



Christmas

Fact or Farce?

Christian or Heathen?



Earl R. Wilson

Christmas

Fact or Farce?

Christian or Heathen?

by Earl R. Wilson

Printed by:

The Church of God, God's Acres
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, OH 43055

www.GodsAcres.org

Reprint 2003

INTRODUCTION

Many have asked for this sermon outline and notes that we have used in preaching on this subject in the church and on the radio. Therefore, we feel impressed to set down on paper the facts contained herein that all may know the truth concerning this subject.

With the coming of additional light, we have found it necessary to revise and add to our previous work, and this work, therefore, represents many hours of study and research and divine inspiration from God.

The facts and data set forth in this booklet have been gathered from various sources. In addition to the Word of God, we wish to acknowledge the following sources:

1. *The World Encyclopedia*
2. *The Encyclopedia Britannica*
3. *Christmas and Its Customs* by Christina Hole
4. *Christmas Traditions* by William Auld

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry"

(1 Corinthians 10:14).

PREFACE

How many times in the past few years have you heard someone say, "Let's put Christ back in Christmas"?

I wonder if it has ever occurred to these same people to check and see if Christ *ever was in* Christmas?

The plain, revealing facts of this festive celebration are enough to make any real child of God search and see just what they have been a partaker of.

The *facts* set forth in this work are not the opinions of the author but are just what we stated them to be—plain, cold, hard facts.

In all humbleness we present these few pages to the people of God mainly and to all others who might be interested that they might be enlightened.

Earl R. Wilson

CHAPTER ONE

CHRISTMAS: Just what is it? Where did it come from? Is it Christian? Does God approve? Where did all the customs and observances come from that people are practicing today? We intend to answer these and many more questions in this booklet.

What more proper way could we open this work than with the words of God Himself in Jeremiah 10:2-3: "Learn not the way of the heathen . . . For the customs of the people are vain."

God has always warned *His people* to keep themselves free and clean from all heathen customs and practices; that command holds true yet today. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

Many today, Christians included, are observing what they claim to be a religious observance, the birthday of Christ on December 25th. Is this true? Is it Christ's birthday? Are we instructed of God to observe His birthday? Is it actually ordained of God? Although it may shock you and astound you, the answer to all of the foregoing questions is a very emphatic and pronounced NO. We will endeavor to show by pure facts in this work *that there is not one single thing about Christmas that is Christian, but on the contrary it is of the most rank heathen origin.*

CHAPTER TWO

Revelation 16:13 warns us that out of the mouth of the dragon (paganism) will come an unclean spirit and it will proceed to do a gathering work. This has certainly come to pass in the thought of this holiday called Christmas.

We feel very strongly that there is a *spirit* that is connected with Christmas and it is not of a heavenly origin. Many are bound today with this observance but the words of Jesus still come ringing down through time, true and clear: "And ye *shall* know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

All that is contained in the Bible is truth, and there is also much outside of its holy pages that is just as true.

In tracing the origin of Christmas, much can be traced back to Catholicism but just where did they get it? Catholicism, we will find, incorporated many pagan rites and rituals and festivals into their religion, among which was that which we know as Christmas. The basis for this observance comes directly from paganism, heathenism, and idolatry. How true and how surely has the Word of God spoken in Revelation 13:2 when it states that the dragon (paganism) passed its seat and power and authority over to the beast (Catholicism).

WHERE DID WE GET THE WORD *CHRISTMAS*?

If we study the word *Christmas* for just a moment, we can see that it has a Romish flavor to it. It comes from the phrase *Christes Masse*, or Christ's Mass, from the Roman Catholic form of worship. This word is nowhere to be found in the Bible.

Did God intend for Christians to observe His Son's birthday? Birthdays in the Bible were only observed, according to the Scriptures, by sinners. Other than the biblical recordings of the birth of Christ, how much *later* reference is made by the writers to that birth? Search carefully, friend, for the center, or the theme, of the New Testament is the *death, burial, and resurrection* of this same Son. This is the underlying principle upon which the new covenant, new birth, and yea, the whole plan of salvation is founded. Nowhere in the entire Bible do we find any divine function from God to observe the birth of His Son by a religious festival or observance of any kind.

