

# **Is Christmas Christian?**

## **By Peter Salemi**

Millions of Christians at winter time celebrate the festival called Christmas on December 25. You see the malls stacked with material treasures for the little kids, not to mention gifts for the adults as well.

Then of course we see a fat guy in a red body stocking suit with black boots, and a white beard saying "ho, ho, ho," saying merry Christmas, and the little children whispering in Santa's ear telling him what they want for Christmas.

On December 24 at midnight, the churches all over our land are packed with people waiting to hear, or participate in the ritual of Christmas, and that ritual is to celebrate the BIRTHDAY OF JESUS CHRIST! This is what the day is about, right? Everything I just mentioned, Santa, and gifts, and Christmas trees, Holly wreaths, etc...It's all about Jesus Christ, right?

Have you ever stopped to wonder what does the Christmas tree, and Santa, the Holly wreath, and mistletoe, what does it have to do with Jesus Christ? The answer, NOTHING! But where did all this come from? You and I were born into a READY MADE WORLD, we did not come up with Christmas. Where did it all come from? Have you ever just picked up an encyclopedia and just researched it? You will be shocked!

### **Origins of Christmas**

Like I said you and I were born into a ready made world, where did Christmas come from, and what are its origins?

The encyclopedia's are united in saying that Christmas did not originate with the Apostolic church.

"Encyclopedia Britannica, 1946 edition, has this: "Christmas (i.e., the Mass of Christ)...Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church..." It was not instituted by Christ or the apostles, or by Bible authority. It was picked up afterward from paganism.

The Encyclopedia Americana, 1944 edition, says: "Christmas...It was, according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian church, as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the death of remarkable persons rather than their birth..." (The "Communion," which is instituted by New Testament Bible authority, is a memorial of the death of Christ.) "

The Catholic Encyclopaedia, 1911 edition, under the heading "Christmas," says: "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church.. "

So if Christmas did NOT originate with the Church, and it does not have divine authority in the Bible to celebrate it, then where did it come from?

### **Rome's State Religion**

Paganism was the STATE RELIGION OF ROME. The following is from Robinson's Medieval and Modern Times, an older College Textbook, p.7, "The worship of the Emperor: In a word the Roman

government was not only wonderfully organized...everyone was REQUIRED to join the in the WORSHIP OF THE EMPEROR because he stood for the majesty and the glory of the dominion...all were obliged, as good citizens, to join in the sacrifices to the head of state AS A GOD" (emphasis mine).

"Dating from around the 15th century B.C. Mithraism emerged in ancient Persia. Mithr' was the word not only for the SUN but also for a friend: and that seems to be how this god was originally worshipped-as both SUPREME SUN GOD [Sol Invictus] and the god of love" (Quest for the Past, p.173, emphasis mine). This same source says that in the third century B.C. the religion became more "militaristic" and that, it was "backed by Imperial approval" (ibid., p.173).

The Emperors and the Sun god Mithra were worshipped as ONE AND THE SAME! The theology was that the Emperors were the INCARNATION OF THE SUN GOD ON EARTH: "The identification of the Emperor AS SUN GOD encouraged by eastern theology [Persia] of the KING SUN' and by political considerations, undoubtedly contributed to the diffusion of a public sun-cult" (The Mysteries of Mithra, by Fanz Cumont, p.101, emphasis mine).

And when was the birth date of this Sun God?

"DECEMBER 25TH the god's [Mithra's] BIRTHDAY, SUNDAY, the holy day..."(Holman Bible Dictionary, p.981, emphasis mine). December 25th was the Feast of Sol Invictus

"The IDENTIFICATION OF THE ROMAN EMPEROR WITH THE SUN HAS A LONG HISTORY...Nero also erected outside his golden house a colossal statue of Sol Apollo with a radiant crown. The Emperor Aurelian was a devotee of the Syrian cult SOL INVICTUS...A magnificent temple was erected to Sol on the Agrippae and its dedication day (Natalis) [meaning birth] was DECEMBER 25...In the 3rd century the dedicatory inscriptions to Sol, Apollo and MITHRAS WERE SOMETIMES INTERCHANGEABLE..." (From Constantine to Julian, C. lieu and Dominic Montserrat, p.75, emphasis mine). Notice that the Emperors with Sol and Mithra were all interchangeable, and his birth day was December 25th!

The Romans celebrated December 25 as the festival of the Sun God, called Solstice Invictus, or the birth of the Invincible Sun! This festival came into the Church, by the Church adopting and adapting Pagan Roman heathen customs, and they put it into the worship of Jesus Christ. As Durant says: "Christianity DID NOT destroy paganism it ADOPTED IT" (vol. 3, p.595, emphasis mine).

The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge gives a clear explanation in the article on "Christmas": "How much the date of the festival depended upon the pagan Brumalia (December 25th) following the Saturnalia (December 17th-24th), and celebrating the shortest day of the year and the 'new sun'...cannot be accurately determined. The pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christian influence...The pagan festival with it's 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 BRETHERN OF IDOLATRY AND SUN WORSHIP FOR ADOPTING AS CHRISTIAN THIS PAGAN FESTIVAL" (Emphasis mine)

The Roman Empire had been pagan, and prior to the 4th century, Christians were few in number and persecuted by the government and pagans. Then the Emperor Constantine professed Christianity, placing it on an equal footing with paganism. Christianity suddenly became popular.

However most of the "converts" had been brought up in pagan customs, the chief of which is December 25th. They enjoyed this festival of joy and merrymaking, and they did not want to give it up!

The pagan Manichaeism identified the SON of God with the physical SUN, giving the new "converts" an excuse to call December 25th (re-birth of the SUN) the birthday of the SON of God.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, some Latins, as early as 354AD, may have transferred the birthday of Christ from January 6th to December 25th, which was then a Mithraic feast or birthday of the unconquered SUN. The Syrians and Armenians who clung to January 6th accused the Romans of sun worship and idolatry, claiming the December 25th festival was invented by the disciples of Cerinthus.

Many authorities agree that Christmas is actually the Roman Feast of the Sun God

"Christmas was originally a Pagan festival, is beyond all doubt...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 birth-day of the unconquered Sun" (The Two Babylons, Hislop, pp.93, 98, emphasis mine).

