



December 13, 2024

Might we ask the hard questions?

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast of lower Alabama. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

I've mentioned this before, but growing up, I asked a lot of questions. I still do. I remember a grade school teacher who I respected and learned a lot from once saying, "You think you will ever stop asking questions?"

When we stop asking questions, we stop learning.

We are in the midst of that time of year that many celebrate with displays of holly wreaths, mistletoe, decorated evergreen trees, and exchange presents and cards while focusing these actions on the date of December 25. Why? So, yes, again, I have questions. I hope you do too.

I've been reviewing the Scriptural clues that help to understand the approximate time of year of the birth of the Son of God. The likely time is nowhere near the time of the Winter solstice or December 25. This might come as a surprise to you, but there are also many who reject the celebration of Christmas for even more significant reasons than simply having an erroneous date for the birth of Jesus.

Let's review some of those reasons as to why many choose to not celebrate Christmas. One might say "oh my, who in their right mind would not celebrate Christmas?" Well, those who have questions, and seek the true answers, often make a decision to no longer observe Christmas in spite of the masses who do.

Again, let's review some of those reasons.

I present that the most powerful instruction that leads us to reject the celebration of Christmas and other holidays that incorporate un-biblical traditions and practices is found in the book of Deuteronomy. *"When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods."* (Deuteronomy 12:29-31)

Isn't this clearly telling God's called out people to reject incorporating traditions and ceremonies and practices that were associated with paganism and the worship of false gods?

One can plead ignorance, but there is so much information about the pagan origins of traditions associated with the celebration of Christmas. People will reason around these strong warnings by claiming they are using some of these practices to "show love and do nice things for their children or friends". I agree, giving gifts to children, family members, and friends is not in itself a pagan practice. Utilizing decorative lights is not in itself wrong. But when these things are part of a package of practices done at the time of the Winter solstice it needs to be looked at with suspicion.

God warned His people similarly in the book of Leviticus. *"According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances."* (Leviticus 18:3)

In a book I have in my library, Alexander Hislop reveals the origins of a number of ancient pagan celebrations. He explains that the imagery of a "mother and child" used in pagan worship appears in Babylon, India, Egypt, and in other cultures and

is often associated with a kind of trinity. Hislop traces this back to the wife of Nimrod, Semiramis, and a child born to her that she claimed was the reincarnation of Nimrod (Nimrod is associated with the name "Ninus" in many ancient histories). Ancient traditions say that Nimrod suffered a violent death and it seems his body was cut into pieces and the pieces sent to various places. The practice of "weeping for Tammuz" seems to harken back to the death of Nimrod and the lamentations made for him by his followers at the behest of Semiramis.

Hislop explains that "Yule" is a Chaldee word meaning infant or little child. December 25th was called by the pagan Anglo-Saxons as "Yule day" and the night that preceded it "mother night" long before any contact with Christianity. The Egyptian Isis (queen of heaven) was claimed to have given birth to her child at the time of the Winter solstice. Hislop connects Semiramis with Rhea, the goddess of fortifications. Kronos or Saturn was the husband of Rhea and is traced back to the first king of Babylon, Ninus or Nimrod. Hislop connects this also with Baal worship that the Canaanites and ancient Israel engaged in.

There is much more that Hislop documents regarding the traditions and practices associated with the worship of Nimrod, Semiramis and her supposed son, and the time of the Winter solstice around December 25 on the Roman calendar.

Let's go the New Testament, and look at one of the warnings to Pergamos, one the seven churches of Revelation. *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."* (Revelation 2:14-15)

When we review what happened when Balaam induced the women of Moab to seduce the Israelite men to engage in sexual immorality as part of pagan worship we find it was associated with some kind of Baal worship (Numbers 25:1-3) The warning in Revelation logically refers to some of the members of the congregation were accepting some kind of pagan practices.

Adam Clarke's Commentary (electronic version) states: "The Nicolaitans taught the community of wives, that adultery and fornication were things indifferent, that eating meats offered to idols was quite lawful; and mixed several pagan rites with the Christian ceremonies.")

Albert Barnes' New Testament Commentary (electronic version) states: "It has been supposed that some person now unknown, probably of the name Nicolas, or Nicolaus, was their leader, and laid the foundation of the sect. This is by far the most probable opinion"

Let me quote from the verses associated with the Scriptural passages I quoted above. "*Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God. "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."* (Deuteronomy 12:28, 32) "*You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.*" (Leviticus 18:5)

God clearly accentuates obeying and following His instructions and then also rejecting the practices promoted by false teachers and pagan cultures that are connected with idolatry and worship of false gods.

One's decision to observe Christmas is yes, his or her decision. A personal choice that our Father and His Son gives us with everything in our lives. If we truly are desiring to worship God in Spirit and Truth, might we ask the hard questions and then choose to do those things that please Him?

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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