

The Vanity of Christmas and the Truth in Christ

By

Elder Enoch Ofori Jnr
(Sabbath School, 22nd Dec. 2012 – 5th Jan. 2013)

The Wine of Babylon is Strong

Believe it or not, but the imperial, Babylonian universal religion of sun-worship has got the whole world hooked on a complete nonentity—a vacuous, empty festival that is antithetical to all godliness and everything our Holy Creator God stands for. Sadly, however, most of the world is ignorant. But sadder still, those presented with the truth (even in the believing community) are so intoxicated with the wine of the Babylonian false religion that they are hardly able to extricate themselves from its grip.

Jer. 51:7

“Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad”.

Rev. 17:1-2

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

“With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication”.

The festival called Christmas is etymologically derived from the term “*Cristes maesse*” (old English) which simply means Christ's Mass. The term “Mass” is in turn derived from the [Late Latin](#) word *missa* (dismissal), a word used in the concluding formula of Mass in Latin: “*Ite, missa est*” (“Go; it is the dismissal”). In other words, Christmas is the celebration of the dismissal of Christ, (i.e. his death, a good riddance). While the average Christian is blithely unaware of this truth, modern pagans, witches, Satanists and enlightened seculars are fully aware of this secret taunt against Christ in the name ‘Christmas’. That is why they have no qualms celebrating ‘Christ's dismissal’ along with ‘Christians’. Of course, for the larger Christian community all it takes to fall for the winter festival is for the magic name Christ to be added. The trick works perfectly. The name Christmas functions as a smokescreen to deceive and hide the true satanic pagan origins of a festival that predated the birth of Jesus of the Bible by thousands of years. It's the devil's flagship festival, a masterpiece of frivolity and vanity that has held the world spellbound since ancient days. Christmas has nothing to do with Christ the Son of God and everything to do with the pagan sun god, one of the aliases of Satan, “the god of this world”. Far from furthering the cause of Christ, it's a satanic invention in fierce competition with Him to attract the attention and adoration of men. It could easily pass as the most enduring, formidable anti-God institution of Satan to date!

Rather than honouring Christ, this 'Christianized' pagan festival shows the continuing sway of the devil over people's lives!

How did it all began?

Nimrod, the Prototypical Antichrist and Sun-worshipper Appears on the Scene

After the deluge which destroyed "the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet. 2:5), God set out to implement His plan of repopulating the earth with the righteous seed of Noah. This He began to do by pronouncing the very blessing of fruitfulness and dominion He pronounced on Adam and Eve, the failed first ancestors of the human family, on Noah and his sons with a clear warning to them to steer clear of bloodshed, a crime prevalent in the pre-flood world:

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

"And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:1-6).

The divine plan was on course to replace an ungodly world with a godly world. At a stroke, the devil's antediluvian project of corrupting the entire human race had been crushed. All the people he had succeeded in turning away from God into godless puppets of his were now under the waters.

While the devils' plan had been dealt a major setback, he remained undaunted. Man still possessed the SIN NATURE inherited from Adam, who fell for his deception in disobedience to God. It was only a matter of time before the devil had an opportunity to exploit the SIN NATURE in any of Noah's descendants. The opportunity soon presented itself in the person of Noah's great-grandson Nimrod, a great hunter AGAINST Yahweh. He was a hero or celebrity of his time. A hunter par excellence, he successfully fought off and killed many of the savage animals that threatened human survival in an environment bristling with numerous wild beasts out of all proportion to a decimated human population. Apparently his hunting success went to his head, and he swelled up with satanic pride and rebellion against God. He would now compete with God for men's attention and allegiance; he would hunt and recruit men into his empire-building projects. He sought fame and power over people as though he were God! Hence his rise to greatness and fame, following his heroic

hunting expeditions, is bound up with his reputation as a mighty hunter against (i.e. in defiance of) Yahweh:

“Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man.

“He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. Therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.”

“The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

“From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and

“Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city” (Gen. 10:8-12 *ESV*).

The first “mighty man” to appear on earth and “a mighty hunter before or against Yahweh”, Nimrod soon graduated into the world’s first builder of cities under a single authority. But he wasn’t satisfied. He wanted to unite all humanity in a single location under a centralized authority, and there build a tower reaching into heaven with intent to make a reputation for themselves:

“Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.

“And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

“And they said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.’ And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.

“Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth’” (Gen. 11:1-4 *ESV*).

The goal was clear: apart from making a name for themselves, the people sought to avoid God’s command to man “fill the [face of] the earth” (Gen. 1:28; 9:1, 7; 10:25 & Deut. 32:8 cp Acts 17:26). They wanted a human-centred one-world empire under one human leader. To all intents and purposes, Nimrod was the primary prototype of the final, end-time antichrist to come.

However, God’s purposes on earth especially in relation to the calling out of His chosen people (Deut. 32:9-14; Isa. 51:2) would not be truncated. He as the Elohim of all the earth would not countenance Nimrod’s godless enterprise. He threw all his plans into disarray by confusing the common language of the people thereby creating a polyglot family of mankind and thus forcing them to disperse over all the earth:

“And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built.

“And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

“Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.”

“So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

“Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth” (Gen. 11:5-9 *ESV*).

