

Should Christians Celebrate Christmas?



By Charles Half

Many people around the world celebrate Christmas. You might think that is strange since many of those people are not even Christians. They even have a Christmas tree every year, because it was the popular thing to do. They have ornaments, mistletoe, holly wreaths, presents, and everything else that goes along with the Christmas celebration.

You see, people celebrate Christmas today, not because of Christ's birthday, but because it is a popular tradition and part of our present-day culture. It's as American as apple pie and hamburgers. But what is the true origin of Christmas? Is it Christian or Or pagan?

Christmas Not A Bible Doctrine

In the first place, Christmas is not a Bible doctrine. If our blessed Lord had wanted us to celebrate His birthday, He would have told us when to celebrate it and how to celebrate it. But Christ never told anyone to celebrate His birthday. Furthermore, we know from the Bible and from church his story that the apostles and the early church never celebrated Christ's birthday.

In fact, there are only two birthday celebrations recorded in the Bible; and each of them is connected with murder. The Bible tells us in Genesis 40:22 that on one of Pharaoh's birthdays he murdered his chief baker while a big celebration was going on. The other birth day celebration recorded was that of Herod, when he had John the Baptist murdered. I personally believe that God purposely records these two birthday celebrations to warn and to teach us-and to show us that the Lord has no pleasure in birthday celebrations or anniversaries.

The Bible is God's complete and final revelation to man, and it tells us everything we need to know for our spiritual lives (see II Timothy 3:16). We don't have to go outside the Bible for anything.

God's Word tells us how we're to worship, how we're to give money for the support of the Lord's work, how to evangelize the lost, how to observe the Lord's Supper, and everything else pertaining to the Christian life. But not once in the Bible does God tell us to celebrate Christmas! We're told to remember the Lord's death, but nowhere are we told to celebrate His birth.

God's people are supposed to be Bible people. We're supposed to live by the teaching of God's holy Word. So the very fact that Christmas is never mentioned in the Bible is sufficient reason for us not to have anything to do with it. But that's not all.

The second reason I don't celebrate Christmas is that Christ was not born on December 25. Notice: *"And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night... And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us"* (Luke 2:7, 8, 15).

Don't miss the point: The shepherds WERE IN THE FIELDS taking care of their flocks on the night Jesus was born. As the shepherds were watching their sheep, the message came to them of the birth of Jesus.

It's a well-known fact that December falls in the middle of the rainy season in Palestine, and the sheep were kept in the fold at that time of the year. The shepherds always corralled their flocks from October to April.

They brought their sheep from the mountainsides and the fields no later than October 15 to protect them from the cold, rainy season that followed that date. So the birth of Christ could not have taken place at the end of December.

Luke 2:1, 3 tells us that at the time of the birth of Jesus it was decreed that ". . . all *the world should be taxed... And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.*" This couldn't have taken place in the winter. Caesar Augustus, the ruler at Rome, would certainly not call for such a taxing in the depth of winter. Travel at this time of the year is extremely difficult; hence, it would be virtually impossible for everyone to comply with the decree if it had been given then. The Lord himself testified to the rigors of traveling in winter, for He told the people to pray that their flight at the end of this age would not be in winter (see Matthew 24:20).

No one knows the exact day when Jesus was born, but in all probability He was born sometime during the first part of October. We can be reasonably sure of this because His earthly ministry

lasted three and a half years, and He was crucified on the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan, which corresponds to our April (see John 19:31; Leviticus 23:5). If we go back three and a half years to the time when Jesus was 30 years old-when He began His public ministry-we come to the month of October. This was probably the month when our blessed Lord was born into the world. However, let's remember that it's not the date of Jesus' birth that's important. The important thing is that He was born and that He died for our sins. We're not worshipping a helpless infant lying in a manger. We're worshipping a risen and exalted Christ who has all power in Heaven and in earth (see Matthew 28:18).

Origin of Christmas

Where do you suppose Christmas originated? Certainly not with God! Christmas started with the sun worshipers during the time of Nimrod, the man who supervised the building of the tower of Babel. And that's another reason why I don't celebrate Christmas.

Thousands of years before Jesus was born, the heathen in every country observed December 25 as the birthday of a god who was called the sun god. Semiramis, the widow of Nimrod, was his mother. She claimed to be the queen of heaven. And she had a son who was supposed to have been born on December 25; his name was Tammuz.

According to all the heathen religions of that time, Tammuz had a miraculous birth; and for centuries his birthday was celebrated with feasts, revelry, and drunken orgies. The heathen celebrated Tammuz's birthday according to the very example he set for them. He was the world's greatest lover of women, strong drink, dirty jokes, and other sensual fun. It is said that he loved everybody and everybody loved him. And it was December 25 that all the pagan religions celebrated the birthday of Tammuz, the sun god.

This is all clearly brought out in Alexander Hislop's great book, *The Two Babylons*. Any reputable encyclopedia will also verify these facts.

Some will say, "We can't help it if we were born into a pagan world. We can't help it if we were reared and steeped in pagan doctrines and customs." Oh, yes we can! Christ said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." There is only one righteous thing that you can do with these pagan holidays, and that is to repudiate them and have no part in them. The virgin birth of Christ is a blessed fact, but the Xmas celebration is a wicked and ungodly thing.

It's plain to see, isn't it, that Christmas is a pagan holiday that came out of pagan Babylon. As born-again believers, let's have nothing to do with it.

Christmas: A Catholic Holiday

Another reason I don't celebrate Christmas is because Christmas is a Catholic holiday. Why should I steal Christmas from the Catholics? They got it from the pagans, and I'm happy to let them keep it.

Notice what Encyclopedia Americana has to say about Christmas and Catholicism:

"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 a remarkable person rather than their birth. A feast was established in memory of the Saviour in the FOURTH CENTURY. In the Fifth Century the Western Church (Roman Catholic) ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol. The holly, the mistletoe, the yule log, and the wassail bowl are of pre-Christian times. The Christmas tree has been traced back to the Romans. It went from Germany to Great Britain."

Encyclopedia Britannica has this to say about Christmas:

"Christmas (i.e., the Mass of Christ) was not among the earliest festivals of the church."

Just take the word Christmas itself and break it down. What does it mean? *The mass of Christ*. The mass is a prayer that's read or sung for the soul of a dead person. Born-again Christians don't have anything to do with masses, and yet multitudes of professing Christians will say "Merry Christmas," never realizing that when they do this they are actually mixing the precious and holy name of Christ with a demon holiday. The Lord tells us in unmistakable language that we are not to mix His name with any pagan holiday or with a pagan god. The Lord says in Ezekiel 20:39,

".....pollute ye my holy name no more....."

Christmas (let me repeat it) is a Roman Catholic holiday. We got it from the Catholics, and they got it from the pagans. It was on December 25 that the pagans of the Roman Empire celebrated the birthday of their sun god. After Constantine, the Roman emperor, won the battle of the Milvian Bridge, he forced all the pagans of his empire to be baptized into the Christian church. Thus, baptized pagans far outnumbered the true Christians.

Since the church worshiped the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, when December 25 rolled around and the pagans wanted to worship Tammuz, their sun god, Constantine knew that he would have to do something. So he had the church combine the worship of Tammuz with the birthday of Christ, and a special mass was declared to keep everyone happy. Thus, pagan worship was brought into the Christian church and called "Christ-mass. And yes, every time we say "Merry Christmas," we're actually mixing the precious and holy name of Christ with paganism!

The World and Christmas

That brings me to the next reason why I don't celebrate Christmas. Christmas is of the world, and we're commanded,

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15).

The very fact that the world which hates Christ and His blood atonement for sin makes more fuss about Christmas than any other holiday proves to me that Christmas is not of God. If December 25 were truly the birthday of the blessed Son of God, the world would have nothing to do with it!

And one doesn't have to be a Christian to celebrate Christmas. Even in non-Christian countries like Japan, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Russia the people celebrate Christmas.

People throughout the world, who for the most part have no awareness of the Bible or Jesus Christ, eat up the Christmas celebration. To take Christmas from the world would be harder than taking candy from a child.

In Luke 16:15, Christ made this remarkable statement: *"....that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."* Our Lord said that anything which men highly esteem is an abomination before God. Don't people esteem Christmas more highly than almost anything else? Doesn't that tell us that Christmas is not of God?

Let's face it, the world is married to the idol of Christmas. In fact, more people get drunk at Christmas than at any other time of the year. There are more big parties and more selfish spending than at any other season. Doesn't that prove that it's not of God?

The world loves Christmas, but it hates Christ.

Unscriptural Traditions

Another reason why I don't celebrate Christmas is that it's filled with unscriptural traditions. The exchanging of gifts, the Christmas tree, the singing of carols, and Santa Claus are all of pagan origin. These all crept into the church during or after the Fourth Century.

There are many unscriptural traditions that have cluttered up the story of the birth of our wonderful Saviour. For instance, many people believe that the wise men of the East and the shepherds were together in Bethlehem at the time our Lord was born. But nothing could be further from the truth. The shepherds came to Bethlehem to see Jesus at His birth. The wise men came to Nazareth to see Jesus when He was almost two years old (see Matthew 2:16).

Furthermore, the Bible says nothing about three wise men, nor does it say that they were kings. The fact is the Bible does not give their number at all, but merely states that they were wise men.

Perhaps the worst part of the Christmas celebration is that thousands of parents will teach their children the falsehood of Santa Claus. Children are taught that Santa Claus makes his home at the North Pole, and once each year he fills his sled with toys for the boys and girls who have been good throughout the year. If they are good, he rewards them by bringing them toys on Christmas Eve; and if they are bad, he passes them by.

Is it any wonder that many times when children grow up and learn the truth, they question whether Christ is also a myth?

The Bible says in Colossians 3:9, "*Lie not one to another*"

And we are commanded in Ephesians 4:25 to "put away" lying and to "...speak *every man truth with his neigh...*"

Now I know that some of you loving mothers are saying, "Don't you think we should give the children a good time? They don't understand all the paganism behind Christmas."

But let me ask you a question, mother. Is it necessary to drag the holy name of our blessed Lord down to the low level of fleshly gratification and drunkenness to show the kiddies a good time? A thousand times, no! Let's teach our children the truth about Christmas. God's Word says that we should bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (see Ephesians 6:4). Why should we dishonor the name of Christ in such a manner under the pretense of showing the children a good time? There are 364 more days in the year during which we can give gifts to our children.

Merrymaking And Exchanging Gifts

Without question, the most important part of Christmas for most people is buying and exchanging gifts. I don't celebrate Christmas because exchanging gifts has nothing to do with Christ's birthday. Perhaps some of you are asking, "Didn't the wise men give gifts to Jesus?" They certainly did, but they didn't give them to one another. And their gifts were not birthday gifts, because the wise men did not come to visit Jesus until He was nearly two years old (see Matthew 2:16). The shepherds came to visit Jesus at His birth, but the wise men came to see Him nearly two years later.

Did you know that giving gifts to a king was a common custom in the Far East? That's the reason why the wise men brought gifts to Jesus-because He was born to be King of the Jews. But they were not birthday gifts. So there is no connection between Christmas and the birthday of Christ, in this respect.

One final word before leaving the matter of exchanging gifts. Let me point out that even this is a part of Satan's antichrist program. The greatest Christmas celebration yet to come will be the awful days of the tribulation. During the antichrist's reign, all hell will be let loose. The two witnesses whom God shall send to the people of the earth will be killed when God is finished with them.

Could you guess who will kill them? The antichrist will put them to death. Listen to God's Word. "*And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them*" (Rev. 11:7).

It is under the antichrist's reign that the last and greatest Christmas celebration shall take place. As a result of the death of these prophets of God, the world will be so delighted and thrilled that they

will exchange gifts with one another. Here is what the Bible says: *"And they Of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth"* (Rev. 11:9, 10).

What further proof do we need that the Christmas celebration is not of God? Truly the Lord's people should not celebrate Christmas. It is anti-God, anti-Christ, satanic, and unscriptural. The call of God is, ". . . come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . and touch not the unclean thing; . . ." (II Cor. 6:17). God's command to all His people is, ".... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them...." (Eph. 5:11).

