christmas Time...

- I believe that it is because we are just following pagan traditions.
- Giving someone you love a gift (or anyone for that matter) should not be dictated by any calendar or pagan traditions.
- It should come from the heart, be sincere and be given without expecting anything in return.
- Plus, the best time to give someone a gift is when they least expect it, that's when they'll appreciate it the most.

Concerning Santa Claus: "The origin of this tradition is a fascinating and deliberate mixture of a bishop-saint, Father Christmas, Christmas Man, and the Norse mythological god Thor." Thor is described as "elderly, jolly (though a god of war), with white hair and beard, friend of the common people, living in the north land, traveling in the sky in a chariot pulled by goats, and as god of fire, partial to chimneys and fireplaces"

- Catholic Customs and Traditions: A Popular Guide, by Greg Dues (pg. 60-62).

Shouldn't pagans still be celebrating it?

- If all this comes from ancient pagan sun-god worship, then shouldn't there still be people today that celebrate the winter solstice at the same time of year without trying to incorporate the birth of Jesus into it or call it Christmas?

"That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, and the ceremonies, with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, 'about the time of the winter solstice.' The very name by which Christmas is popularly known among us -- Yule-day -- proves at once its pagan and Babylonian origin. 'Yule' is the Chaldee name for an 'infant' or 'little child'; and as the 25th of December was called by our Pagan Anglo-Saxon ancestors, 'Yule-day,' or the 'Child's-day,' and the night that preceded it, 'Mother-night,' long before they came in contact with Christianity, that sufficiently proves its real character. Far and wide, in the realms of Paganism, was this birthday observed"

- The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop, P.93-94

What is Yule or Yule-tide?

- Anyone recognize this popular "Christmas" Carol?

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa-la-la-la-la, Fa-la-la-la.

'Tis the season to be jolly, Fa-la-la-la-la, Fa-la-la-la.

Don we now our gay apparel, Fa-la-la, Fa-la-la, Fa-la-la.

Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, Fa-la-la-la-la, Fa-la-la-la.

"Yule or Yule-tide is a winter festival that was initially celebrated by the historical Germanic peoples as a pagan religious festival, though it was later absorbed into, and equated with, the Christian festival of Christmas."

- Yule, Wikipedia, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yule>)

What does Yule represent?

"In Wicca, a form of the holiday is observed as one of the eight solar holidays, or Sabbat. In most Wiccan sects, this holiday is celebrated as the rebirth of the Great God, who is viewed as the newborn solstice sun."

- Winter solstice -> Yule (Wiccan), Wikipedia, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter_solstice)

"I'm not so much celebrating Christmas as acknowledging Yule – the old Germanic and Norse mid-winter festival supplanted over a millennium ago by early Christian missionaries and to which we owe most of the seasonal fun, including the Christmas tree, the lights, holly, mistletoe and the ham."

- Ancient Yule festivals lie behind much of our British Christmas, by Ian Vince, 15 Dec 2008, Telegraph.co.uk

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/family/3776077/Ancient-Yule-festivals-lie-behind-much-of-our-British-Christmas.html>)

What does Yule represent?

"Yule, the winter solstice, is a festival of peace and a celebration of waxing solar light. I honor the new sun child by burning a[n] oaken yule log in a sacred fire. I honor the great goddess in her many great mother aspects, and the father god as Santa in his old sky god, father time, and holly king forms. I decorate my home with lights and with holly, ivy, mistletoe, evergreens and other herbs sacred to this season. I ring in the new solar year with bells."

- Wiccan high priestess Selena Fox, (<http://www.circlesanctuary.org>)

"Yule has the longest night and the shortest day of the year. It is the time when the Goddess gives birth to a son, the God. Witches and Wiccans celebrate the Festival of the God's Rebirth. It is a time to honor the Holly King. Accomplishes of the past, love, togetherness, and love are also celebrated. These things are celebrated by burning the Yule Log in a bonfire. Other Names: Winter Solstice, Christmas, Alban Arthan, Finn's Day, Festival of Sol, Yuletide, Great Day of the Cauldron, and the Festival of Growth."

- A Beginner's Guide To The 8 Wiccan Holidays, by Silver Wolf, Oct. 28th, 2007 (http://www.witchvox.com/va/dt_va.html?a=user&c=holidays&id=11776)

What does Yule represent?

"Adorn the home with sacred herbs and colors. Decorate your home in Druidic holiday colors red, green, and white. Place holly, ivy, evergreen boughs, and pine cones around your home, especially in areas where socializing takes place. Hang a sprig of mistletoe above a major threshold and leave it there until next Yule as a charm for good luck throughout the year. Have family/household members join together to make or purchase an evergreen wreath. Include holiday herbs in it and then place it on your front door to symbolize the continuity of life and the wheel of the year. If you choose to have a living or a harvested evergreen tree as part of your holiday decorations, call it a Solstice tree and decorate it with Pagan symbols."