But this festival goes back even further than Rome. It goes all the way back to the Babylonian religion, of Nimrod And his wife.

Christmas is "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;" (ibid, p.93, emphasis mine).

"The festival of Rome are innumerable; but five of the most important may be singled out for elucidation-viz., CHRISTMAS DAY...EASTER...and all can be proved to be BABYLONIAN" (ibid, p.91, emphasis mine).

### **The Original Christmas Story**

As the original Christmas story goes from many ancient writings, considerable is learned of this man Nimrod, who started the great organized worldly apostasy from God that has dominated this world until now. Nimrod was so evil, it is said he married his own mother, whose name was Semiramis. After Nimrod's untimely death, his so-called mother-wife, Semiramis, propagated the evil doctrine of the survival of Nimrod as a spirit being. She claimed a full-grown evergreen tree sprang overnight from a dead tree stump, which symbolized the springing forth unto new life of the dead Nimrod. On each anniversary of his birth, she claimed Nimrod would visit the evergreen tree and leave gifts upon it. December 25th was the birthday of Nimrod. This is the real origin of the Christmas tree.

Through her scheming and designing, Semiramis became the Babylonian "Queen of Heaven," and Nimrod, under various names, became the "divine son of heaven." Through the generations, in this idolatrous worship, Nimrod also became the false Messiah, son of Baal the Sun-god. In this false Babylonish system, the "Mother and Child" (Semiramis and Nimrod reborn) became chief objects of worship. This worship of "Mother and Child" spread over the world. The names varied in different countries and languages. In Egypt it was Isis and Osiris. In Asia, Cybele and Deoious. In pagan Rome, Fortuna and Jupiterpuer. Even in Greece, China, Japan, Tibet is to be found the counterpart of the Madonna, LONG BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST!

Thus, during the fourth and fifth centuries, when the pagans of the Roman world were "accepting" the new popular "Christianity" by the hundreds of thousands, carrying their old pagan customs and beliefs along with them, merely cloaking them with Christian-sounding names, the Madonna and "Mother and Child" idea also became popularized, especially at Christmas time. Every Christmas season you'll hear sung and chanted dozens of times the hymn "Silent Night, Holy Night," with its familiar "Mother and Child" theme. We, who have been born in such a Babylonish world, reared and steeped in these things all our lives, have been taught to revere these things as holy and sacred. We never questioned to see where they came from - whether they came from the Bible, or from pagan idolatry!

The real origin of Christmas goes back to ancient Babylon. It is bound up in the organized apostasy which has gripped a deceived world these many centuries. In Egypt, it was always believed that the son of Isis (Egyptian name for "Queen of Heaven") was born December 25th. Paganism celebrated this famous birthday over most of the known world for centuries before the birth of Christ.

December 25th is NOT the birthday of Jesus, the true Christ! The apostles and early true Church never celebrated Christ's birthday at ANY time. There is no command or instruction to celebrate it in the Bible.

Thus the ancient idolatrous "Chaldean Mysteries," founded by this wife of Nimrod, have been handed down through the pagan religions under new Christian-sounding names

### **Origins of Christmas Traditions and Symbols**

What are the origins of the precious traditions that we practice every year at Christmas time. Have you ever just looked into an Encyclopedia, even for curiosity? You will be shocked when you start peeling back the layers of some of these things and finding the true origins of our precious customs.

Holly and mistletoe: Francis Weiser, in his book "Christian Feasts and Customs" has this to say regarding the mistletoe:

"THE MISTLETOE. The mistletoe was a sacred plant in the religion of the Druids in Britain. It was believed to have all sorts of miraculous qualities, such as the power of healing diseases, making poisons harmless, giving fertility to humans and animals, protecting from witchcraft, banning evil spirits, bringing good luck and great blessings. In fact, it was considered so sacred that even enemies who happened to meet beneath the mistletoe in the forest would lay down their arms, exchange a friendly greeting, and keep a truce until the following day.

From this old custom grew the practice of suspending mistletoe over a doorway or in a room as a token of good will and peace to all comers. A kiss under the mistletoe was interpreted as a sincere pledge of love and a promise of marriage, and, at the same time, it was an omen of happiness, good fortune, fertility, and long life to the lovers who sealed and made known their engagement by a kiss beneath the sacred plant.

After Britain was converted from paganism to Christianity, the bishops did not allow the mistletoe to be used in churches because it had been the main symbol of a pagan religion. Even to this day mistletoe is rarely used as a decoration for altars. There was, however, one exception; e.g. At the Cathedral of York at one period before the Reformation, a large bundle of mistletoe was brought into the sanctuary each year at Christmas and solemnly placed on the altar by a priest. In this rite the plant that the Druids had called 'All-heal' was used as a symbol of Christ, the Divine Healer of nations.

The people of England then adopted the mistletoe as a decoration for their homes at Christmas. Its old, pagan religious meaning was soon forgotten, but some of the other meanings and customs have survived: the kiss under the mistletoe; the token of good will and friendship; the omen of happiness and good luck; and the new religious significance."

And Holly, when the earth turns brown and cold, the holly, with its shiny green leaves and bright red berries, seems to lend itself naturally to Christmas decoration. Its appearance in the homes of old England opened the season of feasting and good cheer. Today, holly is not only hung at doors and

windows, on tables and walls, but its green leaves and red berries have become the universal symbol of Christmas, adorning greeting cards, gift tags and labels, gift boxes and wrapping paper at Christmas time.

Medieval superstition in England endowed holly with a special power against witchcraft. Unmarried women were told to fasten a sprig of holly to their beds at Christmas to guard them throughout the year from being turned into witches by the Evil One. In Germany, branches of holly that had been used as Christmas decoration in church were brought home and superstitiously kept as charms against lightning. Another superstition claimed that holly brought good luck to men, and that ivy brought it to women. The holly, therefore, is always referred to as "he," while the ivy is the "distaff plant."

### **The Christmas Tree**

As we have mentioned earlier, the origin of the Christmas tree goes all the way back to Nimrod, who is the real child that was reborn on December 25th.