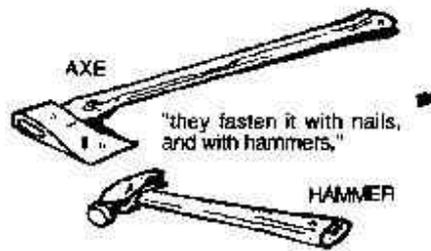
Christmas Condemned By the Puritans

The pagan history of Christmas has been well-known throughout history. In fact, at one time the celebration of this pagan custom was forbidden by law in England. In 1644, Parliament declared Christmas to be unlawful; and, consequently, it was abolished. The English Puritans looked upon the celebration of Christmas as the work of Satan.

At one time in early American history, the observance of Christmas was illegal. A law was adopted in the general court of Massachusetts about 1650 which required that those who celebrated Christmas were to be punished. The statute read, "Whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas, or in any other way ... shall be subject to a fine of 5 shillings." The law's preamble explained its purpose was "for preventing disorders ... (by) observing such festivals as were superstitiously kept in other countries to the great dishonor of God and the offense of others." After the Mayflower pilgrims landed in 1620, the first December 25th was spent in labor and cutting down trees "in order to avoid any frivolity on the day sometimes called Christmas." Opposition to the observance of Christmas continued just past the second half of the Nineteenth Century. An article in the December 26, 1885 edition of *The New York Daily Times* stated, "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."



"for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe."



The Puritans knew the truth about Christmas and regarded it as a pagan holiday. It would be good if all believers followed their example.

What About The Christmas Tree?

Another reason why I don't observe Christmas is because the Christmas tree is condemned by the Bible.

Notice:



"they deck it with silver and with gold"

"... Learn not the way of the heathen, . . . 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... But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities"

(Jer. 10:2-4, 8).

Here you have a perfect description of the Christmas tree, called by God, "the way of the heathen." We are commanded not to learn that way or follow it! The Christmas tree is also viewed in this

passage as idolatry. The fifth verse says that these trees cannot speak cannot walk-must be carried. Some people misread this to make it say that there is no harm in having a Christmas tree, but that is not what it says at all. Rather, the Prophet Jeremiah tells us that it is vanity and foolishness, and says,

"...Learn not the way of the heathen..... "

Some people will stay up all night to work on an old dead tree. They'll trim it all up and stand off a little ways and admire their handiwork. Then many of them will sit up all night and look at that old Christmas tree.

I hope some of you preachers will get up in the middle of the night and throw that old tree out of your house and out of your church, right at Satan's head. I realize that some of you will just gnash your teeth and call me "narrow-minded." Well, you can call me anything you want, but I'm just giving you the Word of God.

Did you know that the green tree is mentioned 14 times in the Bible, and in every instance it is linked with idolatry? There isn't one place in the Bible where God commends the use of the "green tree" in connection with true worship.

Perhaps you're wondering why people have a Christmas tree during the Christmas celebration. You can search the Bible through and through, but you won't find a reason for it there. The first decorating of an evergreen tree began with the heathen Greeks and their worship of their god Adonia, who allegedly was brought back to life by the serpent Aessulapius after having been slain. And each Christmas, multitudes of people will secure an evergreen tree and dress it up with bright glitter, lights, and tinsel, not realizing that they are following in the tradition of a pagan festival in honor of a false god!

No doubt there are many sincere Christians who think that they are honoring Christ by having their Christmas tree when, in reality, they are dishonoring Him by having anything to do with a heathen festival that God hates.

As you read these lines, perhaps you say, "I have my Christmas tree but I don't worship it, and consequently, I see nothing wrong with it." Let me remind you, however, that you don't determine what is right and what is wrong. God determines what's right and wrong. If the Christmas tree is not an idol to you, why are you so reluctant to give it up? What are you doing down on your knees when you place your gifts under it?

Observing Days Forbidden

Finally, I don't celebrate Christmas because God's Word forbids the observance of any holy days in this dispensation of grace. **Listen:**

"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. 4:10, 11).

I want to reemphasize: I don't know of a single thing connected with Christmas that is biblical. You have to go outside of the Bible to learn of the Christmas tree, Santa Claus, the holly wreath, mistletoe, the yule log, and all the other things that go along with the Christmas celebration. Let's be honest before God and admit that this is a pagan holiday and a trick of the devil.

Anyone with any sense at all ought to be able to see that Christmas is only good for one thing-to make money for department stores and business merchants. Christmas is not in the Bible.

Observance of days is a sign of weakness, childishness, and lack of development. There are no special holy days for members of the body of Christ. The Lord wants us to worship Him the same 365 days a year.

We're not worshiping a dead Christ or a helpless infant lying in a manger, but we're worshiping a real and living Christ who lives all year round.

Sometimes well-meaning people will make the statement, "Let's put Christ back into Christmas." This sounds very good on the surface-but beloved, how can you put Christ back into something when He was never there?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the famous English preacher of the last century, said, "We have no superstitious regard for times and seasons. Certainly we do not believe in the present ecclesiastical arrangement called Christmas ... we find no scriptural word whatever for observing any day as the birthday of the Saviour; and consequently, its observance is a superstition, because (it's) not of divine authority ... probably the fact is that the 'holy days' (were) arranged to fit in with the heathen festivals ... how absurd to think we could do it in the spirit of the world, with a Jack Frost clown, a deceptive worldly Santa Claus, and a mixed program of sacred truth with fun, deception, and fiction." (Quoted from *Metropolitan Pulpit Series*, Pilgrim Publications: Pasadena, Texas, 1871, p. 1026).

While the world celebrates Christmas with its gift swapping and wild parties, what should be our attitude? God's Word makes it plain that we should have nothing to do with this pagan holiday. Let's not associate the birth of the holy Son of God with the pagan traditions of men. Let us heed God's command, "... *be ye separate, saith the Lord....*" (II Cor. 6:17).

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Easter
or
Passover
Which Day Should
Christians Observe?

Every spring, millions of professing Christians celebrate Easter, believing that this holiday honors the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But shocking as it may sound, this holiday has nothing to do with the resurrection of our Savior! Easter is actually the veneration of an ancient pagan fertility goddess whose worship God condemns!

The truth is, the pagan Easter celebration was instituted as a substitute for His Passover, a festival which God commanded to be observed throughout all generations, and which Jesus, the Apostles and the New Testament Church all kept!

* * *

Many professing Christians consider Easter to be one of the most important and meaningful celebrations of the year. In spring, literally millions assemble to attend sunrise services. These celebrants rejoice with a profound sense of liberation as the new life of spring, and thoughts of Christ's resurrection assure them of eternal life.

Easter also involves family members in a variety of creative projects. In preparation, decorations are made, eggs cooked and dyed, baskets assembled, and parties are planned. The day is filled with religious services, games for the children, family gatherings, and specially prepared Easter dinners.

During this season, people are enticed by the soft "newborn" colors of Easter. The cheerful pastel colors such as lavender, pink, blue, yellow, and green, serve to lift holiday spirits. The children are tantalized by thoughts of baskets lined with brightly colored cellophane and filled with beautiful, jewel like eggs, chocolate bunnies, and marshmallow duckies. The youngsters run to an fro in delight as they hunt dyed eggs.

Shocking as it may sound, as alluring, and family oriented as the Easter holiday appears, God absolutely condemns it! This unbiblical spring celebration literally glorifies pagan sex and fertility rites, and is a blatant counterfeit of God's scripturally commanded Passover.

Prove All Things

Have you ever researched Easter in a dictionary or encyclopedia? Did you ever wonder why there is an almost whimsical nature reflected in this holiday that is so closely connected to Christ's brutal sacrifice, death, and resurrection? What does the word Easter mean, and what is the origin of this holiday? Did God ever command Lent, Good Friday,

or Easter to be observed? What do the various Easter symbols represent, and how do they coincide with scripture?

More important, what Holy Days did Jesus, His disciples, and the first century Christians actually keep? Why don't the modern churches celebrate these Holy Days that God commanded in the Bible? Was the Passover abolished because Christ died for us, or was it commanded to be observed as a memorial of His death? Why did the Roman church substitute Easter for God's appointed Holy Day, and did God approve of this change? What do the symbols of Passover mean, and is it possible that you should observe the Biblical New Testament Passover instead of Easter?

The Bible and secular history both record that the early Christian Church did not celebrate Easter. More than twenty years after Christ's resurrection, the Apostle Paul wrote to both Jewish and Gentile converts urging them to properly keep God's Passover (I Corinthians 5:7). Further, true believers continued to keep the Passover for another 270 hundred years until an unconverted Roman emperor ordered believers to keep Easter or suffer the loss of their property.

Are you willing to prayerfully examine the facts with an open mind? God instructs believers to search the scriptures and prove all things (Acts 17:11; I Thessalonians 5:21). Can you put past personal prejudice aside and accept the challenge to search out the truth, proving it for yourself? Should you keep Easter or the Christian Passover?

Easter Is Not Christian

The original Church founded by Jesus Christ did not celebrate Easter! The early Christians understood that Easter was a pagan observance, and as such, condemned by God. Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia reveals the true origin of this holiday: The name Easter comes from the ancient Anglo Saxon goddess of spring, Eostre or Ostara, in whose honor an annual spring festival was held. Some of our Easter customs have come from this and other pre-Christian spring festivals. (Vol 4 p. 140)

The goddess Eostre, or Ostara, is the Anglo Saxon equivalent of the Babylonian Ishtar and the Phoenician Astarte. The Wiccan website, Temple of the Dark Moon explains: This festival is named after the Anglo-Saxon Goddess Eostre, also known in Old German as Ostara. Little is known about this Goddess except that Her festival was celebrated at the Spring Equinox, and became Easter. She was a Goddess of Fertility and was connected with hares and eggs. She may have been a Goddess of the Dawn. She may also be connected with the Greek Eos and the Roman Aurora, both Dawn Goddesses, and with the Babylonian Ishtar and Phoenician Astarte, both who are Love Goddesses.

The ceremony and symbols of Easter existed centuries before Jesus ever walked this earth. Further, we are told that the celebration comes from the worship of a pagan goddess, a false god!

In addition, this goddess has a less than pure reputation. Her worship featured fertility rites, and immoral sexual acts permeated her celebrations! Collier's Encyclopedia explains:

The Ishtar festivals were symbolical of Ishtar as the goddess of love or generation. As the daughter of sin, the moon god, she was the Mother Goddess who presided over child

birth; and women, in her honor, sacrificed their virginity on the feast day or became temple prostitutes, their earnings being a source of revenue for the temple priests. (Vol 9, p. 622)

It is no wonder the symbolism pervading the celebration of Easter is oriented toward sex and reproduction. Consider the symbolism of the lily. Easter celebrants go to church services and delight in the great numbers of lilies decorating their altar, never realizing that this flower was widely regarded from ancient times as a symbol of sex and reproduction. Unger's Bible Dictionary explains:

Characteristically Canaanite, the lily symbolizes grace and sex appeal and the serpent fecundity.

The cute and cuddly Easter bunnies are also culpable. As a religious symbol, these animals are declared unclean in the Bible. They have no place in the worship of the true God (Leviticus 11:6). The Catholic Encyclopedia admits the following about the egg laying Easter bunny:

The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a great many pagan customs, celebrating the return of spring gravitated to Easter. ...The Easter rabbit lays the eggs, for which reason they are hidden in a nest or in the garden. The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility. (p.227)

The egg also played a preeminent role in the pagan religions from ancient times. In more primitive cultures It was believed that the very goddess from whom we get our modern Easter celebrations came from a giant egg. In his book, Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop records a most amazing account:

From Egypt these sacred eggs can be distinctly traced to the banks of the Euphrates. The classic poets are full of the fable of the mystic egg of the Babylonians; and thus its tale is told by Hyginus, the Egyptian, the learned keeper of the Palatine Library at Rome, in the time of Augustus, who was skilled in all the wisdom of his native country: 'An egg of wondrous size is said to have fallen from heaven into the river Euphrates. The fishes rolled it to the bank, where the doves having settled upon it, hatched it, and out came Venus, who after wards was called the Syrian Goddess. (p. 109)

In many parts of the world, for centuries, hot cross buns have also been an Easter staple. The buns are baked with the symbol of a cross on them, and today many believe the mark represents the cross of Christ. This is also a fraud. Buns such as these were used in worship centuries before Christ. They were offerings to the queen of heaven, Ishtar, or Ashtoreth, goddess of spring and fertility. The cross actually originated as a "T", representing Tammuz, the brother of Ishtar, not Jesus Christ! Notice what God tells His prophet Jeremiah:

Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make **cakes to the queen of heaven**, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods. (Jeremiah 17:17-18).

