

# Unwrapping Christmas

THE TRUE WITNESS WITH THE KINGDOM NEWS

*When you think of Christmas, many images probably come, to mind; images of carol singers and holly-decked churches where people sing time-honored songs about the birth of Jesus Christ; of warm fireplaces and homes with bright colored lights; of feasting and revelry; of exchanging gifts and greetings; of old saint Nicholas, and lastly of superstitious customs from long ago.*

Christmas began as a pagan celebration of the end of a cycle. The end of an old year and the beginning of a new year. There is more historical fact to show that it emerged as a commemoration for the birthday of the Sun, referring simply to the completion of the Sun's yearly course, and the commencement of a new cycle. From this beginning, every society and nation has contributed to this year-end commemoration.

If you had the time and means to research the history of this holiday, you would find eye-opening evidence linking our modern day Christmas celebration to ancient pagan religious ceremonies. Many of these ceremonies date back to ancient Babylon, Greece, and Rome. IN parable form, Christmas could be better understood as the waters of a mighty river that had its beginnings one thousand miles upstream. It started out as a small stream, high in the mountains. As the waters flowed toward the ocean, many springs, wells, and tributaries adding to the small stream made it large and powerful. Finally hundreds of miles from its

beginning you have an enormous force of water flowing into the ocean or sea.

THE PAGAN ORIGINS OF CHRISTMAS  
FROM EARLIEST RECORDED HISTORY  
200/2000 B.C.

The most ancient pagan god known is named Dumuzi. There is no pagan god to predate 'him.' Dumuzi means "true" or "only" son, and this pagan god was also known as "the shepherd" and "the fisher" in certain ancient Mesopotamian and Babylonian religious writings. In some more recent writings, (c. 2000 B.C.) Dumuzi is known by a more familiar name: Tammuz. This is in fact the same Tammuz that God condemned the old testament Israelites for worshipping. (Ezekiel 8:14) Tammuz was also worshiped during the time of Daniel and his contemporary Nebuchadnezzar. We know this because the king who immediately followed Nebuchadnezzar (Nabonidus (555 – 539 B.C.) initiated the building of a temple to Tammuz in the personage of the Moon god.

Tammuz is fabled to have had a mother. The name of this pagan god's mother in Asyria is called Ishtar. In a religious text dated from the fifth or sixth century B.C. Ishtar is said to have brought the heathen god Tammuz back from the dead in the form of a baby in her arms. There are ancient idols that have been excavated showing a mother god and child god strikingly similar to modern day idols of so called Mary and Jesus.

Proof is now being presented to you of the pagan origins of these idols that so many people willingly bow down to and pray to.

Tammuz in Egypt became the pagan god Osiris who according to Egyptian religion was born on the first of five days that were gambled away by a Moon goddess and were placed between two 360 day years (presumably to make the 365 days of the year that we now know) for the Egyptian counterpart of Ishtar called Isis to bear five children. This places the birth of Tammuz (in his Osiris form) at the approximate time of the disguised pagan festival called Christmas.

Tammuz was also venerated as a god of agriculture and as a sun god. The sun “travels” in a path that is not “even” relative to Earth. That is why there are two times each year that the days and night begin to reverse their shortening and lengthening. From June 22<sup>nd</sup>, the days gradually become shorter and starting from December 22<sup>nd</sup> the days become longer. These two days are called the summer and the winter solstices. Tammuz the sun god was believed to have been reborn at the winter solstice; (when the days started to shorten). The weeping for Tammuz referred to in Ezekiel chapter eight was the observance the pagans held for the dead Tammuz. There is, however, another part of the ancient cult’s beliefs. There was another festival held at the winter solstice. This festival eventually became detached from the summer solstice observance and then over time became the saturnalia of the Romans.

## ROMAN SATURNALIA

By the time Jesus Christ was born on earth, an elaborate system of religious rites and festivity was already in place from the dates we now know as December 17<sup>th</sup> through January 6<sup>th</sup>. A Roman pagan religious feast known as “Saturnalia” was held on December 17<sup>th</sup> through December 24<sup>th</sup>. Because it was a time of wild merry making and domestic celebrations, businesses; schools; and law courts were closed so that the public could enjoy itself to the fullest. On December 25<sup>th</sup>, the birthday of Mithra, the Iranian god of light, was celebrated (also celebrated was the rebirth of Tammuz). Mithra was venerated as a deity of light and purity. He was widely worshiped in the time of the Roman Empire and was thought to be a mighty warrior who guided the sun’s chariot, and held the power of victory in his hands. The day after Saturnalia, December 25<sup>th</sup>, increasingly became devoted to the invincible sun.