The one thing that convinces me more all the time that this Christmas celebration is wrong is the fact that the *world* celebrates and *enjoys* it. Vile sinners, who the whole year long abhor and deny the saving grace and blood of Christ, are suddenly seized by what they themselves call the Christmas *spirit* and take on an air of a religious atmosphere and respectability and generosity that soon vanish with the passing of December 25th. If this is of God, why does it not last all year long? If God had *commanded* man to observe Christ's birthday, a carnal, rebellious world would steadfastly refuse. (Read Luke 16:15 and Galatians 4:10-11.)

IS DECEMBER 25TH ACTUALLY THE BIRTHDAY OF CHRIST?

We can answer back with a resounding NO! I quote from some of my research material: "Scholars do not know the exact date of Christ's birth. For more than 300 years, people observed it on various dates.

"It was not observed as a separate feast until the 4th century A.D. Before that time the Nativity and the Epiphany were celebrated together on January 6th. When the *new* festival was instituted, the date had to be chosen arbitrarily, because no one knew for certain [nor does anyone now know] on what day Christ was born." God has very carefully hidden from us that knowledge.

We can, however, determine one season of the year in which He was definitely *not* born and that is winter.

We notice that when Christ was born, there were shepherds abiding *in the fields by night with their flocks*. History and the Bible will completely eliminate the winter months. From Solomon's account in Song of Solomon 2:11 and Ezra 10:9 and 13, we find that winter was a rainy season and would not permit the shepherds to have been in the fields at all, let alone at night. History tells us the shepherds brought their flocks in from the fields no later than October 15th. Thus, facts prove the winter season to be false for this observance.

DID THE EARLY CHURCH EVER OBSERVE CHRISTMAS?

We look to the early church for our pattern today, and well we might for God was with them in a mighty way. The early church knew nothing of this festival, but rather they looked forward to the coming of Christ as the uppermost event. Never once can we find a record, biblical or secular, of their observance of this holiday. Modern-day Christians had better begin to search out some of these things that too many have been involved in.

CHAPTER THREE

If December 25th is not Christ's birthday, then how did we come to pick that day as the observance?

Now comes the truth of it all, my friend. Let us look together and see the almost fantastic truth of how this particular day was chosen.

Again, we quote from research material: "Other dates were often celebrated as the day of nativity but in the year 354 by *order* of Bishop Liberius [Roman Catholic] of Rome, December 25th 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. [Note these next facts very carefully.] The early church fathers probably chose December 25th because the feast of the sun or winter solstice was a familiar Roman [pagan] feast celebrating the victory of light over darkness. This idea was easily *turned from a pagan idea to a Christian* one since Christians considered Christ as the light of life."

Again we read, "In the beginning many of the earth's inhabitants were sun worshipers because the course of their lives depended on its yearly rounds in the heavens, and feasts were held to aid its return from distant wanderings. Thus, these ancient people held feasts at the same period of time Christmas is now observed. They built great bonfires to give the winter sun god strength and to bring him back to life again." *Hear the truth, my Christian friend.*

Further quotation from the encyclopedia is very enlightening. It says, "In the 5th century the western church (Roman Catholicism) *ordered* the birth of Christ celebrated forever on *the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, the sun god.*" Thus, it became very convenient for the church fathers to place the birthday of the Son of God on the same day as the feast of the birth of the sun god.

Let us notice carefully how this farce was used to build up Catholicism. Again we quote: "In the beginning of time, many were sun worshipers . . . ancient people held feasts in honor of the sun god at the same time Christmas is observed. The exact day and year have never been satisfactorily settled, but in A.D. 440 the fathers of the church decided upon a date . . . because it was firmly fixed in the minds of the people. The transition was gradual but became apparent after the fall of Rome in A.D. 476.

"It was the policy of the early church to transform pagan festivals wherever possible instead of trying to abolish them and by *giving ancient practices a Christian significance, to purify and preserve for the new faith whatever was innocent and deeply loved in the old.*"

Listen now to a direct quotation from a pope that clearly states the position of the Catholic church concerning paganism: "When missionaries were sent from Rome to outlying provinces in 601, their instructions given by Pope Gregory I made clear the policy of the church. Let the shrines of idols *by no means be destroyed*, but let the idols which be in them be destroyed. Let water be consecrated and sprinkled in these temples, let altars be erected, so that the people not seeing the temples destroyed, may displace error and recognize and adore the true God. And because they were wont to sacrifice oxen to devils, some celebration should be given in exchange for this. They should celebrate religious feasts and worship God by their feasting so that still keeping outward pleasures [satisfying the flesh, in other words] they may more readily receive spiritual joys."

Oh, the depths of Satan—that something calling itself a religion should bargain, yes bargain, to get pagans into the church and yet call itself Christian.