Hislop writes about the origin of the tree used in Rome, Germany, the Europeans and the Americans today and its significance: "The Christmas tree, as has been stated, was generally at Rome a different tree, even the fir; but the very same idea as was implied in the palm-tree was implied in the Christmas fir; for that covertly symbolized the new-born God as BAAL-BERITH, 'Lord of the Covenant,' and thus shadowed forth the perpetuity and everlasting nature of his power, now that after having fallen before his enemies, he has risen triumphant over them all. Therefore, the 25th of December, the day that was observed at Rome as the day when the victorious god appeared on earth, was held as the *Natalis invicti solis*, 'The birth-day of the Unconquerable 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" (Two Babylons., p.98). The Christmas tree was the symbol of the resurrected Nimrod, and his rebirth on December 25th.

Notice that tree worship was associated with the worship of Baal. God condemned the worship of Baal, and tree worship in the Bible. When you look into the bible you read of the "groves" that people worshipped under, and how the sacrificed children to Baal. And what were the "groves"? The word in Hebrew is "asherah." Kitto says, "The word asherah and its plural [asherim] [is] rendered in the A.V. [and is] constantly mentioned with high places. At first sight the common LXX [Septuagint] rendering, followed by our version, seems to carry conviction with it, from the connection of high places with worship under the trees, and the prevalence of nature-worship in Palestine; but a closer examination shows something of the character of an image must be intended" (Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature, Kitto, vol. 11, p. 302, emphasis added). Kitto also says, "It must be remembered that the grove is constantly connected with Baal" (Ibid. p.302, emphasis added).

God warned Israel, "Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, [an "high place"] and upon the hills, and under every green tree [it was their custom to gather amidst "groves" of trees]: and ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars [upright columns of stone, or wood; sometimes, the trunks of trees left rooted in the ground, stripped of branches, and carved, representing phallic symbols], and burn their groves [they worshipped in oak groves!] with fire; and ye shall hew down [as in cutting down a tree trunk!] the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place" (Deuteronomy 12:2, 3).

This practice of tree worship when the Israelites migrated up into Europe, was still practiced among them. These people called the Druids are the priestly caste of people that Jeroboam set up in Israel, and the Druids can be traced back to Jeroboam's priests in ancient Israel. *For details order our Book USA & Britain in Prophecy, chapter 24 The Druids for details.*

In Europe the Druids practiced their religion, and British historians have been struck by the amazing similarity between Druidism and the rituals of the Levitical priesthood of ancient Israel. "Many other authorities have noted the resemblance between the Druidic religion and that of the Old Testament. To quote Charles Hulbert, a noted British scholar: 'So near is the resemblance between the Druidic religion of Britain and the patriarchal religion of the Hebrews, that we hesitate not to pronounce their origin the same'" (Stonehenge and Druidism, E. Raymond Capt., p.75). How can that be unless, these people were part of the Israelites of the Bible, and practiced the religion of the Old Testament. Of course along with the religion of the Old Testament was the religion of Baal worship that we also find among them such as the worshipping of Oak trees.

The Catholic Encyclopedia says, "The etymology of this word [Druid] from the Greek 'oak' has been a favorite one since the time of Pliny the Elder; according to this the Druids would be the priests of the god or gods identified with the oak" (vol. V. p.162). The Oak tree that they called God was the Baal of the Bible.

"The Druids taught the existence of one god, to whom they gave a name "Be' al," which Celtic antiquaries tell us means "the life of everything," or "the source of all beings," and which seems to have affinity with the Phœnician Baal. What renders this affinity more striking is that the Druids as well as the Phœnicians identified this, their supreme deity, with the Sun. Fire was regarded as a symbol of the divinity. The Latin writers assert that the Druids also worshipped numerous inferior gods" (Thomas Bulfinch (1796–1867). *Age of Fable: Vols. I & II: Stories of Gods and Heroes.* 1913, XLI. a. The Druids). So there is no doubt that Baal worshipped with trees is the same worshipped of the Druids of ancient Europe.

Now we come to the story of Saint Boniface, and the origin of the Modern Day Christmas tree. St. Boniface, a British monk, was preaching to a tribe of Germanic Druids outside the town of Geismar. To these Druids, the oak was a sacred tree. St. Boniface, trying to convince these people that the oak was not sacred, and he felled one on the spot. The tree toppled over, crushing every shrub in its way except a small fir sapling. Legend has it that St. Boniface interpreted the fir's survival as a miracle and declared it 'the tree of the Christ Child.' (see . Frazer, in *The Golden Bough* ) Notice, the origin of the modern Christmas tree, has its origin of the sacred Oak tree of the DRUIDS, WHO WAS BAAL OF ANCIENT ISRAEL!

Now does God condemn the practice of Christmas Trees which originated with Baal, or Nimrod worship? Absolutely. Jeremiah 10: 1-5, says: "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 ax.

"They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

"They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."

Notice that this prophecy is to the HOUSE OF ISRAEL, NOT the House of Judah. Israel was gone over 120 years before Jeremiah gave this prophecy. And this prophecy was for them. The House of Judah, the Jews today don't practice bringing a tree indoors and decorating it. But the peoples of northern Europe and the British Isles, the USA and Canada, and the rest of the British Commonwealth do. God is speaking to his people Israel in this end time telling them that this custom is vain. That it has pagan origins, and he is telling them not to do it. This prophecy is for our day.



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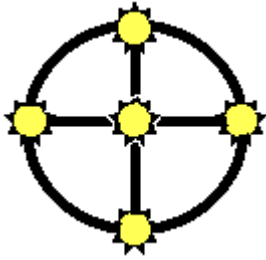
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## **Yule Log**

The word Yule comes from the Norse Jul, meaning wheel. The ancient Europeans saw time as a cyclic, as opposed to a linear event. You can see that in merely marking equinox and solstice, their (apparently) "controversial" sun wheel formed the foundations for both swastika and the (apparently) "objectionable" Celtic cross. One of the recurrent themes in Sir James Frazer's seminal study of mythology, *The Golden Bough*, was the ritual slaying of the old king by the new. Frazer named the oak the "pre-eminently sacred tree of the Aryans ... its worship is attested for all the great branches of the Aryan stock in Europe." (Macmillan, 1963 p. 870). The point is that Yule represented the rebirth of the Oak King, as much as that of the sun. Solstice was the occasion for the young Oak King (summer) to slay the ageing Holly King (winter). Yule blended elements of both Christmas and the New Year. Taking stock of the previous year, swearing oaths, and making resolutions would have been as familiar to our European forefathers as the image of the aged old year being unceremoniously hustled off stage to make way for the New Year's baby.

