

Christmas Customs Are Pagan

Christmas customs originated in pagan worship. Does God want us to use those customs to honor Him?

By Gregory Dullum

Christmas, the grand-daddy of all this world's celebrations, is coming this month. The world seems to be making a bigger and bigger deal of this holiday. Christmas decorations go up long before Thanksgiving—in some cases even before Halloween!

Let's review why we, as true Christians, don't keep Christmas. Where did all these Christmas customs come from? Why is Christmas Dec. 25? What are the origins of the Christmas tree, presents under that tree, gift giving, holly and Christmas greens, kissing under the mistletoe, Christmas carols, yule logs, Santa Claus and Christmas feasts? What is our *scriptural basis* for NOT keeping Christmas?

December 25

Let's start our review with the day upon which Christmas is celebrated. Why Dec. 25? It was NOT the day that Jesus was born! A Roman Catholic bishop chose Dec. 25 more than 350 years after Jesus' birth. Why that date? Because the pagans already had a celebration on that day!

The World Book Encyclopedia tells us: "No one knows definitely when the Christmas festival was first celebrated. It is spoken of in the 400's by Clement of Alexandria. Chrysostom speaks of it in the 380's as a custom of longstanding. Other dates were often described as the day of the Nativity, but in the year 354, by order of Bishop Liberius of Rome, December 25 was adopted. It was noted later that this date would fall within the rainy season in Palestine, so that the shepherds would hardly have been in the fields at night as they were when Jesus was born.

"The early Church Fathers probably chose December 25 because the feast of the sun, or winter solstice, was a familiar Roman feast celebrating the victory of light over darkness. This idea was



NAPSA photo

No Christmas celebration would be complete without a Christmas tree. Where did the custom originate of decorated and lighted trees at this time of year?

easily turned from a pagan to Christian one, since Christians consider Christ as the light of life" (1956, vol. 3, p. 1425).

According to *The Illuminated Book of Days* by Kay and Marshall Lee, "The Romans called this day, when the sun was weakest by their calendar, *Dies Natalis Invicti Solis*—Birthday of the Unconquered Sun" (1979, p. 181).

The Pagan Book of Days by Nigel Pennick says: "The major festival of December is the winter solstice, also called Yule, Alban Arthuan, and Midwinter. The birth of many solar saviors and dying gods is celebrated at this time, usually on 25 December. These saviors include Osiris, the Syrian Baal, Attis, Adonis, Helios, Apollo, Dionysius, Mithras, Jesus, Balder, and Frey.... All of these deities were given

similar titles: The Light of the World, Sun of Righteousness, and Savior. The festival of Christmas is a wonderful amalgam of many religious traditions, ancient and modern, Pagan, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Mithraic, and Christian" (1992, pp. 132-133).

So we can conclude that those who think they are worshiping Jesus on his birthday are unknowingly worshipping a pagan sun god at the time when the sun is the lowest in the sky and shines the fewest hours (the winter solstice). They are observing a festival that pagans thought gave encouragement to that sun god, so he would return in strength.

Christmas Tree:

No Christmas celebration would be complete without a Christmas tree. They pop up in practically every home, office and place of business. Why? Why bring an evergreen tree indoors and decorate it?

"Several scholars believe the Christmas tree began in early Rome. It appears in Germany in literature in 1604. Tree worship was common in Scandinavian countries. ... When the pagans of northern Europe became Christians, they made their sacred evergreen trees part of the Christian festival, and decorated the trees with gilded nuts, candles (a carry-over from sun worship) and apples to stand for the stars, moon and sun" ("*Christmas*" *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1956, vol. 3, p. 1425).

Does the Bible mention Christmas trees? The prophet Jeremiah gives a description that fits the modern Christmas tree: "For the customs of the people are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple.

CHRISTMAS

Continued on Page 2

Chistmas

Continued from Page 1

They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do good" (Jer. 10:3-5).

In ancient times, pagans worshiped trees. The tree that was worshiped in pagan times has become the modern Xmas tree.