The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible explains how these cakes were used in worship:

The object of worship, particularly by women, in Judah in the time of Jeremiah: Cakes

were offered to her with libations. The reference (is) to Ishtar, the goddess of love and fertility, who was identified with the Venus Star and is actually entitled 'Mistress of Heaven' (Vol. 3 p. 975)

Easter comes from ancient worship of the goddess, Ishtar, or Ashtoreth. For this reason the early Church leaders rejected such celebrations. They understood that the Bible condemned these false goddesses and their vile practices.

Easter Condemned

The first time the Bible shows God's people coming in contact with these pagan deities was as slaves in Egypt. There they were immersed in the worship of the sun, fertility rites, and animal gods of that land. The modern practice of taking a sun shaped wafer at communion actually came from this source. In ancient Egypt, celebrants would kneel before the priest and receive the round sun shaped wafer intended to fill the worshiper with the renewing strength of the sun.

When God freed the Israelites from Egypt, He not only delivered them from slavery, he also delivered them from the pagan worship of these false gods.

The Passover is so important to God that He used it to punctuate history. It was the final great miracle that God used to set Israel free from bondage (Exodus 12). So vital is this observance that God commanded individuals who were either too ill to observe it, or those who were traveling out of the country, to keep the Passover the following month (Numbers 9:9). Further, the Passover was commanded to be observed forever, throughout every generation. Notice God's words:

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. (Exodus 12:14)

Designed to be kept in perpetuity, the observance of the Passover, along with God's other Sabbath's actually picture our willingness to obey God. They are the mark of a true Christian (Deuteronomy 6:1-6; Exodus 31:13).

Passover is the antitheses of the mark of the Beast. It is God's sign, or mark, worn in the forehead and hand. The forehead symbolizes what people think about, and the hand, what they do with their strength. Therefore God explains the importance of this observance, stating:

(the Passover observance) shall be for a sign (mark) unto thee upon **thine hand**, and for a memorial **between thine eyes**, that the LORD'S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. (Exodus 13:9)

After revealing the Passover to Israel, God gave them His Law and Holy Days. Israel was then commanded to invade the Promised Land and stamp out every last vestige of the people's pagan practices, including Easter.

Before the children of Israel entered their new land, God took care to forewarn them. They were absolutely not to adopt the religious practices of the inhabitants which they were commanded to dispossess! The people of the land worshiped in many perverse ways, including their particular version of the Ishtar fertility rites. Moses recorded God's warning to them then and us today. He wrote:

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: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods.
(Deuteronomy 12:30-31)

Despite God's warning not to worship Him the way the pagans worshiped their gods, Israel lost sight of the Passover, and began to worship the pagan gods and goddesses of the local people. As punishment for this sin, God took ten of the twelve tribes away from Solomon's son, Jeroboam, splitting the kingdom in two. The chronicler writes: Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:... Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians. (I Kings 11:31-35)

Watson's Biblical and Archeological Dictionary explains more about Ashtoreth. They write:

Ashtoreth, or Astarte, (was) a goddess of the Zidonians. She was also called the queen of heaven; ...Solomon, seduced by his foreign wives, introduced the worship of Ashtoreth into Israel

Unger's Encyclopedia spells out the identity of this goddess: Ashtoreth, Astarte, a Canaanite goddess. The Babylonian **Ishtar**, the goddess of sensual love, maternity and fertility. Licentious worship was conducted in honor of her. (p. 412)

Ashtoreth is the goddess of Easter. God severely punished His people for worshiping her then, and He absolutely does not accept such worship today.

After the tribes split apart, Israel continued her downward slide into idolatry. God revealed to Ezekiel how far His people had sunk into this sin. The prophet, records God's words for us, writing:

Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which [was] toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (Ezekiel 8:13-14)

Tammuz was the brother of Ishtar, goddess of spring and fertility. The Israelites wept during his supposed absence in winter hoping their tears would bring back the sun and abundant crops. As foolish as this was, God reveals what He considered even worse.

Ezekiel records the celebration of the return of Tammuz with his sister Ishtar in the spring. The prophet records God to say:

Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east. (Ezekiel 8:15-16)

God condemned those who turned their backs to Him, worshiping the sun in a morning Ishtar sunrise service. The Almighty describes this practice as "greater abominations." He condemns it! When professing Christians assemble themselves on the ancient festival dedicated to the same goddess, and they face the sun as it rises,

worshiping their god, does the Eternal judge this to be any less evil?

The ancient Israelites had lost the knowledge of the proper way to worship the true God. They had abandoned God's Passover. In time they came to believe they were honoring God with their pagan celebrations and symbols. This is exactly what many professing Christians unwittingly do today.

God's Passover Lost And Found

Over time, Israel let the Passover slip into disuse. They adopted the pagan practices of sun worship again, going so far as to offer their children in the fire. Adopting the superstitious belief that fire came from the sun, they sacrificed their children in the fire believing their offering would purify the family.

Finally, God sent the ten-tribe House of Israel into captivity for their abominations. Their more obedient Jewish brothers in the south were spared for another hundred or so years, but in time they too fell prey to these seemingly seductive pagan practices. The Passover was again lost.

In time, king Hezekiah was born. This great man restored the worship of the true God. As a part of his reform movement, he commanded Judah to once again keep God's sacred Passover. The Chronicler writes:

Hezekiah began to reign *when he was* five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy *place...* And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the LORD God of Israel. (II Chronicles 29:1-5, 30:1)

Hezekiah instituted many reforms, but after his death God's people again yielded to pagan influence. The Jews slipped back into idolatrous worship, losing sight of God's Holy Days once again.

After this, many decades passed before a priest chanced upon God's Word, and gave a copy to the new leader, king Josiah. The king studied God's law and was moved to deep repentance. His immediate response was to restore the Passover! The law was found too late to keep the first observance, and according to the commandment, Judah kept the Passover in the second month. As it is written:

The king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. ...And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to

the planets, and to all the host of heaven.... And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. ... And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the Passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant. (II Kings 23:3, 5, 11, 22)

Whenever God's people returned to true worship, they observed the Passover, rejoicing in the truth they had found. But the pattern of apostasy continued and eventually the Jews lost sight of God's law again, falling away a final time. God then took them captive as He did their brethren earlier.

After seventy years, the Jewish people were finally released from their captivity in Babylon. Led by Ezra and Nehemiah, they returned to their land where they once again revived the observance of the Passover. There the people of Judah awaited the coming of their Messiah.

Christ Kept The Passover

The patriarch Isaac prophesied that the Messiah would come out of Judah (Genesis 49:10). Jesus could have been born no other place in the world than the tiny territory of Judea under Roman rule. Had He been born in a Gentile nation, or he would have been raised in a culture that observed the ancient Ishtar rites.

Christ had to be born and live in an environment where He could keep the Passover. If Jesus had not kept the Passover, He would have sinned, and we would have no Savior. Therefore, Jesus was born in Judea where God knew that the Passover would be respected and observed. There Jesus kept the Passover every year as He grew to adulthood. Luke records:

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. (Luke 2:41)

Christ always kept the Passover, and He taught His disciples to keep it also. In fact, the last meal Jesus ate was on the Passover. Jesus told His disciples to prepare for this annual observance that final evening. Luke's records:

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. (Luke 22:7-8)

When all was ready that night, Jesus observed God's Passover with His apostles. Luke records that:

When the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. (Luke 22:14)

This was no ordinary supper. The verse states "when the hour had come." This was a specific time period when God had commanded the Passover to begin, after sunset on the 14th of Nisan (Leviticus 23:5). Christ's sacrifice began at this hour with the betrayal of a friend, it continued with an illegal trial, a terrible beating, and it concluded with His crucifixion that afternoon, the exact time the Passover lambs were slain.

The Apostle Paul Kept The Passover

Christ taught His apostles how they were to keep the Passover, but the apostle Paul

was not among the twelve at the last Paschal meal. He was called later, an apostle of equal rank with the twelve, but called to minister to the Gentile Churches. He was also taught personally by Christ for three years in the Desert of Arabia (Galatians 1:17).

While in this wilderness environment, Christ taught Paul to keep the Passover the same way He taught the other twelve. In turn, Paul then taught the Gentile Churches what he was given. They were to faithfully keep the Christian Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

While in Ephesus, Paul wrote to the Gentile Church in Corinth about 55 A.D. He sent them a letter during the Days of Unleavened Bread in which he wrote:

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (I Corinthians 5:7-8)

In these verses Paul was not addressing whether the Gentile Church should keep this Feast. Paul was teaching them the WAY they were to keep the celebration. The fact that they were to keep the Holy Days was a foregone conclusion.

Later in his first letter to Corinth, Paul explained more about how to properly keep God's Passover. The Corinthian Church had been confronted with a number of heresies, and Paul corrected them regarding the proper relationship of men and women. He then discussed the importance of hair length, and finally explained that the Christian Passover was not to be celebrated by eating a meal. Paul wrote:

When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. (I Corinthians 11:20)

Some were hungry, others were eating large meals, and a few were actually drinking too much. Paul reminded the Gentile Christians that he was teaching them what Christ had taught him as he records the following instructions:

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread. (I Corinthians 11:23)

Notice first that the Passover service was not a weekly Sunday morning observance as some presume to celebrate today. Instead, it was a night service Paul speaks of. It was the night that Christ was betrayed. They were eating a supper, and that night was the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month. It was God's Holy Passover.

That evening Christ changed the symbols from eating a lamb to the eating of bread and drinking a small amount of wine. Therefore, Paul taught that Jesus took bread, and: When he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: **this do** in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: **this do** ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. (I Corinthians 11:24-25).

Paul reminded Christians that Christ said "this do" twice that night. Therefore, true Christians are to do THIS and NOT something else! It is a command from Christ, and we must not do it any time we wish. Christ observed the Passover, Paul kept the Passover, and we are to observe the Passover. Christ kept it as God commanded, and Paul taught

the Gentiles to practice this observance once a year.

The Church Continued to Keep the Passover

God's Church has always celebrated the Passover observance as Jesus directed. After Christ was crucified and resurrected, the entire Church continued this practice. In fact, the Passover and the corresponding Days of Unleavened Bread were always an intrinsic part of the early Christian's every day thoughts and lives.

Notice how the Holy Spirit inspired the author of the book of Acts to record the time of year in scripture by referring to these days. He wrote:

And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the **days of unleavened bread**.) Acts 12: 3

Luke, himself a Gentile, would not record time in terms of the Passover unless this day was paramount in both Christian thinking and practice. Illustrating this, the next verse there is another reference to Passover. The translators of the King James version of the Bible mistranslated this however. They put the word "Easter" into the text where it did not belong. The verse reads:

When he had apprehended him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after **Easter** to bring him forth to the people. (Acts 12:4)

The Jewish people never kept Easter. Further, this holiday was never an official part of the Church until corruption entered after 300 A.D. Consequently, the word "Easter" would never be a part of Luke's vocabulary, and it has no legitimate place in this verse. The original inspired Greek is "pasha," and it should have been translated "Passover." Many margins today show the correct wording, and most modern language translations render the word as "Passover." The New English Bible conveys the meaning of the word as follows:

. . . meaning to produce him in public after the **Passover**. (Acts 12:4)

Paul and his assistants kept the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. Notice how Luke refers to Paul's travels:

We sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread. (Acts 20:6)

The early Church kept the Passover, and all scholars acknowledge this truth.

