



The Living God Ministries, Inc.

Montgomery & Spanish Fort, Alabama

December 13, 2019

Warm hellos to you dear brethren, co-workers, and spiritual family here on the Coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and scattered children of God.

My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed!

Where did these Customs come from that so many are Observing?

I ventured out today to run several errands, and both the traffic and stores were extremely busy with more hustle and bustle than I care for. I was glad to return to the peace and quiet of my home.

We can be happy and have peace on this beginning of God's Sabbath even though we are surrounded by a world with confusion, consternation, and deception in many areas.

Speaking of deception, it's important to remember that the primary way we can be freed from deception is by *knowing and living the truth*.

Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) God's Word brings us truth (John 17:17) and that coupled with obedience and a humble fear and awe of God leads to a good understanding. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments." (Psalm 111:10).

Right now, society is currently immersed in the celebration of Christmas and its season. Is it really "the most wonderful time of the year?" For many it simply isn't.

Have you ever considered and asked, "Where did the date and customs connected with this celebration come from?" Many honestly have no clue. It's just what they have always done, and have not known anything different. That's just one of the confusing parts of this holiday.

Are Christmas celebrations found in *the book of truth* - the Holy Scriptures?

The answer may surprise some. No, they are not. Even for those who sincerely think they are in some way honoring Christ by celebrating His birthday, they're inveigled. The Scriptures do not

reveal the date of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, and nowhere in the Bible are God's people directed to celebrate the birth of the Messiah. In fact, just the opposite.

The Bible record suggests that it may have been some time in the autumn for Christ's birth, but definitely not at the time of the Winter solstice.

The Holy Scriptures point you and me to ancient Babylon as the place where many if not most pagan practices originated. Babylon had its origins in connection with a tyrant and dictator. There is only a brief mention of ancient Babel and its builder Nimrod, called a "mighty one" and a "mighty hunter before the LORD." (Gen 10:8-10)

But, those brief words are very revealing. History books give us extensive historical reverence to Nimrod and his mother-wife Semiramis and their supposed child Tammuz. Some trace the customs associated with their deification and how those religious practices have persisted down through the centuries and became associated with the celebration of what we now know as Christmas.

In addition to celebration of Christ's birth, where did the use of mistletoe, holly branches, yule logs and gift giving on and around December 25 come from? One writer, Hyslop, traces them back to ancient Babel and Babylon and their emergence in the religious practices in Egypt and the Roman Empire.

Semiramis connects with Rhea, the goddess of fortifications. The mythical Kronos (or Saturn) was the husband of Rhea and is traced back to the first king of Babylon, Ninus (or Nimrod). Kronos was king of the Cyclops (known as the inventors of the tower building). Kronos was known as the Horned One and the Mighty One. He became associated with "the bull god".

In my travels within the Spanish areas of the world I've seen many references to the "mother and child". The imagery of a "mother and child" used in history in pagan worship appears in Babylon, India, Egypt and in other cultures and is often associated with the trinity.

One author traces this back to the wife of Nimrod, Semiramis, and a child born to her that she claimed was the reincarnation of Nimrod (with the name "Ninus" often appearing in ancient histories).

"Yule" is a Chaldee word meaning "infant or little child". December 25th was called by the Anglo-Saxons as "Yule day" and the night that preceded it "mother night", long before any contact with Christianity.

Notice in God's Word the reference to the "Queen of Heaven." "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, *that they may provoke Me to anger.*" (Jeremiah 7:18)

In Hislop's work the "Two Babylon's" he clearly links her worship to that of Nimrod's wife Semiramis and correspondingly Osiris's wife *Isis*. The *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's Commentary* refers to "the queen of heaven" with: The Phoenicians called the moon Ashtoreth or Astarte: the wife of Baal or Moloch, the king of heaven. The male and female pair of deities symbolized the generative powers of nature; hence arose the introduction of prostitution in worship.

The ancient Romans held year-end celebrations to honor Saturn, their harvest god; and Mithras, the god of light. Mithra, the Persian god of light and sacred contracts, was supposedly born out of a rock on December 25.

Rome was famous for its interest and worship of strange gods and cults, and in the third century [274 AD] the unchristian emperor Aurelian established the festival of Dies Invicti Solis, (the Day of the Invincible Sun), on December 25.

"Mithra was an embodiment of the sun, so this period of its rebirth was a major day in Mithraism, which had become Rome's latest official religion with the patronage of Aurelian. It is believed that the emperor Constantine adhered to Mithraism up to the time of his conversion to Christianity. He was probably instrumental in seeing that the major feast of his old religion was carried over to his new faith" (The Christmas Almanac, 1979, p.17).