Presents Under the Tree

Have you ever wondered why presents are placed under the Christmas tree until they are opened? Where did this practice originate?

To the Druids, the oak tree represented the same god that the Greeks called Zeus and Romans called Jupiter. The modern Christmas scene of household items wrapped up and placed under a tree would not seem out of place to the ancient pagan tree-worshippers.

According to *Druids: Their Origins and History* by Lewis Spence: "Tyler alludes to a grove in a Siberian forest where gaily decked idols 'each set up beneath its great tree swathed with cloth or tin-plate, endless reindeer hides and peltry hanging to the trees around, kettles and spoons and snuff-horns and household valuables strewn as offerings before the gods' composed a strange picture of a holy grove at a later stage" (1949, p. 75).

Perhaps modern Christmas-keepers are not intending to offer their presents to a tree god. But that's where the custom originated. And placing the gifts *under the tree* forces the givers and recipients of those presents to BOW BEFORE the tree.

Gift Giving

The giving of gifts at Christmastime originated in the Roman festival of Saturnalia, which was celebrated at this time of year. *The World Book Encyclopedia's* article on "Saturnalia" tells us that the last days of the festival were given over to visiting and exchanging presents (1956, vol. 15, p. 7234).

Holly and Christmas Greens:

What about the hanging of holly and other greenery used to decorate at this time of year? What is the true significance of this custom?

"Holly, mistletoe, Yule logs and the wassail bowl all come to us from the days before Christianity, but they are all things which set Christmas distinctly apart from all other holidays" ("Christmas," *The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1956, vol. 3,

p. 1425).

In *Star in the East*, Hans Holzer states: "...the 'hanging of the greens' and the 'wassail ceremony' are remnants of ancient pre-Christian rituals. The greens of course stem from the Druidic groves and signify the eternal aspects of life." The Druid priests wore holly in their hair (1973, p. 25).

On page 26 Holzer adds, "The holly tree, incidentally, because of its ever-green nature, symbolized life eternal to them [the pagans], and it is true that even today's 'white witches' are firmly convinced that reincarnation is the way of life. ...But the fact remains that the use of any forms of greens in the Christmas service is entirely pre-Christian and has nothing to do with the nativity."

Kissing Under the Mistletoe

Another plant commonly tied to Christmas is the mistletoe. It is a custom to kiss under it. Where did this custom originate?

"Both tradition and literature have inevitably associated the mistletoe plant with Druidism." According to the Roman author Pliny, "The Druids held nothing more sacred than the mistletoe and the tree that bears it" (Spence, p. 79). Why?

The Druids believed oak trees, in particular, represented gods. And the mistletoe represented the life-essence, or impregnatory fluid containing the sexual seed of that god. Spence writes, "the amatory practice of kissing under the mistletoe' seems to have some tincture of recollection of a rite which might make a union fertile by 'sympathetic magic'" (p. 80).

Christmas Carols

Christmas music is everywhere in the days leading up to and including Dec. 25. And yet, as soon as Christmas is over, the music is gone! Where did the custom of playing certain "songs of the season" come from?

"The Druids sang chants to create a harmonious atmosphere among celebrants, although the Druidic solstice festival was a serious and somber affair not at all like the gay Christmas celebration of today. The chants also entered into the Christian traditions and became caroling, the singing of songs of the season" (Holzer, p. 26).

Curiosities of Popular Customs by William Walsh says that Christmas carols originated in hymns from the Roman Saturnalia: "the Christmas carol is a new birth, purified and exalted, of the hymns of Saturnalia..." (1897, p. 227).

Yule Log

An old custom associated with Christmas is burning a "yule log." Although this is not

done as much in recent years (many modern homes don't have real fireplaces), the name is still used with such expressions as "yuletide" and "the yule season."

Where did the yule log originate? "The Druids blessed it with great ceremony at the winter feast. For good luck, the log was not allowed to burn out during the Christmas season, and part was kept to start the fire next year" ("Christmas," *The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1956, vol. 3, p. 1425).

