

# Christmas: What Does *GOD'S WORD* Say?

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Jesus Christ is our Savior! Christ said, “I am the **way**, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). “Nor is there salvation in **any other**, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

I am a Christian. Yet, I do **not** observe Christmas! Does that sound “strange”... or even “blasphemous”?

Have you ever asked yourself why *you* observe Christmas? For most people, the answer is simply that they celebrate Christmas because all of their friends and loved ones do so. It is the “normal” or “traditional” thing to do. Others, however, would argue that *their* main reason for observing Christmas is to honor God... to celebrate their Savior’s birthday. Yet, what does THE BIBLE—God’s Holy WORD—say... about observing Christmas?!

If you are an individual who doesn’t **care** what God’s Word says, then you are wasting your time reading this article. However, for those who DO care what God’s Word says, let’s now examine what the **Bible has to say**... about Christmas observance!

(1) The *vast* majority of church-goers consider “Christmas” to be an extremely “**important**” day for Christians to observe. Yet, did you know that the *word* “Christmas” is not even IN the Bible?!

(2) Did you know that NOWHERE—in the **entire** Bible—does God’s Word instruct us, to celebrate Christ’s birthday?!

If observing, or celebrating, Christ’s birthday is something that Christians **should** do, then why is there absolutely NO statement in the Bible *indicating* that we should do so?!

(3) If God **wanted** us to annually observe Christ’s birthday, then wouldn’t God have at least told us—in the Bible—**WHEN** Christ was born?!

**Nowhere**, does the Bible reveal the **date** of Christ’s birth!

The Bible **does** reveal the dates of specific days that God **does** instruct His people to annually observe... such as Pentecost, and other annual holy days of God. These annual holy days **were** observed by both Jesus and His apostles (cf. Acts 2:1). Even Paul, the apostle **to the Gentiles**, kept God’s holy days (Acts 18:21; 20:6, 16; 1 Cor. 5: 6-8; 16:8). (For access to a *booklet* which discusses God’s Annual Holy Days, click on the link at the end of this article.)

The Bible *tells* us the **dates** of when His holy days are to be annually observed (Leviticus chapter 23). Yet, **nowhere** does the Bible tell us the **date** of Christ birth. Wouldn't God have TOLD us that... if He **wanted** us to annually *observe* Christ's birth?!

(4) An extremely *important* point: Neither the apostles **nor** the New Testament Church ever celebrated, or annually *observed*, Christ's birth!!

The Bible gives an account of the New Testament Church for sixty-some years **after** Christ's crucifixion. Yet, you can search the *entire* New Testament, but you won't find **any** evidence, that either the apostles **or** the New Testament Church ever celebrated Christ's birth!

If "Christmas" is something that **should** be observed... then **WHY DIDN'T THE APOSTLES AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OBSERVE IT?!**

What about the "Wise Men" who brought **gifts**, to honor Christ? Does *that* somehow prove that we should annually observe Christ's birth? NO! The *reason* that the "Wise Men" brought gifts, is because they were seeking a newborn **king**! They asked, "Where is He who is born **king** of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2). And, in bringing *gifts*, they were merely following a long-established custom, that whenever one comes into the presence of a King, a **gift** is offered! So, that, in **no** way, is an indication that we should observe Christmas!

(5) The annual observance of the Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> **date**—as well as the **customs** associated with the celebration of that date—**originated** from PAGAN practices! Yes, **pagan** practices... involving **the worship of sun gods**!

Why sun-worship? Previously, our world was much more *agrarian* than today's world. Individuals were very dependant on the local weather and seasonal changes. They oftentimes were inclined to **worship** the source which *regulated* these changes... the light of the **sun**!