The Yule log was decorated with evergreens and ribbons, and a libation poured over it before the lighting. The magical properties attributed to the sacred oak can hardly be over-emphasized. Each year a brand was rescued from the flames and reserved to rekindle next year's Yule log. During the interim, it served as a talisman to protect the home from a variety of evils, including lightning. The ashes were carefully swept from the grate and saved to impart a magical efficacy to a variety of nostrums.



Celts, Norse and Teutons considered trees the earthly representatives of the gods. Sacrificing a Yule log to the dying sun was a universal practice. Local customs varied from the enormous tree brought into the Scandinavian home, to the "heavy block of oak fitted into the floor of the hearth, where, though it glowed under the fire, it was hardly reduced to ashes within a year ... in the valleys of the Sieg and Lahn" (Frazer, p. 834).

Hislop reveals the origins of Yule log: "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 the 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...but why, it may be asked, does he enter the fire under the symbol of a log? ...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, Hislop, p. 87, 98).

### **Santa Claus**

Certainly, no one claims that the jolly fat man with a long white beard, known as Santa Claus, is taken from the Bible. Where then did he come from? Francis Weiser says: "After the Reformation, the feast and veneration of Saint Nicholas, the patron of little children, were abolished in many countries. Soon people in those countries forgot the saint who had once been so dear to them. Only here and there a trace of him would linger on; as, for example, in the pageant of the 'Boy Bishop' in England, and in the name Pelznickel (Fur Nicholas), which many people in western Germany gave to their Christmas Man (Pelsnichol - now among the Pennsylvania Dutch).

When the Dutch came to America and established the colony of New Amsterdam, their children enjoyed the traditional 'visit of Saint Nicholas' on December 5, for the Dutch had kept this ancient Catholic custom even after the Reformation. Later, when England took over the colony and it became New York, the kindly figure of Sinter Klaas (pronounced like Santa Claus) soon aroused among the English children the desire of having such a heavenly visitor come to their homes, too.

The English settlers were glad and willing to comply with the anxious wish of their children. However, the figure of a Catholic saint and bishop was not acceptable in their eyes, especially since many of them were Presbyterians, to whom a bishop was repugnant. In addition, they did not celebrate the feast of saints according to the ancient Catholic calendar.

The dilemma was solved by transferring the visit of the mysterious man whom the Dutch called Santa Claus from December 5 to Christmas, and by introducing a radical change in the figure itself. It was not merely a 'disguise' but the ancient saint was completely replaced by an entirely different character. Behind the name Santa Claus actually stands the figure of the pagan Germanic god Thor (after whom Thursday is named). Some details about Thor from ancient German mythology will show the origin of the modern Santa-Claus tale:

"Thor was the god of the peasants and the common people. He was represented as an elderly man, jovial and friendly, of heavy build, with a long white beard, His element was the fire, his color red. The rumble and roar of thunder were said to be caused by the rolling of his chariot, for he alone

among the gods never rode on horseback but drove in a chariot drawn by two white goats (called Cracker and Gnasher). He was fighting the giants of ice and snow, and thus became the Yule-god. He was said to live in the 'Northland' where he had his palace among icebergs. By our pagan forefathers he was considered as the cheerful and friendly god, never harming the humans but, rather, helping and protecting them. The fireplace in every home was especially sacred to him, and he was said to come down through the chimney into his element, the fire." (Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1958), pp. 113, 114).

### **Santa Claus in The Bible**

In Isaiah 14 verses 4 and 25 we see the "King of Babylon," and the "Assyrian." Since "Nimrod" of Genesis 10 is the founder of BOTH Babylon and Assyria, these verses are speaking of Nimrod. The third name is the power behind the whole Babylonish system. His name "Lucifer." As in Revelation 13, the "Dragan" gave the power to the beast. The Kingdom called "Baylor the Great" in Revelation 17 and 18. Isaiah 14 is speaking of the original Babylon and its end time fulfillment in Revelation 13, 17, 18.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Let's briefly analyzed "Lucifer," whose destruction is prophesied in verses 4 through 27.

Verse 13 shows that his desire is to be "above" all things, and to have a "throne" even above God. Every year we see Santa on a throne, and little children are required to come to him and solicit his good favor. He will be in the "congregation" i.e. the congregation of the Israel the "mount" is a symbol of a nation, meaning the Nation of the congregation of Israel. Nationally our people Israel, i.e. The British Commonwealth, the Northern European peoples and the USA have Santa as a national hero, and bring some kind of worship to him in some way. Even the direction of his abode, the abode of Lucifer is in the "North". Santa resides in the "North Pole," or regions of the North. Verse 14: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds." We are told Santa comes to every home through air with his sleigh and reindeer.

"I will be like the most High." This should have an ominous ring to believers. It means he will usurp God's glory, God's praise, to actually take the place of God. This Santa Claus does in the hearts and minds of little children by the millions every year, as both evil and foolish adults tell them of the good things that Santa not God will bring them. You do not see children running into the malls saying "Where's Jesus?" They don't do that do they! Santa is the real hero not Jesus at Christmas! He is like the most high!

### **Description of Santa and Nimrod**

In ancient times Nimrod was portrayed as a man with a "long flowing white beard, the ornate dress, the 'reindeer,' the fir tree (Christmas tree), and the wings giving power to 'fly through the air' ...In the drawing of Nimrod...the similarity to 'Santa Claus' can be seen..." (Is Christmas Christian? Sheldon Emry, p.12).



*Notice the similarities between Nimrod and Santa Claus.*



**Nimrod may have been the first Santa Claus.**

What about giving gifts on Christmas is that scriptural?

From the Bibliotheca Sacra, volume 12, pages 153-155, we quote: "The interchange of presents between friends is alike characteristic of Christmas and the Saturnalia, and MUST HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY THE CHRISTIANS FROM THE PAGANS, as the admonition of Tertullian plainly shows."

History records that early Christians avoided the ancient custom of holiday "gift-giving" because it was reminiscent of the Roman Saturnalia, see Restad, Penne L., Christmas in America, p.65.

