

❖ THE REAL REASON FOR THE SEASON! ❖

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According to history no one really knows the origin of Christ-Mass. But, we do know from Scripture that the early Nazarenes did not celebrate the birth of Moshiach Yahshua. Luke does record in his Gospel that Yahshua was born in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius. However, no month or day is given in his account. According to Hebraic tradition and ritual, birthdays were not celebrated by the Jewish people at the time of the Second Temple.

The date of the birth of Yahshua was not set for certain by the early so-called "Church" fathers. Even by the end of the second century, no date was set for the birthday of the Messiah. Therefore, the early "church" never acknowledged the birth of the Messiah, nor could they even agree on the date¹.

An unbiased review of the evidence proves that the early Nazarenes never celebrated a feast called Christ-Mass. But, we do have clear record of the halakah concerning the observance of Passover and Shavuot until the fourth century². Never is the celebration of His birth mentioned. So for over 350 years the Believers never celebrated His birth.

- It is in the last degree incredible, then, that the birth of [Messiah] could have taken place at the end of December. There is great unanimity among commentators on this point. Besides Barnes, Doddridge, Lightfoot, Joseph Scaliger, and Jennings, in his "Jewish Antiquities," who are all of opinion that December 25th could not be the right time of our Master's nativity, the celebrated Joseph Mede pronounces a very decisive opinion to the same effect....Indeed, it is admitted by the most learned and candid writers of all parties * that the day of our Master's birth cannot be determined, ** and that *within the Christian Church* no such festival as Christmas was ever heard of *till the third century*, and that not till the *fourth century* was far advanced did it gain much observance. **Hislop, Two Babylons, pg 92**

That brings us to the question: "Why did they begin to celebrate Christ-Mass after the fourth century?" The conclusion is under the influence of the pagan customs of the ones from the nations coming into the community of Believers, leaders compromised and adopted Roman holidays into their calendar. It cannot be just a coincidence that the "church" started celebrating the birthday of the Messiah on December 25th.

- This tendency on the part of Christians to meet Paganism half-way was very early developed; and we find Tertullian, even in his day, about the year 230, bitterly lamenting the inconsistency of the disciples of [Messiah] in this respect, and contrasting it with the strict fidelity of the Pagans to their own superstition. "By us," says he, "who are strangers to Sabbaths, and new moons, and festivals, once acceptable to [Elohim], the *Saturnalia*, the feasts of January, the *Brumalia*, and *Matronalia*, are now frequented; gifts are carried to and fro, new year's day presents are made with din, and sports and banquets are celebrated with uproar; oh, how much more faithful are the heathen to *their* religion, who take special care to adopt no solemnity from the Christians." Upright men strive to stem the tide, but in spite of all their efforts, the apostasy went on, till the Church, with the exception of a small remnant, was submerged under Pagan superstition." That Christmas was originally a Pagan festival is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, "about the time of the winter solstice." The very name by which Christmas is popularly known among ourselves--Yule-day --proves at once its Pagan and Babylonian origin. "Yule" is the Chaldee name for an "infant" or "little child"; * and as the 25th of December was called by our Pagan Anglo-Saxon ancestors, "Yule-day," or the "Child's day," and the night that preceded it, "Mother-night," long before they came in contact with Christianity, that sufficiently proves its real character. **Hislop, op.cit.pg.93**

¹ Only after the complete Hellenization of the Nazarenes did the date of the Messiah's birth become an issue.

² MacLean, The Christian Calendar, pg261

According to the Calendar of Julius Caesar set in 45 BCE, December was the month of the winter solstice. The Romans called this *Brumalia*. The Romans were eager to establish the divinity of the Roman Emperor so they incorporated the celebration of the sun to prove his divinity. December 25th was decreed as *Dies Natalis Invicti Solis*, the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun, by Aurelian (270-275CE). This was carried on by Diocletian, Constantine, and Julian.

But *Brumalia* lacked all the excitement of ritual that the people wanted. Because of this fact, that it was not appealing to the masses of people under Roman rule they added their rites of *Mithraism* to supply the rituals and brotherhood needed to make this date appeal to the people.

Chrysostom (398-403CE) announced that Christ-Mass replaced the celebration of *Brumalia*:

- “On this day also the Birthday of Christ was lately fixed at Rome in order that while the heathen were busy with their profane ceremonies the Christians might perform their sacred rites undisturbed. They call this (December 25th), the Birthday of the Solar Disc, but Christ the Sun of Righteousness.” **Samuel Dill, Roman Society, p.586**

Besides *Brumalia* and the Rites of *Mithras*, *Saturnalia* (December 17-24), also was another factor in the picking of the date of December 25th by the “Church”. The celebration of *Saturnalia* was in honor of the hope of the return of the Golden Age of Rome.

- It was no mere astronomic festival, then, that the Pagans celebrated at the winter solstice. That festival at Rome was called the feast of Saturn, and the mode in which it was celebrated there, showed whence it had been derived. The feast, as regulated by Caligula, lasted five days; * loose reins were given to *drunkenness* and revelry, slaves had a temporary emancipation, ** and used all manner of freedoms with their masters. **Hislop, Two Babylons, pg. 95**

Saturnalia was celebrated by a stopping of all work and the schools were dismissed throughout the Roman Empire. It was a time of peace and all hostilities were ceased until the holiday season was over. Public buildings were decked with flowers and shrubs. Gifts were sent and received between friends and family. It was a time of great celebration, drunkenness, and orgies. During *Saturnalia* a spirit of brotherhood was fostered between all peoples.

A letter from Pope Gregory 1 advised Augustine of Canterbury to encourage the people to observe these “harmless” pagan customs that were capable of “Christian “interpretations. The use of evergreen trees after the custom of the Roman *Saturnalia* was permitted and even encouraged by the Pope of Rome. This was done to satisfy the masses of heathens in the “church”. Thus, the “Church” allowed the use of occultic pagan symbols to keep the people happy in the “Christian” faith.

