

The Real Meaning of Christmas

-Notes on Christmas and the Birth of Jesus, the Christ

Where did Christmas come from? One of the things you need to know about Christmas is that the early Christians did not celebrate Christmas. For the first 300+ years of Christianity, there were no Christians celebrating the birth of Christ. I think that most Christians, even in today's Christianity, know that December 25th is not actually Jesus' birthday. He was not even born in December. He was born in September, at the time of Rosh Hashanah, Jewish New Year. We know this from the sign given to us in Revelation 12.

In a nutshell, in Revelation 12, the Apostle John was shown a vision of a woman who was about to give birth to a man child who is going to rule the nations with a rod of iron. We know that that is a quote from Psalm 2, which is talking about Christ and His reign upon the earth. And John's vision gives the astronomical position of the sun and moon against the constellations. It gives the position of where the sun and moon was at the time of Christ's birth. It gives the year that Christ was born. It says that the woman was clothed with the sun, the woman is the constellation Virgo. Everyone knows that these days. It says that the moon was under her feet, at that time of year when the sun is in the middle of Virgo with the moon at her feet is Rosh Hashanah. It's the New Moon in September.

So, first of all you need to know that Jesus wasn't born in December. Next you need to know, and was just stated, that Christians never celebrated Christ's birth until the Roman Emperor Constantine. There were two major pagan holidays and festivals that occurred in December in ancient times between Christ's actual birth date in September and the time when Christmas began to be celebrated on December 25th. There were two Roman holidays, one of them was **Saturnalia**, which is the festival of the Roman god, Saturn (the god of agriculture). And this festival went from *September 17th to the 23rd*. It was the last seven days before the winter solstice; which, if you don't know, is the shortest day of the year. It was celebrated with public singing, or what you might call caroling today... partying, drunkenness, streaking, believe it or not... that kind of thing. They also played a role reversal game one of those days in the week. Husbands would trade places with their wives. Masters would trade places with their servants. Bosses would trade places with their employees. It was a big party atmosphere. They decorated trees with silver and gold ornaments. They hung wreaths on their homes. They even made little man-shaped pastries. You might call them gingerbread men. They did that as well. It was part of the Saturnalia celebration for the god of agriculture, Saturn. Then on the last day of the festival, September 23rd, gifts were exchanged. Everyone had a free pass to do anything they wanted to without any penalty. So you can imagine what people did. You might call it the Roman Mardi Gras, which, if you have ever been to Mardi Gras, can get rather decadent.

Well, shortly after that, in about 274 AD, the Emperor Aurelian made the cult of the sun god one of the official religions of Rome. It's called Sol Invictus, Latin for 'the unconquered sun'. The sun god became the predominant god of the Roman Empire in that year. He had a special holiday, the birthday of this sun god of Sol Invictus, and, you guessed it... It was December 25th.

Now these are the things that were going on while Christianity was simultaneously spreading throughout the Roman Empire. While this was happening, while these people were partying during Saturnalia, and while they were celebrating the birthday of Sol Invictus, the Christians were being tortured, killed, and thrown to the lions in the Colosseum. There was wave after wave of these kinds of

things, of Christian persecution, at this time. Even the more recent Pope Benedict said this in a speech at St. Paul the Sixth Audience Hall on December 23, 2009...

“Christmas acquired its definitive form in the 4th century when it replaced the Roman feast of Sol Invictus.”

That is, it, Christmas, got its form from these pagan holidays. That is, the things that people now do in celebration of Christ’s birth, the cutting down of a tree and decorating it; Which God forbid His people to do in Jeremiah 10:1-4, decorating the home, the wreaths, giving gifts, all that stuff came from these pagan things. It became Christmas in the fourth century.

Jeremiah 10:1 NKJV Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.

Jeremiah 10:2 NKJV Thus says the LORD: "**Do not learn the way of the Gentiles;** Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.

Jeremiah 10:3 NKJV For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.

Jeremiah 10:4 NKJV They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple.

Now how did it become Christmas? I’m sure you have heard of the Emperor Constantine. In 312 AD, Constantine, who was a general at the time, in a battle, defeated his enemies at the Tiber River. He supposedly saw a vision of a cross and in the sky was written these words... this is his testimony as to what supposedly happened, the phrase, “In this sign you will conquer.” So he painted a cross on the shields of the Roman legions and they defeated the enemy. From that time on, he took that as a sign that the Christian God was the true God. So he made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, or at least for his administration. But eventually the whole kingdom of the Roman Empire.

Now you can imagine what it would be like if you have an empire that is worshiping a multitude of gods and all of a sudden the Emperor says, “I am a Christian,” how those people would react. Then he made the declaration that all persecution against Christians would stop. He restored all of the properties that had been seized by the former Emperor. He then lavished all kinds of gifts on the leaders of the churches. You can see that when the common people see that the Emperor is favoring a particular religion, and the common people who want to have good standing in society, what are they going to do? They are going to call themselves Christians.

So what we had, was that many pagan people who never really gave up the worship of their pagan gods, coming into the churches to be baptized as Christians; and what happened was that all of their paganism came right into the church with them. It was really at the instigation of Constantine.

How committed do you think Constantine was to Christianity? He was not really all that committed. Constantine himself declined baptism until he was on his death bed on May 22, 337 AD. He said as a king he had to do a lot of things that would get blood on his hands; and he said that he knows that a Christian can’t do some of the things that he has to do as a king. Therefore, he said he didn’t want to fall away from the faith because of the wickedness that he had to do, so he wanted to delay his baptism.