Even the festival ASPECT OF Christmas comes from the festival of the Sun also called the Saturnalia of the winter. Seneca the younger...he writes here about Rome during Saturnalia around 50 A.D: "It is now the month of December, when the greatest part of the city is in a bustle. Loose reins are given to public dissipation; everywhere you may hear the sound of great preparations, as if there were some real difference between the days devoted to Saturn and those for transacting business....Were you here, I would willingly confer with you as to the plan of our conduct; whether we should eave in our usual way, or, to avoid singularity, both take a better supper and throw off the toga."--From the Epistolae

WELL HOW ABOUT THE GIVING OF GIFTS TO BABY JESUS BY THE WISE MEN??

Consider what the Scriptures says...."Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. "And when they 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 2:1-2,11)

Notice here.... the wise men gave Jesus gifts because He was the KING of the Jews - it was not because it was His birthday. It was customary to give gifts to someone who is a King, just as it is so in many cultures today. In any case, the wise men didn't give any gifts to Jesus until long after His birthday. If you notice in the verses above you will see that the wise men came to the "House" NOT a Manger, and that Herod had the children killed between "two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men" (verse 16). So Jesus was at least a year old when the wise men came to see him.

"Verse 11 (They presented unto him gifts) The people of the east never approached 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, page 46).

The exchanging of gifts among friends and relatives is not found in the Scriptures, it is derived from paganism. Consider the poor among us who can't afford to buy gifts at Christmas time? Why is it that strife and torment increases around Christmas time? Family breakups, murders, suicides increases around Christmas time! Many of the impoverished among us speaks of the torments of not being able to buy gifts for one another at Christmas time, leading many to despair and suicide. Many tells of Christmas as being "a time of pain and heartbreak". Many will proclaim "it is the thought that counts", however reality is, we're bombarded by and surrounded by commercialized messages proclaiming in effect "how much you love someone is dictated by how much money you spend on a gift for them".

The cold hard facts are.... if Christmas was a Christian festival, then there would not be so much pain and heartbreak among the poor and impoverished among us!! Jesus brought JOY and LIFE to the poor, NOT pain and heartbreak!!! Christmas shopping.... the annual chaos of rush hours to the shopping centres, searching the whole city for that one thing for that hard-to-buy-for Uncle, the devastations of bank balances so carefully maintained throughout the rest of the year (or the blow-outs of credit card debts), often leading to financial strife in the new year - oh no, this is not a modern 20th century phenomenon!!!

Consider the writings of a fourth-century writer Libanius describing the end-of-year festivities of the pagan Roman Empire...."Everywhere may be seen...well-laden tables...The impulse to spend seizes everyone. He through the whole year has taken pleasure in saving...becomes suddenly extravagant...A stream of presents pours itself out on all sides." As quoted in "Christmas in Ritual and Traditions"

### **Ham Dinner for Christmas**

Many people have a "Christmas Ham" on December 25th. They may not know that in the Egyptian and Greek worship, the son of the "mother god" was believed killed by a wild boar which was then killed by the "mother-god" prior to the resurrection of her son. In commemoration of this act the worshippers killed and offered as a sacrifice a pig which was then eaten by the "celebrants."

Diana (mentioned in Acts 19) was often portrayed with a dead boar or boars head.

"For over 3000 years, it has been common among the pagans to kill and eat a pig at their winter festival of the return of the sun (late December). In Rome, it was called the 'festival of Saturn' and the boar was killed as a sacrifice to Saturn. The entire animal was cooked, often served with an apple

or a pomegranate in its mouth. The custom still prevails in England and parts of Europe. In America, almost every minister promotes the eating of swine's flesh by his congregation" (Sheldon Emry, *Is Christmas Christian?* P.21)

### **Christmas Goose**

In Egypt a favorite offering to Osiris was a goose, offered at any time, but when offered in the dead of winter, the goose was then eaten.

In Rome Juvenal writes: "That Osiris, if offended, could be pacified only by a large goose and a thin cake." (The thin cake has become the communion wafer used in the Roman Catholic sacrament). Historians record that one of the night attacks by the Gauls on Rome was defeated. The geese kept in the temple of Jupiter aroused the Roman soldiers with their cackling.

In India, they have the "Brahmany goose," sacred to Brahma. In Babylon, the goose was offered as a sacrifice by the priests of Baal. Wilkinson (*Egyptians* vol. V, p.227), states that ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphics indicate the goose symbolized a son, giving itself up in sacrifice that the family might be preserved.

### **"Wassailing"**

One of the familiar "Christmas carols" is "Wassailing." To most, it is merely some ancient word they assume came from England or somewhere—perhaps Germany—they don't really know, which means, "Here we go, singing carols in the neighborhood on Christmas Eve." But the old English word meant "Be whole," or "Be well."

Allegedly, the custom of "wassailing" began with "...the reception of King Vortigern by Hengist, when Rowena came into the king's presence, with a cup of gold filled with wine in the hand, and making a low reverence to the king said, *Waes hael hlaford Cyning*, which means 'Be of health, Lord King.' In a collection of ordinances for the regulations of the royal household in Henry VII's reign, the steward on the Twelfth Night [of the 'Twelve nights of Christmas'] was to cry 'wassail' three times on entering with the bowl, the royal chaplain responded with a song. Wassailing was as much a custom in the monasteries as in laymen's houses, the bowl being known as *poculum Caritalis*. What is popularly known as wassailing was the custom of trimming with ribbons and sprigs of rosemary a bowl which was carried round the streets by young girls singing carols at Christmas and the New Year. This ancient custom still survives here and there, especially in Yorkshire, where the bowl is known as 'the vessel cup,' and is made of holly and evergreens, inside which are placed one or two dolls trimmed with ribbons. The cup is borne on a stick by children who go from house to house singing Christmas carols. In Devonshire and elsewhere it was the custom to wassail the orchards [trees again!] on Christmas and New Year's eve. Pitchers of ale or cider were poured over the roots of the trees to the accompaniment of a rhyming toast to their healths" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, vol. 28, p. 361). One will recognize the English word "hale," as in "hale and hearty," in the word "wasshail," or "wassheil."