Santa Claus:

Santa Claus is a legend that has nothing to do with Christ's birth and everything to do with taking true worship away from God. Attributes which belong only to God are given to this faker.

Where does Santa live? At the North pole. Where is God's throne? In the North (Isa. 14:3).

Santa is known as one who comes out of the sky above and gives good gifts. But the Bible tells us in James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father."

Comedian singer Ray Stevens sings a song about Santa in which he claims, "He's everywhere! He's everywhere!" But the Bible says God is everywhere. Jer. 23:24 tells us He fills the heaven and earth.

One Christmas carol says of Santa, "He sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake. He knows if you've been bad or good..." But these are qualities of God: Prov. 15:3 tells us, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good."

Dutch children sing about SERVING Santa *all their lives*: A hymn goes like this:

*Santa Claus, good holy man
Go your way from Amsterdam,*

The SABBATH SCOOP

228 O'Connell Drive
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701-3332

Editor

Gregory Dullum

Circulation Managers:

Craig Evans • Raleigh Collins

Ed Crook • Gregory Dullum

© Copyright Gregory Dullum 2014

PRINT CIRCULATION: 79 • COST PER ISSUE: FREE
www.thesabbathcoop.org

The Sabbath Scoop is an independent publication. Opinions expressed are those of the editor (based upon more than 48 years attending the Church of God and four years of Ambassador College plus additional personal Bible study), not of any church or organization. Donations to cover costs of paper, toner, postage and Web site are gratefully accepted. You may e-mail the editor at: cbjprodept@socket.net. Unless otherwise noted, Bible quotes are from the New King James Version, ©1983, Thomas Nelson Publishers.



NAPS drawing

Santa Claus is depicted as a wise old man who lives in the North; who sees all and knows all; and who brings good gifts from above on Christmas Eve. He is a substitute for God!

*From Amsterdam to Spain
From Spain to Orange
And bring these little children toys...*

*Saint Nicholas, My dear good friend,
To serve you ever was my end;
If you me now something will give,
Serve you I will as long as I live"*

Yet, we are to serve GOD as long as we live, NOT SANTA!

Nigel Pennick, in *The Pagan Book of Days*, says St. Nicholas — or Santa Claus — “absorbed pagan attributes from Woden (Odin), chief of the wild hunt, who rides through the sky with reindeer and 42 supernatural huntsmen” (p. 136). Santa’s true origins come from a chief god who was a huntsman—and I believe his origins can be traced back to Nimrod in Genesis 10:8-10, who was a mighty hunter before (i.e., in place of) the LORD, and starter of the false Babylonian Mystery Religion.

Feasting:

The World Book Encyclopedia article on “Saturnalia” says this pagan celebration “was an ancient Roman festival. The feast was given in honor of Saturn, the Roman harvest god. The festival began on December 17 and lasted for seven days. On the second day, many families offered their own sacrifices of a young pig.

“The Saturnalia festival was a gay occasion. Schools observed holidays and all public business was halted. Courts of law closed their doors, and no criminals could be punished. Families held gatherings and elaborate banquets.”

Curiosities of Popular Customs by William Walsh (p. 227) adds: “the Christmas banquet itself is a reminiscence of the feasts given in honor of ancient gods and goddesses.”

The ancient Greeks also celebrated the winter solstice. According to “Wonders of the Winter Solstice” in the Dec. 10, 2003 *Cash-Book Journal*, “Their winter solstice ritual was called Lenaea, the Festival of the Wild Women. A man representing the harvest god Dionysos was torn to pieces and eaten by a gang of women.” Human sacrifice and cannibalism are part of the history of Christmas.

Does It Matter to God?

So Christmas and all its customs originated in pagan worship of false gods. The Roman Catholic Church could not get the people of Europe to stop their pagan practices when the church spread its brand of Christianity across that continent. So it allowed the pagans to keep their customs but it gave “Christian” meaning to those customs.

Instead of worshiping the sun god on its birthday, these pagans by Catholic decree were suddenly worshiping the “Son of God” on a day the church decided would honor Him, a Mass day (hence the name: Christ-mass).

