

God's Holy Days or Pagan Holidays – Which?

Millions of people are deceived – they think they are holidays without a thought as to their ancient, true historical origin! What are the facts? Could you be worshipping Christ IN VAIN?

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Who decides what days Christians ought to worship, anyway? Is it a matter of “church authority”? If so, then I suppose it depends on which “church” you belong to!

History is filled with anomalies and strange facts – but perhaps the strangest of all is how the whole world ASSUMES that Christmas and Easter are Biblical and Christian holidays, and should be observed by faithful Christians – yet neither of these is anywhere alluded to, commanded, or observed by the early Church in the days of the apostles, Christ never commanded them, but the actual fact is that they are PAGAN in origin!

Whose Opinion Counts?

It ought to be plain to anyone that despite what men and ministers, churches and religious leaders, say, the final authority belongs to ALMIGHTY GOD. He is the only One who has the right to tell us what days to observe and WHEN to observe them. To do anything CONTRARY to the word and will of Almighty God on this matter would constitute nothing less than insubordination and spiritual REBELLION, which God Himself says is as the sin of *witchcraft!* (I Sam.15:23). Therefore, let's see what the Scriptures say about which days we ought to observe – if we desire to please God, and inherit eternal life!

Millions of ostensible “Christians,” or “nominal” Christians, who think they are followers of the religion of Jesus Christ, have been deceived. Not only have they foolishly embraced erroneous “traditions” as if they were “Christian,” but they have been lied to, misled by preachers and ministers and priests, and have ASSUMED that they were worshipping Christ! Yet Jesus Christ Himself warned: “Howbeit IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, *teaching for doctrines THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye HOLD THE TRADITION OF MEN . . .*” (Mark 7:7-8).

The gospel of Matthew also records similar words spoken by Christ. Notice! “Ye *HYPOCRITES, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths, and honoreth me with their lips; but THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. But IN VAIN do they WORSHIP me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of*

MEN” (Matt.15:7-9).

What, then, is the origin of Christmas, the world’s biggest holiday?

In the book *History of Rome*, by Michael Grant, we read this startling revelation:

“Yet there was also another pagan belief during this same epoch, that much more nearly competed with Christ for the control of the Western world. This was the cult of the Sun, which was revered by millions of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire, and its religion for a time even became the state worship. . . .

“In Rome, the divinity of the Sun came very early on; and then, centuries afterwards, in the superb dome of Hadrian’s Pantheon, the central opening, surrounded by star-like rosettes, represented the solar orb. . . . Before long, the emperor Aurelian established a massive temple of the Unconquerable Sun as the central and focal point of the entire religious system of the state (274).

The birthday of the god was to be on DECEMBER 25, and this TRANSFORMED INTO CHRISTMAS DAY, WAS ONE OF THE HERITAGES THAT CHRISTIANITY OWED TO HIS CULT
(p.391-392, emphasis mine).

Notice! Christianity took over the birthday of the sun god, the cult of the sun, and transformed it into CHRISTMAS DAY, the “birthday” of Jesus Christ! It was in reality the birth day of the pagan sun god, worshipped by millions throughout the Roman Empire!

Historian Jack Finegan, *Myth & Mystery: An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World*, writes:

“. . . But the worship of the sun-god continued widely throughout the empire, and under Aurelian (A.D. 270-275) the cult was restored to its former high estate. In the year 274 Aurelian declared the god – now called Deus Sol Invictus – the official deity of the Roman Empire; he built a splendid temple of the sun in Rome . . . and set the sun’s birthday celebration (naturalis solis invicti) ON DECEMBER 25, the date then accepted for the winter solstice (also in his sola character the BIRTHDAY OF MITHRAS). In the time of Constantine the cult of Deus Sol Invictus was still at its height, and the portrait of the sun-god was on the coins of Constantine . . .

“Likewise it must have been in this time and with the intent to transform the significance of AN EXISTING SACRED DATE that the birthday of Jesus, which had been celebrated in the East on January 6 . . . was placed in Rome ON DECEMBER 25, THE DATE OF THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SOL INVICTUS. This date appears in a list of dates probably compiled in A.D. 336 and published in the Roman city calendar, edited by Filocalus, for the year 354” (Finegan, p.211-212, emphasis mine).

Amazing, but true! Christmas is NOT really “Christian” at all, but grew out of the root of pagan practices and worship!