Thus various "quaint" superstitions were added to the custom of "wassailing." In Germany, the game-keeper, once his hunter has killed a stag, breaks off a twig of evergreen, dips it into the blood of the animal, and then presents it with a "toast," pronouncing similar words, "Wass-heil!" The sprig of bloody evergreen then is worn in the successful hunter's hat band.

## Christmas Once Outlawed

With the Reformation in the sixteenth century, there naturally came a sharp change in the Christmas celebration for many countries in Europe. The Sacrifice of the Mass - the very soul of the feast - was suppressed. The Holy Eucharist, the liturgy of the Diving Office, the sacramentals and ceremonies all disappeared. So did the colorful and inspiring processions, the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints.

In England the Puritans condemned even the reduced religious celebration that was held in the Anglican Church after the separation from Rome. They were determined to abolish Christmas altogether, both as a religious and as a popular feast.

Pamphlets were published denouncing Christmas as pagan, and its observance was declared to be sinful. In this anti-Christmas campaign these English sects were much encouraged by the example of similar groups in Scotland, where the celebration of the feast was forbidden as early as 1583, and punishment inflicted on all persons observing it.

When the Puritans finally came to political power in England, they immediately proceeded to outlaw Christmas. The year 1642 saw the first ordinances issued forbidding church services and civic festivities on Christmas Day. In 1644, the monthly day of fast and penance was appointed for December 25. The people, however, paid scant attention to these orders, and continued their celebrations. There was thus inaugurated a great campaign of two years duration (1645-1647). Speeches, pamphlets and other publications, sermons and discussions were directed against the celebration of Christmas, calling it "antichrist- Mass, idolatry, abomination," and similar names. Following this barrage of propaganda, Parliament on June 3, 1647 ordained that the Feast of Christmas (and other holidays) should no longer be observed under pain of punishment. On December 24, 1652 an act of Parliament again reminded the public that "no observance shall be had on the five-and-twentieth of December, commonly called Christmas day; nor any solemnity used or exercised in churches in respect thereof."

Each year, by order of Parliament, town criers went through the streets a few days before Christmas, reminding their fellow citizens that "Christmas day and all other superstitious festivals" should not be observed, that market should be kept and stores remain open on December 25.

During the year 1647 popular riots broke out in various places against the law suppressing Christmas, especially in London, Oxford, Ipswich, Canterbury, and the whole county of Kent. In Oxford there was a "world of skull-breaking;" in Ipswich the festival was celebrated "with some loss of life;" In Canterbury "the mob mauled the mayor, broke all his windows as well as his bones, and put fire to his doorsteps." An ominous note was sounded against the republican Commonwealth at a meeting of ten thousand men from Kent and Canterbury, who passed a solemn resolution saying that "if they could not have their Christmas day, they would have the King back on his throne again." The government, however, stood firm and proceeded to break up Christmas celebrations by force of arms. People were arrested in many instances but were not punished beyond a few hours in jail.

Anglican ministers who decorated their churches and held service on Christmas Day were removed from their posts and replaced by men of softer fibre. Slowly and relentlessly, the external observance of Christmas was extinguished. December 25 became a common workday, and business went

on as usual. But in spite of these repressive measures many people still celebrated the day with festive meals and merriment in the privacy of their homes.

In America, Christmas was banned as well. "Christmas was not established as a legal holiday throughout the U.S until late 19th century. In 1659, the Puritan colony in Massachusetts passed a law that anyone 'found observing such a day as Christmas...shall be fined five shillings" (Arizona Currents Dec 1968 & Phoenix Gazette, Dec 22, 1967.

### **When Was Jesus Christ Really Born?**

So now that we have established the origins of Christmas, and that it has nothing to do with Jesus Christ. Then when was Jesus born? Was it in the winter or at another time of the year?

There are several indications in the bible that show that Jesus was born no later than September, and most likely on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles! To be born on the first of Day of that feast is also highly significant.

Let's go through the indications in the Bible, the little clues to show when Jesus was actually born.

In the Gospel of Luke we read that "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." (Luke 2:8). This is a very important Biblical key to understanding when Jesus was actually born.

Many tourists who visit the Middle East during the winter months are usually unprepared for the cold weather they often encounter. Today, as in ancient times, Jerusalem is a cold place during the winter season. Hence Jeremiah the prophet speaks about "the snow of Lebanon" (Jer. 18:14), and Jesus warned His followers in Judea, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." (Matt. 24:20).

Surely, Christ's birthday could not be on December 25 or on any day during the month of December whatsoever. One does not have to be a born genius to conclude that shepherds, in their right senses, would not be found outside with their flocks on a cold winter night. The truth of the matter is, it has long been a practice among the shepherds of Judea to secure their flocks by removing them from the fields no later than around the end of October. The Bible Itself proves that the winter was a rainy season and that they did not permit the shepherds to abide in the open fields at night, see Song of Solomon 2:11 and Ezra 10:9, 13.

The Shepherds in the time of the winter season put their flocks in the sheep coat, and not outside. Clarke's Commentary states: "And as these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, 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, which casts considerable light upon this disputed point. See the quotations from the Talmudists in Lightfoot." (Commentary on Luke, emphasis added).

Bullinger's says that it was "custom then (as now) to withdraw the flocks during the month Marchesvan (Oct-Nov)...for the paramount reason that there would be no pasturage at that time" (Appendix 179, p.199). So by this bit of information we know Jesus was NOT a winter Baby.



Humble shepherds visit  
Christ at His birth site.

*Just as it is illogical for shepherds to be watching their flocks out in the fields on a cold winter night, certainly it is illogical to conclude that Mary and Joseph and all the other travelers would have made their way to the city on a cold winter night. Many of the travelers may have had to journey from very long distances to get to the city, and it is unlikely that they would have done so in the cold of winter*

Another indication was the tax census by the Roman government at that time. There was no way the Romans were going to go against the habits of the entire nation of the Jews and have a census in the winter time. They would have followed the Jewish tradition and have the census at a time when the Jews made pilgrimages, such as the great Feast days of Leviticus 23. One of those great pilgrimages was the Feast of Tabernacles. Buillinger's explains:

“The Roman authorities in imposing such a ‘census taking’ for the hated and unpopular ‘foreign’ tax would not have enforced the imperial decree (Luke 2:1) at the most inconvenient and inclement season of the year, by compelling the people to enrol themselves at their respective ‘cities’ in December. In such a case they would naturally choose the ‘line’ of least resistance.’ and select a time of year that would cause least friction, and interference with the habits and pursuits of the Jewish people. This would be in the autumn, when the agricultural round of the year was complete, and the people generally more or less at liberty to take advantage, as we know many did, of the opportunity of ‘going up’ to Jerusalem for the ‘Feast of Tabernacles’ (compare John 7:8-10, etc.), the crowning Feast of the Jewish year...To take advantage of such a time would be to the Romans the simplest and most natural policy, whereas to attempt to enforce the Edict of Registration for the purposes of Imperial taxation in the depth of winter, - when travelling for such a purpose would have been deeply resented, and perhaps have brought about a revolt,-would never have been attempted by such an astute ruler as Augustus” (pp.199-200).

