



---

David Cayhill

---



## *The Reason for the Season*

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year”... or so the saying goes. From the moment the plates are cleared of Thanksgiving Turkey and taters, it’s Christmas time till New Year’s. The most joyous time period. The colors! The lights! The decorations and the festive traditions! Food and cheer! Family and friends! Presents and parties! Since we were small we’ve all enjoyed the hap-happiest season of all. But of this time of wonder and delight, of all our cherished traditions, have we ever wondered why we decided to do them? Why at this time? Why at all?

Each year both the church and the world celebrate with glee and gaudy pomp, the same exact event. Both take up their stand at opposite ends of the holiday either embracing the commercialized consumerism of Christmas culture or else exclaiming enthusiastically that “Jesus is the Reason for the Season.”

And then of course come the Hebrew Roots crowd, condemning all celebrants as idol worshipers and branding Christmas pagan, heathen, and satanic. Out comes their tattered copy of the debunked “Two Babylons” and they begin screaming about Nimrod and Tammuz. On they will rage about Santa as an ambigram of Satan and bending to get presents from under the tree as bowing to an idol. So much hate and rage...and little consideration whether or not their points are being heard...let alone whether they have merit.

So what is the answer? Is Jesus the reason for the season? Is Tammuz? Santa Clause? Why do we do what we do? Why do we do anything at all? Is it a Christian celebration hijacked by capitalism or a heathen holiday hijacked by Christendom? Or is it something else entirely? Perhaps an amalgamation of each? And if it is, is that okay? Let’s take a look into the history and traditions and see what we can find. And try to answer as with anything: What is it now? What was it then? And how did it get from there to here?

If you grew up in church like I did, it’s a no-brainer. Christmas is the birthday of “Jesus Christ”. Celebrated the world over by millions of faithful men and women who love the Lord with all their hearts and remember the 25th of December fondly every year as the day our Savior entered into this wicked world to suffer and die for our sins. Every year,



we read the story of the nativity. And sing the song “What child is this?” Oddly enough though, that’s always asked as rhetoric...We are never supposed to really ask “What child is this?!”

See, if you grew up heathen like many of the people I know, this celebration would not be so clearly Christian to you. For you it would be known from youth as Yule, the Winter Solstice, a celebration of nature and a time to honor the gods, to give thanks for the sun and revel in their blessings. Yule after all means “wheel” in reference to the sun but also means “child” denoting the newly born sun.

So rightly it should be asked of this time and

season, “What Child is This?”

Is it pagan? Is it Christian? Well, at this present time, it is different things to different people and that for different reasons. Pagans tend to be mad at Christians for celebrating what they see as their stolen holiday and turned into Jesus’ birthday. And Christian’s tend to have on average no idea that anything is amiss.

But in reality, neither is entirely on point.

It is true that the December 25th holiday the church observes annually was originally the exclusive practice of the heathen Germanic and Nordic peoples, and despite the desperate claims of Christianity, it was not part of our first praxis. However, neither is it true that we as Christians have purloined this pagan rite either; it simply being something special we received from our forebears and a bit of family fun we’ve inherited innocently.

So while it is so that the Teutonic peoples serve as the source of most of our modern Christmas traditions, their theft from the heathen was hardly our doing. And to be sure, the deed was not done in our day nor even within recent history.

For that amalgamation we must go back to antiquity to that erstwhile age we have come to call the early “church”. Most Christmas detractors will try to jump straight back to Babylon and the baleful beliefs Nimrod forced upon the world, but much of that era gets garbled by time and twisted by well-meaning yet ill-informed individuals intent on sharing truth but only able to pass on what they too heard from a half truth. Most of that madness is the result of the infamous writings of one Alexander Hislop who penned his points of view in a tome called *The Two Babylons*. Writing in the mid-1800s Hislop became the source for most Christmas critics of the last century and a half. However, sadly Alexander was too intent upon lambasting Roman Catholicism as the New Babylon that he performed shoddy research and rather pitiful studies to conclude that Christmas is originally the Birthday of Nimrod’s son by his wife Sameramus. Yet for all the time this book was used to prove the pagan nature of the nativity of Jesus in December, it was debunked in recent years not merely by bias critics but by genuinely scholarly research of which it turns out Hislop had never done. His accusations against Rome of pagan assimilation were accurate for certain but equally certain is the importance of honesty in our investigations and insinuations, neither of which may be found in *The Two Babylons*.

As it is so that the simplest story is usually the truth, unlike Hislop, we need not reach all the way back to the blurry history of Babylon and guess, stretch, and contrive to make connections between external evil and its adoption into Christendom.

We need only return to the first few centuries this side of Calvary, to Christianity in its infancy and the elements of the Roman Empire that influenced her early development. Where that pagan empire got her heathen ways is much a mystery, shrouded in the mists of history, but however she came by them, by the time she believed them, they were then heathen. Ergo we need go no further to find when and how the foreign elements of alien faiths ended up infused in ours and inherited eventually by us in the modern age.