Also, Constantine continued to worship Sol Invictus. In fact, on his coins from after this time, one side had the image of Constantine and the other side had the image of the sun god Sol Invictus. So you can see how deep his Christianity really went.

What Constantine did was to take on Christianity because it had become so cross cultural, it had spread through so many ethnic groups throughout the Roman Empire. You know, the various ethnic groups had their own gods that they worshiped. But Christianity had broken through all of those cultural barriers. And there were multitudes of Christians among all of those peoples that the Emperor was trying to keep together to solidify the Roman Empire. So he used Christianity as a mechanism for solidifying his rule over all of these various cultures within his kingdom. So he used it to sort of keep the peace, if you will.

In 325, Constantine called the first ecumenical council of all the Christian bishops, but not all of them came, by the way, because not all of them were all that impressed with Constantine. He invited 2000. Just under 300 attended. The purpose of the council was to settle the issue of the doctrine of the Trinity, which the Catholic Church purported. It started from the 'Arian Controversy' in 318. It also covered the issues of Mary as being the mother of God. She was purported to have never sinned in her life. And the doctrine of Hypostatic Union.

If you read Eusebius' account of what happened in that Council, it is very obvious that Constantine saw himself as sort of the definitive head of the church. What we now have here is a Roman Emperor leading the church. He didn't decree everything that absolutely had to happen, he just said, 'You guys are going to settle this issue and I am going to stay here until you do.' Because he didn't want his empire split up because of the arguing among Christians. He also gave a speech where he gave his own opinion on subjects like the afterlife, which was not at all in keeping with the Biblical doctrine handed down by the Apostles.

Constantine took the birthday of the sun god and sort of "Christianized" it. He took some of the rituals from Saturnalia and the cult religion of Sol and mixed them together and put Christian names on them. And the pagans who came into the church didn't really want to give up their paganism. They wanted the favor of the Empire, but still hold on to the things they were accustomed to with their pagan religions, so by merging, if you will, pagan traditions, and the birthday of Christ, of course this doesn't account for Santa Clause. He came much, much later. That is a fairly modern invention. But the other things we associate with Christmas and the birth of Christ, has come to us from this paganism and incorporated into Christianity because of Constantine.

Now Hanukkah is the day that the Jews celebrate at about this same time of year. Hanukkah continues for 8 days. It is a celebration for the rededication of the Temple to God after it was saturated with paganism under the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 165 BC. It is talked about in the Maccabees of the Greek and Catholic Old Testaments.

There are 12 additional books and two chapter additions to the book of Daniel in these Old Testament versions. The Catholic Church claims they are divine scripture handed down from God. I don't believe that is true. If you read and study them you will find many mistakes and contradictions that, I personally, do not think God would make. They are however, a great source of historical data giving lots of cultural understanding to us; and adding more information to our other historical accounts... much like the Gospels do by giving us different information based on different author's points of view.

The books of the Maccabees are crucial to our understanding of some events that happened in the Gospels of our New Testament. Even Jesus attended the Feast of Dedication, which is Hanukkah. Hanukkah means 'dedication' in Hebrew. It is also known as the Festival of Lights, and Feast of the Maccabees.

So where did the actual origin of this celebration come from? Well, as I've said, in 165 BC there was an invasion of Israel by the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes. He invaded Judea and Jerusalem and abolished the worship of God. He forbid the observance of the Sabbath and the festivals of God. And he defiled the Temple of God in Jerusalem by burning a pig on the Altar of Sacrifice. There were two altars in the Temple; the Altar of Sacrifice and the Altar of Incense, which was within the Holy of Holies. He also put an image of Zeus in the Temple. Then he left his armies behind to enforce it all. And unfortunately, many of the Jewish people capitulated out of fear of persecution.

You can imagine that this was pretty shocking to the Jews. Many of the people, as well as some of the Temple priests fled into the mountains surrounding Jerusalem in order to escape the persecution that was coming.

Over a period of time a revolt solidified from a family called the Maccabees, who were priests from the Temple. They began to attack the Syrian forces that were stationed at the Temple in sort of a gorilla warfare. They kept relentlessly attacking and retreating until they eventually wore down the Syrian army. And eventually they defeated them. It took them three years to win this victory. Then the priests went back to the Temple. And the first thing that they had to do was to cleanse the Temple of God from the paganism and idolatry.

If you know your Old Testament, you know that when Moses built the tabernacle in the wilderness, God gave him a series of rituals that he was to do to cleanse the Temple articles for dedicating to God. The Maccabees went through those rituals. One of the things that they had to do was to light the Menorah. There was a seven branch Menorah in the Temple. And one of the things that they needed to do was to relight the lights in the Temple.

God had commanded under the Law that the oil for the Menorah had to be a certain recipe. And they had to make it according to God's command; and it would take several days to make the oil. Well, they only had enough oil for one day by the time Hanukkah was to begin. But, in an act of faith, they stepped out and lit the Menorah with only that one day supply. And according to the eyewitness accounts, the Menorah burned for 8 days on that one day supply of oil. They took that as a miracle from God. And since that time, every year, at this time of year, for 8 days, the Jews celebrate the Feast of the Dedication, or Feast of Lights... Hanukkah.

On the first day of Hanukkah the Jews light the first lamp, from right to left, the same way they write. On the second day, they light two lamps, the third day they light three, and so on. The center lamp, or candle, is for the purpose of lighting the others. It represents the eight days of the miracle of the oil.