In pre-historic times, winter was a very difficult time for people in the northern latitudes. The growing season had ended and the tribe had to live off of stored food and whatever animals they could catch. The people would be troubled as the life-giving sun sank lower in the sky each noon. They feared that it would eventually disappear and leave them in permanent darkness and extreme cold. After the **winter solstice**, they would have reason to **celebrate** as they saw the sun rising and strengthening once more. [www.religioustolerance.org/winter\\_solstice.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/winter_solstice.htm)

What is the "winter solstice"? It is the day of the year in which we experience the shortest day and the longest night of the year. In other words, it is the day of the year that we experience sunshine for a **shorter** period of time than any other day of the year. Accordingly, it could be considered the "*death* of the old sun," and "*the birth* of the new sun" (as the subsequent days become longer and longer). This "birth of the new sun" was cause for great *joy*... and even *worship*... worship **of** the sun... or worship of the various "gods" associated **with** the sun.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the Winter Solstice (shortest day of the year) occurs either Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup>. However, as discussed below, when the Julian calendar was *first* established, the winter solstice occurred **on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>!**

Notice the following information from TheFreeDictionary.com, subject “Winter Solstice”:

*Winter Solstice in Ancient Rome*

**According to the Julian calendar used by the *ancient Romans*, *winter solstice* fell on December 25.**

...In the late third century A.D., however, the Roman emperor Aurelian (c. 215-275) added a new celebration to the calendar, the Birth of the Invincible Sun.

**He chose December 25, the winter solstice, as the date for this festival honoring the sun god.** In fact, by the late third century the solstice did not occur on December 25. A flaw in the design of the Julian calendar caused this error. The creators of the Julian calendar believed the year to be 365.25 days long. The actual length of the solar year is 365.242199 days. This tiny discrepancy caused the calendar to fall behind the actual sun cycle by one day every 128 years. **In 46 B.C., when the Julian calendar was established, the winter solstice really did occur on December 25.** By the late third century winter solstice was arriving two and one-half days early. Nevertheless, **the twenty-fifth** had engraved itself in the minds of the populace as the date of the solstice, and so was **retained as the date of the new solstice holiday...**

*Winter Solstice and the Date of Christmas*

**In the middle of the fourth century, when Christian officials in Rome chose a date for the celebration of the Nativity, they, too, selected December 25. Most scholars believe that they chose this date in order to draw people away from the pagan holidays celebrated at that time of year. In fact, a document written by a Christian scribe later in that century explains that the authorities chose December 25 for the feast of the Nativity because people were already accustomed to celebrating on that date. Moreover, some Christian leaders found celebrating Jesus’ birth at the time of the winter solstice especially appropriate as they considered him “the sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2) and the “light of the world” (John 8:12). **With the new festival date in place, Christian leaders exhorted the populace to dedicate their midwinter devotions to the birth of Jesus RATHER THAN to the birth of the sun.****

...The ancient Romans celebrated the Winter Solstice with a festival dedicated to Saturn, the god of agriculture (*see SATURNALIA*). When Emperor Constantine declared in the early fourth century that Christianity would be the new faith of the Roman Empire, **the holiday was given an entirely new name and meaning:**

**It became the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth, also known as Christ Mass or CHRISTMAS. Many familiar Yuletide customs-including the Christmas TREE and the Yule log (see FIRE ) - actually have more to do with the Winter Solstice THAN with Christian doctrine. Even Santa Claus may *originally* have been a “solstice shaman” who officiated at the rites that took place on the Winter Solstice.**

Again, the annual observance of the Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> **date**... as well as the **customs** associated with the celebration of that date... **originated** from PAGAN practices! This fact can *easily* be **proven**, through a computer-search... or through a visit to one's local library! Thus, it is not the purpose of this paper to go into an in-depth proof of that fact... but rather, to cite just a couple of examples. (You can also click on the link at the conclusion of this paper, to access the booklet *Is Christmas Christian?*)

The author Earl W. Count wrote a book (published in 1997) entitled *4000 Years of Christmas: A Gift from the Ages*. The very **title** of this book attests to the fact that Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> was being celebrated **2,000 years BEFORE Christ!** This book gives details showing how many of today's Christmas customs **originated in ancient, pagan Babylon and other pagan societies... long before** the time of Christ!