Granted there were always sungods in the pantheons of pagantry, as there were also stormgods and idols of sea and sex and plenty and time. But in the first few centuries after Calvary and just prior, there rose up in Rome certain cults centered around sungods from around the world. And whether the idol was Apollo, Helios, Sol Invictus, Mithra or some composite version of each or all of them, the one thing that all their worship held in common was the winter celebration of the solstice on what amounts to December 25th. (Changes in the accounting of time since have altered the modern calendar so that what is now Dec.25 is the day when the sungods had their birthdays.)

Coincidence? Not hardly. Within a century of the ascension of our Savior back to glory Above, a shift took place in the Faith He entrusted to us. His great commission was to go out into the world and make disciples from out of all the nations and to teach them to obey everything He commanded, but instead somewhere along the way, this instruction was set aside in favor of making converts at any cost and learning the ways of the nations. In the early days, forced conversions had not yet been thought of by the bishops but compromises they made a plenty to make it easier for people to believe.

Some of the more mendacious malefactors manipulated the Faith in such ways as to lure in the lost, while other more honest elders merely altered details to accommodate them that were already interested. Each instance was unquestionably utter evil, well intentioned or otherwise. Whether to ease the path to belief or to inspire otherwise uninterested parties, the result was the same, a man-made connection between the Messiah of Israel and the sungod of Rome. Subtlety ruled the day at the start, but over several centuries what began as accommodation became indoctrination.

Admittedly, those aberrant pastors who compromised for the comfort of converts generally purposed to purge the religion of all the added extras over time. Alas that never happened. And here we are 17 centuries later having to explain what happened and why.



# Remnants of the Romans

The initial compromise was made in the mid-first century when the separation was first started between mainstream Judaism and the Jewish sect known as Nazorim (Followers of the Nazarene) eventually to evolve (devolve?) into the Christian Church.

As gentile converts began to dominate the sect, its inclusion in Judaism was fast fraying.

By the early second century, gentile converts formed the overwhelming majority of the Jewish sect. And in light of the nascent hostility of Rome toward the Jews, the Nazarene sect swore off obedience to Torah (the first 5 books of the Bible) the instructions of Heaven, embracing instead a Greco-Roman version of the faith.

Yahshua the Messiah became Iesous Christos (eventually over the centuries, Jesus Christ) and the terminology, and mindset was moved from Hebrew to Greek, which incurred great losses of understanding. Through these alterations and the aforementioned compromises of the elders with those joining up, elements of sun-worship snuck into the new-made religion of Christianity.

Immensely popular among the pagans of that day and age in the Roman Empire were the celebrations of Brumalia and Saturnalia. The shortest day in the year followed swiftly behind the rather raucous festival honoring the great protector of Rome, the deity called Saturnus, or as we know him today, Saturn, were the most widely commemorated events leading up to the winter solstice.

As for those who belonged to the cults of the sun, what came on the heels of these heathen holidays was called Dies Natalis Sol Invictus or the Birthday of the Unconquerable Sun, the day that corresponds on our calendar to December 25th.

As time passed and Christianity became more popular both through persecutions and through emendations, converts to the Faith increased exponentially but many and more wanted the Savior without changing to His behavior. Basically they wanted to add Him atop their already established belief systems. And this desire, as mentioned was not met with hostility by the leadership of Christianity but was instead in stages accepted, accommodated, and even by some, encouraged.

In this way, the birthday of the sungod entered the Christian religion and was accepted as the birthday of the Son rather than the sun. The light of the world exchanged for the Light of the world...supposedly...but we kept all his stuff.

Though it took several centuries for the celebration to solidify, eventually it was taken up by later generations with vigor. Not yet called Christmas, a title that would develop out of the Middle Ages, what became known as the Nativity was adopted in the 4th century and due largely to the efforts of the Emperor Constantine.

Hailed as the first Christian emperor, Constantine is given by church history a pass for almost every evil thing he ever did simply for signing the Edict of Milan, ending the centuries long persecutions of the Faith. But one of the most disturbing things about the emperor is that he was not a Christian in the sense that we would say. Sure he was baptized on his death bed and nominally accepted the Christian religion...but only after spending a life time altering said religion to his liking.

Constantine had been a henotheist, which is to say that he worshipped only one deity but believed in the existence of others. Or even more accurately, that he thought all the major deities were identical. And by the demonstration of behavior, Constantine was an ardent worshiper of the sun god, Helios...whom the emperor could not in his mind distinguish from Jesus (Jesus).