The church changed the meaning of Christmas greens to picture eternal life. The prickly holly now represented Christ’s crown of thorns and the red berries his blood.

Gift-giving was said to represent the gifts the magi gave to Christ at his birth.

Santa Claus was taken from the realm of godhood and made into a legend of a friendly, giving, harmless old fellow who gives gifts to good children around the world. His name came from a Catholic “saint” Nicholas.

Little that the pagans did in worshiping their false gods was changed. The Catholic church just gave new meaning to those things.

Is this the way God wants people to

worship Him? No! He told the Israelites when they were about to enter the promised land that was filled with pagan worshippers: “take heed to yourselves 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.’ 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... Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.” (Deut. 12:29-32).

The customs of Christmas are evil. They are darkness. They are idolatry. What does the New Testament tell us Christians?

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 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.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters,’ says the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

Christmas is all around us. But let’s AVOID it *as much as we can*. Today, we may be considered the oddball because we don’t keep it. But what will these same people think when their eyes are opened to the truth and they are called to an account for their actions? Then they will realize they were, in truth, the oddballs for keeping these pagan traditions.

Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. What river is called the River of Egypt?
2. What sea does the River Jordan flow into?
3. Who said to Christ, “We know you are a teacher come from God”?
4. What was the robber’s name who was released instead of Jesus?
5. What is the first important day on God’s calendar?

(Answers on page 5)

Why Was Saul Made King?

Israel's first human king had many flaws. Why was he chosen to be their leader instead of one with better character?

By Gregory Dullum

God used Moses to lead Israel out of Egyptian slavery. Moses was a *prophet*, NOT a *king* (Deut. 34:10).

When Moses died, Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Joshua was a former “minister” to Moses but he was NOT a *king* (Ex. 24:13).

After Joshua, Israel was led by a group of unnamed “elders” who were *elders* but were NOT kings (Josh. 24:31).

Then came the period of judges, when God selected a man or a woman to deliver his people from oppressors and to rule them for a period of time. These people were *judges* and NOT *kings* (Judges 2:16). The last major judge was Samuel. He was a prophet, NOT a *king* (1 Sam. 3:20).

“Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel.... But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, ‘Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations’ ” (1 Sam. 8:1, 3-5).

Who Was Israel's First King?

During the time from Moses to Samuel, Israel was ruled, NOT by a *human* king, but by God Himself! These prophets, elders and judges were intermediaries who took the people's concerns to God and brought God's answers back to the people. When the people demanded a king, they demanded a human ruler *in place of God*—at least that's the way God looked at it.

“And the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them’ ” (1 Sam. 8:7).

Israel's *first* king was God—the preincarnate Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:1-4)!

Israel Rejects God & His Way

How did it make God feel to be rejected as king? He was ANGRY! He said through the prophet Hosea, “O Israel, you are destroyed, but your help is from Me. I will be your King; Where is any other, that he may save you in all your cities? And your judges to whom you said, ‘Give me a king and princes’? I gave you a king *in my*

anger, and took him away in My wrath” (Hos. 13:9-11, emphasis added).

Why was God so angry? Because He loved Israel and wanted the best for his people. He wanted Israel to LIVE HIS WAY—the way of LOVE—*loving God and loving their neighbor* (Deut. 11:1, 30:16; Lev. 19:18; Mat. 22:36-40). Under such a system, Israel's leaders were to be SERVANTS of the people (Mat. 20:26-28).

Israel REJECTED *God's way of love and service*. The Israelites wanted to live SATAN'S WAY of *selfishness* in which the *leaders lord over their subjects*—TAKING instead of GIVING (v. 25). The Israelites wanted to be like the nations around them, which had followed a pattern created by Nimrod in Babylon (Gen. 10:8-11).

Babylon was a city-state with a pagan religion and a Satanic form of government that put a few leaders at the top who profited from the sweat and labor of others.