Illustrating this, the Encyclopedia Britannica 11th edition states:

There is no indication of the observance of the Easter festival in the New Testament, or in the writings of the apostolic Fathers. The first Christians continued to observe the Jewish festivals, though in a new spirit, as commemorations of events which those festivals had foreshadowed. Thus the Passover, with a new conception added to it, of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb and the first fruits from the dead, continued to be observed. (P.828)

Historians realize that the early Church faithfully kept the Passover for three centuries. The original teachings of Christ and the apostles were eventually lost and along with it God's sacred Passover. It was much like the apostasy of ancient Israel.

How Did Easter Replace the Passover?

During the first three centuries after Christ began His Church, the observance of God's

Passover slowly dwindled until it was all but extinguished. In time, God's feast was eventually replaced by a form of worship that had long antedated it. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Explains:

The development of the (modern) church calendar was a remarkably slow process in Christianity, and equally striking is the fact that so little of the Jewish year originally found a place in Christians celebrations. Where we should have expected a Christian transformation of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succoth, Channukah, Purim, etc, we find only the retention of the paschal festival (in the keeping of Easter). This is due to the fact the church year was largely the creation of the Gentile church, and the background of such notable days as Christmas, (and) Epiphany, etc is pagan, not Jewish.

Understanding how these Gentile holidays came to replace the original Church celebrations is of great value in determining how we should worship God today. The change from Passover to Easter did not occur from a command of God. It did not evolve over time based on a Biblical principle or scripture. It did not come from a Christian Church leader. Instead, this radical change in Christian worship followed the same pattern of apostasy set by ancient Israel. Many decades after Christ built the Church, new young leaders looked upon the old ways as out-dated, and "Jewish." Desiring to appeal to the masses, they took it upon themselves to modify the church in order to bring it into their modern age and culture. The Grolier's Encyclopedia explains:

The church Fathers turned this heathen holiday (Easter) into the Christian celebration of the resurrection. (Vol 17, 1966).

The Last Two Million Years by the Reader's Digest Association describes this process. The editors write:

By a stroke of tactical genius the Church, while intolerant of pagan beliefs, was able to harness the powerful emotions generated by pagan worship. Often, churches were sited where temples had stood before, and many heathen festivals were added to the Christian Calendar. Easter, for instance, a time of sacrifice and rebirth in the Christian year, takes its name from the Norse goddess Eostre, in whose honour rites were held every spring. She in turn was simply a northern version of the Phoenician earth-mother Astarte, goddess of fertility. Easter eggs continue an age old tradition in which the egg is a symbol of birth; and cakes which were eaten to mark the festivals of Astarte and Eostre were the direct ancestors of our hot-cross buns. (1981 p. 215)

The church underwent a metamorphosis as heathen practices and festivals were added. Jesse Hurlbut describes this change in the first century in his book, *The Story of the Christian Church*. He writes:

We name the last generation of the first century, from 68 to 100 A.D., 'The Age of Shadows,' partly because the gloom of the persecution was over the church; but more especially because of all periods in the history, it is the one about which we know the least....For fifty years after St. Paul's life a curtain hangs over the Church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church fathers we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul. (P. 41)

After 100 A.D. the church was "very different." The church was completely

transformed. It was no longer the Church founded on the apostles and prophets, with Jesus as the chief corner stone! What happened? How did the changes come about?

When church historians discuss this period, they claim to have no records of this time, but they ignore the Bible as a historical source. The Bible tells us clearly what was occurring during this first century.

During the time between Christ's resurrection and the apostle John's death, false ministers crept into positions of influence and power in the church. God's apostles fought valiantly to keep the true doctrines alive, but as early as 50-51A.D., a false system was already well established. Paul writes:

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: (I Thessalonians 2:7)

By 53 A.D. a false teaching regarding the gospel was well established, and doing its insidious work. Paul writes:

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, Which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 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 6:1)

Within two years, by 55 A.D., false ministers were readily being accepted in the church. The apostle Paul writes to the church at Corinth, stating:

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. (II Corinthians 11:4)

Paul continued to explain the destructive work of false teachers. They appeared to be true ministers on the outside, but taught wrong doctrine to unsuspecting believers. Paul unequivocally states:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness. (II Corinthians 11:13-14)

By 68 A.D. Peter was forced to write a similar testimony. He states that false ministers infiltrated the church.

There were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways. (II Peter 2:1)

By 69 A.D., Peter, Paul, and many other Church leaders had been martyred. This created a power vacuum into which ambitious and immoral men rushed to fill the void. The last letter in the New Testament, written in the late 80s or 90s A.D., addresses this situation in the Church. Jude writes:

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God

into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 3)

The Bible reveals that as the Church approached the close of the first century, true Christians were finding it difficult to hold on to the original teachings of Christ and His Apostles. A different gospel was being preached, another Jesus was being propagated, and a different spirit was creeping into the church. God's law was being minimized and the Church was being changed slowly from within.

After a Jewish uprising and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., anti-Jewish sentiment spread throughout the Roman empire. To avoid persecution, many of the professing Christians began to avoid any thing that seemed Jewish.

Further, many had come from a pagan background, and had observed Sunday ceremonies in honor of the sun for decades before this time. Consequently, many began to return to their previous Ishtar worship - claiming to celebrate Christ's resurrection on the more familiar Sunday. Contrary to the true meaning of the Biblical phrase, many began to call Sunday "the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10; Isaiah 34:8). This seemed to give Sunday and Easter legitimacy to those who lacked understanding, and many reverted to former ways of worship. The Churches ministered to by the apostle John in Asia remained faithful, however, continuing to observe Passover. The Encyclopedia Britannica Explains: In the second century of our era there were many churches in Asia which kept the fourteenth day (Passover). They were called Quartadecimans, which means the keepers of the fourteenth day of the lunar month. Among the observers of the quartadeciman festival are counted Polycarp ...it is (also) incontrovertibly clear that the quartadeciman Christians celebrated Passover. The name and the date of the festival are the same as in the Israelite calendar... The quartadeciman Christians commemorated only the Death of the Lord Jesus, and not his Resurrection.

Before the apostle John died, prior to 100 A.D., he personally taught a younger disciple named Polycarp. By 159 A.D., the observance of Easter had become the predominate observance in the western churches, and Polycarp traveled to Rome to counteract this pagan practice which had arisen there.

In the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers Irenaeus writes:
But Polycarp also was not only instructed by the apostles, and acquainted with many that had seen Christ, but was also appointed by Apostles in Asia, bishop of the Church of Smyrna...he was also in Rome in the time of Anicetus and caused many to turn away from the heretics to the church of God. While at Rome, Polycarp discussed the matter of Easter with the Roman bishop... Anicetus (could not) persuade Polycarp not to observe it (The Passover) because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, who said that he was bound to follow the customs of the presbyters before him.

Because Rome was the capitol city of the empire, the Roman church began to view itself as the headquarters for all Christianity. Over time, the Roman church also had patterned itself after the Roman civil governmental system.

Having set themselves up to be the leaders, the church in Roman began to demand that all the churches in the empire submit to their rule - even when their decisions seemed

unbiblical.

Finally, approximately 40 years after Polycarp's visit to the capital city, Rome was convinced she now had the power to demand that the churches in the east eliminate the observance of the Passover. The faithful Polycarp had long since been martyred, but he had trained a man named Polycrates to replace him.

This new leader of the churches in the east carried on the fight to hold fast to the original teachings. Consequently, Polycrates also traveled to Rome to contest the new Roman bishop on the issue of Easter or Passover. The Encyclopedia Britannica records the result:

That province (John's Pastorate) was the only portion of Christendom which still adhered to the Jewish usage, and Victor demanded that all should adopt the usage prevailing at Rome. This Polycrates firmly refused to agree to, and urged many weighty reasons to the contrary, whereupon Victor proceeded to excommunicate Polycrates and the Christians who continued the Eastern usage. (P. 828)

Eusebius is considered to be the most authoritative church historian for the first three centuries. In his famous book, Ecclesiastical History, He writes of this famous controversy, stating that:

The Asian bishops who insisted that they must observe the custom transmitted to them long ago were headed by Polycrates.

Eusebius then records the letter written to Rome by this courageous man of God, Polycrates. He writes:

We for our part keep the day (Passover) scrupulously, without addition or subtraction. For in Asia great luminaries sleep who shall rise again on the day of the Lord's advent, when He is coming with glory from heaven and shall search out all His saints - such as Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis ... Again there is John, who leant back on the Lord's breast...he too sleeps in Ephesus. Then in Smyrna there is Polycarp, bishop and martyr; and Thraseas, the bishop and martyr from Eumenia, who also sleeps in Smyrna. Need I mention Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who sleeps in Laodicea, or blessed Papius, or the eunuch, who lived entirely in the Holy Spirit, and who lies in Sardis waiting for the visitation from heaven when he shall rise from the dead? All of these kept the fourteenth day of the month as the beginning of the Paschal festival, in accordance with the Gospel, not deviating in the least but following the rule of the Faith. Last of all I too, Polycrates, the least of you all, act according to the tradition of my family, ...for seven of them were bishops and I am the eighth, and my family have always kept the day when the people put away the leaven. So I, my friends, after spending sixty-five years in the Lord's service and conversing with Christians from all parts of the world, and going carefully through all Holy Scripture, am not scared of threats. Better people than I have said; 'we must obey God rather than men.' (P. 232)

The famous writer, Irenaeus persuaded the Roman bishop Victor not to excommunicate all the churches in the east. Still, the controversy raged on for many years after this. This division over the Easter issue was not solved until it was formally ruled upon by the pagan Roman emperor Constantine in the council of Nicea in 325 A.D.

Centuries before this famous council, the prophet Daniel had foretold of a "little horn"

that was to come. This little horn symbolized a leader who, while limited in power, would think to change times and seasons (Daniel 7:25). Constantine fulfilled this ancient prophecy of Daniel.

It was this man who was responsible for the union of church and state. Constantine realized that because of rampant immorality amongst his subjects, the empire was degenerating. On the other hand, within the empire there was an outlawed movement called Christianity whose adherents were highly moral and who would die before they would abandon their faith. Constantine seized upon the growing Christian faith to unite and strengthen his fracturing kingdom.

The pagan emperor decided to legalize Christianity. He issued the edict of toleration, and throughout the empire believers rejoiced because the new law halted the persecution. But this joy was short lived. Eventually, Constantine outlawed any religion but Rome's version of the faith.

Regarding the issue of Easter or Passover, Constantine's concern was for unity in his empire. The observance of Passover by some of the churches was a threat to the solidarity he needed to cement his failing empire. Consequently, the emperor called the bishops to Nicea to resolve this question and end the division.

At this famous council, the emperor ultimately declared that he would outlaw the Passover, and make Easter the official church holiday. After his monumental decision, he wrote a letter to all the churches in the empire explaining his reasoning on the subject. The following is an excerpt from that letter:

When the question relative to the sacred festival of Easter arose, it was universally thought that it would be **convenient that all should keep the feast on one day**; ...it was declared particularly unworthy for this, the holiest of all festivals, to follow the custom of the Jews, who have soiled their hands with the most fearful of crimes, and whose minds were blinded.... We ought not, therefore, to have anything in common with the Jews,... in unanimously adopting this mode, we desire, dearest brethren, to separate ourselves from the detestable company of the Jews, for it is truly shameful for us to hear them boast that without their direction we could not keep this feast... They do not possess the truth in this Easter question; a Divine Providence wills that this custom should be rectified and regulated in a uniform way; and everyone, I hope, will agree upon this point. As, on the one hand, it is our duty **not to have anything in common with the murderers of our Lord**; and as, on the other, the custom now followed by the Churches of the West, of the South and of the North, and by some of those of the East, is the most acceptable.... You should consider not only that **the number of churches in these provinces make a majority**, but also that it is right we should have nothing in common with the Jews.

In the Nicene council, the decision was made to universally adopt the observance of Easter. This law then became binding for all who professed Christianity. From that time forward, those who were a part of the Roman Empire celebrated Easter, and those who held fast to the teaching of Christ and the apostles went underground to keep their faith.