Throughout his long reign of over 30 years, Constantine the Great did such irreplaceable harm to the Christian religion as to stagger the imagination. It was under his supervision, that the ecclesia, anachronistically referred to as the church, became associated with being a physical building rather than the gathering of the faithful wherever they may be. By forbidding pagan religions from repairing their temples and practicing certain grotesqueries, while simultaneously extending benefits toward Christian ecclesia, Constantine introduced a new form of false conversion into the mix. Till then, it was bishops making concessions and compromises to allow the halfhearted to convert. But through these Constantinian incentives, it became financially, politically, and economically advantageous to become nominally Christian instead of whatever former heathen religion one held. The line that separated Christian from heathen, which had begun to be blurred in the first 3 centuries was in the 4th practically erased.

On December 25, 336, Constantine made the birthday of the sun god the official commemoration of the Nativity of "Christ" for the church in Rome. And by 352AD, Pope Julius I had made it official for the whole of Christendom. And once something is adopted by the whole church, it's almost impossible to abandon, as it is then deemed to be divinely given.

But before officially making Dec 25 into the Birthday of "Jesus" Constantine first appointed his mother, Helena as Augusta Imperatrix and sent her to the Holy Land on a 2 year journey in 326 to "find" the relics of Christendom and to declare the holy sites. In addition to a trove of icons and locations she claimed to be of gospel significance, Helena selected the site for the birthplace of the Savior, over which the Church of the Nativity now stands. And for this location, Constantine's mother chose a Tammuz cave. A grotto where heathens worshipped yet another sun god, of Babylonian origin. And to this day that location is regarded by billions of people as the place Mary gave birth to the Son of the Most High.



# ✦ Silent Night ✦

Very little if anything we believe relating to the birth of the real Messiah is genuine... except for the gospel accounts of course. But they tell a very different story of the Lord's birth than the church has been doing now for 17 consecutive centuries. For starters, it's absurd to say the Birth of the Messiah is in December as several points of the gospel account note that utter unlikelihood. (It should be noted also now that no obligation is ever bearing on those who refuse to accept Dec 25 Christmas as the birthday of the Lord and Savior, to explain themselves, as the burden of proof rests on the claimants of Christmas since it was an addition to the original faith. As the Messiah is Jewish and his parents were Jewish, and first century Torah observant Jews did not celebrate birthdays, it is both arbitrary and capricious to assign the winter solstice as His birthday. Yet for the betterment of believers, we will endeavor to explain.)

The gospel narrative of the birth of the Messiah is set off by the issuing of the order of taxation from Caesar Augustus. Contrary to the church interpretation of Caesar's command, believed to require every subject to return to the town of his ancestors (a foolish order as this would cause great chaos and undermine the point of the census itself), August's actual order was for everyone to go to "his own city". In other words, "everybody go home so we can count you and tax you." And such census' and taxations were never demanded in winter. Why? Because the vast majority of persons in the olden days were agrarian. They lived from harvest to harvest and were taxed in the same manner. The emperor would never have issued a national taxation long after the last harvest when no one had anything to give. Moreover travel even on good Roman roads was intolerable in wintertime without the modern amenities of climate controlled vehicles. Though undoubtedly Mary and Joseph's trip can't be taken as the average journey of the average person, but a 97 mile trip in the dead of winter was no simple order even from the emperor. What would today be a 2 1/2 hour drive in a warm car would have been an arduous and dangerous journey by foot, cart, or pack animal. Moreover it would have been more than merely the classic depiction of the very pregnant Mary riding a simple donkey and humble Joseph walking beside her, staff in hand. No one else present. No cart for them to sit in. No caravan for them to join. A ridiculous image if we think about it for half a minute...but we are never supposed to. Never supposed to question, to wonder, to consider the culture and customs and conditioning of the times...and especially to never consider that we might just be envisioning the entire scene based exclusively on the customs, culture, and conditioning of our time instead.

Taking in the facts of the story as we know it, all the Roman world was ordered to go home for census and taxation. Therefore in making the long and arduous journey to Bethlehem, Joseph is going *back* to Bethlehem because it is his home. And from the rest of the narrative, if we do not read it through the filter we were given, we can deduce the fact that Mary was from Nazareth. Joseph was evidently in Nazareth for his wedding to Mary (Jewish weddings in those days were extended affairs) when the census was called for. For safety's sake, both of them would have travelled in a group aswell along with any one else making the trip in that direction.

And why, one might ask, is the classic depiction of the two, not only alone but with Mary on a donkey and Joseph walking? Because the prevailing belief is that these two were extremely poverty stricken. A notion that is the height of hilarity and hopeless ignorance.

Considering Joseph's profession as what the Scriptures call a Tekton (usually rendered bluntly as "carpenter") it is utterly unlikely that he would be poverty stricken. In Hebrew, his profession would be called Kharash, not a simple carpenter, but a craftsman, and a master craftsman at that. He was an artificer. Possibly of woodworking but the term and its meaning are quite broad and elaborate, incorporating everything from carpentry to masonry, from ship building to cloth weaving, from sculpting to poetry writing. But all around, a kharash (tekton) was by no means living hand to mouth. He would have been highly skilled and highly paid and quite likely a master of his craft with workmen under-him. He and his very pregnant wife would therefore not be tramping over the hills of Israel to get from Nazareth to Bethlehem like beggars on foot and donkey. They'd be riding into town like well-to-do Jews of their time.