It is widely understood that the Christian Roman Emperor Constantine was influential in the institution of a Christian feast for “the Sun of Righteousness.” His feast was established as a rival to the popular pagan festival of the Unconquered Sun celebrated at the winter solstice. The winter is that time of the winter season when the sun has no apparent northward or southward movement. On or about the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December the sun is over the Tropic of Capricorn. This means that the daylight is at its shortest hours of the year. After the week of December 24<sup>th</sup>, the sunlight will once again grow longer each day. The Romans looked on this phenomenon each year as the birthday of the sun.

The sun has for countless centuries intrigued man. First as a source of heat and light and later as a source of idol worship. It was the Almighty God that made the sun, moon, stars, and all the heavens. (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 42:5, 45:18) Pagan worshippers of the sun never looked beyond their natural eyesight to see the One and True God. The True God is He who holds the sun in the sky, and the God that steadies it on its axis. God showed Ezekiel a vision shortly before the fall of Jerusalem: "So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their BACKS toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were WORSHIPPING THE SUN toward the east. And He said to me, 'Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoked Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose.'" (Ezekiel 8:16-17)

The word Christmas is derived from the Old English term "Cristes maesses", or "Christ's Mass." No one has ever been able to establish a day or month of the birth of Jesus Christ. There is not a single month in the year to which the birth of Christ has not been assigned by some writer or other. Christmas by far is the most popular of all festivals among the Christians and many non-Christians. However, the first notice of celebrating the birth of Christ on a particular day was recorded in a Roman almanac by the church of Rome. The year of this recording was 336 A.D. The establishment of Christmas as an

independent festival fitly followed the triumph of the Catholic doctrine of the tri-one godhead at the council of Nicea in 325 A.D.

Into the midst of Pagan festivals and feast of revelry and merry making, the Roman Church chose to introduce her celebration of the nativity. There is no wonder that Christmas contains so many pagan elements. What we find then are many pagan practices concealed beneath a superficial Christianity. After becoming the state religion of Rome, Christianity soon grew intolerant of heathens and attempted to convert them. Under the emperors who passed on to the popes the title of chief priest, or "pontifex maximus," many pagan customs were incorporated in the Roman Church. Since the pagans already celebrated the birthday of the "unconquered or Invincible Sun" it was only natural to meet them half way. Therefore, to keep them happy, the birthday of the "Son of God" was set at the same time of year. We later find many of the duties of other pagan gods were assigned to the "saints" of the Roman Church.

### WHAT TIME OF YEAR WAS JESUS BORN?

No one knows for certain the date of the birth of Jesus Christ. However, there are certain months of the year that can be ruled out as birthday months. The winter season in Israel is very cold, and rainy. (Song of Solomon 2:11) This was hardly a time for shepherds to be abiding in the open fields keeping watch over their flocks. Rather, it was the custom to send flocks out after Passover (April) and to stay until the first rains in October. December, being in the middle

## HOW DOES JESUS REALLY WANT US TO REMEMBER HIM?

of the winter season, was a time of great rains. Ezra chapter ten tells us that in the ninth month and on the twentieth day of the month (December) all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, FOR THE GREAT RAIN (vs. 9). Then in verse 13, Ezra writes: "But there are many people; it is the season for heavy rain, and we are not able to stand outside. Nor is this the work of one or two days..." Also Jesus warns Israel in Matthew 24:20 to pray that your flight from the antichrist be not in the winter.

The idea of December 25<sup>th</sup> as Jesus' birthday was conceived in the mind of the Roman Church centuries after His birth. This fraud was carried out in order to convert pagans to Christianity. The methods of modern day Christmas celebrations are in juxtaposition to ancient Rome's Saturnalia.

The lights, trees, mistletoe, yule log, candles, and even Santa Claus can be easily traced to superstitious customs and worship of idols. The sadness that follows in this writing is that Jesus Christ never told us to look to Saint Nicholas or Santa Claus for gifts or presents, but turn to God to supply our every need. (Matthew 6:8) Every child and adult must come to understand that Old Saint Nick is a fraud. Jesus never told us to exchange gifts in celebration of His birthday, but contrariwise, the wise men from the east gave gifts to Jesus of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:1-11) Jesus never rode a sleigh pulled by reindeer to and from the North Pole, but He ascends and descends by the power of God. (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-10)

The apostle Paul in his writing to the Corinthians states: "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take eat; this is My body which is broken for you; DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

This passage in I Corinthians chapter eleven tells us how Jesus Christ wants His people all over the earth to remember His birth, death, burial and above all, His resurrection!

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