This brings to mind Romans 12:1-2.

Romans 12:1 NKJV I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:2 NKJV And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The question then, before us, and before all Christians, should be, is it acceptable for us to God, to take pagan traditions and use them in the worship of God? Because that is exactly what Christmas is. What does the Bible have to say? I think we ought to turn to Scripture. The Bible actually has the answers to ALL of life's problems if we just dig in. That also means we don't need a therapist. Psychology is completely useless to the true Christian. I double majored in college in Software Engineering and Psychology. But after a year and a semester of Psychology, I dropped Psychology as my second major because of how humanistic and Godless it was as a study and profession. I took up Physics instead.

Anyway, let's see what the Bible has to say about mixing the things of paganism with the things of God. Turn in your Bible to Deuteronomy 12:1-5; 29-31.

Deuteronomy 12:1 NKJV "These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.

Deuteronomy 12:2 NKJV "You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

Deuteronomy 12:3 NKJV "And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place.

Deuteronomy 12:4 NKJV "**You shall not worship the LORD your God with such things.**

Notice that statement? "You shall not worship the LORD your God with such things." He didn't say, "You shall not worship other gods." He said, "You shall not worship the LORD your God with these things," that is the items like the pagans.

Deuteronomy 12:5 NKJV "But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go.

Now skip down to verse 29.

Deuteronomy 12:29 NKJV "When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,

Deuteronomy 12:30 NKJV "take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, '**How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.**'

He didn't say we are going to serve their gods. He said 'how' they did it... the practices that they used to serve their gods.

Deuteronomy 12:31 NKJV "**You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way;** for every abomination to the LORD which He **hates** they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

Do you see that? You shall NOT worship God IN THAT WAY.

Now turn back to Exodus. This is when God gave Israel the Law. And when Aaron made the golden calf.

Exodus 32:1 NKJV Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

Exodus 32:2 NKJV And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."

Exodus 32:3 NKJV "So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron.

Exodus 32:4 NKJV And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

Did Aaron make them a representation of a pagan god? It was supposed to be a representation of the One True God that brought them out of Egypt. That's what it says right there in that verse. And look at the next verse...

Exodus 32:5 NKJV So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD."

Look at the word 'LORD'. In our Bibles it is placed in all capital letters because it is the actual name of God, Jehovah (H1961). He is calling the golden calf Jehovah, or Yahweh. He made an idol similar to the gods they were used to seeing in Egypt. And he made it as a representation of the One True God, the God that parted the Red Sea, and all that. But he used a pagan form in the worship of Him.

Exodus 32:6 NKJV Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

Exodus 32:7 NKJV And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

Exodus 32:8 NKJV "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'"

You know the rest of the story. I don't need to read the rest of the chapter. God destroyed 3000 of them (verse 32). God was angry because the were worshiping Him in the same manner as the pagans.

Now look at 2 Kings 22. We are leaping forward in time to the time of King Josiah. You know the history of the nation of Israel. Solomon turned away from the Lord God and fell into idolatry. The kings, or at least most of the kings, I should say, that followed him did likewise and turned away from God. The Law of Moses, God's Law, was lost. The people were engulfed with paganism. Then here comes an eight-year-old king named Josiah. He was the next in line, and his father was dead. So he became king.

2 Kings 22:1 NKJV Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.

2 Kings 22:2 NKJV And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

If you continue to read in this chapter, King Josiah commands that the Temple of God be cleaned up. During the cleaning, Hilkiah, the high priest, found the Book of the Law. The scroll that Moses actually wrote. Hilkiah took it to King Josiah. Josiah didn't even know what was in it. It was the five books of Moses, the Torah. So King Josiah had it read to him by Shaphan the scribe. After the reading of the books, King Josiah tore his clothes and wept before God; because they had allowed so much paganism to enter into the things of God. He decreed, that day, that they were going to follow God's Law.

Then he sent the priests to go pray and ask God what they should do as to avoid God's wrath coming down on them.

2 Kings 22:15 NKJV Then she said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me,

2 Kings 22:16 NKJV "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants; all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read;

2 Kings 22:17 NKJV 'because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched.' "

2 Kings 22:18 NKJV "But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Concerning the words which you have heard;

2 Kings 22:19 NKJV "because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the LORD.

2 Kings 22:20 NKJV "Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place." ' ' So they brought back word to the king.

Now look at chapter 23.

2 Kings 23:1 NKJV Now the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him.

2 Kings 23:2 NKJV The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.

2 Kings 23:3 NKJV Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant.

2 Kings 23:4 NKJV And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made

for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

All these pagan items were even in the Temple of God... mixing the things of God with the things of paganism.

2 Kings 23:5 NKJV Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven.

2 Kings 23:6 NKJV And he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people.

2 Kings 23:7 NKJV Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the wooden image.

2 Kings 23:8 NKJV And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places at the gates which were at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were to the left of the city gate.

King Josiah didn't just stop worshiping in the manner of the pagans. He destroyed and burned everything... even the bowls in the Temple, so that nothing pagan would be used in the worship of God.

Christmas used to be my favorite holiday. But as I dig deeper into the written word of God, I begin to understand His nature and character more and more. And I have learned that God does not like to be worshiped in any way that is tied with pagan gods or pagan symbolism. So I just quit in 2012. I haven't celebrated Easter or Christmas since. These are absolutely traditions of men.