In this context, it is very important to consider why this decision was made. Was this judgment legitimate? Did it have God's approval? The Emperor's letter outlines three main reasons for his historic decision. They are listed below:

Three Reasons Why Emperor Constantine Changed the Passover to Easter

It was convenient for all to keep the same day.
The majority were already keeping Easter
To have nothing in common with the Jews

When it came to the decision regarding the Passover, there was no mention of what the Holy Scriptures said about God's feast, no reference to what Christ practiced, and no allusion to what the apostle John had taught. There was no regard for what Paul taught the Gentile Churches. There was certainly no reference to the verse that states that the Jews were given the unique role in all human history to preserve the sacred scriptures (Romans 3:1-3).

The church was now made part of the Roman empire. The Roman church leaders influenced the emperor, and he, rather than God, dictated what the church was to believe and practice - all based on political reasons, not on Scripture.

The True Church Continued To Keep Passover

The council of Nicea was a defining moment in the history of all western civilization. The growing church which called itself "Christian" became inextricably joined together with the Roman political system in the prophesied unholy alliance. The "little horn" of Daniel did his work, and the woman (a church in prophetic terminology) began to ride the beast - the Holy Roman empire (Revelation 17:3,7). From this moment in time, the church shifted from being persecuted, to being the persecutor!

The leaders of what would one day be called the Roman Catholic church began to kill, imprison, and confiscate the property of those who did not comply with the new "Christianity." As Christ had prophesied, they began to kill God's people thinking they were doing God a service (John 16:2). But these attacks by the great church on those who kept the Passover did not stop the true believers from worshiping as Christ had taught.

Jesus had promised that His Church would not die out. He said the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). Therefore, the Church continued to exist, and God's people persisted in keeping the Passover. In his book, *The Apostolic Community to Constantine*, Karl Baus traces the history of the faithful from the third century through the fifth:

The quartodeciman minority remained faithful to their previous practice throughout the whole of the 3rd century... (later) the council of Nicea expelled the Quartodecimans from the ecclesiastical community. Thereafter, their numbers continually declined, though even into the fifth century the great church had to deal with them on occasion. (P. 271)

By the 7th century A.D. the Church became visible again. During this time, the mountains in Asia Minor and Armenia hid a people named Paulicians. The church historian Broodbent describes these people in *The Pilgrim Church*:

The persecutions to which they were subjected, and the systematic destruction of their literature, hide from us all but occasional glimpses of their history, though what remains

is sufficient to show that there were in those wide regions of Asia Minor and Armenia... churches of baptized believers, disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, who kept the teachings of the apostles received from Christ and contained in the scriptures, in an unbroken testimony from the first.

Fred Coneybear found and translated the Paulician book, *Key of Truth*. In it, he explained that he had finally understood that these people were the remnant of the original Church:

All who had written about them had been misled... I now realized (he said) that I had stumbled on the monument of a phase of the Christian Church so old and so outworn, that the very memory of it was lost. The Sabbath was perhaps kept. Wednesday and Friday were not kept as fast days, and of the modern Christmas and of the Annunciation, and of the other feasts connected with the life of Jesus prior to his thirtieth year, this phase of the Church knew nothing. The general impression which the study of it leaves on us is that in it we have before us a form of Church not very remote from the primitive Jewish Christianity of Palestine.

The Paulicians remained visible until about the 10th century. Following Christ's example, they kept the Passover for centuries before they finally became lost to history.

By the 13th century, the Church reappeared, this time identified as the Waldenses. The *New Schaff Herzog Religious Encyclopedia* states of them that:

They were determined to celebrate the Lord's Supper yearly, and that in France it had been the custom of these people to celebrate it yearly from an early time... in Germany as well as France the Waldenses celebrated the Lord's Supper yearly... (p. 243).

The noted historian, Mosheim explains that remnants of this same group were called Passaginians in Italy. They professed to keep God's Ten Commandments in their part of the world during the years 1100-1200. Mosheim explains their beliefs, saying: In Lombardy, which was the principal residence of the Italian heretics, there sprung up a singular sect known, for what reason I cannot tell, by the denomination Passaginians... they had the utmost aversion to the dominion and discipline of the church of Rome; but they were at the same time distinguished by two religious tenets which were peculiar to themselves. The first was a notion that **the observance of the law of Moses, in everything except the offering of sacrifices, was obligatory** upon Christians; in consequence of which they...abstained from those meats, the use of which was prohibited under the Mosaic economy, and celebrated the Jewish Sabbath. (Eccl. Hist.,Cent, 12, part2, chap.5 sec14,p.127)

During the 17th century, the Church reappeared once again, this time in England. The London Public Library contains this excerpt recorded in the *History of the True Church*: A complaint is entered on certain people for celebrating the **Lord's Supper** in the morning, when it is said it should be **celebrated in the evening**. The name 'Church of God' is mentioned twice referring to people holding the Passover in the evening.

In the book, *The History of the True Church*, Dugger describes the church in America. He writes:

The church in Rhode Island was founded the year 1671, and Ephrata, Pennsylvania, May 1725, with numerous other congregations throughout the eastern states... During these

early colonial days congregations were at first isolated because of distance and a lack of means of travel with no roads between them. Thus being isolated from fellowship with one another, we find companies in one place called the Church of Christ, in another place the **Church of God**, while in other communities they were simply called 'Sabbatarian Congregations' but the belief was practically the same. They stood for the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, observing the true Sabbath, **keeping the Lord's Supper yearly on the 14th** of the first month. (p. 252-253)

In his book, *History of the Sabbatarians*, Clarke records the Church keeping Passover a hundred years later. He writes:

Some of these (western Virginia) churches, believe in the washing of one another's feet, at appointed times,... but the Sabbath and Baptism are their distinguishing tenets...

Concerning the Passover, or the Lord's Supper, in at least one assembly of the early Sabbatarians in West Virginia, the following is illustrative; 'March 21, 1853, it was voted that communion **service be held once in twelve months on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish Month**, ie., on the evening of the Passover.

From the past, throughout the more recent history of the 19th and 20th centuries, thousands of congregations of the Church of God around the world have continued to faithfully observe the Passover. The Eternal Church of God is one of those assemblies who is committed to keeping this sacred day that memorializes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Church teaches that even when Christ finally returns in glory, it will not spell the end of this observance. Instead, His return will herald a time when all people will observe the Passover.

The Passover is an Ordinance Forever

The Passover was to be observed forever. Therefore, God told Moses to record the following words:

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. (Exodus 12:14)

The Passover is a permanent ordinance. It was not done away when Christ died, and it will not be eliminated at His return.

Jesus clearly stated that He would celebrate the Passover in His kingdom. At the last supper, Christ talked longingly with His disciples and He made the following promise: With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. (Luke 22:15-18)

Jesus spoke to His followers about His return, explaining that He would again eat the Passover and drink the wine with them. He reiterates this in Matthew's gospel, saying: I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:29)

Few have grasped this truth. When Christ came the first time, He did not change the

Holy Days. Instead, He kept them His followers continued their commemoration. Further, Christ will keep them in the millennium.

When Christ comes the second time, He promises to take a much more aggressive approach, literally enforcing the observance of His Holy Days. He will literally exact a penalty upon those who refuse to keep His commanded days. The prophet Zechariah reveals that Christ will require those who survive the battle of Armageddon to observe His commanded feasts. He writes:

It shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, upon them shall be no rain. (Zechariah 14:16-17)

After Jesus Christ returns, He will set up His kingdom. It will be the literal government of God on this earth. He will bring scattered Israel back from her captivity to the land of promise a second time. There he will begin to rebuild Jerusalem. He will construct a magnificent temple, set a prince over it, and require His Holy Days be observed.

In the book of Ezekiel, several chapters discuss this new temple which will be the headquarters for the government of the entire world. In chapter forty five, Ezekiel records various offerings that will be given then, and then he addresses the Passover. Ezekiel explains that the prince of the temple will teach people to keep God's Passover. He writes: In the first *month*, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. (Ezekiel 45:21)

Christ will enforce observance of His Holy Days during the Millennial rule, and eventually all will come to know God and His ways. Habakkuk writes these encouraging words:

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14)

This wonderful time is coming soon. Jesus will rule the earth for a thousand years. During this period, all will come to know God. People will no longer keep Easter. All will observe His sacred commanded ceremony, the Christian Passover. All will come to understand the love of God and the magnitude of the sacrifice that He made for each one of us as we keep God's Passover from year to year.

Faced With A Choice

Like the ancient Israelites who fell away, losing all awareness of God's Holy Days, many professing Christians today have lost the knowledge of God's Passover. They do not realize that God will require keeping His Passover in the future, that His faithful have always kept this ceremony, or that God planned the Passover observance from the very beginning.

The scriptures reveal that Christ was actually slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). This means that the Passover was planned before man existed. Days before creating man, God set the astronomical calendar in the heavens with a specific purpose in mind. God said:

Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: (Genesis 1:14)

On the fourth day of creation, God set the great astronomical bodies of the sun and moon in their respective orbits for "signs," and for "seasons." The word "sign" is "owth" in the Hebrew, and means a mark or beacon. Owth is the same word God uses when He states that His Sabbaths are a "sign" (Exodus 31:13). The Eternal then created the Sabbath on the seventh day, and that weekly celebration continues to this day. The other word that God uses to describe His purpose for placing the sun and moon in their respective positions is "seasons." This word is "mowdah" in the Hebrew, and it literally means days for "assembly," or "Holy Day observance."

This truth gives us incredible insight. God actually set the astronomical calendar in motion before He created man, and these vast bodies were to serve as a lunar-solar calendar to signal the time His Holy Days are to be observed.

This is of great significance! It means that God planned to atone for man's sin before the foundation of the world, and therefore He set the Passover, picturing His atoning death, in the creation calendar to be on the first full moon of the first month of every year as a memorial.

God later revealed this celebration to His people when He freed them from their bondage in Egypt. When God's people were faithful to Him, they kept the Passover. When they fell away from God, they celebrated Easter.

In the New Testament, Jesus kept the Passover as an example for us to follow (I John 2:6). His Apostles observed it, and Paul taught the Gentiles to keep it (I Corinthians 5:7).

Further, historically the Church of God through the centuries has faithfully kept this ordinance. And, today there exists around the world thousands of congregations of the Church of God keeping the commandments of God rather than the traditions of men. Finally, when Christ returns He will teach all mankind to observe His Holy Days, including the Passover.

A Decision to Make

But what about you? And what about now? What will you do with the knowledge that you have been given? Your decision is of the utmost importance. To be a son or daughter of God, you must keep His Passover. John records Jesus' words stating the following: Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (John 6:53).

When Jesus made this statement, He did not mean to take communion every Sunday as many churches do today. Jesus never did that, neither did the twelve Apostles, nor did the apostle Paul. Christ's words mean that we must keep the Passover as He commanded. Furthermore, Jesus' words mean we must literally take Him inside us, as the Passover symbols picture. We must surrender our will to His and allow Him to live in us (Galatians 2:19-20). This is the true meaning of the Passover.

Knowing this, you now have a choice to make. Are you going to celebrate Easter or will you obey your Creator and observe Passover?

Some will argue that they do not believe they are worshiping false gods when they

celebrate Easter. They believe that they can worship Jesus using the symbols of Easter no matter the source of those symbols.

Before you make your decision, reflect on and carefully weigh the example of Aaron and the golden calf. For hundreds of years Israel had been in bondage in Egypt. There they had lost the knowledge of God's way, but became very familiar with the worship of false gods. Shortly after their deliverance from Egypt, when Moses was gone for a time, the people demanded a god to worship. Aaron then made them a calf such as they were accustomed to.

When Aaron made the calf, did Israel think they were worshipping a false god? Absolutely not! They believed they were using the symbols to worship the true God. As Moses writes:

And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, tomorrow *is a feast to the LORD*. (Exodus 32:5)

Aaron made a feast to the LORD using the familiar pagan Egyptian symbols of a golden calf. He thought the people could worship the true God with man made symbols. Many people hold a similar belief today. Do you think that you can worship God with the false, pagan symbols of bunnies, eggs, and lilies? In the case of the ancient Israelites, notice God's reaction:

And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for **thy people**, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, **have corrupted themselves**: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed there unto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that **I may consume them**: (Exodus 32: 7-10).