- Celebrating Winter Solstice, by Wiccan high priestess Selena Fox, (<http://www.circlesanctuary.org/pholidays/SolsticeArticle.html>)

"However, the enduring imagery of the festival is forever pagan, from the top of the Christmas tree to the presents at its base, the Druids' mistletoe and the Romans' holly over the fireplace, with a Yule log burning in the grate."

- Seasons of the Witch: The Winter Sabbat , by L.P. Ruickbie, p. 7

What does Yule represent?

“But of course, now it’s time for the big one – Yule. You know, celebrating with Yule logs, and holly, and mistletoe (not to mention the stolen kisses!) . Singing those old Yule time carols. Putting up the evergreen Yule tree and decorating it. Drinking a lot of mead - or these days, spiced cider or spiked eggnog. Giving presents. Lots of presents. The Sun [pause] of God being born with the New Year. Gathering together and celebrating with family and friends...did I mention drinking a lot? Yule’s a GREAT Pagan holiday! Yes, my friends, the Puritans were right – Yule (by any other name smelling as sweet) is definitely NOT a Christian holiday.”

- We Want them Back! (A Pagan View of the Holidays), by Bluehawk, (http://www.witchvox.com/va/dt_va.html?a=usga&c=holidays&id=10378)

- What about the Puritans? What did they think about Christmas?

Puritans and Christmas...

"It was only in the fourth century that the Church officially decided to observe Christmas on Dec. 25. And this date was not chosen for religious reasons but simply because it happened to mark the approximate arrival of the winter solstice, an event that was celebrated long before the advent of Christianity. The Puritans were correct when they pointed out – and they pointed it out often – that **Christmas was nothing but a pagan festival covered with a Christian veneer.**"

- In the Pulitzer Prize finalist, "The Battle for Christmas", by University of Massachusetts historian Stephen Nissenbaum

"Few Americans are aware that large groups of colonists objected to Christmas during the 17th and 18th centuries. Many loathed it as an 'abomination' even though others observed the occasion as a religious feast."

- The American Christmas: a study in national culture By James Harwood Barnett, p.2

Puritans and Christmas...

"In New England, for the first two centuries of white settlement, most people did not celebrate Christmas. In fact, the holiday was systematically suppressed by Puritans during the colonial period and largely ignored by their descendants. It was actually illegal to celebrate Christmas in Massachusetts between 1659 and 1681 (the fine was five shillings). Only in the middle of the nineteenth century did Christmas gain legal recognition as an official public holiday in New England."

- In the Pulitzer Prize finalist, "The Battle for Christmas", by University of Massachusetts historian Stephen Nissenbaum

"A decree issued in 1659 formally banned the observance of Christmas -and all other like holidays- with a penalty of five shillings to be levied against any lawbreaker. "

- Christmas in Colonial and Early America,
by World Book Encyclopedia, p.11-12

Puritans and Christmas...

"Opposition of the English Puritans to festivals culminated in an act of Parliament in 1647 which abolished the observance of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. This was echoed in 1659 when Puritans of the American colonies enacted a law in the General Court of Massachusetts to punish those who 'kept Christmas'."

- The American Christmas: a study in national culture, by James Harwood Barnett, p.3

"In general, Puritans, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Quakers strongly opposed the religious observance of Christmas, but members of the Church of England, the Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic churches, as well as the German sects, carefully followed their traditional celebrations."

- The American Christmas: a study in national culture, by James Harwood Barnett, p.2

Puritans and Christmas...

“On Dec. 25, 1789, the first Christmas under the brand-new Constitution, the United States Congress was actually in session, with no day off for any holiday. In fact, the U.S. did not even make Christmas a federal holiday until 1870.”

- Christmas banned in America ... by Christians!

by WorldNetDaily, November 21, 2008.

(<http://www.wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=81144>)

“In England, for example, the Puritans could not tolerate this celebrating for which there was no biblical sanction. Consequently, the Roundhead Parliament of 1643 outlawed the feasts of Christmas, Easter, Whit-suntide, along with the saints’ days,”

- Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays by Robert J. Myers, p. 312.

Puritans and Christmas...

"The year 1681 saw the law against the celebration of Christmas repealed, but many of the Puritans were not reconciled to this action."

- The American Christmas: a study in national culture By James Harwood Barnett, p.3

Henry Ward Beecher, clergyman and lecturer, wrote in 1874 of his boyhood in New England, "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 church for; but I got no satisfactory explanation. A little later I understood it was a Romish institution, kept up by the Romish Church." Eventually the major Protestant denominations accepted Christmas, "although they reacted violently against the corruption of the Christkindl, the Christ Child, into 'Kris Kringle,' "

- Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays by Robert J. Myers, pp. 315-316.

Puritans and Christmas...

