

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

# Submitters Perspective

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## THE PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTMAS

*[Ed.'s note: We present here excerpts from an article written by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892 – 1986). He was the founder of the Worldwide Church of God. Note that these are his views and research without any of our commentary. The complete article can be accessed at <http://home.sprynet.com/~pabco/ptofxmas.htm>]*

Where did the world get Christmas?...from the Bible, or paganism. Here are astonishing facts which may shock you. Test yourself. How much do you know of the origin of the Christmas tree - of "Santa Claus" - of the mistletoe - of the holly wreath - of the custom of exchanging gifts?

When I was a little boy, I was taught to hang up my stockings on Christmas eve. When I awakened the next morning, they were filled with small toys and sacks or little boxes of candy and nuts. And beside the mantle, from which my stockings hung, a Christmas tree had suddenly appeared, decorated with shiny tinsel. And on it hung presents. Other presents for us children were piled on the floor underneath. I was told Santa Claus had come down the chimney during the night and left all these things.

But did I question what my parents had told me? Of course not. I accepted it - took it all for granted. Didn't you?

Stop and think a moment. Very few have ever reflected on WHY they believe what

they do - WHY they follow the customs they do, or from WHERE those customs came. We were born into a world filled with customs. We grew up accepting them without question. Why? Sheep instinct? Well, not exactly. But by nature we do tend to follow the crowd, whether right or wrong. Sheep follow others to the slaughter. Humans ought to check up where they are going. How - WHEN did Christmas originate? Does Christmas REALLY celebrate the birthday of Christ? Was Jesus born on December 25th? Did the original apostles, who knew Jesus personally and were taught by Him, celebrate His birthday on December 25th? Did they celebrate it AT ALL?

If Christmas is the chief of the Christian holidays, WHY do so many non-Christians observe it? Do you know? Why do people exchange presents with family members, friends, relatives, at Christmas time? Was it because the wise men presented gifts to the Christ-child? The answer may surprise you.

Most people have "supposed" a lot of things about Christmas that are not true. But let's quit "supposing" and get the facts!

### WHAT ENCYCLOPEDIAS SAY

The word "Christmas" means "Mass of Christ," or, as it came to be shortened, "Christ-Mass." It came to non-Christians and Protestants from the Roman Catholic

Church. And where did they get it? NOT from the New Testament - NOT from the Bible - NOT from the original apostles who were personally instructed by Christ - but it gravitated in the fourth century into the Roman Church from paganism.

Since the celebration of Christmas has come to the world from the Roman Catholic Church, and has no authority but that of the Roman Catholic Church, let us examine the Catholic Encyclopedia, 1911 edition, published by that church. Under the heading "Christmas," you will find:

"Christmas was NOT among the earliest festivals on the Church...the first evidence of the feast is FROM EGYPT." "PAGAN CUSTOMS centering around the January calends gravitated to Christmas."

And in the same encyclopedia, under the heading "Natal Day," we find that the early Catholic father, Origen, acknowledged this truth: "...In the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a great banquet on his birthday. It is ONLY SINNERS (like Pharaoh and Herod) who make great rejoicings over the day in which they were born into THIS world".

Encyclopedia Britannica, 1946 edition, has this: "Christmas (i.e., the Mass of Christ)...Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church..." It was not instituted by Christ or the apostles, or by

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Bible authority. It was picked up afterward from paganism. The Encyclopedia Americana, 1944 edition, says: "Christmas...It was, according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian church, as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the death of remarkable persons rather than their birth..." (The "Communion," which is instituted by New Testament Bible authority, is a memorial of the death of Christ.) "...A feast was established in memory of this event [Christ's birth] in the FOURTH CENTURY. In the fifth 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."

Now notice! These recognized historical authorities show Christmas was not observed by Christians for the first two or three hundred years - a period longer than the entire history of the United States as a nation! It got into the Western, or Roman, Church, by the fourth century A.D. It was not until the fifth century that the Roman Church ordered it to be celebrated as an official Christian festival!