But the Bible has more to say, a lot more actually. If you want to celebrate around this time of year, learn about and celebrate Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, which was approved by God.

Some people might say, all that stuff is out of the Old Testament. That's true. So let's look at some stuff out of the New Testament. And by the way, the stuff in the New Testament is quoting the Old Testament... so good luck with that.

2 Corinthians 6:14 NKJV Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:15 NKJV And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

2 Corinthians 6:16 NKJV And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." -Quoted from Leviticus 26:12; Ezekiel 37:27.

Now as he is making these statements, where is he drawing these concepts from? The Law of Moses. Because all throughout the Old Testament God said you must make a difference between the clean and the unclean.

The Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. No worship is going on over there now. Muslims have control. But in its place, God is still dwelling among His people. He is not living in a building. He is living in us as a collective whole. His Spirit is with each individual that comes together to worship and study about Him. That group that come together and study and worship God is the church. Once the gathering of the assembly is over, there is no more church until the next assembly. It is not some building as we have come to think of it.

Now does the Law apply directly to us today? Not in some ways. Do we have to do everything in the Law today? No, because we have a new covenant. But the principles of the Law, that is, that God is a holy God, God will not accept paganism, period. It is abhorrent to Him. That principle is the same in the New Testament as it is in the Old Testament. Doesn't that Bible tell us that God does not change. Yes, it does. Does it say that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever? Yes, it does.

Malachi 3:6 NKJV For I am the LORD, I do not change..."

Hebrews 13:8 NKJV Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

That is why Paul can take these quotes from the Law out of the Old Testament and apply them to the church in Corinth in the New Testament. Then look what he says.

2 Corinthians 6:17 NKJV Therefore "**Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.**" -Isaiah 52:11

2 Corinthians 6:18 NKJV "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." -2 Samuel 7:8, 14; Isaiah 43:6

2 Corinthians 7:1 NKJV Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Now this passage doesn't only talk about pagan items and pagan rituals, things like that. It is talking about anything that is unclean. We are to strive for holiness. Of course we will never reach it. But we are commanded to diligently pursue holiness all throughout the New Testament... to become like Christ. Who Hebrews 4:15 tells us, was without sin.

With that said, how do we figure out Jesus' correct birthday? Let's see how close we can come.

You can see in Luke chapter 1 that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was a priest in the division of Abijah.

Luke 1:5 NKJV There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth.

David divided the priesthood into 24 courses, or divisions. 1 Chronicles, chapter 24, gives the sequence in which they served. Based on that, we know they started the sequence over every Passover.

We discovered, if you go down to the course of Abijah, approximately when Zacharias was serving in the temple. He served for a week; and it was around mid to late June, on our calendar. Then we learned

that when Zacharias went home, which would have been a week, actually eight days later, that Elizabeth conceived. And so, just guessing when she would have conceived in relation to Gabriel telling Zacharias that they would have a son, because we have to allow for a woman's monthly cycle, we come out to early or mid July that Elizabeth would have conceived.

Then Luke goes on to tell us that it was in her 6th month of pregnancy when Gabriel went to Mary (Luke 1:26), which would have put us in mid December.

Luke 1:26 NKJV Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

We come to December because we use “inclusive reckoning”, which is what the Jews did. They count the starting month as well as the ending month. That is the way that they kept track of time.

This ends up being right in the middle of Hanukkah, the festival of lights. When did Hanukkah begin? It was not anything that God commanded them to do in the Law. It was done a couple hundred years before Christ, actually 165 BC to celebrate the deliverance from the king of Syria with the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem by Judas Maccabee.

It was during the Festival of Lights when Gabriel appeared to Mary, in mid December, to tell that she was to be the mother of Jesus. She then went to stay with Elizabeth for 3 months before returning to Nazareth. If Gabriel appeared to Mary in mid December, and Mary became pregnant, when would Jesus be born on our calendar? Nine months later brings us to mid September. The typical gestation period for a human being is 266 days.

Luke 2 begins the birth of Jesus. And based on Luke's account, Jesus had to be born in September. December is when He was conceived. Unfortunately the Roman Catholic Church placed Christmas on the birth date of Sol Invictus, which is the sun god of the pagans. Although Jesus would have been conceived in December.

I want to read to you something that we have from the early Christians. This is a paragraph that was written by Irenaeus. He was a Christian pastor in the middle 2nd century. He was taught by a man named Polycarp, pastor of the church in Smyrna. In the book of Revelation, he was the leader of the church in Smyrna for which Jesus had nothing but good things to say about in the 7 letters of chapters 2-3. Polycarp was taught by the Apostle John.

Jesus (3 B.C. – 30 A.D.) taught John. John (2? B.C. – 101 A.D.) taught Polycarp.
Polycarp (65 A.D. – 155 A.D.) taught Irenaeus. Irenaeus (120 A.D. – 202 A.D.)

These are a few of the men we refer to today as the “Early Church Fathers”. They have many writings that survive today that tell intricate details of how the church was laid down by Jesus and the Apostles and its complete doctrines. The point is, when the Early Church Fathers have something to say about how things were done, dates of events, or what true doctrine is, we can rest assured that the information is accurate and in no way distorted. This means that their ideas are most likely, especially when we see a consistent theme throughout their writings, what was handed down by the Apostles, which in turn got their ideas directly from Jesus Himself.