The next question we will be asked then is, if Joseph lived in Bethlehem why was he trying to rent a room at an inn instead of going to his own house? But here again the inquirer asks a question based on assumption for the Scriptures never say he was renting anything. It simply says that "She (Mary) wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger because there was no room in the inn."...or at least that's the typical translation we are given by Christendom. But how accurate is it? We've never thought to ask till now.

The word the scribes rendered as "inn" is "kataluma". But kataluma can mean "a lodging place, break of journey, guest chamber, or inn." So why did the translators settle on "inn" as the proper meaning of the word? Because of the aforementioned assumption that Joseph was not from Bethlehem but rather Nazareth and the subsequent preconception that he had no home in that place.

If we therefore take the totality of facts into account for understanding, we will likely interpret kataluma not as inn but as guest chamber. In fact the other times kataluma is used in Scripture it is rendered as guest chamber. Why not here then? Because of the preconceptions we've been taught to add to the text.

We also add in the idea that Mary arrived in Bethlehem at full term and was having the baby right away...but the text does not provide this as fact. Luke only says "while they were there" the time came for Mary to give birth. While they were there could be anything from an hour to a week or more. It's an imprecise amount of time. There is however, no reason offered in the account to imply a sense of urgency. Nothing to lead us to believe Mary and Joseph tried to rent a room at an inn but were turned away because everything was full.





We are by tradition, well trained to disregard the culture and customs of the time as we study. For example, we are expected to forget the imperative of Jewish life to be hospitable and render charity to those in need. Had the folk of Bethlehem been inhospitable to a birthing mother in her hour of need, it would be a dreadful abomination in their eyes and the scorn of all the land. It would be no small thing at all and worth a word or two...yet none is given.

We also further determine based on our own biases that first century Jewish homes were not constructed with sections inside them for animals to be housed, even though this is the testimony of archeology and history that it was so. As mentioned, Helena, the Roman emperor's mother determined that the birthing place of the Messiah was in a cave apart from the building people lived in. Why? Most likely because it was this way where she was from. But it was not so in Israel.

In that time and place, most homes were constructed as one large room for living and sleeping etc. And connected to this room was a lower space for the animals. Essentially making two rooms in one. More well-to-do families could have more elaborate housing but it was not the common place. Likely if Joseph's family was wealthy, his home would have had more rooms. And guest chambers were separate from the living quarters with their own space. A newly married couple would have had this space for themselves separate from the rest of the house.

But whatever the situation at the time, when it came to the point of Mary's giving birth, there was not room in the guest chamber so she was to deliver her baby in the animal section of the house itself. There was no cave. There was no stable. And the Scripture never says there was. Even the idea of the manger is manufactured from conjecture. Isn't it strange that the text should say that she laid Him in a feeding trough *because* there was no room in the guest chamber? The logic does not follow...unless of course the word for manger can also have another meaning...and sure enough it does.

In the Septuagint, when the translators used the term "phatne" rendered here as manger, it is a translation of the Hebrew repheth meaning stall or enclosure (for sheep and goats). This interpretation also fits better with Luke's account as it says that she laid Him in the stall or animal enclosure because there was no room for them in the guest chamber. She didn't put Him in a feeding trough because there was no space in the room. She put Him in the room for the animals because there was no space for them in the room for guests.

And then of course the shepherds arrived to bear witness to the new born Messiah, which is yet one more bit of info that make it even more unlikely that all this nativity took place in winter. Although it is possible for sheep to be let out to graze in winter, it is highly unlikely. While it is true, that sheep can stay out in the snow for a time, any good shepherd would not leave his flock out in the cold winter country side. What's more he would not attend them there. And since Scripture records that the Bethlehem shepherds were in the fields by night keeping watch over their flocks at this time, it is much more likely such events unfolded in the spring or fall instead. This fact accompanied by the government requirement of taxation and travel for census make a winter date absolutely out of the question.

But most importantly, it is not the job of the detractors in this case to defend their position of winter not being the time of the birth of our Savior. The burden of proof is

upon the shoulders of those who declare December 25th as the birthday of “Jesus”, when any assertion of this notion is arbitrary at best and adaptive (adoptive) at worst. As mentioned, first century Torah observant Jews commemorated the days when great men had died, but it was not their habit to hold any special remembrance for the days of anyone’s birth. That being the case, for 350 years and more, the birthday of our Lord was not celebrated or even known, though some points in time have been suggested over the centuries.