### **JESUS NOT BORN DECEMBER 25th**

Jesus was not even born in the winter season! When the Christ-child was born "there were in the same country shepherds ABIDING in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8). This never could have occurred in Judaea in the month of December. The shepherds always brought their flocks from the mountainsides and fields and corralled them not later than October 15, to protect them from the cold, rainy season that followed that date....

Any encyclopedia, or any other authority, will tell you that Christ was not born on December 25. The Catholic Encyclopedia frankly states this fact.

The exact date of Jesus' birth is entirely unknown, as all authorities acknowledge - though if I had space in this booklet I could show you scriptures which at least strongly indicate it was in the early fall - probably September - approximately six months after Passover.

### **HOW THIS PAGAN CUSTOM GOT INTO THE CHURCH**

Then how did this pagan custom creep into the Western Christian world?

The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge explains it clearly, in

its article on "Christmas": "How much the date of the festival depended upon the pagan Brumalia (Dec. 25) following the Saturnalia (Dec. 17-24), and celebrating the shortest day of the year and the 'new sun'... cannot be accurately determined. The pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia WERE TOO DEEPLY ENTRENCHED IN POPULAR CUSTOM TO BE SET ASIDE BY CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE...The pagan festival with its riot and merrymaking was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit and manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Near East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ's birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia ACCUSED THEIR WESTERN BRETHERN OF IDOLATRY AND SUN WORSHIP FOR ADOPTING AS CHRISTIAN THIS PAGAN FESTIVAL."

Remember, the Roman world had been pagan. Prior to the fourth century, Christians were few in number, though increasing, and were persecuted by the government and by pagans. But, with the advent of Constantine as emperor, who made his profession of Christianity in the fourth century, placing Christianity on an equal footing with paganism, people of the Roman world began to accept this now-popular Christianity by the hundreds of thousands.

But remember, these people had grown up in pagan customs, chief of which was this idolatrous festival of December 25th. It was a festival of merrymaking, with its special spirit. They enjoyed it! They didn't want to give it up....

### **THE REAL ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS**

But if we got Christmas from the Roman Catholics, and they got it from paganism, where did the pagans get it? Where, when, and what was its real origin?

It is a chief custom of the corrupt system denounced all through Bible prophecies and teachings under the name of Babylon. And it started and originated in the original Babylon of ancient Nimrod! Yes, it stems from roots whose beginning was shortly this side of the Flood!

Nimrod, grandson of Ham, son of Noah, was the real founder of the Babylonish system that has gripped the world ever since - this system of organized competition - of manruled governments and empires, based upon the competitive and profit-making economic system. Nimrod built the tower of Babel, the original Babylon, ancient Nineveh, and many other cities. He organized the world's first kingdom. The name "Nimrod," in Hebrew is derived from "Marad," meaning "he rebelled."

From many ancient writings, considerable is learned of this man, who started the great organized worldly apostasy from God that has dominated this world until now. Nimrod was so evil, it is said he married his own mother, whose name was Semiramis. After Nimrod's untimely death, his so-called mother-wife, Semiramis, propagated the evil doctrine of the survival of Nimrod as a spirit being. She claimed a full-grown evergreen tree sprang overnight from a dead tree stump, which symbolized the springing forth unto new life of the dead Nimrod. On each anniversary of his birth, she claimed Nimrod would visit the evergreen tree and leave gifts upon it. December 25th was the birthday of Nimrod. This is the real origin of the Christmas tree.

### **ORIGIN OF HOLLY WREATH, MISTLETOE, YULE LOG**

Now where did we get this mistletoe custom? Among the ancient pagans the mistletoe was used at this festival of the winter solstice because it was considered sacred to the sun, because of its supposed miraculous healing power. The pagan custom of kissing under the mistletoe was an early step in the night of revelry and drunken debauchery - celebrating the death of the "old sun" and the birth of the new at the winter solstice. Mistletoe, sacred in pagan festivals, is a parasite!