When we read the 2nd chapter of Revelation, and when it talks about the seven letters to the seven churches, the Apostle John, as dictated by Jesus, wrote those letters in 96 AD. Polycarp was the pastor of the church of Smyrna, a city in what is modern day Turkey, at this vary same time. So you can see how close Irenaeus is to Jesus Himself. Jesus taught John; and John taught Polycarp. Polycarp taught Irenaeus.

Here is something that Irenaeus wrote about the date of Christ's birth. He actually tells us the year Christ was born. In this paragraph, what Irenaeus was doing was defending the Greek Old Testament as being the legitimate Old Testament Scriptures and he points out the fact that the Apostles quoted from it rather than the Hebrew Old Testament.

“Since therefore the Scriptures have been interpreted with such fidelity, and by the grace of God, and since from these God has prepared and formed again our faith towards His Son. And has preserved to us the unadulterated Scriptures in Egypt...”

He says in Egypt because that is where the translation was made. The Old Testament was translated into Greek from Hebrew priests during the reign of Ptolemy II. He was the king in Egypt at the time. It was done by 70 Jewish scholars who were sent there by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem at the behest of Ptolemy.

“...where the house of Jacob flourished. Fleeing from the famine of Cannan, where also our Lord was preserved when He fled from persecution, set on foot by Herod. “

What he is doing is saying that the Scriptures were preserved in Egypt in the Greek language. Just like when the nation of Israel was preserved in Egypt, and just like Jesus and His family fled to Egypt to escape Herod. So Irenaeus is basically drawing these parallels.

“...And since this interpretation (or translation) was made prior to our Lord's descent to earth, and came into being before the Christians appeared, **for our Lord was born in the 41st year of the reign of Augustus**. But Ptolemy was earlier under whom the Scriptures were translated. Since these things are so, I say that, truly these men, who prove to be presumptuous...”

He is talking about those who were corrupting the Scriptures.

“...who would now show a desire to make different translations, when we refute them out of these Scriptures (*the Greek Old Testament – LXX*) and shut them up to a belief in the advent of the Son of God, but our faith is steadfast, unfeigned, (*not fake*) and the only true one. Having clear proof from these Scriptures, which were interpreted in the way I have related; and the preaching of the church is without interpolation (*that is without changing or adding to*) for the Apostles since they are more ancient date than all these heretics, agreeing with this foresaid translation. And the translation harmonizes with the tradition of the Apostles. For Peter, John, Matthew and Paul and the rest successively, as well as their followers, did set forth all prophetic announcements just as the interpretation of the elders (*that is the 70 elders, which were the Jewish scribes which did the translation*) contain them.”-**Irenaeus Against Heresies; Ante-Nicene Fathers; Bk. 3, Ch. 21**

The point that I wanted to make was that he says that the Lord was born in the 41st year of the reign of Augustus. That is a very critical point. When did Augustus begin to reign? It was when Julius Caesar was assassinated. Augustus came to power upon the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BC, and when was Augustus in the 41st year? It would be 3 BC So Irenaeus is telling us that Jesus was born in 3 BC.

Something else that was fascinating is that there were some very unusual astronomical events that took place on September 12, 03 BC. There was an alignment of planets, with the brightest star, in Leo... an alignment of Jupiter and Regulus in the constellation of Leo, to be more precise. Jupiter is the biggest planet, the king of planets, if you will. Regulus is a binary star and the brightest star in the Constellation of Leo. The name Regulus is a Latin version of the star's Greek name, Basiliscus, which means "The Little King" and reflects the lion's status as the king of beasts. Leo, the Lion, represents Christ, the King of Kings.

Genesis 49:8 NKJV "Judah, you *are he* whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you.

Genesis 49:9 NKJV Judah *is* a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him?

Genesis 49:10 NKJV The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.

This is the story of Jacob. Before he died he was blessing each of his sons and he gave a prophecy about each of them and the tribe that they would produce. A scepter is mentioned. A king carries a scepter. He is talking about the coming of Christ and His kingdom. Christ was of the tribe of Judah. He is both a king and a lawgiver.

Also, behind Jupiter and Regulus comes up Virgo, the virgin, clothed in the sun with the moon at her feet. It is just a small crescent moon. This makes the brightest star, from an observational point of view, and we also know it as the Star of Bethlehem. This also happens to be the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah is also considered the date of creation on the Jewish calendar. The awesome amount of symbolism in the sky on this day is amazing.

Jesus' birthday was 09/12/03 BC. Now it is not always on September 12th because of the way the Jews use a different calendar to calculate their months. Their month always begins on a new moon. Our calendar doesn't follow the cycles of the moon. We use the sun. So Jesus' birthday will vary between September 5th and October 5th. But His original birth date was 09/12/03 BC.

Can I add anything more? Let's see. Turn to Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:1 NKJV Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

Revelation 12:2 NKJV Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

Revelation 12:3 NKJV And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

Revelation 12:4 NKJV His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

Revelation 12:5 NKJV She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

We know that the one that is going to rule with a rod of iron is Jesus Christ from Psalm 2:9, and Revelation 2:27.

Revelation 12:6 NKJV Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

That 1260 days is, of course, talking about the end-times. The church fleeing from the persecution that is going to come in the last 3½ years before Christ returns.