“This BABYLONISH principle of government, intertwined with economic manipulation, has ruled the world ever since. It has ruled under various forms—whether called oligarchy, monarchy, dictatorship, autocracy, democracy, communism or Naziism—but it's the same old BABYLONISH PRINCIPLE under slightly different modes of administration” (“Who Would Jesus Vote for President?” by Herbert W. Armstrong, 1964, p. 2).

God told Samuel to warn the Israelites about adopting this Babylonish system of government. The results would NOT BE GOOD! The king would TAKE from them to *glorify himself*! He would take their sons and daughters into *his service*, confiscate the best of their lands *for himself*, and heavily tax them to put funds *in his coffers* (1 Sam. 8:11-18). The warning fell on deaf ears. “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, ‘No, but we will have a king over us that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles’ ” (v. 19).

Who Chose Saul to Be King?

The first human king of Israel was Saul, son of Kish. Had there been an election, Saul would have won! The people of Israel would have chosen Saul hands down.

Saul is described as “a choice and handsome young man. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward

he was taller than any of the people.... there is no one like him among the people” (1 Sam. 9:2, 10:24).

However, Saul was NOT elected *by the people*. He was CHOSEN. By whom? Samuel? When Israel demanded a king, Samuel relayed the message to God, and God replied to Samuel, “‘Heed their voice, and MAKE THEM A KING.’ And Samuel said to the men of Israel, ‘Every man go to his city’ ” (1 Sam. 8:22). Did Samuel go through the cities, selecting whom *he thought* should be king? No!

“Now the LORD told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying, ‘Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over my people Israel...’ ” (1 Sam. 9:15-16).

When Samuel anointed Saul king before all the people, he proclaimed, “‘Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?’ So the people shouted and said, ‘Long live the king!’ ” (1 Sam. 10:24).

Saul was neither ELECTED *by the people* nor SELECTED *by Samuel*. GOD CHOSE HIM.

How does God choose a king? When God selected David as Saul's successor, He told Samuel, “For the LORD does not see as a man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

Saul's Flaws

What was *in Saul's heart* when God selected him? His biggest flaw appears to have been an *inferiority complex*. When Saul was anointed king, he was “little in his own eyes” (1 Sam. 15:17).

Having an inferiority complex *is different* from being HUMBLE. A humble person understands *his true worth*, recognizes his *need for help* and *asks for it*. For example, Solomon was humble at the time he became king, and he said to God, “I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or to come in.... Therefore give to your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1 Kings 3:7-8). Solomon did not feel capable of being king over God's people, so he asked God for help and received it. He didn't hide; he didn't shirk his duty.

Saul's reaction was different. When it was time to anoint him king, he was

found HIDING among some equipment (1 Sam. 10:22). And when David was victorious in battle, Saul was not grateful for another man's success. His inferiority complex made him so jealous of David that he tried to kill him (1 Sam. 18:6-16). Saul's inferiority complex also led him to bow to peer pressure instead of standing up for what is right (1 Sam. 15:18-24).

Why Did God Choose Saul?

Did God know Saul's heart when He selected Saul to be Israel's king? You can be certain that He did. Why did God choose such a flawed man?

God does not always place the GREATEST people in positions of power. In fact, he often selects the LOWEST of men—the weak and base—to be rulers. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar said of God, “the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men” (Dan. 4:17).

God knew Saul's heart, but He *chose him anyway!* Why? God said his job was “commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines” (1 Sam. 9:16). God knew the Israelites *would follow a man like Saul* into BATTLE. He had the LOOK of a champion, even if he didn't have the HEART of one. God's plan worked. Saul fought the Philistines all during his reign (1 Sam. 14:47, 52).

Saul Given a Chance to Grow

God gave Saul a chance to overcome his weakness in character. He gave Saul his spirit (1 Sam. 11:6). Saul was told that by using God's spirit, he could “be turned into another man” (1 Sam. 10:6).

Saul was told to live according to God's laws. He was given the opportunity to learn God's way—to grow in grace and knowledge (1 Sam. 12:14-15, 20-21, 24-25).

Saul accomplished the outward task God had given him to do—battle the Philistines. But he failed at the inward task. He never learned to love the LORD with all his heart, so his kingdom was taken from him and given to David, a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14).