### **The Course of Abijah**

Another indication in the bible is Zacharias the father of John the Baptist. When he received his message from the Angel Gabriel about his son that was to be born, he was performing his priestly duty of the "course of Abijah" (Luke 1:5). This course just meant the “week” in which his family of Levites had to do their duty in the temple.

King David on God's instructions (1 Chr 28:11-13) had divided the sons of Aaron into 24 groups (1 Chr 24:1-4), to setup a schedule by which the Temple of the Lord could be staffed with priests all year round in an orderly manner. After the 24 groups of priests were established, lots were drawn to determine the sequence in which each group would serve in the Temple. (1 Chr 24: 7-19). That sequence is as follows:

|                    |               |                  |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1 Chr 24:7         | 1. Jehoiarib  | 2. Jedaiah       |
| 1 Chr 24:8         | 3. Harim      | 4. Seorim        |
| 1 Chr 24:9         | 5. Malchijah  | 6. Mijamin       |
| <b>1 Chr 24:10</b> | 7. Hakkoz     | <b>8. Abijah</b> |
| 1 Chr 24:11        | 9. Jeshuah    | 10. Shecaniah    |
| 1 Chr 24:12        | 11. Eliashib  | 12. Jakim        |
| 1 Chr 24:13        | 13. Huppah    | 14. Jeshebeab    |
| 1 Chr 24:14        | 15. Bilgah    | 16. Immer        |
| 1 Chr 24:15        | 17. Hezir     | 18. Aphses       |
| 1 Chr 24:16        | 19. Pethahiah | 20. Jehezekel    |
| 1 Chr 24:17        | 21. Jachim    | 22. Gamul        |
| 1 Chr 24:18        | 23. Delaiah   | 24. Maaziah      |

1 Chr 24:19: "These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him." Now each one of the 24 "courses" of priests would begin and end their service in the Temple on the Sabbath, a tour of duty being for one week (2 Chr 23:8, 1 Chr 9:25). On three occasions during the year, all the men of Israel were required to travel to Jerusalem for festivals of the Lord, so on those occasions all the priests would be needed in the Temple to accommodate the crowds. Those three festivals were Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Deut 16:16).

The Jewish calendar begins in the spring, during the month of Nisan, so the first "course" of priests, would be that of the family of Jehoiarib, who would serve for seven days. The second week would then be the responsibility of the family of Jedaiah. The third week would be the feast of Unleavened Bread, and all priests would be present for service. Then the schedule would resume with the third course of priests, the family of Harim. By this plan, when the 24th course was completed, the general cycle of courses would repeat. This schedule would cover 51 weeks or 357 days, enough for the lunar Jewish calendar (about 354 days). So, in a period of a year, each group of priests would serve in the Temple twice on their scheduled course, in addition to the 3 major festivals, for a total of about five weeks of duty.

### **The Conception of John the Baptist.**

Now back to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.

Luke 1:23 "And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house."

Luke 1:24 "And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, ..."

Beginning with the first month, Nisan, in the spring (March-April), the schedule of the priest's courses would result with Zacharias serving during the 10th week of the year. This is because he was a member of the course of Abia (Abijah), the 8th course, and both the Feast of Unleavened Bread (15-21 Nisan) and Pentecost (6 Sivan) would have occurred before his scheduled duty. This places Zacharias' administration in the Temple as beginning on the second Sabbath of the third month, Sivan (May-June).

|             | 1st Month                                  | 2nd Month                    | 3rd Month                  |
|-------------|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|
|             | Abib - Nisan<br>(March - April)            | Zif - Iyyar<br>(April - May) | Sivan<br>(May - June)      |
| First Week  | Jehoiarib (1)                              | Seorim (4)                   | All Priests<br>(Pentecost) |
| Second Week | Jedaiah (2)                                | Malchijah (5)                | Abijah (8)                 |
| Third Week  | All Priests<br>(Feast of Unleavened Bread) | Mijamin (6)                  | Jeshuah (9)                |
| Fourth Week | Harim (3)                                  | Hakkoz (7)                   | Shecaniah (10)             |

Having completed his Temple service on the third Sabbath of Sivan, Zacharias returned home and soon conceived his son John. So John the Baptist was probably conceived shortly after the third Sabbath of the month of Sivan.

### **The Conception of Jesus Christ.**

Now the reason that the information about John is important, is because according to Luke, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy:

Luke 1:24 "And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself *five months*, saying,"

Luke 1:25 "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men."

Luke 1:26 "And in the *sixth month* the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,"

Luke 1:27 "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."

Note that verse 26 above refers to the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, not Elul, the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar, and this is made plain by the context of verse 24 and again in verse 36:

Luke 1:36 "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the *sixth month with her, who was called barren.*" The New Testament Commentary on the Whole Bible, p.163 by JFB makes this plain as well.

Now working from the information about John's conception late in the third month, Sivan, and advancing six months, we arrive late in the 9th month of Kislev (Nov-Dec) for the time frame for the conception of Jesus. It is notable here that the first day of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, is celebrated on the 25th day of Kislev, and Jesus is called the light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5, 12:46). This does not appear to be a mere coincidence. In the book of John,

Hanukkah is called the feast of dedication (John 10:22). Hanukkah is an eight day festival, celebrating the relighting of the menorah in the rededicated Temple, which according to the story, stayed lit miraculously for eight days on only one day's supply of oil.