Jesus was born on Rosh Hashanah (September 12, 3 BC), the anniversary of Creation. The Bible gives the date in Revelation 12, where the "Woman" giving birth to the "Man Child" (Jesus) is portrayed with a description of the position of the sun and moon against the constellation, Virgo. When Jesus was born, the sun was in the midst of Virgo, and the moon was beneath her feet. This sign occurs every year on Rosh Hashanah, the "New Year" on the biblical calendar. This was the anniversary of the first day of creation. It is also the day that Jesus (the creator) entered His creation. God commanded Israel to celebrate this day with "the blowing of trumpets" (Leviticus 23:23-25). Therefore, we celebrate the birth of Jesus on Rosh Hashanah, in September.

Why not celebrate Hanukkah (the "Feast of the Dedication"), a time for cleansing ourselves individually and as the congregation from all idolatry, instead of celebrating the birthday of the Roman sun god. Let's not "put lipstick on a pig" by trying to put Christ in a pagan holiday.

The Sun travels through all the constellations in a year. And the moon travels through all twelve of them in a month. So the moon appears to be moving much faster than the sun.

And remember, in the Bible everything is from an observational point of view. It is not necessarily a scientific point of view. We do the same today. For example, we say that the sun is rising in the morning. We call it sunrise. But the sun isn't moving, we are. We have learned this from scientific study, but it doesn't negate anything.

A question of the meaning of the number of lamps on the Menorah has been asked by a friend. So I am going to add a little to this in order to answer that...

Some of the ultra-orthodox Jews who give an interpretation of the Menorah with 8 lamps, with the servant lamp in the middle, interpret it as referring to the 7 days of creation plus the 8th lamp referring to eternity after the seven days of creation. I think that is rather insightful of them because I think they are on the right track.

The early Christians taught, pretty much unanimously, the earliest Christians, those who had linkage to the Apostles, in their writings, they taught that from the time of creation until the time of Christ's return to establish His kingdom on the earth, would be six millennia (6,000 years). And that the time that He will reign over the nations with the saints will be 1,000 years, the 7th millennium. And they equated this to the creation week. That is, that God created everything in 6 days and on the 7th day (the Sabbath) He

rested. So the Sabbath day became the millennium of Christ's reign on the earth over the nations along with the resurrected saints.

Then they interpreted the 8th day as reference to eternity, which comes after the 1,000 year reign. I want to read to you from one of the early Christians. This is from the Epistle of Barnabas:

Further, also, it is written concerning the Sabbath in the Decalogue which [the Lord] spoke, face to face, to Moses on Mount Sinai, "And sanctify ye the Sabbath of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart." (Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:12) And He says in another place, "If my sons keep the Sabbath, then will I cause my mercy to rest upon them." (Jeremiah 17:24, Jeremiah 17:25) The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation [thus]:

"And God made in six days the works of His hands and made an end on the seventh day; and rested on it, and sanctified it. Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, "He finished in six days". This implies that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him as a thousand years. And He Himself testified saying, "Behold, today will be as a thousand years." (Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8) Therefore, my children, in six days (that is 6,000 years) all things will be finished. And He rested on the seventh day. This means that when the Son coming again will destroy the time of the wicked man (the Antichrist), and shall judge the ungodly and change the sun and the moon and the stars, then He shall truly rest on the seventh day."

Moreover, He says, "Thou shalt sanctify it with pure hands and a pure heart." If, therefore, any one can now sanctify the day which God hath sanctified, except he is pure in heart in all things, we are deceived. Behold, therefore: certainly then one properly resting sanctifies it, when we ourselves, having received the promise, wickedness no longer existing, and all things having been made new by the Lord, shall be able to work righteousness. Then we shall be able to sanctify it, having been first sanctified ourselves. Further, He says to them, "Your new moons and your Sabbath I cannot endure." (Isaiah 1:13) Ye perceive how He speaks: Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Me, but that is which I have made, [namely this,] when, giving rest to all things, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead. And when He had manifested Himself, He ascended into the heavens. (Epistle of Barnabas, XV - The False and the True Sabbath)

So what he is saying is that the six days of creation is a prophecy of six one-thousand-year periods. Then the seventh one-thousand-year period, will be the time of rest; which is Christ's coming kingdom. This is a very ancient Christian document. It was written about the time the Apostle John died.

These things are beneficial to Christians because they remind us of the promises of God and His spiritual truths. We are not under the Law; so we don't have to keep the Feasts of the Lord the way the Jews had to. But I am going to tell you this... by keeping them, or at least studying them, will absolutely help you to understand Scripture better. And I can't tell you why that is true, you have to learn that stuff to know. Also, this will absolutely open your eyes to Biblical prophesy and help you understand God's timeline for everything.

Hanukkah is a celebration that was not commanded by God for the Jews. It is certainly not commanded for us, but God approved of and blessed the celebration. Why would it be beneficial for Christians to

celebrate Hanukkah? Most Christians don't celebrate Hanukkah, some do, but most don't. Instead they put up a tree, decorate their house with lights, give gifts, etc. Paganism.

Hanukkah is about cleaning the House of God from all things pagan and unclean. Jesus went into the Temple for Hanukkah (Feast of Dedication). You can read about that in John chapter 10. It says that Jesus was at the Feast of the Dedication, which is Hanukkah, and was in the Temple at that time.

You know, it was only three months later that Jesus went back to the Temple and He made a whip and used it against the men and their sheep and oxen because they had turned God's house into a house of thieves... a house of merchandise (John 2:16). Here it was only three months after Hanukkah, the celebration for cleansing the Temple, and they are right back to defiling it again. This is really the only time Jesus actually became angry and showed any violence at all.