Moses was also furious when he saw the idol they had made. He burned the golden calf in the fire, and he ground it to powder. Then he made the children of Israel drink of the powder with water. After this he went to God and petitioned Him saying: Oh, this people have **sinned a great sin**, and have made them gods of gold. (Exodus 32:31)

The Israelites had sinned a GREAT SIN by using false symbols to worship the true God. Celebrating a feast to God with Easter symbols is also great sin! If Moses did not intercede, God would have destroyed the people for their sin.

When God brought the people into the promised land, the land was filled with idolatry including the worship of the sun god and fertility goddess Ishtar. At that time, God told Israel to destroy all the remnants of such worship. He also gave His people a warning. He commanded them not to adopt any of the ways that these people worshiped their gods. Moses records Gods warning:

When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee... Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, ...and that thou inquire not saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: (Deuteronomy 12:29-32)

Notice that Israel was not to look to the pagan practices of worship, and use their customs in any way. God did not consider it acceptable to worship Him using the various pagan symbols. He did not tolerate such worship. He hated it! God's words echo to us down through the age as He thunders His warning to mankind:
Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God.

God does not approve of using pagan symbolism to worship Him! If we use false means of worship, it will pervert our perspective of God, and over time we will lose sight of His greatness, and purpose.

Israel forgot God's command and began to use the symbols of Ashtoreth, the goddess of fertility, to worship. God sent them into captivity for doing so, and He will send this nation of professing Christians into captivity for the same abominable practices before He returns.

So important is this issue, your very eternal salvation is at stake. When Christ returns He will have to address a group of people who believe themselves to be Christians, but who will be absolutely shocked to find they are not! Jesus states:
Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.
(Matthew 7:22-23)

These will be individuals who call Jesus their Lord. They will have even preached in His name. They will have done many good works for Him. Yet, He tells them to "depart." Why? Haven't they accepted Him? Isn't that all we have to do?

The reason Christ gives is that they work "iniquity." This word "iniquity" simply means "lawlessness." These are people who do not obey God's law. They believe they are worshiping Christ, but He states they are doing so unlawfully.

They are worshiping Him according to what they think, and what they feel, not according to His command in scripture.

Grasp the eternal lesson from these verses. We cannot worship God in any way that we desire. We cannot worship the true God with ancient fertility symbols. We can only truly worship Him the way that He commands. Do not make the mistake that so many have made. Christ says:

In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)

Easter, with its practices and symbols, is nothing more than the commandments of men. To celebrate Easter is to worship Jesus in vain - for no real lasting purpose. We worship Christ in vain when we worship Him according to such human traditions.

Realize that the world we have grown up in and have lived in for years is deceived. The apostle John writes:

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: (Revelation 12:9)

God tells us that the entire world is deceived. Yet the deceived person does not know he or she is deceived. The result? Millions of professing Christians do not recognize the truth regarding the question of the Christian Passover. They have been taught they don't

have to do what God commanded. Instead, they believe they can worship God any way they so desire as long as they have love in their heart.

If you desire to worship the God of the Bible, and you attempt to do so by celebrating Easter, you are deceived. The name "Easter," rabbits, eggs, and lilies are a "dead give away."

From Christ's Perspective

Consider how Jesus Christ views the celebration of Easter. Christ is the Passover (I Corinthians 5:7-8). He endured the worst death a person has ever experienced. He was betrayed by a friend, kept awake all night enduring an illegal trial, physically abused, spit upon, humiliated, and jeered at.

Christ was then beaten by a professional whose job it was to take the victim to the very point of death, then revive him, and beat him again. Finally, he was nailed to a stake and left to writhe in agony for hours until after his death a Roman soldier ended the ordeal by thrusting a spear in His side.

How do you think Jesus Christ feels after making this ultimate sacrifice for all mankind, only to see people making a game out of it with colored eggs, Easter bunnies, and the worship of the goddess of fertility?

Is it any wonder He says to such people, "depart from me, ye workers of iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). Don't be a part of such practices. Instead come out of the pagan practices of the ancient Babylonian mystery religion. As Christ says to those at the end of the age: Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (Revelation 18:4)

Make the choice to obey God, rather than the teachings and traditions of men! Decide to come out of pagan practices and begin to truly worship God. Keep God's Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread instead of Easter. Join the faithful throughout the ages, and commemorate Christ's death with all its profound meaning, as so many of God's servants have done from the beginning of time.

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What is the TRUE Origin of Valentine's Day? The Silence of Educators

Teachers are all too often silent about the origin of the customs they are forced to teach in today's schools! If they were to speak out, many would lose their jobs!

Isn't it time we examined why we encourage our children to celebrate St. Valentine's Day - when it is never mentioned in the Bible as a practice of the New Testament Church?

Today, candymakers unload tons of heart-shaped red boxes for February 14, while millions of the younger set are annually exchanging valentines. Florists consider February 14 - St. Valentine's Day - as one of their best business days. And young lovers pair off - at least for a dance or two - at St. Valentine's balls. *Why? Where did these customs originate? Where do we find any such practices in the Bible? How did we come to inherit these customs?*

A Christian Custom?

Did you know that centuries before Christ, the pagan Romans celebrated February 15 and the evening of February 14 as an idolatrous and sensuous festival in honor of Lupercus, the "hunter of wolves"?

The Romans called the festival the "*Lupercalia*." The custom of exchanging valentines and all the other traditions in honor of Lupercus - the deified hero-hunter of Rome- was also linked anciently with the pagan practice of teen-agers "going steady." It usually led to fornication. Today, the custom of "going steady" is thought very modern. It isn't. It is merely a rebirth of an old custom "handed down from the Roman festival of the Lupercalia, celebrated in the month of February, when names of young women were put into a box and drawn out by men as chance directed." That's the admission of the Encyclopedia Americana, article, "*St. Valentine's Day*."

When Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire there was some talk in church circles of discarding this pagan free-for-all. But the Roman citizens wouldn't hear of it! So it was agreed that the holiday would continue as it was, except for the more grossly sensual observances.

It was not until the reign of Pope Gelasius that the holiday became a "Christian" custom. "As far back as 496, Pope Gelasius changed Lupercalia on February 15 to St. Valentine's Day on February 14." (p. 172 of *Customs and Holidays Around the World* by Lavinia Dobler).

But how did this pagan festival acquire the name of "St. Valentine's Day"? And why is the little naked Cupid of the pagan Roman so often associated today with February 14? And why do little children and young people still cut out hearts and send them on a day in honor of Lupercus the

hunter of wolves? Why have we supposed these pagan customs in honor of a false god are Christians?

Who Was the Original "St. Valentine"?

Valentine was a common Roman name. Roman parents often gave the name of their children in honor of the famous man who was first called Valentine in antiquity. That famous man was Lupercus, the hunter. But who was Lupercus? - and why should he have also borne the name Valentine among the heathen Romans?

The Greeks called Lupercus by the name of "*Pan*". The Semites called Pan "*Baul*," according to the Classical Dictionaries. Baal - mentioned so often in the Bible - was merely another name for Nimrod, "the mighty hunter" (Genesis 10:9) It was a common proverb of ancient time that Nimrod was "the MIGHTY hunter before the Lord." Nimrod was their hero - their strong man - their VALENTINE!

How plain that the original Valentine was Nimrod, the mighty hunter of wolves. Yet another of Nimrod's names was "*Sanctuc*" or "*Santa*", meaning Saint. It was a common title of any hero-god. No wonder that the Roman Lupercalia is called "St. Valentine's Day"!

But why do we associate HEARTS on a day in honor of Nimrod - the Baal of the Phoenicians and Semites?

The surprising answer is that the pagan Romans acquired the symbol of the heart from the Babylonians. In the Babylonian tongue the word for heart was "*bal*" (*Strong's Concordance* Number H1168). The heart - *bal* - was merely a symbol of Nimrod - the Baal! or Lord of the Babylonians!

Executed at Rome

Nimrod - the original St. Valentine - was also known as Saturn, the Roman-Babylonian god who hid from his pursuers in a secret place. The Latin word *Saturn* is derived from the Semitic-speaking Babylonians. It means "be hid," "hide self," "secret," "conceal." The original Semitic (Hebrew) word, from which the Latin Saturn is derived, is used 83 times in the Old Testament (see *Young's Concordance* under "Sathar," also "sether").

According to ancient tradition, Saturn (Nimrod) fled from his pursuers to Italy. The Apenine mountains of Italy were anciently named the mountains of Nembroth or Nimrod. Nimrod briefly hid out at the site where Rome was later built. The ancient name of Rome, before it was rebuilt in 753 B.C. was Saturnia - the site of Saturn's (Nimrod's) hiding. There he was found and slain for his crimes. Later, professing Christians in Constantine's day made Nimrod - the St. Valentine of the heathen- a Saint of the Church and continued to honor him under the name of a Christian martyr.

Why February 14?

But why should the Romans have chosen February 15 and the evening of February 14 to honor

Lupercus - the Nimrod of the Bible? (Remember that day in ancient times began at sunset the evening before.)

Nimrod - Baal or sun god of the ancient pagans - was said to have been born at the winter solstice. In ancient time the solstice occurred on January 6 and his birthday therefore was celebrated on December 25 and now called Christmas. It was the custom of antiquity for, the mother of a male child to present herself for purification on the fortieth day after January 6 - Nimrod's original birthdate - takes us to February 15, the celebration of which began on the evening of February 14 - the Lupercalia or St. Valentine's Day.

On this day in February, Semiramis, the mother of Nimrod, was said to have been purified and to have appeared for the first time in public with her son as the original "mother and child."

The Roman month February, in fact, derives its name from the februa which the Roman priests used in the rites celebrated on St. Valentine's Day. The februa were thongs from the skins of sacrificial animals used in rites of purification on the evening of February 14.

Cupid Makes His Appearance

Another name for the child Nimrod was "Cupid" - meaning "desire" (Encyclopedia Britannica, article "*Cupid*"). It is said that when Nimrod's mother saw him, she lusted after him - she desired him. Nimrod became her Cupid - her desired one - and later her Valentine! So evil was Nimrod's mother that it is said she married her own son! Inscribed on the monuments of ancient Egypt are inscriptions that Nimrod (the Egyptians called him Osiris) was "the husband of his mother."

As Nimrod grew up, he became the child-hero of many women who desired him. He was their Cupid! In the Book of Daniel he is called the "**desire of women**" (Dan. 11:37). Moffatt translates the word as Tammuz - a babylonian name of Nimrod. He provoked so many women to jealousy that an idol of him was often called the "**image of jealousy**" (Ezekiel 8:5). Nimrod, the hunter, was also their Valentine - their strong or mighty her! No wonder the pagans commemorated their hero-hunter Nimrod, or Baal, by sending heartshaped love tokens to one another on the evening of February 14 as a symbol of him.

Nimrod, the son of Cush the Ethiopian, was later a source of embarrassment to the pagans of Europe. They didn't want an African to worship. Consequently, they substituted a supposed son of Nimrod, a white child named Horus, born after the death of Nimrod. This white child then became a "fair Cupid" of European tradition.

It is about time we examined these customs of the pagans now falsely labeled Christian. It is time we quit this Roman and Babylonian foolishness - this idolatry - and get back to the faith of Christ delivered once for all time.

Let's stop teaching our children these pagan customs in memory of Baal the sun god - the original St. Valentine - and teach them instead what the Bible really says!

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How plain that the original Valentine was Nimrod, the mighty hunter of wolves. Yet another of Nimrod's names was "*Sanctuc*" or "*Santa*", meaning Saint. It was a common title of any hero-god. No wonder that the Roman Lupercalia is called "St. Valentine's Day"!

But why do we associate HEARTS on a day in honor of Nimrod - the Baal of the Phoenicians and Semites?