Yes, history shows that the celebration of Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> (the winter solstice of the Julian Calendar) began in Babylon, and then migrated to Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

What were some of the **PRE-Christian**, pagan **customs** that were observed at that time of year? Such customs included the following: merrymaking, visiting friends, drinking, eating *sumptuous* dinners, exchanging **gifts** for good-luck, **decking the halls with boughs of evergreen**, and having **lights in the windows to ward off evil spirits**.

Clearly, when a person engages in the celebration of Christmas, he is appropriating, not only the **DATE** of a *pagan* religious observance (Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>), but also the pagan **CUSTOMS** used in the celebration **OF** that date! He is appropriating the date... **and** the customs... **and APPLYING THEM TO**, the celebration of our Savior's birth.

**HOWEVER... what does GOD'S Word say, about DOING such a thing?!**

Notice what God's people were instructed in Deut. chapter 12: "When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do NOT inquire after their gods, saying, '**How did these nations serve THEIR gods? I also will do LIKEWISE.**' **You shall NOT worship the LORD your God IN THAT WAY...**" (verses 29-31).

So, here we see that God strictly **forbids** His people from taking PAGAN methods of worshipping THEIR gods, and **applying** such worship to the true God!

Notice now, Jeremiah chapter 10: "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**" (verses 2-4, *KJV*).

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Yet, what does God say about His people **engaging** in this form of idolatry and pagan worship? He said, "Learn **NOT** the way of the heathen." **DON'T DO IT!** (And let's be clear... in this prohibition, God was speaking of pagan **religious** practices.)

Finally, notice Exodus 32, verses 3-8 *and* verses 19-35. This is the account of the golden calf. This golden calf, created **by** the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, was an idol of the *type* worshipped by Egyptians.

How did Aaron make use of this golden calf, which he had formed? “So when Aaron saw *it* [the golden calf], he built an altar before it. And Aaron **made a proclamation and said, ‘Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD’**” (verse 5).

Thus, Aaron was declaring, to God’s people, that they would use this golden calf to honor the TRUE God! They would use it in a “feast **TO the LORD**”!

What was **God’s response** to this? How did God **respond** to His people taking **pagan** religious customs and applying them to the worship of Him?

God declared that His people had “corrupted *themselves*”! (verse 7). He said that they had committed “a GREAT SIN” (verse 21).

God caused 3,000 men to DIE that day! (verse 28). Furthermore, God imposed a PLAGUE on the people! “So the LORD **plagued** the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made” (verse 35).

Plainly, God **forbids** us, from using **pagan** religious practices... practices **LIKE the celebration of Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>**... and applying them TO the worship of the true God!

Yes, God’s Word shows that if we try to worship Him **in a different way** than what the Bible instructs us to, then we are worshipping God **in vain**! “**In VAIN** they do **worship** me, teaching for doctrines the commandments **of men**,” said Jesus Christ (Matt. 15:9, *KJV*).

Christmas observance is a “**TRADITION of men**.” “And he [Christ] said unto them, ‘Full well ye **REJECT the commandment of God**, that ye may keep **your own TRADITION**’” (Mark 7:9, *KJV*).

Jesus Christ said that “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and **truth**; for the Father is **seeking** such to worship Him” (John 4:23). God does *not* want Christians to **mix** righteousness with unrighteousness! (II Cor. 6: 14-16). “Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do **not** touch what is unclean, and I will receive you” (verse 17).

## Conclusion

What is the *conclusion* of the matter? In deciding whether to observe Christmas, the issue is reduced to a simple question: “Do you care **more** what God Almighty thinks... **or** what other people think?”

<http://www.tomorrowworld.org/booklets/the-holy-days-gods-master-plan>

<http://www.tomorrowworld.org/booklets/is-christmas-christian>