"The churches of the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists were not open on December 25 except where some mission schools had a celebration. They do not accept the day as a holy one, but the Episcopalian, Catholic, and German churches were all open. Inside they were decked with evergreens."

- Article in the December 26, 1855 edition of The New York Daily Times

"By about 1870, Christmas was an accepted lesson topic in the publications of the Sunday School Union. This demonstrates a widespread change in the attitude of the most denominations toward Christmas between 1830 and 1870. An interesting confirmation of this is found in the fact that many of the popular Christmas songs of a religious character were composed between the years 1850 and 1868."

- The American Christmas: a study in national culture, by James Harwood Barnett, p.7

The sad truth about Christmas...

"Although it took a long time for 'Christmas' to catch on, it was not particularly long before the real significance of the date -i.e., the winter solstice- had been completely severed to the point where very few people were aware of its existence."

- Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection,
by D. M. Murdock & Acharya S., p.80

- Alright, we've got quite some information regarding Christmas so far. Let's summarize what we've learned.

Let's Summarize...

- The bible does not mention any sort of celebration for Christ's birth.
- Jesus, the apostles and the early church did not celebrate His birth either.
- After the 3rd century, Christians started taking part in blatant pagan sun worship celebrations.
- The Church leaders tried as hard as they could, but they could not stop the influence and the spread of these pagan celebrations within Christianity
- Getting tired of constantly fighting against them, they decided to "Christianize" these pagan celebrations and allow them to continue as "Christian" celebrations
- In the 4th century, the Church at Rome declared December 25th (a well established pagan holiday) as the official birthday of Christ.

Let's Summarize...

- The Eastern churches continued to celebrate it on January 6th (which was also a pagan holiday)
- In the 17th century, Christmas was banned for a time in England and in early America.
- In the 19th century, most Christian churches gradually adopted some form of Christmas celebrations
- That's where we stand today. Most Christian churches celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25th (whether on the Gregorian or Julian Calendar) and a few, namely the Armenian church, on January 6th.

What is acceptable to God?

- So now that we know exactly where these celebrations come from and what they represent, we can look to the Bible to see if this type of worship is acceptable to God.
- Sun worship is clearly forbidden in the Bible, no one will argue that.
- What about worship that used to be clearly blatant sun worship, but that is now white-washed, candy-coated, happily Christianized, focused on the birth of Jesus and approved by most Christian churches?
- Does God disapprove of it as well?
- Let's find out.

What does God say?

“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”

- Deuteronomy 4:2 (NKJV)

“Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.”

- Deuteronomy 5:32-33 (NKJV)

What does God say?

- Even the New Testament states:
"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."
- **John 14:15 (ESV)**
- First off, we see that God makes the rules.
- He expects us to stick to them.
- He does not want us to start changing His commands in any way or modifying them little by little to suit our own traditions.
- If we love Him, we will keep His commandments.

God's Commands...

“The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, “How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same.” **You must not worship the LORD your God in their way**, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates.”

- Deuteronomy 12:29-31 (NIV)

God's Commands...

“The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. **Do not follow their practices.** You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God.”

- Leviticus 18:1-4 (NIV)

- Secondly, we see that God does **NOT** want to be worshipped in a fashion similar to how the pagan nations worshipped their gods.
- God clearly states throughout the Bible that we should **NOT** follow pagan practices in regards to worshipping Him.
- Note: So not only is worshipping pagan gods wrong, but worshipping the True God with practices adopted from pagan forms of worship is also wrong.

God's Commands...

- The 1st of the 10 Commandments:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” - Exodus 20:3 (KJV)

“Do not worship any god except me.” - Exodus 20:3 (CEV)

“You must not have any other god but me.” - Exodus 20:3 (NLT)

“And when you look up into the sky and see the sun, moon, and stars—all the forces of heaven—don't be seduced into worshipping them.”

- Deuteronomy 4:19 (NLT)

- God already knew that people would start worshipping other gods, including the sun, moon, stars, etc...
- So He clearly told us to be careful and to NOT get seduced into worshipping them.
- Did most people back then listen? Let's find out.

The Golden Calf incident...

“And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.”

- Exodus 32:4-6 (ESV)

- Here is a clear example of using pagan practices to worship. Just in case people at the time might have thought this was idolatry (which it clearly was), Aaron tries to smooth things over by declaring that they were doing all this as a feast to the True God.
- By claiming that they were worshipping God, Aaron was attempting to "christianize" a pagan practice of worship.
- But did God accept this form of worship?

Was God pleased?

“The Lord told Moses, “Quick! Go down the mountain! Your people whom you brought from the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. How quickly they have turned away from the way I commanded them to live! They have melted down gold and made a calf, and they have bowed down and sacrificed to it. They are saying, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.’” Then the Lord said, “I have seen how stubborn and rebellious these people are. Now leave me alone so my fierce anger can blaze against them, and I will destroy them.”

