

RUSSELL SANDERS

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THE CHRISTMAS SERIES – PART 2

THE ORIGIN OF DECEMBER 25TH AS CHRISTMAS – PART 1

This series will cover two broad categories. First, we will see how the current celebration of a December 25th Christmas holiday came into being and the pagan roots of the celebration. Second, we will learn of it from scripture and understanding of its Jewish roots. We must not allow the pagan features to turn us aside from truly celebrating the birth of God's only begotten Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ (Anointed One).

The early church held no holiday celebration of Christ's birth for nearly 300 years. The celebration only began in the fourth century A.D. The early church had five cities that were the powers of administration. By the fourth century Rome had gained preeminence, as the others faded, since the Roman Empire was the ruling power. For most of those first three centuries, Christians were heavily persecuted.

About 303 A.D., Constantine became the new Emperor of Rome. In 312-313 A.D. he converted from paganism to Christianity. In his zeal he made moves to consolidate the Christian faith around Rome and to establish uniform doctrines and practices.

In 325 A.D. (fourth century) Constantine called all the prominent Christian leaders to the city of Nicaea for a council. It was at this council that Roman Church doctrine was codified in the "Nicene Creed" (and later revised). It was also at this council that Christian holidays known as Christmas and Easter were first established, both of which incorporated pagan features into the Christian Celebration.

As we dig into "Christmas" origins tomorrow, do not allow its combination of Christianity and paganism turn you aside from celebrating Christmas. We "chew the fat and spit out the bones" as we celebrate God's gift of love to the world.