The surprising answer is that the pagan Romans acquired the symbol of the heart from the Babylonians. In the Babylonian tongue the word for heart was "*bal*" (*Strong's Concordance* Number H1168). The heart - *bal* - was merely a symbol of Nimrod - the Baal! or Lord of the Babylonians!

Executed at Rome

Nimrod - the original St. Valentine - was also known as Saturn, the Roman-Babylonian god who hid from his pursuers in a secret place. The Latin word *Saturn* is derived from the Semitic-speaking Babylonians. It means "be hid," "hide self," "secret," "conceal." The original Semitic (Hebrew) word, from which the Latin Saturn is derived, is used 83 times in the Old Testament (see *Young's Concordance* under "Sathar," also "sether").

According to ancient tradition, Saturn (Nimrod) fled from his pursuers to Italy. The Apennine mountains of Italy were anciently named the mountains of Nembroth or Nimrod. Nimrod briefly hid out at the site where Rome was later built. The ancient name of Rome, before it was rebuilt in 753 B.C. was Saturnia - the site of Saturn's (Nimrod's) hiding. There he was found and slain for his crimes. Later, professing Christians in Constantine's day made Nimrod - the St. Valentine of the heathen- a Saint of the Church and continued to honor him under the name of a Christian martyr.

Why February 14?

But why should the Romans have chosen February 15 and the evening of February 14 to honor Lupercus - the Nimrod of the Bible? (Remember that day in ancient times began at sunset the evening before.)

Nimrod - Baal or sun god of the ancient pagans - was said to have been born at the winter solstice. In ancient time the solstice occurred on January 6 and his birthday therefore was celebrated on December 25 and now called Christmas. It was the custom of antiquity for, the mother of a male child to present herself for purification on the fortieth day after January 6 - Nimrod's original birthdate - takes us to February 15, the celebration of which began on the evening of February 14 - the Lupercalia or St. Valentine's Day.

On this day in February, Semiramis, the mother of Nimrod, was said to have been purified and to have appeared for the first time in public with her son as the original "mother and child."

The Roman month February, in fact, derives its name from the februa which the Roman priests used in the rites celebrated on St. Valentine's Day. The februa were thongs from the skins of sacrificial animals used in rites of purification on the evening of February 14.

Cupid Makes His Appearance

Another name for the child Nimrod was "Cupid" - meaning "desire" (Encyclopedia Britannica, article "*Cupid*"). It is said that when Nimrod's mother saw him, she lusted after him - she desired him. Nimrod became her Cupid - her desired one - and later her Valentine! So evil was Nimrod's mother that it is said she married her own son! Inscribed on the monuments of ancient Egypt are inscriptions that Nimrod (the Egyptians called him Osiris) was "the husband of his mother."

Nimrod grew up, he became the child-hero of many women who desired him. He was their Cupid! In the book of Daniel he is called the "**desire of women**" (Dan. 11:37). Moffatt translates the word as *meuz* - a Babylonian name of Nimrod. He provoked so many women to jealousy that an idol of him was often called the "**image of jealousy**" (Ezekiel 8:5). Nimrod, the hunter, was also their Valentine - strong or mighty her! No wonder the pagans commemorated their hero-hunter Nimrod, or Baal, by giving heartshaped love tokens to one another on the evening of February 14 as a symbol of him.

Nimrod, the son of Cush the Ethiopian, was later a source of embarrassment to the pagans of Europe. They didn't want an African to worship. Consequently, they substituted a supposed son of Nimrod, a white child named Horus, born after the death of Nimrod. This white child then became a "fair Cupid" of European tradition.

It is about time we examined these customs of the pagans now falsely labeled Christian. It is time we quit this Roman and Babylonian foolishness - this idolatry - and get back to the faith of Christ delivered once for all time.

Let's stop teaching our children these pagan customs in memory of Baal the sun god - the original St. Valentine - and teach them instead what the Bible really says!



A Brief History Of Halloween



Halloween is not Satan's birthday. He was created in Heaven, and his name was Lucifer. He was a beautiful creature who guarded God's throne. Then he rebelled against God, so their creator the Lord Jesus Christ kicked him out of Heaven. About a third of the angels rebelled too and were kicked out with him. They became demons, and Lucifer became Satan. Satan is alive and well and is busy destroying mankind. He and his demons know their time is short. They are afraid of Jesus Christ because He created a lake of fire for them. But Satan wants everybody to fry in hell with him. Unfortunately, he will get most of them. He is a master deceiver, and Halloween is just one of his tricks. Kids love Halloween because it is both fun and scary, and of course free candy. But they have no idea what's behind this celebration. To satanists and witches, Halloween is no joke. It is their most solemn ceremony of the year. As we get closer to the Second Coming of Jesus Satanism will increase. So will human sacrifice! Halloween started in the British Isles with the Druids. October 31st was a night of terror called "Samhain." That night the Druids went house to house, demanding a child or virgin for human sacrifice. The victim was the Druids' treat. In exchange for the victim, they left a Jock-O-Lantern with a lighted candle made of human fat. Which was supposed to prevent Those inside the home from death demons that night. When some unfortunate couldn't meet the demands of the Druids, then it was time for the trick. A symbolic hex was drawn on the front door. That night Satan or his demons would kill someone in that home. Spellbound, pgs. 13-14 published by Chick Publications. The Druids offered children in sacrifices. They believed that only "the fruit of the body" offered to Satan was for the "sin of the soul." The Two Babylons by Hislop, page 232. The same thing is going on today, only it's much more subtle. Lucifer Dethroned and Blood on the Door Posts, by William and Sharon Schnoebelen. You must understand that Satan is one of the most powerful and intelligent creatures God ever created. Ezekiel 28:12-15 If you think he doesn't exist, then you won't fight him. Satan's greatest desire is to hurt and destroy people. The children who are mutilated and murdered every Halloween are no accident. They are carefully planned sacrifices to Satan, carried out by those who serve and worship him. Satan loves Halloween because it glamorizes the powers of darkness, drawing little kids into his realm. And it is paying off, witchcraft is exploding among teens today. The Lord God hates Halloween and its evil origin. Satanic human sacrifices are a slap in God's face. To gain control of children's minds, witches make elaborate incantations calling forth demonic powers to attack these little ones. Their minds are influenced by these dark powers to alter their way of thinking. Sin stops everyone from going to heaven. But God, in His perfect love, provided the way. John 14:6 He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place, and to be our moderator to God in Heaven. Jesus came to earth to destroy Satan's power. He went to the cross and

shed His precious blood to wash away our sins. 1John 3:8 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16 Jesus shed His precious blood to was away our sins. 1Cor 15:3-4 When you receive Jesus as your Lord, Saviour, and Master, you then have His power available for you to stand against Satan. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee form you." James 4:7 "Giving thanks unto the Father... who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Col 1:12-13 If you believe Jesus died for your sins... and receive Him as your personal Saviour, you will be saved.

Alternatives

An increasing number of people are seeing the dangers associated with celebrating Halloween. Christians, when exposed to the dark side of the day, are deciding that celebrating it is not pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Wise parents are replacing Halloween with family night activities. Others are having "Glory Gatherings" where all references to Halloween are removed and wholesome games are played, Christian songs are sung and Christian videos are shown. Others are using Halloween as a night to pass out Gospel literature. Whatever you do, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21

I hope you will carefully consider the information I have related in the pamphlet and decide NOT to celebrate Halloween. But there is an even more important decision you should make first. That is deciding to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Here's what to do...

REALIZE that God loves you - John 3:16; Romans 5:8

RECOGNIZE that you cannot be saved from sin by your own good works - Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

ADMIT that you are a sinner separated from God - Romans 3:23

REPENT of your sins - Luke 13:3-5; Acts 3:19

CALL upon Christ in faith believing that He died for your sins and arose from the dead - Romans 10:13

Other Halloween Articles

- [Boo!](#)
- [The Dark Side Of Halloween](#)
- [Halloween - Harmless Fun or Pagan Rituals?](#)
- [Halloween: Oppression or Opportunity?](#)
 - [Halloween Profile](#)
 - [Happy Halloween](#)
- [Samhain: History of Halloween](#)
 - [The Trick](#)
- [What About Halloween?](#)

Why Christians Don't Celebrate NEW YEAR'S

What's wrong with celebrating the new year? What's wrong with "ringing out the old and ringing in the new"? After all, aren't real Christians commanded to "walk in newness of life" ([Rom. 6:4](#)), and isn't that what New Year's celebrations are all about? The PLAIN TRUTH may surprise you!

January 1st, the stroke of midnight: Phil and Julia party like there is no tomorrow, on a ballroom dance floor crowded with men in tuxedos and women in evening gowns.

Ralph, feeling happy and warm, weaves through traffic, while drunk behind the wheel of a potential killing machine, oblivious to the danger he presents to himself and to others. Todd and Mara, strangers who have just met, exchange kisses while dancing to 120 beats per minute in a dark nightclub. Fred runs outside his house, points his pistol into the air, and fires off a few rounds. Marta sits on a bench in a cold cathedral and whispers the same prayer over and over again. Susan sits at home watching television and envies the masses that crowd together at Times Square and wishes she was there, anywhere, instead of home alone on New Year's.

And yet there are a few others scattered around the world who will not be out on New Year's Eve. They will not be partying on a ballroom dance floor, or drinking and driving, or exchanging illicit kisses with strangers, or firing pistols into the air, or sitting beside other professing Christians, praying by rote. And they will not be sitting at home alone, wishing they were out and about with the rest of the world, ringing in the new year. Instead, they will treat New Year's like just another ordinary day.

Why?

Because they are true Christians—those who carefully hold fast to the exact same truths, teachings and traditions which Jesus Christ taught His apostles to pass on to the New Testament Church ([Matt. 28:18-20](#)). True Christians do not celebrate New Year's. They do not get caught up in its "eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-tomorrow-we-die" attitude. And they do not crave to imitate those who do. Yet the vast majority of professing Christians today see nothing wrong with observing New Year's. They do not see what the "big deal" is. Nor do they care.

What about you? Do you want to know why true Christians—whose calling and goal is to imitate the perfect, sin-free life of Jesus Christ—choose not to celebrate New Year's or get caught up in its excitement? If so, read on. You may be surprised to learn the PLAIN TRUTH that most "Christian" church leaders refuse to teach.

A Brief History of New Year's

"The earliest-known record of a New Year's festival dates from about 2000 BC in Mesopotamia, where the New Year (Akiu) commenced with the new moon nearest the spring equinox (mid-March; Babylonia) or nearest the autumn equinox (mid-September; Assyria)" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1998). "New Year's Day, the first day of the year. Among ancient peoples the beginning of the year was determined by one of various events, such as the spring or autumnal equinox or the winter or summer solstice. In Egypt, for example, beginning about 2773 BC, the year began with the heliacal rising of Sirius, which coincided with the start of the flood period of the Nile and came not long after the summer solstice" (*Encyclopedia Americana*, 1999). The Ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians and Persians began their new year with the autumn equinox (September 21), while the Greeks, up until the 5th century BC, observed their new year with the winter solstice (December 21).

"Many ancient peoples...performed rituals to do away with the past and purify themselves for the new year. For example, some people put out fires they were using and started new ones" (*World Book*, 2001). The Celts celebrated the new year on November 1, marking the end of summer and the harvest, and the beginning of the cold, dark winter ahead (this was a precursor to Halloween). They built "sacred" bonfires to scare off evil spirits and to honor their sun god.

In early times, the ancient Romans gave each other New Year's gifts of branches from sacred trees. In later years, they gave gold-covered nuts or coins imprinted with pictures of Janus, the god of gates, doors, and beginnings. January was named after Janus, who had two faces—one looking forward and the other looking backward" (*World Book*, 2001).

"By the Roman republican calendar the year began on March 1; after 153 BC the official date was January 1, and this was confirmed by the Julian calendar (46 BC)...In early medieval times most of Christian Europe regarded March 25 (Annunciation Day) as the beginning of the year, though for Anglo-Saxon England New Year's Day was December 25" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1998).