What about Easter?

The true story of the origin of Easter is intriguing. In this article, we will explore the earliest beginnings of the celebration of the spring festival called Easter, discover the origins of many of today's Easter customs, and see the amazing manner in which this ancient custom wove its way into the fabric of modern Christianity. No story is more astonishing.

The English word Easter and the German *Ostern* come from a common origin (*Eostur, Eastur, Ostara, Ostar*), which to the Norsemen meant the season of the rising or growing sun -- the season of new birth. The word was used by ancient Europeans to designate the "Feast of New Life" in the spring.

The word long antedates Christianity. Originally, it referred to the celebration of the spring sun, which had its birth in the East and brought new life upon the earth. The ancient Teutonic goddess of spring was addressed as *Eostre*. Easter, then, antedates Christianity by centuries.

But what about the myriad customs that surround this day -- the chocolate bunnies, the Easter eggs, the parades?

The Origin of Easter

Admits the *Encyclopedia Britannica*: "The egg as a symbol of fertility and of renewed life goes back to the ancient Egyptians and Persians, who had also the custom of colouring and eating eggs during their spring festival" (article, "Easter").

The Romans called the name of this goddess of sexual fertility "Venus," and it is from this name that we derive the modern English words "venereal" and "venereal disease."

What about the Easter Rabbit? This symbol, too, comes from ancient paganism. Says the *Britannica*: "Like the Easter egg, the Easter hare came to Christianity from antiquity. The hare is associated with the moon in the legends of ancient Egypt and other peoples....Through the fact that the Egyptian word for hare, UM, means also "open" and "period," that hare came to be associated with the idea of periodicity, both lunar and human, and with the beginning of new life in both the young man and young woman, and so a symbol of fertility and of the renewal of life. As such, the hare became linked with Easter...eggs" (*ibid.*).

Says Alexander Hislop regarding the festival of Easter: "Then look at Easter. What means the term Easter itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on

the Assyrian monuments, is Ishtar” (*The Two Babylons*, p. 103).

Admits the *World Book Encyclopedia*, “Its name may have come from *Eostre*, a Teutonic goddess of spring, or from the Teutonic festival of spring called *Eostur*” (article, “Easter,” vol. 6, p. 25).

Adds Alexander Hislop: “Such is the history of Easter. The popular observances that still attend the period of its celebration amply confirm the testimony of history as to its Babylonian character. The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Pasch or Easter Sunday, figured in the Chaldean rites just as they do now. . . .” (Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p. 108).

When Constantine became Emperor of Rome, he nominally at least became a “Christian.” But being the head of a far-flung political Empire, he was concerned about the unity and coherence and stability of his Empire. As a sagacious politician, he sought to reconcile and blend and mesh pagan practices with “Christian” beliefs, to merge paganism with the Roman church. (Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, *The Story of the Christian Church*, p.74). From this time, for the next two hundred years, all persecutions of Christians of the Roman church, and its adherents, ceased. The sword of persecution was “not merely sheathed; it was buried” (*ibid.*, p.75).

But Jesse Hurlbut laments the results of Constantine’s making Christianity the state religion, free from all persecution. From that time, he points out, the church became totally subverted by politics and self-seeking opportunists.

“Everybody sought membership in the church, and nearly everybody was received. Both good and bad, sincere seekers after God and hypocritical seekers after gain, rushed into the communion. Ambitious, worldly, unscrupulous men sought office in the church for social and political influence. . . .

“The services of worship increased in splendor, but were less spiritual and hearty than those of former times. *The forms and ceremonies of PAGANISM GRADUALLY CREPT INTO THE WORSHIP. Some of the OLD HEATHEN FEASTS BECAME CHURCH FESTIVALS WITH CHANGE OF NAME AND OF WORSHIP*” (Hurlbut, *The Story of the Christian Church*, p.79, emphasis mine).