The adoption of December 25 is rooted in appeasing the pagans who were being intermingled into the church in the days of the Roman Empire. The adoption of the date of December 25th for the celebration of Christ's birth comes not only from the influence of the Sun-cult, but also of the endeavoring by the Church of Rome in promoting the adoption of the pagan holidays of Dies Solis (the Day of the Sun) and Natalis Solis Invicti (the birthday of the Invincible Sun), both held on December 25.

There is so much history behind "Christmas" and other end of the Gregorian Calendrical year celebrations.

Oh, I know some will respond with, "What difference does it make. We are not setting up idols to worship. We're simply enjoying the season"

Does it matter? Good question to ask.

God describes some of the practices and customs of the cultures and nations Israel would encounter. Note in (Deut 12:2-3) He clearly states, "You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things." (v.4) the Lord again warns Israel of the pagan practices of the nations they will encounter. (v.29-30) Again God warns, "You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way" (Deut 12:31) Might we consider God's instruction?

He then reminds them, "*Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.*" (v.32)

The answer appears clearly from scripture what we should be observing and obeying. Simply put, we shouldn't be observing or partaking of Christmas, not matter how popular it is or how widely it is observed.

Let us truly rejoice in the truth of God, and be about living this calling and doing the work He has given us to do.

As I close this letter, as I do every Friday, as we enter His Sabbath...reflect on this evening's missives with me, will you?

May God continue to richly bless you. Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

(Pastor and wife (Gayle) *The Living God Ministries Gulf Coast*)

The schedule for this week's Sabbath is:

December 13th / Friday: Evening Praise Sacrifice to welcome God's Sabbath - 6:30 pm (via Teleconference live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

December 14th / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services - 10:15 am, with services held in **Montgomery** (those in our Spanish Fort congregation and all others are welcomed and

encouraged to connect live to Worship Services via our normal phone conference from Montgomery). There will be a pot-luck fellowship noon meal in **Montgomery** shortly after Worship Services are finished.

December 14th / Saturday: Sabbath Fellowship (Interactive Bible Discussion) - **3:30 pm** from Montgomery. (Connecting live with all via telephone conference).

December 14th / Saturday: Monthly Family Meeting with our Congregation **5:00 p.m.**

Next Sabbath's Schedule:

December 20th / Friday: Evening Praise Sacrifice to welcome God's Sabbath - 6:30 pm (via Teleconference live connect with Stephen Glover and Friends.)

December 21st / Saturday: Spirit and Truth Worship Services 10:15 a.m., with local services held in **Montgomery**. (Those in the Spanish Fort congregation and all others are welcome and encouraged to connect live to Worship Services from Montgomery *via our normal phone conference*). [There will be no local services in Spanish Fort as the Hoefkers are traveling on a pastoral visit].

December 21st / Saturday: Sabbath Fellowship (interactive Bible Discussion) **3:30 pm** from Montgomery (connect live to all others via telephone conference).

Telephone Ministry (English): Call **1-712-770-4700**; then, when asked, enter Code **112165 #** to join.

(Note: All callers are muted and must press *6 to comment and *6 to resume mute.)

All times are listed in Central Standard Time zone.

Our Daily Bread Recordings

Sunday through Saturday / Our Daily Bread [listen anytime 24/7 to a recorded 15 minute message] Call 1-712-770-4709 (note this call in number is different and ends in "9"), then when asked, enter code 112165# [reference code numbers are on "Spiritual Fellowship Opportunities" on this website <http://www.tlgministriesgc.org> or at "Resources/Archives" on <http://www.haggai114.net>]

Daily Fellowship Opportunities

Sunday – Friday / **Morning Sacrifice** (Prayers & Scripture Reading) at 6:00 a.m.

Sundays / **History & Background of the Gospels** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Scott & Friends]

Mondays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]

Almond Branch Fellowship at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) (Stephen & Friends)

Tuesdays / **Haggai Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. (Interactive) [Stephen & Friends]

Wednesdays / Africa Discipleship at 7:00 a.m. [Stephen & Moses]
1st & 3rd Wednesday / **Sons of God Fellowship** (Young men training) at 6:30 p.m. [Stephen & Friends]
2nd & 4th Wednesday / **Lydian's Fellowship** (Ladies) at 6:30 p.m. [Esther/Gayle/Laura & Friends]
Thursdays / **Mt. Carmel Fellowship** (Interactive) at 6:30 p.m. [Hoefkers & Friends]

Scott Hoefker, Pastor
The Living God Ministries Gulf Coast
(*Ministerio del Dios Viviente Costa del Golfo de México*)
tshoefker@tlgministriesgc.org
www.tlgministriesgc.org
251-930-1797 Office /402-250-2389 Cell

Stephen Glover, Pastor
The Living God Ministries Alabama
faith_book.net@reagan.com
<http://haggai114.net/>
334-467-2677 Cell