- Hear the word which YHWH speaks to you, O house of Yisra’el. 2 Thus said YHWH, “Do not learn the way of the gentiles, *and* do not be awed by the signs of the heavens, for the gentiles are awed by them. 3 “For the prescribed customs of these peoples are worthless, for one cuts a tree from the forest, work for the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool. 4 “They adorn it with silver and gold, they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it does not topple. **Yirmeyahu 10:1-4**
- 20 “For of old you have broken your yoke and tore of your bonds. And you said, ‘I am not serving *You*,’ when on every high hill and under every green tree you lay down, a whore”. **Yirmeyahu 2:20**
- 6 And YHWH said to me in the days of Yoshiyahu the sovereign, “Have you seen what backsliding Yisra’el has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there committed whoring.” **Yirmeyahu 3:6**

Along with the use of evergreens, they also used holly berries and mistletoe. Holly was placed in the windows to attract the forest spirits. Mistletoe (also known as the Golden Bough), was believed to hold magical properties. The Druids held mistletoe as a sacred plant, calling it “all-heal” and claimed it held several magical powers. It was used in many magical rituals by the Druids.

Homes and buildings of so-called Believers continue to be decorated in the same manner as the ancient Saturnalia. It is strange that those who claimed to have the Spirit of Truth are lead into such gross error. At least the American Puritans had the sense to outlaw the celebration of XMass.³

Can we make *kadosh* (holy) a pagan holiday by using it for “witnessing” of the Messiah? What does YHWH say about borrowing pagan symbols and celebrations for His worship? And what if the pagan symbols of XMass have changed over the centuries for people? Can’t this holiday be used for good?

The term “**syncretism**” means “to attempt union or reconciliation of two diverse or opposite tenants or practices in religion”. It is an impure mixture.

YHWH does not accept syncretism. The term *KADOSH* (set-apart) means separation from the profane. Throughout the Scriptures, YHWH’s people were to separate themselves form the pagan religions and customs of the lands around them. Elohim took a people for Himself , Yisrael, and set them apart to Himself. They were to be different and keep YHWH’s Holy Days as given in the Torah.

According to Torah, Yisrael was forbidden to make impure mixture. This included cloth, seed, and animals. No admixture was allowed. But is there something morally wrong in mixing two kinds of seeds? No! The message YHWH was communicating to Yisrael is that there was to be absolutely no “heart-mixture”. They were to love HIM with all their heart, soul, and strength. All religious mixture is forbidden.

- 9“When you come into the land which YHWH your Elohim is giving you do not learn to do according to the abominations of those gentiles.” **D’varim 18:9**
- 18lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their mighty ones, and you sin against YHWH your Elohim. **D’varim 20:18**

These verses teach YHWH’s hatred towards the mixing of YHWH approved worship with pagan ways. This is not saying that people who celebrate XMass are knowingly worshiping false gods. However, I am stating that I do believe they have been greatly deceived and misled to believe that YHWH looks favorably upon rituals and rites taken from paganism and idolatry. They also believe it is ok to keep these pagan holidays if they put “Christ” into them. Dressing a pig in human clothes still does not change that fact that it is still a pig! Scripture teaches us that syncretism may be practiced by those who say they serve YHWH (like David and Asa).By accepting and practicing the customs of one’s culture and community without first testing them against the Word of YHWH, people are unknowingly violating the Torah and Words of YHWH.It is also clear, according to Scripture, that YHWH does not always punish syncretism by His people immediately. This is shown in Scripture by the history of Yisrael and their slow downward spiral taking place over centuries before their exile from the Land. The real danger of syncretism is that it leads to increasing compromise in matters of obedience to YHWH and His Torah. The worship of Baal and Ashterah in the Temple of YHWH did not take place overnight. It began by accepting a little at a time things which differed from the true worship of the Elohim of Yisrael, Yahweh.

I do not celebrate XMass because I am convinced it is a substitute for many pagan holidays and it is steeped in paganism and is syncretistic in nature. All the symbols associated with XMass, such as the tree, reindeer, elves, holly, yule logs, mistletoe, and the lie of Santa are still attached to the demonic womb from which they were birthed.

- Therefore, the 25th of December, the day that was observed at Rome as the day when the victorious god reappeared on earth, was held at the *Natalis invicti solis*, "The birth-day of the unconquered Sun." Now the Yule Log is the dead stock of Nimrod, deified as the sun- god, but cut down by his enemies; the Christmas-tree is Nimrod *redivivus*--the slain god come to life again. In the light reflected by the above statement on customs that still linger among us, the origin of which has been lost in the midst of hoar antiquity, let the reader look at the singular practice still kept up in the South on Christmas-eve, of kissing under the mistletoe bough. That mistletoe bough in the Druidic superstition, which, as we have seen, was derived from Babylon, was a representation of the Messiah, "The man the branch." The mistletoe was regarded as a divine branch *--a branch that came from heaven, and grew upon a tree that sprung out of the earth. **Hislop, Two Babylons,pg. 97**

³ Crippen, Christmas and Christmas Lore, pp.87-93

But, even more than all this, XMass has robbed the Believer in Messiah of the true roots of their faith and heritage. XMass is a time when Yisrael and the world are united in a common pagan celebration .The result is that there is no visible distinction between the holy and the profane.

15“And if it seems evil in your eyes to serve YHWH, choose for yourselves this day whom you are going to serve, whether the mighty ones which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the mighty ones of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But I and my house, we serve YHWH.” 16And the people answered and said, “Far be it from us to forsake YHWH, to serve other mighty ones” **Yehoshua 24:15**