In conclusion of this chapter, concerning the date of December 25th, note the three pagan feasts held at that time of the year:

1. Saturnalia—Observing a feast to Saturn, the god that was supposed to have reigned during the golden age. Work stopped, schools closed, war was never declared, and gifts were given.

2. Kalends—Another pagan festival. The impulse to buy or spend seized everyone (and they did not even have credit cards in those days). People were not only generous toward themselves but also toward their fellow man.

3. Yule—This pagan feast came from the barbarians of the north. There was great slaughtering of cattle and riotous feasts and celebrations.

Have times changed much? I think very little for we see the same things today under the guise of Christmas. A carnival atmosphere reigns in which men find a fleshly pleasure.

CHAPTER FOUR

We now turn from the date to the *customs* that surround Christmas and its celebration. People refer to this as the *sacred season* and yet all its traditions and customs are drawn *directly* from paganism itself. Surely the great red dragon lives on today. Let us notice together.

Lights—The pagans placed a great accent on the use of lights and open fires. They thought it warmed the sun and drove evil spirits away.

Yule Log—"The custom of burning the yule log came from the Norse and the Anglo-Saxons. They burned a huge oak log once a year to honor Thor, the god of thunder. After the Norse became Christians, they made the yule log an important part of their Christmas celebration." From yet another source we read, "The yule log is in reality the 'sun log.' Yule means wheel, a pagan symbol of the sun."

Candles—"Used by the pagans in their rituals . . . given as gifts during the saturnalia . . . supposed to light the way for the Christ child on Christmas Eve."

Green Boughs—"The use of Christmas wreaths is believed by many authorities to be traceable to pagan customs of decorating buildings and places of worship at the feast, which took place at the same time as Christmas is now observed." Another source said they were used to decorate pagan temples during the pagan worship of the sun. Times have not changed much for the pagan temples of modern-day Babylon still sport the green boughs of ancient pagan Babylon, their spiritual forerunner.

Holly Wreaths—"Holly berries were also considered sacred to the sun god." Holly, ivy, bay, and rosemary are all in the same category and can be traced right back to the heathens who used them to decorate during the pagan feasts.

Mistletoe—"Mistletoe was considered sacred to the sun because of its supposed miraculous healing power. The *pagan custom* of kissing under the mistletoe was just another step in the old pagan feast of reveling and ungodliness." That same spirit is loose today. It is just a supposedly *legalized* way to give vent

to an old, lustful passion within the unsaved breast of people. Yet, it is done as a part of the observance of the birthday of Christ.

Carols—This word comes from a French round dance called *Corle*, and was performed as an English song dance in pagan days to celebrate the shortest days of winter.

Nativity Scenes—We will see the falseness in this later as it pictures the three wise men, etc.

Christmas Cards—The first card was introduced in 1842. The practice was frowned upon by the Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites, Amish, and the Lutherans until about 1900. Catholics and Episcopalians were the first to adopt the custom.

CHAPTER FIVE

Now for more customs and traditions.

The Christmas Tree—Ah, yes, the Christmas tree so many hold near and dear and try to blame on their children for even having one.

The pagans worshiped nature and some worshiped trees in particular. They had a reverence for what they called the spirit of vegetation.

One pagan legend has it that the night Christ was born, all the trees in the forest bloomed and bore fruit.

Another popular legend states that a German forester gave refuge to a child on Christmas Eve. The child was transfigured before him and turned out to be Christ. The story goes on to say that Christ took a twig from a fir tree and planted it and said every year at Christmas it would bear fruit.

The Scandinavians worshiped trees and made it a part of their worship when they became Christians.

According to legend a missionary, named Boniface who lived about 1200 years ago, came upon a group of heathens who were about to sacrifice a young prince to the god Thor. He stopped them and cut down a blood oak where they were preparing to sacrifice, and a young fir tree appeared. Boniface told the people that the fir tree was the tree of life representing Christ. I wonder how Boniface would explain the modern-day aluminum and synthetic trees now used?

We need not to adhere to just historically recorded facts concerning this subject. Let us turn to God's Word and let Him speak out about this. We read in Jeremiah 10:3-5: "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 ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good." Thank God He lets us know there is no spirit in vegetation for us to reverence. If this is not a direct description of the Christmas tree and the condition of our day, I would like to read one.

More will be brought forth about the tree under the following heading.