Holly berries were also considered sacred to the sun-god. The yule log is in reality the "sun log." "Yule" means "Wheel," a pagan symbol of the sun. Yet today professing Christians speak of the "sacred yule-tide season"!

Even the lighting of fires and candles as a Christian ceremony is merely a continuation of the pagan custom, encouraging the waning sun-god as he reached the lowest place in the southern skies.

The Encyclopedia Americana says: "The holly, the mistletoe, the Yule log...are relics of pre-Christian times." Of paganism!

The book Answers to Questions, compiled by Frederick J. Haskins, found in public libraries, says: The use of Christmas wreaths is believed by authorities to be TRACEABLE TO THE PAGAN CUSTOMS of decorating building and places of worship at the feast which took place at the same time as Christmas. The CHRISTMAS TREE IS FROM EGYPT, and its origin dates from a period long anterior to the Christian Era."

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## YES, AND EVEN SANTA CLAUSE

But surely dear old Santa Claus is not a creature of pagan birth? But he is, and his real character is not so benevolent and holy as many suppose.

The name "Santa Claus" is a corruption of the name "St. Nicholas," a Roman Catholic bishop who lived in the 5th century. Look in the Encyclopedia Britannica, volume 19, pages 648-649, 11th edition, where you'll read: "St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, a saint honored by the Greeks and Latins on the 6th of December... A legend of his surreptitious bestowal of dowries on the three daughters of an impoverished citizen...is said to have originated the old custom of giving presents in secret on the Eve of St. Nicholas [Dec. 6], subsequently transferred to Christmas day. Hence the association of Christmas with Santa Claus..."

Through the years, parents punish their children for telling falsehoods. Then, at Christmas time, they themselves tell their little children this "Santa Claus" lie! Is it any wonder many of them, when they grow up and learn the truth, begin to believe God is a myth, too?

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS TREE

But if the Bible is silent about telling us to observe Christmas, or recording any such observance by the apostles or early true Church, it DOES have something to say about the Christmas tree.

This will come as a real surprise to many. But here it is: Jeremiah 10:2-6: "Thus saith the Lord, LEARN NOT THE WAY OF THE HEATHEN...FOR THE CUSTOMS OF THE PEOPLE ARE VAIN: for one cutteth 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 hammers, that it move not."

There is a perfect description of the Christmas tree, termed by the Eternal as "the way of the heathen - the customs of the people." We are commanded not to learn that way or follow it. It is also viewed in this passage as idolatry. The fifth verse shows that these trees cannot speak - cannot walk - must be carried. "Be not afraid of them; for THEY (the trees) cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good." They are not gods to be feared. Some people MISread this to make it say there is no harm in having a Christmas tree, but that is not what it says.

## ISN'T EXCHANGING GIFTS SCRIPTURAL?

But when it comes to the most important part of all in this Christmas observance - the Christmas shopping season - the buying and exchanging of gifts - many will exclaim triumphantly, "Well, at least the Bible tells us to do that. Didn't the wise men give gifts when Christ was born?"

Again, we are due for some surprises, when we learn the plain truth. First, let's look at the historic origin of trading gifts back and forth, then see exactly what the Bible DOES say about it.

From the Bibliotheca Sacra, volume 12, pages 153-155, we quote: "The interchange of presents between friends is alike characteristic of Christmas and the Saturnalia, and MUST HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY THE CHRISTIANS FROM THE PAGANS, as the admonition of Tertullian plainly shows."

## DOES IT REALLY HONOR JESUS?

Now come two arguments often used to justify Christmas observance.

1) Many will reason this way: "But, even though the exact date of Jesus' birth is unknown, should we not select SOME date to celebrate as His birthday?" The answer is positively no. Did you not notice the statement quoted from the Catholic Encyclopedia: "Sinners alone, not saints, celebrate their birthdays." The custom of birthdays is not a Christian, but a pagan custom, observed by sinners!

2) But, many still reason, "Even so - even though Christmas was a pagan custom, honoring the false sun-god, we don't observe it to honor the false god, we observe it to honor Christ."