### **The Birth of John the Baptist.**

Based on a conception shortly after the third Sabbath of the month of Sivan, projecting forward an average term of about 10 lunar months (40 weeks), we arrive in the month of Nisan. It would appear that John the Baptist may have been born in the middle of the month, which would coincide with Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is interesting to note, that even today, it is customary for the Jews to set out a special goblet of wine during the Passover Seder meal, in anticipation of the arrival of Elijah that week, which is based on the prophecy of Malachi:

Mal 4:5 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:"

Jesus identified John as the "Elijah" that the Jews had expected:

Mat 17:10 "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?"

Mat 17:11 "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things."

Mat 17:12 "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them."

Mat 17:13 "Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

The angel that appeared to Zacharias in the temple also indicated that John would be the expected "Elias":

Luke 1:17 "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

So then, the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of the 1st month, Nisan, and this is a likely date for the birth of John the Baptist, the expected "Elijah".

### **The Birth of Jesus Christ.**

Since Jesus was conceived six months after John the Baptist, and we have established a likely date for John's birth, we need only move six months farther down the Jewish calendar to arrive at a likely date for the birth of Jesus. From the 15th day of the 1st month, Nisan, we go to the 15th day of the 7th month, Tishri. And what do we find on that date? It is the festival of Tabernacles! The 15th day of Tishri begins the third and last festival of the year to which all the men of Israel were to gather in Jerusalem for Temple services. (Lev 23:34)

Isa 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Immanuel means "God with us". The Son of God had come to dwell with, or tabernacle on earth with His people.

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

The word in the Hebrew for "dwelt" is "succah" and the name of the Feast of Tabernacles in Hebrew is Sukkot, a festival of rejoicing and celebration:

Bullinger's says: "It thus appears without the shadow of a doubt that the day assigned to the Birth of the Lord, videlicet: December 25, was the day on which He was 'begotten of the Holy Ghost,' that is to say, by pneuma hagion = divine power (Matthew 1:18, 20 marg.), and His birth took place on the 15th of Ethanim, September 29, in the year following, thus making beautifully clear the meaning of John 1:14, 'The Word became flesh' (Matthew 1:18,20) on 1st Tebeth or December 25 (5 B.C.), 'and *tabernacled* (*Greek eskenosen*) with us,' on 15th of Ethanim or September 29 (4 B.C.)" (p198, emphasis added).

### **Solomon's prayer:**

Solomon, when he gave that prayer on the feast of Tabernacles, said "But will God indeed dwell on the earth" (1 Kings 8:27). And on that day they held the feast of Tabernacles. "And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month...And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation" (verses 2, 65). Bullingers says, "viz Feast of Tabernacles" (p.464). Isn't it interesting that Solomon asked will God dwell on the earth, on the first day of that feast, then the Apostle John writes that God was made flesh and "TABERNACLED" among us. Everything shows that Jesus was born on the first day of that feast!

**Why was there no room at the inn?**-Bethlehem is only about 5 miles from Jerusalem, and all the men of Israel had come to attend the festival of Tabernacles as required by the law of Moses. Every room for miles around Jerusalem would have been already taken by pilgrims, so all that Mary and Joseph could find for shelter was a stable.

Also of note is the fact that the Feast of Tabernacles is an eight day feast (Lev 23:36, 39). Why eight days? It may be because an infant was dedicated to God by performing circumcision on the eighth day after birth:

Luke 2:21 "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb."

So the infant Jesus would have been circumcised on the eighth and last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, a Sabbath day. The Jews today consider this a separate festival from Tabernacles, and they call it Shemini Atzeret.

## Does it Matter?

Many people say "Well, were doing this all for Jesus. Does it matter how we worship God, as long as we worship him?" Like I keep insisting, IF THERE IS NO GOD don't worry about it, but if there is and he thunders out "Learn NOT the way of the Heathen" and that the "customs of the people are vain," and that if your God, then you should have a say on how you want people to worship you.

Also God condemns the practice of mixing Paganism with Christianity. Deuteronomy 12:29-31 makes it clear how God feels about Mixing paganism with his religion: "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;

"Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.

"Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: [The context here is not to use the way of the heathen to worship the True 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.

"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." God says, not matter what Frank Sinatra sings, do it his way not your way.

## Conclusion

So, if you have followed the above reasoning, based on the scriptural evidence, a case can apparently be made that Jesus Christ was born on the 15th day of the month of Tishri, on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which corresponds to the September - October timeframe of our present calendar!

From Bullinger's Companion Bible under the Course of Abijah, Appendix 179, pp.198-199.

**A few More points-** You have heard of the star of Bethlehem. This is very significant to when Jesus was born. The Wise men said they saw his star in the "east" where they lived, and then travelled to see him (Matthew 2:1-2). Samuele Bacchiocchi's book God's Festivals, makes an interesting statement: "A final interesting sideline supporting the possibility that Christ was born on the very time of the Feast of Tabernacles, is the reference to the wise men that came from the east to visit Christ (Matt 2:1). The land the East is most likely Babylon, where many Jews still lived at the time of Christ's birth.... We are told that the wise men made their journey from the East to Bethlehem because they had seen 'the star in the East' (Matt 2:1). Watching stars was associated especially with the Feast of Tabernacles. In fact, the roof of the booth, as note in chapter 6, was built with leafy branches carefully spaced so that they would screen out the sunlight without blocking the visibility of the stars. The people watched for the stars at night during the feast because of the prophecy 'a star shall come out of Jacob' (Num 24:17). It is possible during the feast of Tabernacles, the special season of star watching, the wise men saw the Messianic star..." (pp.244-245, emphasis added).

**Jesus Death-** When Jesus died, it was the Passover, in April. This shows also exactly when Jesus was born.

"If as generally agreed, Christ's ministry began when he was about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23) and lasted three and one half years until his death at the Passover (March/April). Then by back tracking we arrive much closer to the Feast of Tabernacles (Sept/Oct) than to December 25" (ibid, p.243, emphasis added). If Jesus started his ministry at thirty, and died at 33 1/2, then 6 months earlier would have been his birthday which is September!

So the evidence is conclusive, Christmas is a pagan feast, and Jesus was born on the First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles which has a lot more biblical symbolism and significance than does Christmas. We are singing "Born is the King of Israel" at the wrong time of the year!

*Written by Peter Salemi*