Will Durant, renowned historian, in his massive work *The Story of Civilization*, wrote in volume III, entitled *Caesar and Christ*, that in the new “church” that developed in the Roman Empire, the Jewishness of Jesus was lost or rejected, and replaced with Greek philosophy and thought; the “Law” of the Scriptures and the Jews was rejected, and, he writes,

“. . . the god Christ was assimilated to the religious and philosophical traditions of the Hellenistic mind. *Now the PAGAN WORLD -- even the anti-Semitic world -- could accept him as its own.*

“CHRISTIANITY DID NOT DESTROY PAGANISM; IT ADOPTED IT. The Greek mind, dying, came to a transmigrated life in the theology and liturgy of the

Church . . . the *Greek mysteries* passed down into the impressive mystery of the Mass. *Other PAGAN cultures contributed to the syncretic result.* From Egypt came the idea of a divine trinity . . . from Egypt the adoration of the Mother and Child . . . From Phrygia came the worship of the Great Mother . . . The Mithraic ritual so closely resembled the eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass that Christian fathers charged the Devil with inventing these similarities to mislead frail minds. ***Christianity was the last great creation of the ancient PAGAN world***” (p.595).

These historical observations ought to make us sit up and take notice! The “Christianity” that we see around us in the world today is but a “spin-off” of this ancient syncretism – blending and merging of PAGANISM into the professed Church of Jesus Christ, which had lapsed into political apostasy, profligacy and impurity.

As Christians, then, why should we observe such days?

God’s Word tells us: *“Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen . . . For the customs of the people are VAIN”* (Jeremiah 10:1-3). This chapter goes on to describe a pagan custom of cutting a tree out of the forest, bringing it home, decorating it with gold and silver, and fastening it so it will stand upright. This is an obvious description of a “Christmas tree,” and such “tree worship” goes back to ancient German times, long before Christ, and has nothing to do with Biblical Christianity!

But is it wrong to take pagan customs and traditions, and to dress them up in “Christian” garments, and to use pagan customs to worship the TRUE God?

God’s Word tells us in no uncertain terms: “When the LORD thy God shall cut off the [pagan] nations from before thee . . . Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them . . . and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. *Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God [that is, worship Him with pagan customs!]: For every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods* What thing soever I command you, observe to do IT: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Deut.12:29-32).

How plain it is! We must not worship the Lord our God by using PAGAN practices, methods, rituals, holidays, or the like. Rather, we are commanded to worship Him ONLY by the word and commandments HE has given to us, and *not to add anything to it from paganism, or from our OWN ideas or opinions!*

But what days does the Word of God command us to observe, if any? Are there any Biblically-commanded holy days?

God’s Biblical Holy Days

Notice! God said to Moses and the children of Israel, His people, “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt . . . And THIS DAY shall be unto you for a MEMORIAL: and ye shall keep it a feast to

the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance FOR EVER” (Exodus 12:12-14).

The Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a seven day festival, was ordained by God to be observed “*in your generations by an ordinance for ever*” (Exo.12:17). Does that sound like these holy days are still to be observed today? Does “forever” not really mean “forever”? In other words, till the END OF TIME?

God’s Word also commands the observance of an annual holy day called “Pentecost,” or “Shavuot” in the Hebrew, meaning “Weeks.”

Fifty days after the Passover, came the feast of Pentecost, or Shavuot, the “Feast of Weeks,” so named because it followed Passover by counting “seven weeks” (Deut.16:9; Lev.23:10-16). It also was to be “a statute *FOR EVER* in all your dwellings throughout your generations” (Lev.23:21).

Other annual holy days God commanded His people to observe are also listed in Leviticus 23. They were held in the fall of the year, beginning with the Feast of Trumpets on Tishri 1 (Sept.-Oct. in the Roman year). It was “a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation” (Lev.23:24).

Next, God commanded observance of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) on Tishri 10, saying, “It shall be a STATUTE FOREVER throughout your generations in all your dwellings” (Lev.23:31).

Following this God commanded observance of the Fall harvest, known as the seven day Feast of Tabernacles (Tishri 15-21, Hebrew, “Sukkot”), followed the next day by the Feast of the Eighth Day (known as “Shemini Atzeret” in Hebrew) on Tishri 22nd. God declared that this combined feast was to be kept forever – “It shall be a *statute forever in your generations*” (Lev.23:41).

What could be plainer than that? Yes, mysteriously, the vast, overwhelming number of “Christians” today totally IGNORE these commanded celebrations of God and have replaced them with HUMAN traditional holidays, which came from PAGAN origins, and brought them by stealth into the Church!

These feasts “of the LORD” are all enumerated in Leviticus 23 where God says of them: “*These are the FEASTS of the LORD*, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons” (Lev.23:4).