... Jesus said: "In VAIN they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt 15:9). Christmas observance is a TRADITION OF MEN, and the commandments of God, as quoted, forbid it. Jesus said, further, "full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

That is precisely what the millions are doing today. They ignore the commandment of God. He commands, regarding taking the customs of the pagans and using them to honor or worship God: "Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God." Still, most people today take that command of God lightly, or as having no validity whatsoever, and follow the tradition of men in observing Christmas.

Make no mistake. God will ALLOW you to defy and disobey Him. He will ALLOW you to follow the crowd and the traditions of men. He will ALLOW you to sin. But He also says there is a day of reckoning coming. As you sow, so shall you reap....

## WE'RE IN BABYLON, AND HAVEN'T KNOWN IT

Christmas has become a commercial season. It's sponsored, kept alive, by the heaviest retail advertising campaigns of the year. You see a masqueraded "Santa Claus" in many stores. Ads keep us deluded and deceived about the "beautify Christmas spirit." The newspaper, who sell the ads, print flowery editorials exalting and eulogizing the pagan season, and its "spirit." A gullible people has become so inoculated, many take offense when told the truth. But the "Christmas spirit" is created each year, not to honor Christ, but to sell merchandise. Like all Satan's delusions, it appears as an "angel of light," is made to appear good. Billions of dollars are spent in this merchandising spree every year, while the cause of Christ must suffer. It's part of the economic system of Babylon.

...

This year, instead of gift trading, why not put that money into God's Work?

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## Virgin Mary and Birth of Jesus

The Quran confirms the conception of Jesus without a father. It also confirms that the birth of Jesus, son of Mary, is not in December.

[3:45] *The angels said, "O Mary, GOD gives you good news: a Word from Him whose name is 'The Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary. He will be prominent in this life and in the Hereafter, and one of those closest to Me.'*

[3:46] *"He will speak to the people from the crib, as well as an adult; he will be one of the righteous."*

[3:47] *She said, "My Lord, how can I have a son, when no man has touched me?" He said, "GOD thus creates whatever He wills. To have anything done, He simply says to it, 'Be,' and it is.*

[3:48] *"He will teach him the scripture, wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel."*

[19:16] *Mention in the scripture Mary. She isolated herself from her family, into an eastern location.*

[19:17] *While a barrier separated her from them, we sent to her our Spirit. He went to her in the form of a human being.*

[19:18] *She said, "I seek refuge in the Most Gracious, that you may be righteous."*

[19:19] *He said, "I am the messenger of your Lord, to grant you a pure son."*

[19:20] *She said, "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me; I have never been unchaste."*

[19:21] *He said, "Thus said your Lord, 'It is easy for Me. We will render him a sign for the people, and mercy from us. This is a predestined matter.' "*

[19:22] *When she bore him, she isolated herself to a faraway place.*

[19:23] *The birth process came to her by the trunk of a palm tree. She said, "(I am so ashamed;) I wish I were dead before this happened, and completely forgotten."*

[19:24] *(The infant) called her from beneath her, saying, "Do not grieve. Your Lord has provided you with a stream.*

[19:25] *"If you shake the trunk of this palm tree, it will drop ripe dates for you.\**

Footnote 19:25. Thus, Jesus was born in late September or early October. This is when dates ripen in the Middle East to the point of falling off the tree.

God Willing

24<sup>th</sup>

## United Submitters Annual Conference

July 31— August 2, 2009

Sacramento, California



God willing, start making plans for attending the Annual Conference of the Submitters.

God willing, the registration forms and hotel information will be mailed out soon to the subscribers of Submitters Perspective.

The web page on the internet to circulate the conference information is

[www.masjiduntucson.org/conference](http://www.masjiduntucson.org/conference)

If you have any specific questions regarding the conference, email us at [info@masjiduntucson.org](mailto:info@masjiduntucson.org)

God willing, we are looking forward to seeing you all again and to meet new submitters.