Our calculations must begin with Zechariah the priest, father of John the Baptist. Why? Because the entire story of the birth of the Messiah first begins with the birth of His herald, Yahchanon or John, as we call him today. John’s birth was prophesied to Zechariah by the Angel as Zechariah was going about his duties in the Temple. John was to be a miracle baby too because Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were well past the age of bringing children into this world. Six months after the conception of John, Mary conceived Yahshua miraculously so, He Whom we have taken to calling in our modern day, Jesus.

So let’s do the math from that moment: we calculate 6 months from the conception of John to the conception of Jesus. Then 9 more months for the gestation period of Jesus. So one year and 3 months after Zechariah was serving in the temple, the Lord was born. So then, when was Zechariah serving in the temple? See why these little details are so important?

Zechariah was of the order of Abijah. And each order served twice a year, while all the orders served together at the holy days. But it seems from the account that the angelic visitation was at one of the two times when the order of Abijah was serving in Temple. Being 8th to serve, Abijah’s order would have been on duty early summer and again early winter. Around about June/July & December/January. Adding 15 months to either of these times would mean that the birth of the Messiah was either early fall or early spring. But neither can be certain since equal evidence is available for each.

The one guarantee though is that the one we call “Jesus” of Nazareth wasn’t born in December and definitely not on the winter solstice...and of course He was not born in Nazareth.

According to the traditional nativity scene, the whole “Christmas” story happened all at once, on a single silent night. We are led to believe that Mary gave birth in the evening and the shepherds came to bear witness to the new born King and the next day the Wisemen arrived to pay homage. Why so short a period? An evening and a morning and nothing more. How odd, especially because from the gospel narrative we are taught a very different story.

We get the details of the birth of Messiah from Matthew and from Luke. But while Luke shares the information about the Lord’s birth, followed by the trip to the Temple Mary and Joseph made for purification and sacrifice according to the Torah, Matthew jumps over all that and is the one who provides the details about the visitors from afar.

“We three kings of orient are bearing gifts we’ve travelled so far....” So the song goes, and so goes our idea of the tale. Three kings traversing the earth to behold the King of kings. They come on 3 camels and carry only three little containers of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Nothing else. No one else. But where do we get these images in our heads? They certainly don’t come from Scripture.

According to the gospels, “magi” came to see “Jesus”. Magi. This word does not mean, kings or wisemen. “Magi” is the plural word for “magus” or “mage”, and that means, “magician, magic worker”. Presumably because they knew how to discern things about the universe in the stars, they were some form of magicians who dealt in astrology. Sure switches up the story a bit, doesn’t it?

And the idea there were three is entirely derived from the number of listed gifts they brought. But this depiction is wholly subjective and doesn’t take into account the magnitude of the moment or its meaning, let alone the manner of travel in those days.

The magi (not kings) travelled from the east to come to Jerusalem seeking the King of Israel. There’s a lot of land east of Israel. How far had they travelled and from what land? On this the gospels are silent. Maybe it was far, maybe not. But we assume the number of persons making the journey were three and we assume they were coming



from very far away. Taking into account both these assumptions, what we are not taking into account is the contradiction. Travel of great distance was extremely susceptible to bandits and traveling in numbers was a necessity. Therefore, the magicians who came to visit the newborn King were either *many* in number and traveling as a caravan, or *few* in number and traveling *with* a caravan, or else few or many but simply east of Israel and traveling not very far at all. Whatever the correct scenario, we cannot know. But it most certainly was not 3 men on camelback making the long trek alone with nothing but treasure.

As to the treasure itself, if you had the money to make such a long and perilous journey to meet the King of all kings under Heaven Whose birth is foretold by the universe itself, do you bring Him a few tiny containers of precious things? No. You bring Him GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, and MYRRH ! You bring Him much and more. Which would again require a great caravan.

So, the notion of the Savior being impoverished is even sillier than would have been thought before. Being, after all from a well-to-do and important family (in fact what should have been the royal family, were all things put to rights in the land of Israel) He would not rightly be thought of as a pauper. Moreover, with His step-father being a master-craftsman as a profession, this thought of the Lord’s poverty is even more

preposterous. But over all, the knowledge of the gifts of the magicians to the Messiah at His birth requires much linguistic gymnastics in order to ignore and declare Him a lifelong poor carpenter from Nazareth.

But all that is parenthetical to the point that an unknown number of magicians (likely many) visited the King of kings in His infancy, bringing Him an unknown amount of gifts (likely many) and this did not happen on the same night as the birth. In fact, it happened years later. How do we know?

First of all, according to the gospel story, the star (whether a literal celestial luminary or an Angel of a sort or some other miraculous happening) appeared when the Lord was born, and the magi followed it to find him. Presumably, based on the other details provided by the author, this trek took about two years. When the magicians arrived in Jerusalem, they asked for the newborn king and were told by Herod, the puppet king of Rome, that they should go look for the child and report back to him the boy's location. When the magi did not report back, Herod sent soldiers with orders to kill all the babies in Bethlehem, "two years old and under". Why two years? It can be deduced based on Herod's conversations with the magi that the star they were following appeared 2 years prior. And children younger than two as well would have been just in case.