There is another reason Christians should keep Hanukkah, but there is actually a blessing for those who attend a great future Hanukkah. Did you know that? You would have to know and understand the culture and chronology of the Bible... the Feasts. Hanukkah is not only mentioned in the Gospel of John, but Daniel as well. It's a prophesy in chapter 12.

Take a look at it. If you didn't do any chronology work, if you didn't do the math in Daniel and Revelation, then this passage would completely escape you. But if you do the math and understand the symbolism, you will find that this passage of Scripture that we are about to read is about Hanukkah.

Daniel 12:1 NKJV "At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.

By the way, Daniel is talking about the exact same thing that we read about in Revelation 12 where it talks about the woman, who is the church, the believers, fleeing into the wilderness to a place where she has a place of protection prepared by God that He should take care of her, the church, during the Great Tribulation, that final 3½ year period. Those written in the book will be delivered or protected.

That is how it has always played out in the entire Bible, Old Testament and New. God protects His people, but they go through the tribulations. Noah was told to build an ark. He wasn't raptured away. Jacob was told to gather food during seven years of plenty because there was going to be seven years of famine. Jacob wasn't raptured away. The Christians were told to flee into the mountains when they saw the Temple surrounded by armies. History tells us that they did and not one Christian perished when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. There was no rapture there either. I could come up with literally a hundred events in the Bible and not one time did God ever 'rapture' anyone away. They always went through the persecutions with His protection. Why is it that modern Christians think they are going to be raptured away before the Great Tribulation? That statement is never made anywhere in the Bible. It is a lie from Satan that can be proven with the very Bible they claim to honor and follow. But Christians today "will not endure sound doctrine", period.

Anyway, I digress.

Daniel 12:2 NKJV And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

This is the resurrection of the dead talked about in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 and Revelation 20:4-6, which is “the first resurrection”. Also, comparing Matthew 24:29-31 with Revelation 6:12-17 you get a good sequence of events between the Great Tribulation and Jesus gathering together His elect, which will be those who were “dead in Christ” and “those who are alive and remain”.

Daniel 12:3 NKJV Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

Daniel 12:4 NKJV "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; ~~many shall run to and fro~~, and knowledge shall increase."

I crossed out that phrase “many shall run to and fro” because it’s not in the older Hebrew manuscripts or the Septuagint, which Jesus and the Apostles quoted from, and if its good enough for Jesus and the Apostles, its good enough for me. Here is what the Septuagint says,

Daniel 12:4 LXX And you, Daniel, close the words, and seal the book to the time of the end; until many are taught, and knowledge is increased.

Daniel 12:5 NKJV Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank.

These are angels that Daniel was talking about in previous chapters.

Daniel 12:6 NKJV And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?"

Daniel 12:7 NKJV Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

Now, “a time, times, and half a time” is a statement that we find in both Revelation and Daniel and refers to 3½ years. A ‘time’ singular, means one year, times, two years, for a total of three years, and half a time, half a year. That is the same period of time we saw in Revelation 12 where the woman flees into the wilderness where she is protected for 1,260 days.

Daniel 12:8 NKJV Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

Daniel 12:9 NKJV And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Daniel 12:10 NKJV "Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

Daniel 12:11 NKJV "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

The Abomination of Desolation is the time when the Antichrist is going to defile the Temple of God again, which is going to happen 3½ years just before the Day of the Lord, the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Then it says, "...one thousand two hundred and ninety days." This is interesting because he talked about the time, times, and half a time, which is 3½ years, or 1,260 days, this is described in Revelation also, then he talks about 1,290 days, then he says... verse 12...

Daniel 12:12 NKJV "Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

Now what are all these days and why do we have different totals? They all start from that time when the Antichrist defiles the Temple, known as the Abomination of Desolation, and they end at three different points: 1,260 days, 1,290 days, (which is 30 days after 1,260 days) and 1,335 days (which is 45 days after the 1,290 days). Now what is interesting about this is, if you have done a chronological study, understand the Year of Jubilee, the shofar (trumpet) sounding at the beginning of the Jubilee Year when Christ will take the Throne of the Kingdom and be called King of Kings and Lord of Lords... And the book of Leviticus tells us on what day of the year that occurs. It is on Yom Kippur, the 10th day of the 1st month of the Hebrew Calendar, God's Calendar, which is in September.

Now what is so interesting about this is that it is the day that Christ returns. That is the day that the last trumpet is blown. (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:51-54)... it is Yom Kippur, but 75 days later is the 1,335 days talked about here. 75 days after Yom Kippur is the first day of Hanukkah. And Daniel just said blessed are those who wait and come to that day.

Daniel 12:13 NKJV "But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

Daniel will be raised at the 1st Resurrection with all the believers at Christ's coming. This is mentioned here, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, and Revelation 20:4-6. There are only two resurrections, this one, and the one where all will be raised and judgment will be pronounced. Those will receive the "second death".

No Hanukkah celebration is going to compare to the one Daniel is talking about here. Because this is when the Temple of God is going to be completely cleansed from all the defilement of the Antichrist; and Christ is going to take His place on His throne, also known as the Throne of David, and He is going to reign over the earth from Jerusalem. And that is going to be some kind of cleansing. Daniel is saying that there is a blessing for those who come to that celebration.

I, for one, want to be there.