Mother (or Madonna) and Child—How familiar this scene is during the Christmas season. How lovely it seems to appear to those who see it through eyes void of understanding, that supposedly, blessed view of "Mother" looking down on her child. As fantastic as it may seem, my friend, there is an ungodly origin to this very portion of Christmas. Shall we look together? From different sources we find several legends propagated.

Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah, is said to have been such an evil individual that he married his own mother (Semiramis). When he died, she propagated the fact that he still lived but as a spirit. She claimed that a full-grown fir tree sprang forth from a dead tree stump and that on the anniversary of his birth, Nimrod would visit the tree and leave gifts upon it. *When was his birthday? You guessed it—December 25th*, and thus, we have a Christmas tree hundreds of years before Christ came to earth along with all the gifts under it. Amazing yet true!

Nimrod's mother came to be known as the Babylonian queen of heaven, and Nimrod became the son of *Baal, the sun god*. In this position they became known as *mother and child*; thus, the *mother and child* were worshiped in heathenism long before Christ was ever born. As the pagans entered Catholicism, their belief in the mother and child found a natural setting in a religion that gave great prominence to *Mary* as

the "*Mother*" of God.

It is amazing to study and find that from all *different* parts of the world and from *different* races of people has been handed down a pagan belief in a *mother-child* setup *years* before Christ was ever born.

Every Christmas people are singing "silent night, holy night" and included in the song is the phrase *mother and child*—the phrase so familiar to every schoolchild. Did we ever stop to consider where it came from? Are not many following the course of the world and claiming to be God-honoring Christians?

Nimrod was the founder of the old Babylonian kingdom that was to later hold the people of God in bondage. Its counterpart, spiritual Babylon, is holding God's people in spiritual bondage under false systems of religion. We are admonished in Revelation 18:4 to "Come out of her, my people." Many Church of God people who claim to be free from this Babylonian system of religion are still entangled and ensnared in the observance of Christmas. Let every true child of God with a vision of truth and the church earnestly consider this message and flee from the midst and deliver every man his soul.

CHAPTER SIX

No work on the origin of Christmas would be complete without the truth being told on "jolly old St. Nick."

Santa Claus—This is one of the biggest lies ever concocted and told to little children. This fictional character is placed on a pedestal alongside of Jesus, whether the adults will own it or not. May I prove it? Little children are told to be good for Santa, rather than Jesus. Santa is billed as the world's greatest gift giver in place of the real giver of true and lasting gifts: Christ who offers the greatest gift of all—*salvation* to a fallen race. Even though the Bible warns that all liars will have their part in the lake of fire, parents go right on lying to their children every year at Christmas. If these same children would *lie to their parents, they would be severely punished.*

This has been brought to life by a small child here in the congregation who had been told at school there was a Santa Claus, but his mother told him at home that this was not so. After thinking awhile, he said to his mother, "If they say Santa Claus is real and you say he is not, how about Jesus? Suppose He isn't real either?" Dear God, help people to *wake up!*

St. Nicholas was a bishop of Myra honored by the Greeks and Latins on December 6th. He was supposed to have secretly bestowed gifts upon three daughters of a needy citizen. This Catholic observance was eventually brought into the church and connected with Christmas.

The idea of Santa coming down the chimney stems from an old Norse belief that the goddess Hertha appeared in the fireplace and brought good luck to the home.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Exchanging of Gifts—The great rush of the Christmas shopping season and the commercial pitch of the local merchants long ago drowned out any lingering religious atmosphere that some sincere souls have tried to maintain in this so-called religious observance of the birthday of Christ.

The folly of it all! This is *supposed* to be the birthday of Christ, and everyone gets a present but Him. What does Christ want? *You, my dear reader.*

The exchanging of gifts at this time of the year dates back to the old pagan festivals held at this time of the year and is a direct product of heathenism, also. Many are put in *bondage* financially at Christmastime by spending money they do not have for gifts people do not want and only do so because they feel obligated. Read John 8:32. If you know the truth, you can be free too.

Many feel they have a biblical basis for giving gifts in the thought of the *wise men*. May I make a statement and then prove it by the Bible? *There is no biblical record of the Christ child receiving any gifts on the night He was born, nor did the wise men (however many there were) see Christ until He was almost two years old.*

It is amazing to see so many Jewish businessmen who love the Christmas *season*, yet do not believe

in *Christ*. The farther you look, the more you can see a fleshly, carnal, selfish motive behind this observance. Note now from the Bible the recorded account of the nativity.