We can know moreover that the magicians' visitation was years later because of the presented grammar in their narrative. When the shepherds are told to look for the child they are told to find a "brephos" meaning unborn or newborn baby. But when Magi arrive they find a "paidion" meaning a young child. By their meeting, the Messiah was at least 2 years old.

Also the magi arrive at a house not a stable or a cave for keeping animals. Whether the night of the birth or years later, there was a home to come to. Meaning that this either confirms, what was explained previously, that Mary gave birth in the animal section of the house or that it's been a couple years and Mary and Joseph are still living in Bethlehem, or both.

When Herod gave the order to slaughter the Bethlehem baby boys, this sent Mary and Joseph and the child to Egypt for safety till Herod died. But the only reason they did not return to Bethlehem was because Herod's son was ruling in his place and Nazareth was beyond his control. Thus, Mary and Joseph went to live in Nazareth, with *her* family. And there the Lord was raised and why He is known as the Nazarene.

So as we can plainly see, the record of events reflects a much different story than the one typically told in nativity scenes and Christmas pageants around the world every winter. And most of the accepted traditional narrative is formed by assumptions and preconceptions which have thereafter been superimposed on the gospel...and these assumptive changes to the story have led to the later distortions created over the centuries by powerful persons in the Church.

We've assumed Joseph was a poor carpenter from Nazareth. We've assumed that Caesar's order was for everyone to go to their ancestral home. We've assumed Mary gave birth in a cave. We've assumed kings came that night to meet Him. And we've assumed of course that this happened on December 25th between 8 BC and 4 BC.

But the simple truth is that Joseph was a highly skilled and highly paid master-craftsman who lived in Bethlehem. When Augustus gave the order for census, he simply told everyone to go home, and at the time Joseph was far north in Nazareth



## THIS WICKED CHRISTMAS

going through the lengthy process of marrying Mary. Together, they travelled south to *his* home in Bethlehem where, at some time, she gave birth in the house, and a couple years later magicians visited bringing a fortune. Joseph and Mary and “Jesus” flee the wrath of Herod and stay in Egypt an unknown amount of time attempting to return to their home in Bethlehem but only end up with *her* family in Nazareth because they were warned about Herod’s son. A fairly simple history to be sure, but not one that is familiar from the usual telling of it...And yet it’s the unbiased objective record of events. So how did we get from there to where we are today? Slowly.

For starters the Messiah never celebrated His own birthday. First century Torah observant Jews did not practice such celebrations. This was at the time exclusive to the heathen. (Not that the habit was particularly heathen in nature any more than the wheel or the bow are pagan products though undoubtedly developed by pagans.) So it was that for the 33 years of His earthly life, the birthday of the Lord was never commemorated. But what about after His death and resurrection? Well, for the first 20 years only Jews were his disciples. And these didn’t celebrate birthdays either. Making over 50 years of not celebrating His birthday. Then when the disciples began to teach nonjews, undoubtedly they would have taught these people the same lessons they themselves had received. Which became the norm for another 20 years...until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.

And that changed everything!

From then on, Jews were at odds with Rome. Until the final destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of all Jews from the promise land in 135AD, a steady dilution was developing in the original sect. More and more nonjews were joining the Natzorim sect. But fewer and fewer were learning the ways of the Nazarene. So that at the time of final divide between the followers of the Nazarene and Judaism was solidified in the Bar Kochba revolt of 132-135AD, a brand new breed of believers came to be which was known as Christianos or as we would call them now, Christians. No longer following Yahshua of Nazareth but instead idolizing the one they called Iesous Christos...now known as Jesus Christ.

In an age at odds with Israel, and in a world that recognizes only Jews as Israel, it would not do to have a religion modeled after their methods and means. And moreover, most converts were not familiar with Jewish practice nor what exactly they were coming into in conversion. Therefore, in an effort to not appear Jewish and in utter lack of understanding of practices they believe exclusively Jewish, converts rather converted the religion into a more familiar form instead of converting themselves and their ways into the form of the faith once for all delivered unto the faithful.

Somewhere between 136 AD and 336 AD there arose, not only the celebration of the Savior's birthday at all but of His nativity in the winter at the time of the Solstice. But it wasn't till 336 that the celebration was afforded public recognition. Constantine it was who made it a mainstream event by his own practice but offered the tradition to the Empire aswell...

Eventually in 352 AD, Pope Julius the First made it official. By church decree, from then on the 25th of December would be the birthday of Christ. (Even though it was always the birthday of "Christ"...but before that time "Christ" was a vague term applied by each pagan religion to their principle savior. But that's besides the point).