Saul's disobedience was called “rebellion,” “stubbornness” and “sin” (1 Sam. 15:23-24). God became angry with Saul, and in his wrath, He allowed Saul and his three sons to be killed in the same day of battle (Hos. 13:11, 1 Sam. 31:6).

A Lesson for Us

There is a lesson we Christians can learn from Israel's first human king.

God does NOT use *perfect* people to fulfill his plans. *There aren't any!* When He

rules the kingdom of men, he sets over it the *lowest* of men!

We, like Saul, have been CHOSEN by God *to be kings*. We “have been made kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:10).

When called to be kings, we, like Saul, *were flawed*. “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

God *looked on our hearts* and saw *we were weak* but he CHOSE us anyway! He has given us a job to do. We are to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Mat. 28:19-20).

God has given us his holy spirit (Acts 2:38, 2 Tim. 1:7). He has given us his laws to follow and obey (Mat. 19:17). We are to be *led by* God's spirit (Rom. 8:13-14) as we GROW in grace and knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18).

We were called in weakness, as was Saul. We were chosen to be kings, as was Saul. We were given God's spirit, as was Saul. We were given God's law and told to obey it, as was Saul. We were promised a great future if we obey God, as was Saul.

What remains to be seen is our future. Will we FAIL to grow spiritually, as did Saul? Will we overstep our bounds, because we fear men instead of God, as did Saul—when he offered a sacrifice that he should not have offered (1 Sam. 13:8-14)? Will we become stubborn and rebel and sin? Will we fail as Christians, and—like Saul—be rejected as kings (1 Sam. 15:23; Rev. 3:15-16)?

Let's learn from Saul's example. Let's not fail as Christians! Let us keep growing in grace, knowledge and obedience to God! Let us succeed where the first human king of Israel failed. And when we are crowned, we will hear those heartwarming words of Jesus, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Mat. 25:21).

Know Your Bible Answers

1) Nile. 2) The Dead Sea. 3) Nicodemus. 4) Barabbas. 5) Passover.

Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The ancient Druids believed that mistletoe could cure sickness, and could shield people from witches and ghosts.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

Being George Washington by Glenn Beck, Candlewick Press, 2011, p. 79.

Character Matters

“[Ben] Franklin emphasized the warm sentiments that the French felt for Washington in a letter. ‘You would, on this side of the sea,’ he wrote Washington, ‘enjoy the great reputation you have acquired. I frequently hear the old generals of this martial country, who study maps of America and mark upon them your operations, speak with sincere approbation and great applause of your conduct, and join in giving you the character of one of the greatest captains of the age.’

“Without the high regard that the French had for Washington, would they ever have agreed to fund the effort? And, if they hadn't, what might have become of the revolution? It's hard to say, but it goes to show you just how much character matters. In the end, it might not have been Washington's leadership, intelligence, or military skills that actually won the war—it might have been his honor. It's something so simple, yet so many people today dismiss it as outmoded or unnecessary.”

Prov. 22:1; Eccles. 7:1; Ps. 7:8, 15:1-5

Quotable Quotes

“Life teaches us to be less harsh with ourselves and with others.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Memory Scripture

“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” —Judges 21:25

Thy Way

The Bible says, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12), and “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts” (Prov. 21:2).

God’s way is better: “ ‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’ ” (Isa. 55:8-9).

We should align our way to be like God’s way (Mat. 5:48).

By changing just a few words in the lyrics of the song, “My Way,” this song becomes an anthem a true Christian may be proud to sing. The original lyrics are by Jacques Revaux and Paul Anka.

And now the end is near
And so I face the final curtain.
My God, I’ll say it clear
I’ll state my case of which I’m certain.

I’ve lived a life that’s full,
I traveled each and every highway;
And more, much more than this,
I did it Thy way.

Regrets, I’ve had a few,
But then again too few to mention.
I did what I had to do
And saw it through without exemption.

I planned each chartered course,
Each careful step along the byway;
And more, much more than this,
I did it Thy way.