Luke 2:1-7 gives us the account of how Joseph and Mary, who was with child, went to Bethlehem to be listed for the purpose of the tax that had been levied by the ruler. They came out of the northern province of Galilee and the city of Nazareth, past Jerusalem to Bethlehem. It was here that Mary gave birth to Christ in the manger.

Luke 2:8-20 sets forth the picture of the *shepherds*, abiding in the fields, who were told by the angel of the Lord of the birth of the Savior. The shepherds went immediately and sought out the *babe* lying in the *manger*. It was the *shepherds* who saw the child the *night He was born*, and they *brought* no gifts for the proclamation to them was that the child was a Savior.

Following this narrative we read in verses 21-24 of the circumcision of the child according to the Law. This was accomplished after eight days. After an additional 33 days, in accordance with the Law (Leviticus 12:1-6), they traveled from Bethlehem to Jerusalem for Mary's purification.

When they had satisfied the requirement of the Law, then they returned, not to Bethlehem, but back north to Nazareth in Galilee (Luke 2:39). It was here in Nazareth, and *not in Bethlehem*, that the wise men found the Savior *many months later*. Let us prove this by the Bible.

Matthew 2:1-12 tells us that these wise men (*and the Scripture does not say it was three—again we come face to face with the fabrications of men*) came to Jerusalem looking for a *king*. Note: To the shepherds He was proclaimed as a Savior. They came to Jerusalem for that was where the ruler lived. *They were not guided by a star to Jerusalem* for they knew the way.

Many scholars believe the wise men were from the far distant country of Arabia because of the nature of their gifts. The gifts were a custom of the country when one approached a king. The shepherds brought none for they did not call Him King as did these wise men (verse 2).

Their inquiry struck fear in the heart of Herod for he felt one had come to usurp his throne. He did not know where Christ was to be born and so consulted the chief priests and scribes who informed him that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem.

Note carefully that Herod inquired of the wise men at *what time* they had seen the star appear. He then told them to go and search, not for a *babe* but for the *young child* (verse 8) and inform him of its whereabouts.

Herod, on the strength of the information from the scribes, sent the wise men to *Bethlehem*, but Christ was not there. He was in Nazareth (Luke 2:39). So when they started, the *star* appeared one more time to them to guide them to where Christ actually was. If they could come all that distance and find Jerusalem, they certainly could have found Bethlehem, which was just a short distance from Jerusalem. God sent the star to show them where Christ really was. What did they find?

According to verse 11 they found a *young child* in a *house*, not a manger. For years people have been fed misinformation and trumped-up stories that have no biblical foundation. It is about time we heard the truth of the matter.

When the wise men failed to come back and tell Herod, due to the warning of God, he became very wroth and ordered all children *less than two years old* to be killed. How did he arrive at a figure such as this? Verse 16 says it was according to the time he had inquired of the wise men. So Herod used the time the wise men said they had seen the star appear and counted forward to the present time and ordered children killed accordingly. This definitely proves that Christ was close to two years old when the wise men found Him and not a babe in a manger.

Think about it, friend. Things many have accepted for years as *biblical* truth are now being exposed for what they are—open, wanton, perversions of the Bible by satanic forces who desire to drag every true, standard-wielding Christian down into the pagan practices of ancient and modern-day Babylon. Thank God, I am free!

People are remembered at Christmas who are totally forgotten all the rest of the year. Is this a Christlike attitude?

The encyclopedia informs us that the retail merchants depend on the yearly Christmas trade to bring in *one-fourth* of their yearly income. They are using a pagan festival to cash in on material gain by labeling it the birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ. May God have mercy on blind people!

CHAPTER EIGHT

We have traced most all of the facts of Christmas and found them to have their roots in deep, rank paganism. There is not one Christian thing about it. It has no biblical foundation whatsoever.

I challenge you, as a Christian, to search deeply and then let God search the innermost recesses of your soul to see if you can freely partake of something as plainly heathen as this is. I challenge the ministry to search and see if they can refrain with a clear conscience before God from standing in the pulpit and exposing this heresy. Are we afraid of the consequences? Of our loved ones' reactions? Are we willing to stand for truth while all around us others give in to the world and its ways?

The truth of the matter is that a pleasure mad, fleshly, carnal people are seeking any excuse they can find to give vent to the desires and appetites within them, even if they have to have a great feast and celebration *under the guise of religion*.

I leave this thought with you, as the Prophet spoke, "If the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

Whatever your attitude may be toward this message, I proclaim for the whole world to hear: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).