So what does Hanukkah have to do with us, because we, if we belong to Christ, are going to be raised from the dead, resurrection, which most Christians don't really even understand and they believe in reincarnation without even knowing it, and looking down on Hindus and Buddhists for that very reason. Christians die. Body buried. Spirit flies away to Heaven. Spirit gets new "glorified" body. All that changing from body to spirit to body is the EXACT definition of reincarnation. It is NOT resurrection. Not to mention, then everyone has to line up for the Great White Throne judgment to see

if they get to go to Heaven or Hell. But if the Christians are already in Heaven when they die, why do they have to wait for the judgment to see if they get to go to Heaven or not? That is stupid, a lie from Satan, and unbiblical. Sorry, digressing again...

I think this is a good reason for Christians to celebrate Hanukkah. I also think it is a good idea for Christians to celebrate Hanukkah **instead** of Christmas, not in addition to Christmas. I'm giving you my opinion. Let me explain...

Christmas presents us with a dilemma... a tension between two things... what is pagan, and what is holy... what is unclean, and what is clean. There is a tension between those two things. And if you don't believe me, just drive down your street on Christmas; where you see one house with a manger scene out front, and the next house has Santa Clause and flying reindeer. You can almost tell who is a Christian and who isn't. Is there a tension between those two ideas? Of course there is.

Check out your supermarket and listen to the music... "Here comes Santa Clause, Here comes Santa Clause..." or "O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree..." then, "Joy to the World, the Lord has come..." Don't you see a tension between those things? One thing is of the world, and the other is of God. One is celebrating the birth of Christ, yes, on the wrong day, and the other is celebrating commercialism, and things of the world for profiteering. There is a tension between those two things.

Hanukkah is about removing and separating what is clean and unclean and having what is clean have nothing to do with what is unclean. And if we know that Christ's birthday was not really on that day, why celebrate it among all the pagan traditions, which God hates anyway?

You know, one of the things I have found that people struggle with is teaching their children about Santa Clause. Telling their kids about Santa Clause and then having them find out later that there is no such thing as Santa Clause. That would be a trust issue. What do you think it might mean to them when you tell them about Christ and the Father? Might it be that they won't believe that either? I think there is a tension between those things.

What about giving and exchanging gifts? We justify the whole gift giving thing by talking about the three wise men. By the way, the Bible never even says there were three. But they brought their gifts to Jesus. Why aren't we giving our gifts to Jesus, instead of everyone except Jesus? Big, big profits at Christmas time. But the tradition of gift giving doesn't come from the wise men, it comes from the Roman holiday of Saturnalia. They exchanged gifts at that time. Which started before the birth of Jesus. It wasn't for more than 300 years before Christians started taking on that pagan ritual. The early Christians never celebrated Christmas.

Christmas has become a day of greed for children. I remember in the news in 2008, and 2009 about people killing others to get a good deal on Black Friday. I don't know what has been happening in that area as of late because I don't celebrate it, and I haven't since 2012.

Do we really want the birth of our Savior to be mixed in with all of that? Christmas is about blending the holy and the profane. Hanukkah is about separating the holy from the profane.

You've heard the expression, "Jesus is the reason for the season." No, not really. Sol Invictus is the reason for the season. Jesus was just sort of tacked on a little later. The baby Jesus was inserted into the middle of all of this paganism.

You also see bumper stickers that say, "Keep Christ in Christmas". I say, "Why?" Why do we have to have a crusade to keep Christ in the midst of all of that paganism? And all the slavery to greed? What does Christ have to do with that?

The thing that we have to ask is, "What does God think about all of this?" We just read some Scriptures where He wasn't too thrilled and **commanded** that it not be done. It is not what we think, or what our relatives or neighbors think, but what does God think, that is important. Do we please God, or men?

Is it better for you to celebrate with your children the miracle of flying reindeer and some fat guy in a red suit going down every chimney in the world in one night, and that would be a miracle, or to celebrate the One who was Light of the World? It's a no-brainer to me.

I would also submit to you that you would have a much better opportunity to witness for your faith when you tell people (unbelievers) that you are a Christian and you don't celebrate Christmas. I know I have. Because they are going to want to know why. Or if you tell people you are a Christian and you tell them that you celebrate Hanukkah. They would ask why. But if you just go and say I am a Christian and I celebrate Christmas, that doesn't open any opportunities to witness whatsoever with the ungodly. It doesn't. Not to mention, think of all the money you would save not having to buy so many presents.

Now I am not going to judge those who celebrate Christmas. I used to celebrate it. It was my favorite time of the year. But I didn't know what I know now as a Christian. I am just explaining why I don't, and why I think it would be wise for Christians to do the same. Now I have never actually celebrated Hanukkah with my family. This will be my first year. But I have thought about it for a few years. It is a way for my family to celebrate a festive event at the same time others are celebrating, what I now see is a pagan holiday. And this is the real time of Christ's birth. And as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, for He is holy.

Joshua 24:15 LXX But if it seem not good to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your fathers that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, among whom you dwell upon their land. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, for He is holy.

You have to do what you feel is right in the eyes of God. That's why I do what I do. That's why I feel I have to say something. We are to spread the Gospel, the true Gospel of the Christ, Jesus. I personally feel like every single step I make trying to follow closer to God, is the right thing to do. And if you seriously dig into your Bible, you can and will find buried treasure. It's not going to jump out at you. God is looking for those who are diligently seeking Him. And I am telling you, the things you will find absolutely are of divine providence. The Bible cannot have been written by anyone other than God Himself. But you have to make your own choices on how to follow Him.