Notice! These are “THE FEASTS OF THE LORD!” That is, the CELEBRATIONS which THE LORD HIMSELF ordained and commanded!

How plain it is!

No mention at all of “Christmas,” or “Easter,” or “Halloween,” which is also pagan in origin, celebrated by the ancient Druids, or any other holiday observed in the

world today! These worldly holidays are NOT FROM THE BIBLE! They derive from ancient pagan, idolatrous religions – something which God HATES! When you really analyze it, they spawn from the devious, clever, cunning mind of Satan the devil!

Truly, Satan has deceived the ENTIRE WORLD! (Rev.12:9). He truly is the “god of this world” (II Cor.4:4), and the prince of the power of the air (Eph.2:2), and a liar and the “father of lies” (John 8:44).

The holidays of the world are not sanctioned or approved by the Word of God! Unlike the Biblical holy days, the world’s holidays are all *pagan in origin and trace back to ancient PAGAN RITES, FESTIVITIES, AND HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS in honor of pagan deities, divinities, and gods and goddesses!*

God’s Law Is Forever

When God institutes a day to observe, it is forever. Think for a minute! What's wrong with the holy days which God Almighty Himself gave to His people? Would God give them something evil, or harmful?

The holy days of God are a tremendous spiritual GIFT to His people, which keep them in mind of the True God, and which impart valuable spiritual lessons when observed properly -- unlike the mistletoe nonsense and pagan revelry of Christmas and the foolery of Easter, with its chocolate bunnies laying brightly-colored eggs!

Have the holy days of God been abolished? Once God introduced them, and said they are ordained *FOR EVER*, is there any way He would turn around and “abolish” them? Wouldn't that make Him out to be a LIAR, who said one thing, and did another? The apostle Paul wrote of “**God, that cannot lie**” (Titus 1:2). The prophet Samuel declared of God, “The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent” (I Sam.15:29). The prophet Malachi quotes God as saying: “For I am the LORD, I change not . . .” (Mal.3:6).

God does not change – He does not lie. When He ordains something “forever,” it is FOREVER!!!!

Therefore, HIS ANNUAL HOLY DAYS ARE *STILL IN FORCE TODAY, JUST AS HE SAID THEY WOULD ALWAYS BE!*

Are YOU Keeping God’s True Feasts?

God warns His people to “**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good**” (I Thess.5:21). People who have been mistaught, and misled, have no excuse to continue following error. God commands all people everywhere: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth ALL MEN to REPENT [that is, to change, about-face, and begin OBEYING the Laws of God]” (Acts 17:30). Too many of us have assumed too much over the years, without studying God's Word and PROVING the truth of God for ourselves.

Paul praised the Bereans because they took this responsibility seriously. They did not "assume." They did not just "believe the preacher," no matter how impressive his "credentials" appeared to be on the surface. Luke wrote of the Bereans, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, *in that they received the word with ALL READINESS OF MIND, and SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, whether those things were so*" (Acts 17:11).

It is the obligation of each and every one of us before the throne of God to RESEARCH into these things, and PROVE them to ourselves – like the Bereans did. We have no excuse. God will accept no excuses.

God commands, "STUDY to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *RIGHTLY DIVIDING the word of TRUTH*" (II Tim.2:15). God tells us the right attitude we should have in our study.

Isaiah declared, "Thus says the LORD . . . to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite [humble] spirit, and *trembles at my word*" (Isaiah 66:2).

Jesus Christ Himself said: "You shall know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH shall make you *FREE*" (John 8:32) – free from the chains and shackles of sin, error, falsehoods, lies, and evil practices.

Will you continue in following human devised fables, traditions and practices condemned in the Word of God? Or do you have the love of the TRUTH, that you may be saved (see II Thess.2:8-10)?

Think deeply about whom you want to please for all eternity before you decide. Your decision may bear eternal consequences.

For more information on this subject, be sure to read the following articles:

- "The Awesome Meaning of the Passover"
- "When Should the Passover Be Observed?"
- "The Whole Story of Pentecost"
- "New Insight on the Feast of Trumpets"
- "A New Look at Yom Kippur"
- "The Annual Holy Days Reveal the Awesome Plan of God,"
- "The Deep Meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles"
- "Sukkah Secrets"
- "How Many Resurrections?"
- "The Awesome Mystery of Hoshana Rabbah"
- "Shemini Atzaret – the Eighth Day"