

Xmas and its Origin

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About 23 years ago, just before Christmas or Xmas¹ I had returned from church and was listening to an evangelist on the radio. He said, "Let's put Christ back into Christmas!" The thought appealed to me and I said, "Yes, let's put Christ back into Christmas!" I was surprised to hear a small Voice within me say, "How can you put Christ back into something He was never in?" This surprised and alarmed me. I had been raised in a Christian home and all my life I had been taught that Dec. 25th was the birthday of Jesus. I had accepted that without question. Now though, I was being challenged. So I set about trying to prove what I believed. First I re-read the accounts in Scripture about the birth of our Lord. I didn't immediately find anything there that told *when* He was born. Then I looked up Christmas. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, "Christmas (i.e. the Mass of Christ) was not among the earliest festivals of the Church, and before the 5th century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come on the calendar; whether on January 6th, March 25th or December 25th."

The early Church had different dates for His birth? If God had wanted us to celebrate the birth of His Son wouldn't He have made the date known to us in His Word? Then I read, "In the 5th century, the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever *on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol*, as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ's birth existed" (*Encyclopedia Americana*). Now I had found that since no one seemed to know just when Christ was born, Christianity adopted someone else's birthday. Who was this Sol? *The World Book* stated, "The early Catholic Church Fathers probably chose December 25th because the feast of the sun (Sol), or winter solstice, was a pagan Roman feast celebrating the victory of light over darkness." It was familiar. The Roman Catholic Church kept it on Dec. 25th "from about 330 AD" (*Collier's Encyclopedia*). Not only was Dec. 25th not the birthday of our Lord, but it was the time that pagan Romans celebrated the "birth" of the sun god or Sol.

The World Book, under Origin of Christmas Tree related that "Tree worship was common in Scandinavian countries" where they still place a small fir tree or its branch on...a newly built house for good luck. When the pagans of northern Europe became Christians, they made their sacred evergreen trees a part of the Christian festivals and decorated the trees with gilded nuts, candles (a carry-over from sun worship), and apples to stand for the stars, sun and moon."

During the winter months when vegetation died and things looked bleak, it was noted by the ancient people that there were some things which stayed green. Among them were the evergreen trees (the fir, palm, and holly, etc.). They thought that those things that stayed green all winter somehow had the substance of the gods in them (of which the chief god was the sun god). So they worshiped the ever-green things in relation to their great sun god. These practices originated in Babylon and went to Egypt, Greece and Rome where they took on different names, but the practices remained the same. That's how we know they originated in Babylon. December 25th was claimed to be the birthday of the chief gods from Babylon to Rome, regardless of their different country names.

The original Babylonian "Christmas" began when Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, said that overnight an evergreen tree sprang up from the stump of a dead fir tree beside his grave. The dead stump symbolized her dead husband Nimrod. The new evergreen tree was Nimrod "resurrected," come back to life again in the person of Ninus, the baby of Semiramis, the god Tammuz, who is also known as "the Christ," who died for mankind's sins. Satan is the Master Counterfeiter. Nimrod had been "born again" from the dead tree stump in the form of the evergreen tree. The stump or Yule log, represented Nimrod dead, and the Xmas fir tree was Nimrod revived, deified as the sun god or the "son of the sun god." Now my head was spinning. All of this was so new to me. I had believed that Dec. 25th was the birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ. To find that it wasn't really bothered me. To find that it was a carry-over from sun worship bothered me even more. It's not an easy thing to discard that which had been put into me from childhood. At this point though, I began to justify: "Oh, it doesn't really matter

¹ *Xmas* is an abbreviated way of speaking of Christmas. The first Greek letter in Christ's name is known as the *Chai*, which has a 'ch' sound, and it's written similar to the English X and hence, its use for Xmas.

whether it's the birthday of Jesus or not. We're honoring Him and that's all that really matters." Then just before the next Xmas I was sitting by the fire one evening reading the Bible. My wife was putting up lights around the windows and was in the process of decorating the Xmas tree, but I was reading in Jeremiah 10:2-5, where God says this to Israel:

"Learn *not* the way of the heathen and be not dismayed at the signs of Heaven. For the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are vain. For one cuts a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold. They fasten it with nails and with the hammer that it moves not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not. They must be lifted to go anywhere because they cannot walk on their own. Be not afraid of them! For they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."

The words just seemed to leap out at me. My wife said, "Oh, but we are not worshiping the tree like they did then." But the words, "Learn not the way of the heathen" began to burn themselves in my mind, and I couldn't help but see the connection between how God felt about the tree cut out of the forest, decked with gold and silver, and our Xmas tree. I began to feel uneasy about what we were doing "for Jesus." The Xmas lights were not strung up that year and the tree remained undecorated. Then one day I read Deuteronomy 12:28-32:

"Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your sons after you forever, *when you do what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God*. When the Lord your God has cut off before you the nations whom you are about to enter to dispossess them, when you have dispossessed them and live in their land, *take care that you are not snared into imitating them*, after they have been destroyed before you. Do not inquire concerning their gods, saying, "How did these nations worship their gods? I also want to do the same." *You must not do the same for the Lord your God* because every abhorrent thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods. They even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. You must diligently observe everything that I command you! *Do not add to it or take anything from it!*"

These Scriptures came alive for me. I began to see how I was caught in a snare not of my own making. I was imitating the rituals for the pagan gods of Babylon and offering it to my dear Jesus. *I was worshiping Jesus the way the pagans worshiped their gods!* I saw that God did not want this. It wasn't pleasing to Him. When Xmas came around again we found ourselves not putting up the tree or exchanging presents. It was a little strange and there was a pull to participate, but we knew that it wasn't of God. I did not want to sin against Jesus.

The early Christian Church didn't practice Xmas, but around 340 AD this pagan practice was "baptized" by the Roman Catholic Church, but this is nothing less than a tradition of man that nullifies God's will for us. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for keeping their traditions that nullified God's Word (Mt. 15:1f.). Why would it be different for us? If God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ had wanted us to celebrate His birthday or His being born, don't you think that it would be found somewhere in the New Testament? Some might say that God can save people at Xmas services, and that's true, but the basic question to ask is, "Does Jesus, the Lord of Truth, want us to keep pagan traditions like Xmas, which have nothing to do with Him, but His rival, to honor Him?" (cf. John 14:6) We need to get back to worshiping Jesus the way He would want to be worshiped.

As you decide (hopefully) not to keep Xmas, seek the Lord for wisdom in how to relate this to others. Many are not ready for this. We need to be loving and Christ-like in sharing this truth with others. As for me and my House though, we will worship the Lord the way He wants (Joshua 24:15). For more information on the paganism in Christianity see my two page handouts and Alexander Hislop's Christian classic:

1. A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law at <http://seedofabraham.net/A-Snapshot-of-Church-History-and-Mosaic-Law.pdf>,
2. Illicit SEX and the Church at <https://seedofabraham.net/Illicit-SEX-and-the-Church.pdf>,
3. The Feasts of Israel and the Church <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Feasts-of-Israel-and-the-Church.pdf> and
4. Alexander Hislop's, The Two Babylons at <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Two-Babylons.pdf>.²

² This handout was created on Saturday, December 2nd, 2023.