Yes there were times I’m sure You knew
When I bit off more than I could chew,
But through it all when there was doubt
I ate it up and spit it out, I faced it all
And I stood tall, and did it Thy way.

I’ve loved, I’ve laughed and cried;
I’ve had my fill, my share of losing.
And now as tears subside,
I find it all so amusing:

To think I did all that
And may I say, not in a shy way.
Oh no, not me,
I did it Thy way.

For what is man, what has he got?
If not his God, then he has not.
To say the things he truly feels,
These are the words of one who kneels.
The record shows I took the blows
and did it Thy way.

Yes it was Thy way.



Pentagon Studies Reveal Major Nuclear Problems

“The Pentagon will have to spend billions of dollars over the next five years to make emergency fixes to its nuclear weapons infrastructure, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel will announce on Friday [Nov. 14], after two separate Pentagon studies concluded that there are ‘systematic problems across the nuclear enterprise’...”

“The reports are a searing indictment of how the Air Force’s and Navy’s aging nuclear weapons facilities, silos and submarine fleet have been allowed to decay since the end of the Cold War. A broad review was begun after academic cheating scandals and the dismissal of top officers for misbehavior, but it uncovered far more serious problems.

“For example, while inspectors obsessed over whether every checklist and review of individual medical records was completed, they ignored huge problems, including aging blast doors over 60-year-old silos that would not seal shut and, in one case, the discovery that crews that maintain the nation’s 450 intercontinental ballistic missiles had only a single wrench that could attach the nuclear warheads” (“Pentagon Studies Reveal Major Nuclear Problems” by David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Nov. 13, 2014, pp. 1-2).

Because of our people’s sins, God promised He would break the pride of our power (Lev. 26:19). We are losing the pride of our military power as we allow our nuclear defenses to weaken.

Ultimately, if our nation does not repent and obey God, it will go into national captivity (vv. 31-35, 43-44). The weakening of our national defenses could make that job easier.

Hard-Liners Oppose Deal

“In Iran, the final decision on a nuclear deal [with the U.S.] lies with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader. And if history is an accurate guide, the real debate over an accord, should one be reached, will not begin to unfold until after it is announced. When that debate

gets under way, the voices of the hard-liners—the clerics, Revolutionary Guard commanders, conservative lawmakers and others who are by and large closest to the supreme leader—will be raised against any compromise on Iran’s right to enrich uranium....

“The hard-liners say they operate under the banner of Iran’s leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, who has repeatedly warned that he is ‘not optimistic’ over the chances of reaching a nuclear deal with the West and particularly the United States, which he regards as Iran’s archenemy....

“[Advisor] Mr. [Amir] Mohebbian insisted change was coming. All the stars have aligned, he said, the society is beyond ready, and regionally Iran is strong and the United States confirms that. He pointed to Iran’s military successes in the region, the fact that in Yemen pro-Iranian rebels had seized power, that Iraq was under even more Iranian influence and that the United States seemingly had abandoned plans to remove Iran’s ally in Syria, President Bashar al-Assad.

“ ‘The fact that Obama writes letters directly to our leader Khamenei highlights Iran’s importance and confidence,’ Mr. Mohebbian said. ‘This is a golden moment for us’ ” (“A Nuclear Deal Is Likely to Hit Hurdles in Iran” by Thomas Erdbrink, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Nov. 20, 2014, pp. 1-2, 4).

At the time of the end, there will be a “king of the South” that attacks the king of the North (Europe) [Dan. 11:40]. It’s likely that a nuclear-armed Iran may be part of an Islamic union that makes up this prophesied king of the South.

Quake Hits Japan

A magnitude-6.7 earthquake struck a mountainous area of central Japan shortly after 10 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 22. The hardest hit area was Hakuba, which hosted events in the 1998 winter Olympics (“Damage worse than thought in Japan quake” by Ken Moritsugu and Mari Yamaguchi, Associated Press, *Southeast Missourian*, Nov. 24, 2014, p. 9A).

“Earthquakes in various places” are a sign we are getting close to Christ’s return (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).