Since the Roman Catholic Church leaders falsely believed that Christ was born on December 25 (to learn more, read our booklet *The True Origin of CHRISTMAS*), they assumed His mother Mary conceived Him on March 25th, nine months earlier: "March 25th is called the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary...It celebrates the occasion when the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the young Jewish maiden and announced to her that she was to be the mother of Jesus...Although the Church began very early to commemorate this event, the date itself cannot have been fixed before the date of Christmas was established, which was sometime late in the fourth century. The two dates are dependent on each other, because they must normally have been nine months apart...Then, reaching all the way back, people decided that this was not only the day on which Christ's earthly life began—it was the day everything began, the day of Creation itself. From here it was a very short step—an almost unavoidable one—to the idea that March 25th must be the beginning of the year, and from the twelfth century until the calendar reform in 1752, March 25th was New Year's day" (*Days and Customs of All Faiths*, Howard V. Harper, 1957).

As you can plainly see, the history of New Year's Eve and New Year's day speaks for itself, how it originated in the minds of men—pagan idol-worshippers—and how it slowly developed over the centuries.

Now notice God's view of New Year's, and any holiday that has its roots in pagan practices, customs and traditions. You may be shocked by what He has to say.

God Hates All Pagan Customs and Traditions—including New Year's

Let's begin with **Jeremiah 10:2-3**: "Learn not the way of the heathen...for the customs of the people are vain." That's a Bible command. Throughout His Word, God describes "heathen" as those who worship nature (the sun, moon, stars, trees, etc.), or man-made idols, or *anything* but the one true God. He calls such people and their practices pagan. True Christians understand that God hates any customs, practices and traditions that have pagan roots.

How serious is God about paganism? When He rescued the twelve tribes of Israel from Egypt and led them out of brutal slavery, He commanded them, "After the doings of the land of Egypt, where in you dwelt, you shall not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, shall you not do: neither shall you walk in their ordinances" (**Lev. 18:3**). God demanded the Israelites not defile themselves with the practices and customs of the surrounding nations (**vs. 24-29**). "Therefore shall you keep My ordinance, that you commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that you defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God" (**vs. 30**).

God cursed Egypt with ten plagues and freed Israel from slavery. He parted the Red Sea and led them to safety. He fed them manna from heaven, protected them from battle-tested Gentile armies, delivered them into the Promised Land, and drove out their enemies. How did Israel treat God in turn? "Our fathers understood not Your wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Your mercies; but provoked

Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea...They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel: but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert...They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eats grass. They forgot God their Savior, Which had done great things in Egypt; wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea...they despised the pleasant land, they believed not His word: but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD...They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their intentions" (Psa. 106:7, 13-14, 19-22, 24-25, 28-29).

God had explicitly commanded Israel to cast out and utterly destroy all nations that occupied the Promised Land (Canaan). Above all, they were not to make political alliances with them or marry into their families (Deut. 7:1-3, 5, 16). "For they will turn away your sons from following Me, that they may serve other gods" (vs. 4).

But the Israelites—who thought they knew better than God—decided to do things their own way. "They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works: and they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yes, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils. And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus they were defiled with their own works, and went whoring with their own inventions" (Psa. 106:34-39).

To wake them up and get them back on track to being the model nation He had originally intended, God gave Israel over to their enemies. Israel repented. God rescued them. Then Israel pursued other gods. God punished them again. Israel repented again. So went the deliverance-idolatry-punishment-repentance cycle (vs. 40-46), until finally, God had no other choice but to "divorce" unfaithful Israel (Jer. 3:6-11). He used the Assyrians to brutally invade, conquer, relocate and enslave the northern kingdom of Israel (II Kings 17), which "disappeared" into history, having forgotten their true national identity (even today, the modern-day descendants of those ten "lost" tribes do not understand who they are). Later, God sent the southern kingdom of Judah into Babylonian exile (II Kings 24 and 25).

This happened because they lusted after pagan customs, rituals, traditions and ways. As you can see, the one true God does not take pagan practices lightly.

God Is NOT the Author of Confusion

True Christians know that "God is not the author of confusion but of peace" (I Cor. 14:33). The original Greek word used here for "confusion" also means instability, disorder, commotion, tumult—words that perfectly describe New Year's chaotic history. For thousands of years, men kept changing the beginning of their New Year from spring to fall, from March 1 to January 1 (and in some cases, December 25), to March 25, back to January 1 again—the dead of winter! "January 1 was restored as New Year's Day by the Gregorian calendar (1582), immediately adopted by Roman Catholic countries. Other countries slowly followed suit: Scotland, 1660; Germany and Denmark, about 1700; England, 1752; Sweden, 1753; and Russia, 1918" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1998).

Even today, men cannot agree on the same date. "Chinese New Year is celebrated officially for a month beginning in late January or early February" (Ibid.). "The Muslim New Year falls on the first day of the month of Muharram and commemorates the date of the Hegira (July 26, 622 A.D., on the Gregorian calendar), the starting point of the Muslim calendar. Since the Muslim year is a lunar one consisting of only 354 days, the commencement of the new year fluctuates widely by the Western calendar" (*Encyclopedia Americana*). The Vietnamese New Year, Tet, falls between January 21 and February 19. "The Jewish New Year, a solemn occasion called Rosh Ha-Shannah, is observed during September or early October. Hindus in different parts of India celebrate the new year on various dates" (*World Book*, 2001). This is what happens when people insist on relying on their own judgment rather than trusting the One who designed the entire universe and everything in it.

Not only is the history of New Year's confusing and chaotic, but so is the holiday itself. For some reason, people tend to let go of all inhibition—and many times self-respect—and simply go wild on New Year's. They drink too much, "hooking up" with people they barely know, for quick affairs that yield life-long repercussions—and shoot guns off into the air to "ring in the new year." Many throw away common sense in order to have a good time before the night is over. In most cases, the only thing people regret is that they have hangovers the next morning. However, that is usually the least of their problems.

According to MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), on New Year's Eve (1999), 43 out of 117 total U.S.-wide traffic fatalities—36.5 percent—were alcohol-related. The following New Year's Eve, the number jumped to 75 out of 147—51.2 percent. On New Year's Day (1999) 65.7 percent of all U.S. traffic deaths were alcohol-rated, the highest percentage for any holiday that year! That same New Year's weekend had 53.8 percent. Think about it. People died because of the foolishness of others.

When America was still in its infancy, "many American colonists in New England celebrated the new year by firing guns into the air and shouting" (*World Book*, 2001). Unfortunately, that tradition still thrives in some parts of the United States. In 1993, the New Orleans newspaper, *The Times-Picayune*, published a front-page informational graphic reminding citizens about the law of gravity: that whatever goes up (bullets) eventually must come down *somewhere*. Sadly, few heeded the warning. In fact, a top news editor for the paper who had just moved into town that year received a taste of this tradition—a bullet hole in his brand new car! Only a few years ago, a woman celebrating New Year's in the French Quarter (which is along the Mississippi River) was struck down and instantly killed by a bullet. Authorities believed that the shot was fired from the other side of that massive river!

Obviously, a holiday this chaotic, violent and dangerous does not reflect God's command to "Let all things be done decently and in order" (**I Cor. 14:40**). All true Christians recognize this about New Year's celebrations and avoid them.

True Christians Live by God's Word—Not by "Traditions of Men"

True Christians know that they must live "by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (**Matt. 4:4**). They know that man cannot rely on himself to determine right from wrong, good from evil. Why? Because "the heart [mind] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (**Jer. 17:9**), and "the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (**Jer. 10:23**). God's ways are higher, better, than man's ways (**Isa. 55:8-9**). He designed us and gave us life. Wouldn't He know how we are supposed to live?

God (your Creator) has given you (His creation) an "instruction manual" to help you live your life the way He originally intended (**John 10:10**). That "manual"—the Holy Bible—is God's Word and His truth (**John 17:17**). It is filled with spiritual laws, statutes, and judgments guided by perfect spiritual knowledge, understanding and wisdom. **II Timothy 3:16-17** states, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine [teaching], for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Only God's Word can accurately distinguish right from wrong, righteousness (obedience to God's commandments – **Psalms 119:172**) from sin (breaking God's spiritual laws – **I John 3:4** and **Romans 7:17**).

True Christians understand that, as the only real standard of truth man can live by, God's Holy Scriptures "cannot be broken" (**John 10:35**).

But most people—even most professing Christians—love to follow the ideas of men. Jesus recognized this, warning, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men...Full well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition...making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which you have delivered" (**Mark 7:6-9, 13**).

God commands His people not to follow pagan practices. Yet mankind follows them anyway. Nowhere in the Bible does God command true Christians to celebrate New Year's. Nor are there any positive biblical examples of true Christians celebrating New Year's. Yet, society (including most professing Christians) thumbs its nose at God, in effect telling Him, "We'll decide what we should or should not do!"

Now what about New Year's? Can you find any biblical examples of God's loyal, righteous followers celebrating New Year's Eve or New Year's Day? What about David, a man after God's own heart? What about Abraham, the father of the faithful? What about Moses, or even Christ?

The answer is NO. Nor can you find a biblical command from God to celebrate such a day. Yet that does not stop most professing Christians from doing so. Christians actively search the Scriptures to learn God's will. Their life's mission is to live by God's Word alone—not by the traditions of men, including pagan New Year's celebrations!

God Has His OWN Calendar, With Its Own "New Year"

When God instituted the Passover to Israel, He also revealed to them His sacred calendar: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (**Ex. 12:2**). God's calendar begins in the spring, between March and April of this world's calendar system. **Leviticus chapter 23** reveals all the special holy days (annual sabbaths) that true Christians are to observe. They are dictated by GOD'S calendar, not man's. Although the Bible tells us when His calendar year begins, God does not command—or even suggest—that His followers cast aside all self-control and celebrate the new year like animals gone wild.

Real Christians understand what days they are commanded to observe: Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Firstfruits (Pentecost), Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day, all clearly projected on God's sacred calendar. Christ kept them, and so did the apostles (**Matt. 26:17-19, 26-28; 28:18-20; I Cor. 5:6-8**).

Most professing Christians believe these special days are only for the Jews. They would rather blindly observe pagan holidays, instituted in humanly-devised calendars. *True Christians know better.*

This Is Satan's World—True Christians Must Come Out of It

God's true servants realize that this world belongs to Satan. He rules it. He runs it, through men, using mass deception, lies, slander, corruption and intrigue: "And the great dragon...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world" (**Rev. 12:9**). Satan was the serpent who misled Adam and Eve into eating from the forbidden tree, thus cutting their offspring—mankind through the ages—off from God (**Gen. 3**). And Satan is the same evil spirit who misleads man into committing every sin under the sun.

As you read this, somewhere a little child is being abused. Someone is being murdered. Someone else is being robbed. As long as Satan rules this world, mankind will drown in sins—including pagan customs and practices, which may seem harmless to the average person, but are a stench to God's nostrils.

Looking into the near future, when man's Satan-influenced world will collapse, God declares, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (**Rev. 18:2-3**).

It is this Satanic system that God commands His people to "Come out of...that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues" (**vs. 4**).

Both New Year's Eve and New Year's Day originate from this pagan, Satan-influenced world. They were designed to deceive mankind as a whole by appealing to fleshly, carnal desires—or, as the Bible calls them, the works of the flesh: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like" (Gal. 5:19-21).

Do any of these sound like the attitudes of New Year's to you?

At the end of [verse 21](#), we read, "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Christ's followers have their minds focused on God's kingdom ([Matt. 6:33](#))—not on the fleshly cravings of this world. They strive to "put off the old man" and actively imitate the perfect, righteous example of Jesus Christ. They know they must *come out of* this Satan-influenced world, including its pagan customs, practices and traditions. That includes celebrating New Year's.

One day soon, Satan will be removed from His throne, and replaced by Christ, who will establish and head God's government—the way of righteousness and peace, mercy and truth—on this earth. When that day arrives (and it is coming sooner than you realize), mankind will no longer be deceived into practicing customs that are contrary to God's divine will.

But until then, what about you? You now know the plain truth about New Year's, its pagan origins, its chaotic history, and how God views its customs, traditions and practices!