So for about 330 to 350 years after the birth of the Messiah, His birthday was not celebrated at all and not officially on December 25 for another 20 years or so. Let's think how long a time period that is. For comparison, as of this writing the United States has existed as a nation for 244 years. And the landing of the Pilgrims in Plymouth was 402 years back.

In that short time America has fashioned her own mythos, now passed on as "common knowledge". Every year thousands of people travel to "America's Hometown" in Massachusetts to see Plymouth Rock, the spot where the pilgrims first stepped into the "New World". Kids all across the country learn in school about how Paul Revere made his famous midnight ride yelling how the British were coming. They are taught about George Washington, the first President, and all manner of little fictions we've invented along the way. But each is as inaccurate as the traditional Christmas story.

The pilgrims didn't land in America starving, and sick, in winter on the brink of civil war and surrounded by hostile Indians...but take special care to remember the rock they touched toe on first, knowing full well it would be important in 400 years. It's a random boulder others much later carved a number on for a tourist attraction.

Paul Revere may have road out to do the warning but he wasn't shouting " The British are coming! The British are coming!" Even though there was a rebellion on, they were all considered British at the time, and Revere didn't ride alone. William Dawes road out too, as did Samuel Prescott, but they receive little credit for their efforts. And only Prescott actually finished the ride.



And despite our repeated declaration that George Washington was the first President of the United States, the fact is, this is another fabrication. While Washington was the first president under the Constitution, there were several presidents before him, under the Articles of Confederation, the first being a man named, John Hanson. Why are we talking about American history if this is about Christmas?

The history of the United States is short by comparison to others of the world, and yet in 200 to 400 years we've developed "common knowledge" and tradition about our own culture and history, which themselves do not match reality.

How much easier it would have been for Greek believers, openly hostile to anything Hebrew, to manufacture traditions and alternate "common knowledge" over the 300

year absence of Jews in the land of Israel. Traditions based on Greco-Roman worldview and understanding. So much so that in about 326 AD, Helena, Constantine's mother, made her famous journey to Palestine to visit the sights made famous in the gospels, and what she found were heathen shrines in every place. But were they real holy sites covered over by pagan temples or were they pagan temples built in random places with Christian tradition built up around them? There's no way of knowing for certain, but it is absolutely true that whether each site in Israel was the real location or not, after Helena's tour of the holy land, each was declared to be so officially, everyone as she said.

And we've been living ever since off the word of Constantine and his mother, devolving generation after generation into worse and worse idolatry. Quite to the extent that one returning to first praxis might very well be perceived to have joined a cult, become a Jew, or otherwise embraced some lesser heretical path. The horror that crosses a Christian face when they hear you've given up Christmas is all but expected as a universal reaction to the information. And why? Because few know where Christmas came from, and how pagan it remains despite its long-standing Association with the Saviour.

Though some would argue that it's not pagan, an untenable position, and others would argue that it's practitioners are pagan (an unfair accusation) what we have been raised to adore as a divine holiday, is in fact remnants of Roman sun god worship baptized and Christianized by the 3rd and 4th century church. Under the belief that salvation was only in the church and through the consumption of the bread and wine of the Eucharist, many early bishops manipulated the Christian message to make it easier for people to enter. Others made concessions to allow converts to come in unchanged.

But both methods were mendacious and muddied the waters of faith, which fowl waters were handed down through the ages for us to drink. Yet it must be noted that while Christmas exists in Christendom "Solely" because of the absorption of sun god superstitions, our present version does not descend from the Romans but rather from the Germans.

You might have heard the song as a kid "the 12 days of Christmas," and if you're anything like me, you probably thought "hey, what a jip! Wonder where the other 11 days went?" And wondering why we sing a song about 12 days of Christmas...but only celebrate one.

While many may wonder, the answer is actually quite simple. Because there may not be 12 days of Christmas, but there are 12 days of Yule.

So what's Yule, and what does it have to do with Christmas? Well? Nothing, and everything. The habit of incorporating the traditions of pagans as they became Christians never really ended but continued on well after Rome.

Cutting down an evergreen and bringing it into the house to decorate? Hanging holly and wreaths and mistletoe. All these customs came to us when the gospel came to the Teutonics (Germans). Sure, they embraced the Romish Christ, but they never let off celebrating as they always had before for time out of mind. And Rome didn't stop making concessions to their converts as they had always done for time out of mind. Instead she absorbed the German customs as the church has always done.

Many critics of Christmas climb onto bandwagons about various theories that are unnecessary, highly suspect, and just plainly far fetched, when it comes to the happy

# YULE TRADITIONS



traditions of Christmas. And they do so, no doubt to demonize the pagan practices as much as possible, but the plain fact is most of these need not be dark and devilish. They don't have to be traced back to Babylon or the worship of Molech and Ashera... which no doubt they most likely do. But that's not the point of why they are pagan. And it's pure coincidence that Satan is an Anagram of Santa. That fact isn't hiding something sick and sinister.