- Exodus 32:7-10 (NLT)

- Not only did God disapprove of this kind of worship, He was so angry that He wanted to destroy them all.
- Shouldn't this serve as some sort of warning for us?
- Maybe we should learn from this story and be very careful to not worship God in ways He does not approve of.

Syncretism...

“The subtle danger of syncretistic worship lies in its claim to be worshipping the true God, Yahweh. When the Israelites brought idols and idolatrous practices into the Temple, they did not think of their actions as an abandonment of Yahweh. They thought of it as just supplementing their worship with customs borrowed from heathen idol worship. Even the golden calf at Mount Sinai was not regarded as a substitute god to replace Yahweh; rather, it was regarded as a symbolic representation of Yahweh. This can be seen in Aaron's reference to the golden calf as the God "which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" and his proclamation that the worship of the golden calf would be "a feast unto Yahweh" - not a feast to some Egyptian god (Ex. 32:4f).”

- SYNCRETISM: A Blending of Paganism & Truth,
by Dr. Daniel Botkin, (Gates of Eden, July-August 2005) p.8

What you might be thinking....

- Even though Aaron claimed that they were having a feast to the LORD, it was clearly blatant pagan idol worship that they learned from Egypt.
- Therefore, this can't be considered as trying to worship the True God, as it is so far from true worship.
- But what if you truly, sincerely want to worship the True God and unknowingly use pagan practices to do so, is that wrong?
- Will God hold you accountable for something like that?
- Let's see what the Bible says...

Offering Strange Fire....

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

- **Leviticus 10:1-2 (NIV)**

- Nadab and Abihu merely took fire that wasn't from the brazen altar of the tabernacle (the altar where the sacrifices were performed).
- They were killed for this oversight. This is another example of how particular God is in regards to worship.

The Cain and Abel Story...

“When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. Abel also brought a gift—the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. “Why are you so angry?” the Lord asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

- **Genesis 4:3-7 (NLT)**

- Clearly Cain was trying to worship the True God. The only problem was that he tried to do it his own way, not the way God prescribed.
- Cain was even upset that God did not accept his form of worship.
- God told Cain exactly why He did not accept it, because it was not the correct method of worship.
- Instead of admitting he was wrong and repenting, we all know what happened.
- Cain went out and murdered his brother Abel.

Saul and the Amalekites...

- Another example is when Saul clearly disobeyed God by sparing the Amalekite animals in 1 Samuel 15.
- After being confronted by Samuel, listen to the excuse Saul gives for disobeying God's command.

"The soldiers took the best sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal." But Samuel answered, "What pleases the Lord more: burnt offerings and sacrifices or obedience to his voice? **It is better to obey than to sacrifice.** It is better to listen to God than to offer the fat of sheep. Disobedience is as bad as the sin of sorcery. Pride is as bad as the sin of worshiping idols. You have rejected the Lord's command. Now he rejects you as king."

- 1 Samuel 15:21-23 (NCV)

Saul and the Amalekites...

- Saul tried to use the excuse that he was going to use the animals he spared as sacrifices to God.
- Saul reasoned that surely God wouldn't mind this, as he was doing it for Him. Was God flattered?
- Absolutely not! This led to Samuel's famous phrase "to obey is better than sacrifice".
- We need to ask ourselves this same question: "Is it better to obey than to sacrifice?" Samuel clearly thought so.
- How about if we rephrase the question a bit: "Is celebrating Christmas (with its pagan-derived practices) with the sincere goal of worshipping the True God actually better than obeying God's clear commands to refrain from any sort of worship that involves pagan practices to begin with?"
- What do you think?

Other Forms of Worship....

- Are there any other examples in the Bible regarding ways of worship that were not acceptable to God?
- Yes! There are numerous examples. The Bible is full of them. Here are a few more:
- Blatant sun worship in the house of the LORD by God's own people. God calls these Abominations. (Ezekiel 8:5-18)
- To protect his kingdom and his life, Jeroboam thought it would be a good idea to set up his own feast in the eighth month (as opposed to the seventh month as commanded by God) with two golden calves no less and other aspects of pagan worship (1 Kings 12:26-33). Not exactly a good idea! God was definitely not pleased (1 Kings 14:14-16).

Mount Carmel Showdown...

- Elijah's showdown with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:20-40).
- Things got so bad, to the point where God's people weren't even sure which method of worship was the true one.
- They were mixing worship of the True God with the worship of pagan gods, but they didn't think anything of it.
- They didn't answer Elijah's question when he asked "How much longer will you try to have things both ways? If the LORD is God, worship him! But if Baal is God, worship him!" (1 Kings 18:21 CEV), they didn't even say a word.
- Surely, they could not think that elements of Baal worship were acceptable to God? But it wasn't until God sent down fire from heaven that burned up the whole altar that God's own people proclaimed "the LORD, he is the God" (vs. 39).

What does God say?

“Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, **Learn not the way of the heathen**, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: **for one cutteth a tree out of the forest**, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They **deck it with silver and with gold**; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.”

- Jeremiah 10:1-4 (KJV)

Jeremiah 10:1-4 Summary...

- Learn not the way of the heathen
- Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven
- The heathen are dismayed at them
- For the customs of the people are vain
- For one cutteth a tree out of the forest
- The work of the hands of the workman, with the axe
- They deck it with silver and with gold
- They fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

Jeremiah 10:1-4 = Christmas?

- A lot of Bible commentaries claim this passage in Jeremiah has nothing to do with celebrating Christmas.
- They say that it is simply referring to making idols
- I admit that it could also be referring to making idols
- And I agree that it is not referring to Christmas, because Christmas wasn't around at that time.
- However, it is definitely referring to the pagan practices around the winter solstice, which is where we get most of our Christmas customs and traditions from.
- Let's look at this passage in more detail...

Jeremiah 10:1-4 details...

- Learn not the way of the heathen
 - Clearly we are to NOT do these things...
- Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven
 - What signs in heaven?
- The heathen are dismayed at them
 - And why are the heathens scared of them?
- The signs in the heaven are the changing of the seasons, particularly, the winter season when everything seems to die.
- Just before the winter solstice, the days are at their shortest, so the sun seems to be dying too. The pagans were scared that the sun wouldn't come back and that they would die too.
- As believers, we don't need to worry about such silliness
- We know that God will take care of all our needs

Jeremiah 10:1-4 details...

- So then why do we continue their pagan practices today?
- “For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not”
- Cutting down a tree and bringing it into your house is a vain custom anyway you slice it.
- Whether it’s in a shape of an idol or just as a decorated tree, it doesn’t matter. It’s a pagan form of worship.
- God clearly tells us to not learn or practice these things.

The Christmas Tree....

"The Lord then commands the people not to engage in the customs of the heathen [Jeremiah 10]. The Lord specifically points to the pagan festival of Saturnalia, which is the birthday of Tammuz, the son God of ancient Babylon... The heathen have celebrated this pagan holiday for over 3,000 years. This is the modern holiday of Christmas. The reference even describes the tradition of cutting down and decorating trees for the feast of Tammuz on December 25th."

- The Day of the LORD is at Hand, Second Edition,
Isaiah 13:6 By Benjamin Baruch, p.109

What does the Bible say?

“During the reign of King Josiah, the Lord said to me, ‘Have you seen what fickle Israel has done? Like a wife who commits adultery, Israel has worshiped other gods on every hill and **under every green tree.**’ ”

- **Jeremiah 3:6 (NLT)**

“**Do not bring any detestable objects into your home,** for then you will be destroyed, just like them. You must utterly detest such things, for they are set apart for destruction.”

- **Deuteronomy 7:26 (NLT)**

Some might be thinking....

- Pagan sun worship is not what Christmas means to me!
- And besides.... everybody is doing it:
my family, my church, my pastor, my friends, etc...
- Clearly it can't be that bad, can it?

- God cares greatly about the way in which we worship Him.
- It really doesn't matter what it means to you.
- Or what it means to your family and friends.
- The only person whose opinion matters when it comes to the way we worship God is God Himself. That's because He decides how He wants us to worship Him.
- Not the other way around.

What does the Bible say?

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”

- **Matthew 10:37-39 (KJV)**

“Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong.” - **Exodus 23:2 (NIV)**

“And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.’ ”

- **Luke 16:15 (NKJV)**

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed”

- **Galatians 1:8 (NKJV)**

What does Paul say?

“But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent. You happily put up with whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus than the one we preach, or a different kind of Spirit than the one you received, or a different kind of gospel than the one you believed.”

- 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 (NLT)

- Just because everyone else is doing it or because your church tells you it's ok, that still doesn't make it right.
- God is the only one that makes the rules about worship.

What does Jesus say?

- Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. **Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.**’[Isa 29:13] For you ignore God’s law and substitute your own tradition.”

- **Mark 7:6-8 (NLT)**

- This was the same problem Jesus had with the Pharisees. Instead of keeping God's commandments, they made up their own rules on how to worship.
- Jesus clearly tells them that their worship is worthless.

Add up the Evidence...

“ 'Christmas' -or the winter solstice- represents the birth of the sun god dating back thousands of years. In other words, as Christian apologists who claim Christ was not born on December 25th must agree, **Jesus is NOT the 'reason for the season.'** ”

- Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection,
by D. M. Murdock and Acharya S., p.80

- There's no evidence whatsoever that Jesus was born on December 25th. Yet most of Christianity somehow got seduced into this pagan-derived sun worship celebration that we have supposedly blessed, Christianized and somehow now blindly accept as Christ's birthday.
- The whole Christmas celebration on December 25th is based on a big fat lie, whether you want to admit it or not.

What does Bible say about lies?

“Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.” - **Psalm 119:128 (KJV)**

“for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.” - **Isaiah 28:15 (KJV)**

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”
- **1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)**

“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.” - **Colossians 3:9 (NIV)**

“We are part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth.” - **Ephesians 4:25 (CEV)**

What does Bible say about lies?

“O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, **Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.**”

- **Jeremiah 16:19 (KJV)**

- The Bible clearly teaches against lying.
- We need to give up all the lies we've inherited from our ancestors. We need to search out and promote the truth instead of continuing a lie.

What does the Bible say?

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

- 1 John 2:15 (NKJV)

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to **contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**”

- Jude 1:3 (NKJV)

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which **we may serve God acceptably** with reverence and godly fear.”

- Hebrews 12:28 (NKJV)

What does Jesus say?

“But a time is coming, and it is already here! Even now the true worshipers are being led by the Spirit to **worship the Father according to the truth**. These are the ones the Father is seeking to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship God must be led by the Spirit **to worship him according to the truth**”

- **John 4:23-24 (CEV)**

- We need to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. We can't do that if we are celebrating a lie every year at December 25. We need to contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

Syncretism...

“Samaritanism and Roman Catholicism are not the only systems of worship guilty of syncretism. Syncretism exists in Protestantism, too. It can even be found in Judaism. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23f).
Let's worship in spirit and in truth, not in a blend of paganism and truth.”

- SYNCRETISM: A Blending of Paganism & Truth,
by Dr. Daniel Botkin, (Gates of Eden, July-August 2005) p.8

What does Paul say?

“For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true. **Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them.**”

- Ephesians 5:8-11 (NLT)

“At one time you didn't know God. You were slaves to gods that are really not gods at all. But now you know God. Even better, God knows you. So why are you turning back to those weak and worthless beliefs? Do you want to be slaves to them all over again? **You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!** I am afraid for you. I am afraid that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.”

- Galatians 4:8-11 (NIRV)

What does Paul say?

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And **what communion has light with darkness?** And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore "**Come out from among them And be separate,** says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

- 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 (NKJV)

What does Revelation say?

“After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “**Come out of her, my people**, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”

- Revelation 18:1-5 (NKJV)

Our Thoughts...

- It doesn't matter how much you try to justify to yourself that celebrating Christmas is acceptable to God.
- It never has been and it never will be acceptable.
- Our minds like to make up excuses to justify continuing in our old ways without having to change.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

- Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV)

Regarding Worship...

“How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him”