What makes these things pagan is the fact they are used for pagan purposes and can not be repurposed for the worship of the true Heavenly FATHER. Why? Because worship isn't singing songs in church. Worship is what we do every day all day. And YAHWEH said for HIS people to never try to worship HIM the way the nations around us worship. Christmas doesn't have to appear wicked like Halloween, to be evil. It just has to be against the express command of the FATHER for how HE says HE wants to be worshipped.

The Germanic celebration of Yule or Yuletide has always been enjoyed with evergreens and wreaths, presents and wassailing. All the little details we find so endearing about Christmas. And it's not devilish in appearance. It's not demonic in nature...it simply comes to us from somewhere other than Scripture and the worship of the Heavenly FATHER. It comes from someone else's religion.

So why do we do it? Good question.

Some say, "the Lord knows my heart. I don't celebrate Christmas for those reasons." Or the response comes as, " But I do it for 'Jesus'". Or the reply says, "What about the kids?"



Well, what about them? When we don't know truth, we teach our children what truth we know. But when we know it's a lie, why would we continue to teach it to our children? And yes, the Lord does indeed know our hearts, but that's no answer to the question, is it? And it ought to be no source of comfort.

The fact is that we don't know our own hearts, so the Lord Almighty knowing ours should terrify us when we use HIS knowledge as our excuse.

When we follow the stories of the Scriptures from the beginning to the end, there is not one single example to be found in which a person is accepted who decides to worship YAHWEH their own way instead of the way HE says to approach HIM. The exclusive result is that the one who did something else to worship HIM besides what HE said, that person was always cursed or killed.



Granted there has ever been a measure of mercy for those who don't know better, but that grace only goes so far. And nearly always when it appears, it does so in the form of knowledge, so that we may adjust our approach accordingly.

As mentioned many Messianic individuals and organizations, some well meaning and others malicious, have maligned Christians for commemorating this wicked Christmas. But that sort of behavior is not only unproductive, it is also unnecessary and unkind. We all do what we do according to what we know. And when we don't yet know the early church coopted Saturnalia

and eventually Yule aswell to make our modern Christmas, we have no reason to believe or teach our children to avoid it. Till we know better we believe it "Jesus" birthday and we celebrate it accordingly.

If you don't know you are celebrating Yule / Saturnalia, it's not automatically your fault. Someone lied to you but not even likely on purpose. The lie was told to the fathers of our fathers many generations removed. Whether or not that ancient lie lives on in our lives and in those of our children is our choice today now that we know what was hid from our parents and theirs all the way back.

Church folk are famous for exclaiming, "Jesus' is the reason for the season." Usually in response to the modern commercialism of the celebration, caught up in SantaClaus and shopping-sprees. But the pure and simple truth is that Mithras is the reason for the season. The reason is a lazy and corrupt clergy of the olden days who didn't want to do the work of discipleship but wanted the mass amounts of converts, either to "save souls" or to fill coffers. Either way, we only own this odd holiday of the Romans and Norsemen because of that ancient evil amalgamation.

It was not Christian, and it was not acquired in a Christian way. And Christ not only did not keep it Himself but would not approve of its observance by His disciples.

To many this may seem so much about nothing. Jumping to extremes over none-issues and lesser religious matters, but to the lost world it is seen as a mark against us once they know the truth of it. And to the heathen or the Muslim it appears the same way. To Islam we are seen as pagan for celebrating the heathen holidays like Christmas. And to the pagans we are seen as having highjacked their stuff. Maybe it's

no big deal in our minds, but to half the world we are supposed to be sharing the full-unaltered Gospel with, we are showing ourselves to be idolatrous and perfidious.

And, honest witness aside, the main thrust of the matter is about obedience. Worship is in *what* we do as much as it is in *why* we do it. From Genesis to Revelation this is the exclusive expectation and example. Whether it's all Israel making a golden calf as an image of YAHWEH or Nadab and Abiahu deciding to offer their own sacrifice their own way. Moses choosing to hit the rock the LORD told him to speak to. Uzzah touching the Ark trying to keep it from falling. Down to Ananias and Sefira offering a lesser gift and claiming it to be more. There is no compromise with YAHWEH. He accepts no lies, graft, half measures or half-truths.

So what does it say about our worship when we knowingly celebrate the birthday of an idol and call it the birthday of "Christ"? "He knows my heart" is hardly an excuse when He sees our actions, and the actions are those of other religions, actions He has not commanded nor condoned.

As always, the choice is yours to continue in the typical Christian tradition or to take the necessary steps of reforming your faith and returning to true worship. Are you going to hell for celebrating Christmas like many Torah terrorists accuse church folk? That's neither the point of this paper nor anywhere in my pay-grade. But should our interest as true worshipers of the true Heavenly FATHER be our own personal salvation over obedience to HIS instruction? That is a far better question.