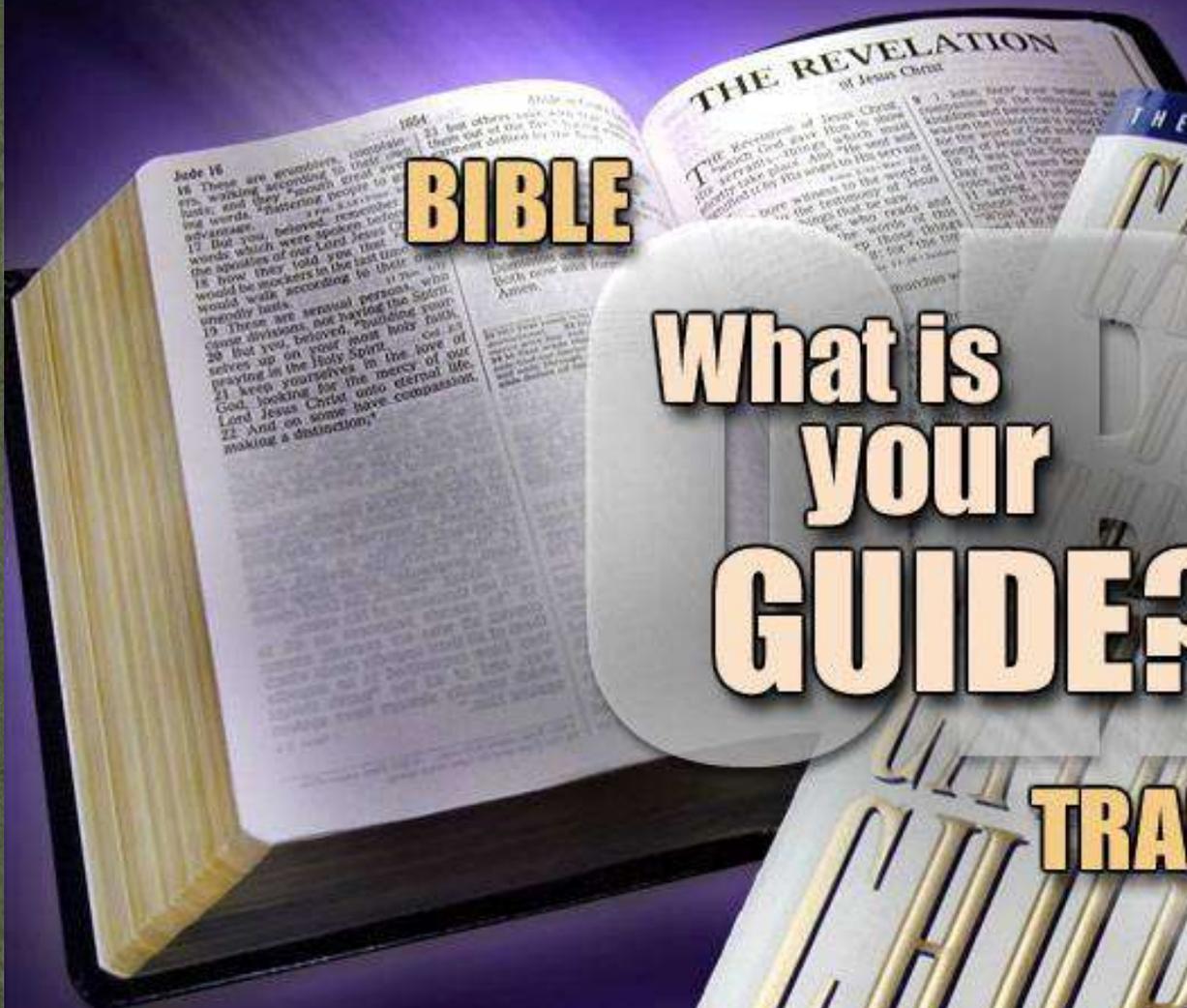
- **1 Kings 18:21 (NKJV)**



JESUS

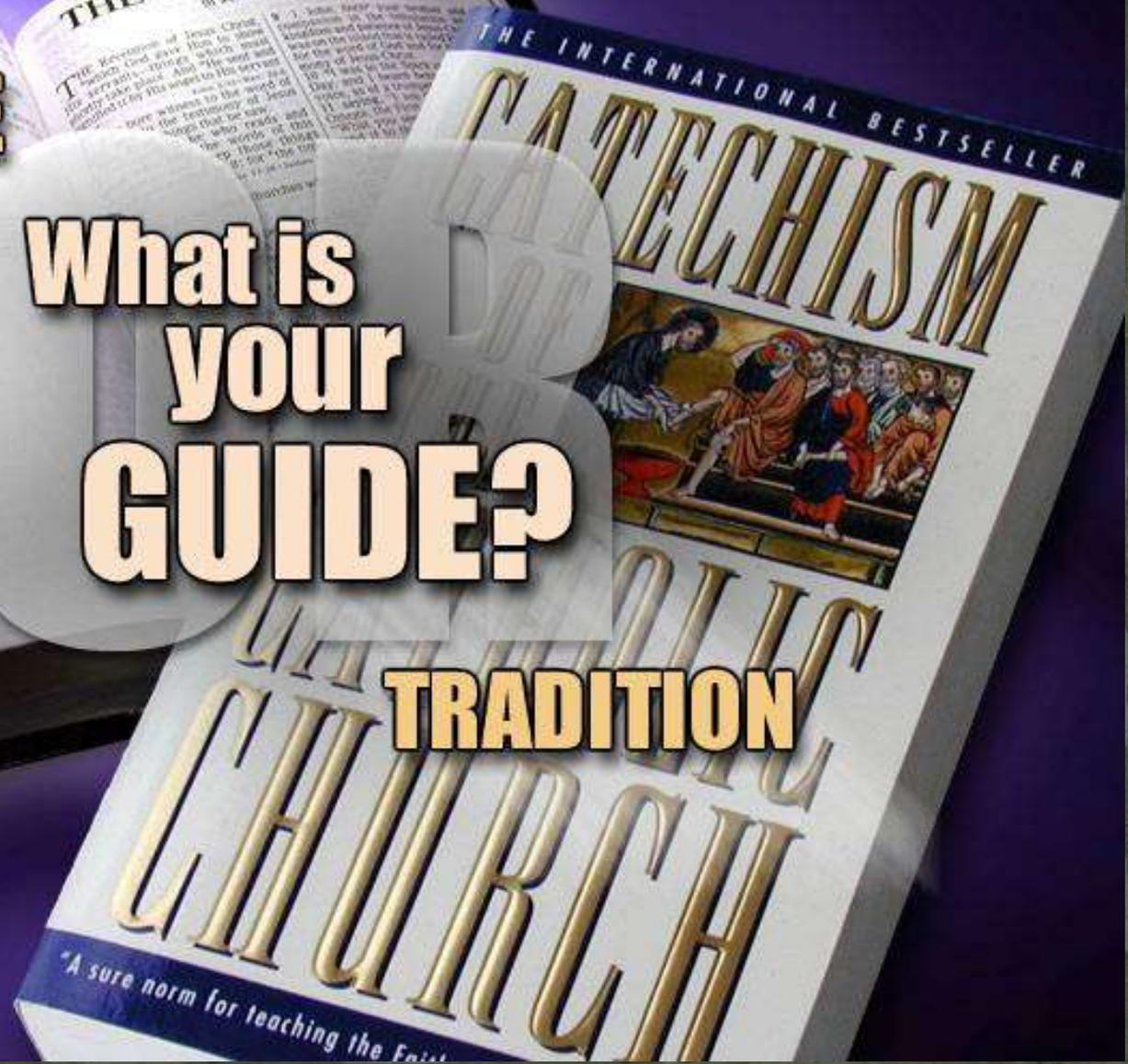
**Who is
your
MASTER?**

CHURCH LEADERS



BIBLE

**What is
your
GUIDE?**



TRADITION

Whom will you serve...

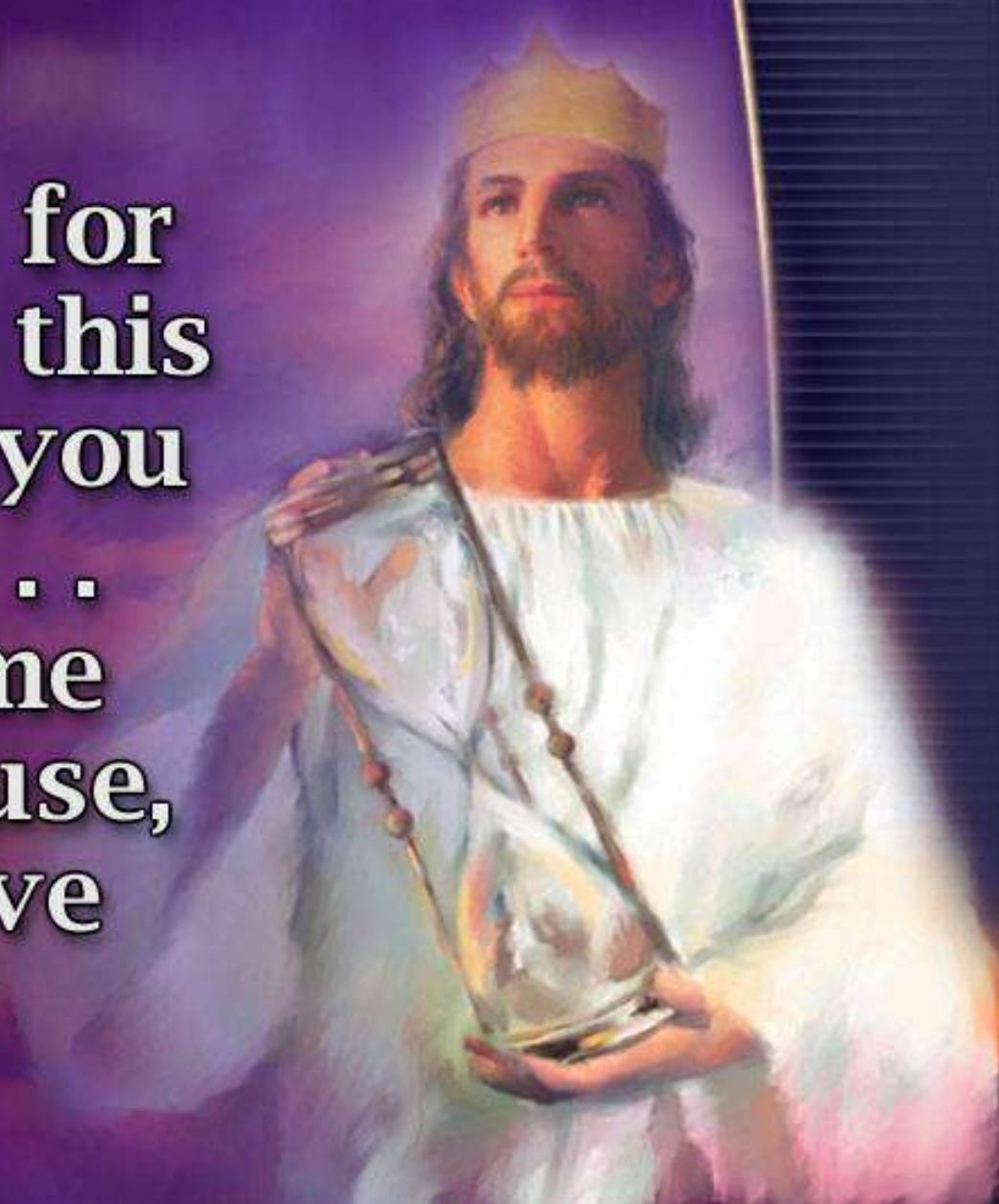
“And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

- Joshua 24:15 (NKJV)



JOSHUA 24:15

“ . . . Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”



The End!

- Thank you for your time!

Any Questions?

- Compiled by: FLO BORS (February 2010)
- email: floski@hotmail.com