Whatever happened first, whether Nimrod got down to building cities in the land of Assyria after the debacle of the Tower of Babel or it was before, the Tower of Babel stoppage and subsequent dispersal did not put paid to Nimrod’s ambitions and wickedness. History identifies him as the originator of sun-worship which he established in his Babylonian kingdom along with his mother Semiramis whom he later married. These two abhorrent figures were the key people used by the devil to institute his annual winter festival marking the birthday of the sun-god.

But who or what was the sun-god?

The plot only thickens.

Mother and Son Transmute into Moon-goddess and Sun-god

Nimrod, whose name means ‘rebel’, and his mother/wife were rank Satanists. Not only was their Babylonian religion steeped in occult mysteries, but it also involved human sacrifices, especially that of babies, to Satan. So prevalent did this evil practice become that, out of righteous indignation, Shem, Noah’s son and great uncle of Nimrod, killed him and cut him up into bits to serve as a warning to others not to act so evil and abominable.

For some time after his death, Nimrod’s satanic religion was suppressed. His followers were gripped with fear and grief. Their hero was gone, and the fear of suffering his ignominious fate held them back from openly practising their religion. For Semiramis, this was a situation she could not accept. Her fame and status as a priestess were at stake. She had to do something to save their dying religion. Finally, she hit on an idea: she would revive their dying religion by infusing it with a mystique that will fascinate people for years to come. How? She would declare her dead husband/son a god and herself, the ‘mother of the husband’, a goddess. But they were not mere human deities. Her spirit was the moon, and she would dwell in the moon when she died even as her son/husband was now in the sun as the sun-god. Henceforth, she told her followers, she was to be worshipped as the “Queen of heaven” and Nimrod as the “divine son of heaven”.

Yet the fact remained that Nimrod, who projected himself as a saviour, a false messiah, was dead. To perpetuate his memory and worship as a god, Semiramis spun another yarn: As proof that Nimrod was a god, she claimed that an evergreen tree had sprung up overnight from the stump of a dead tree and that, that phenomenon represented the rebirth of Nimrod. Furthermore, she claimed that, on each anniversary of his birth, Nimrod would visit the evergreen tree and leave gifts upon it. And guess what! December 25th was the birthday of Nimrod. This is the true history of the Christmas tree. Properly named, it should be Nimrod’s tree!

Over the course of the generations, the mother-son cult of Semiramis and Nimrod grew to have a firm hold on many ancient societies. Devotees worshipped the cult of 'Mother and Child' throughout the world under different names in different languages. In Egypt, Semiramis was known as "Isis", "The Queen of Heaven"; Nimrod was "Osiris", the husband/son, and frequently called "Horus" (the sun god). In Phoenicia, Semiramis and Nimrod were worshipped as Ashterath and Tammuz; in Greece, Aphrodite and Eros; in Rome, Venus and Cupid; in Asia, Cybele and Deouius; in Pagan Rome, Fortuna and Jupiter; and in China, Mother Shing Moo and her child. The cult of Mother and Child was and is a universal religion.

Meanwhile, superstition (rooted in satanic deception and advanced by such agents of Satan as Nimrod and Semiramis) had the better part of the ancients. Thus they tended to attribute almost all natural phenomena in the natural world to supernatural forces, the gods. Any significant change in the weather or the seasons was the handiwork of one god or another or somehow related to their activities. Spring, for instance, which saw the world wreathed in greenery, was ascribed to the goddess of fertility and rebirth, who was none other than Semiramis herself, the Queen of heaven, with such varying names as Astarte, Venus, Ishtar, etc, according to a given culture.

Little wonder, the ancients would be overawed by the splendour of the sun and the luminous glow of the moon surrounded by twinkling little orbs in the heavens and would be moved to worship them. The sun was the deity that provided light, warmth and life. The superstitious, sentimental bent of the peoples of the olden days fitted perfectly into Semiramis' game-plan. That all-important sun-god was Nimrod, the divine son of heaven. Naturally, then, the celebration of his evergreen rebirth or nativity would come to incorporate the sun, thus merging *light* (sun) and *greenery* in one and the same celebration. Shades of the Christmas Tree glistening with lit candles or these days twinkling bulbs! Of course, they would say the light represent "the Sun of Righteousness" (see Mal. 4:2), not the pagan sun-god!



God warned the Israelites in Deuteronomy chapter 4:

“And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

“But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of His own inheritance, as you are this day” (Deut. 4:19-20 *ESV*; see Job 31:26-28).

Israel was to be the exception. All other nations (the Gentiles) were nature worshippers, instead of worshippers of the Creator God. And the celebration of the birthday of the sun-god was the most notable example. Virtually all Gentile cultures observed this occasion. In keeping with the pattern Semiramis had established, the celebration revolved around the theme of death and rebirth, and the clear sign was in the sky. With the onset of the cold season of winter, the sun appeared sapped of its strength as its hours of light decreased rapidly. The result was that the days became shorter and shorter, reaching their shortest on about 21-22nd December. To the ancient pagans, this was their sun-god ebbing away; he was virtually in the throes of death. Today, we know better and can afford to laugh at their superstition and ignorance: the sun sets earlier than usual because at this time of the year (the winter solstice) the sun is furthest from the equator which, unlike the summer solstice, causes it to dip lower and lower in the sky until it reaches its lowest point on the horizon. From the perspective of the sun-worshippers, however, this was no natural occurrence. Their sun-god seemed to be deserting the earth, leaving them. But not for long. By 25th December, the sun had started up back into the sky and was shining brightly as ever before. The sun-god had been reborn! This day would be marked as his birthday—which was already the birthday of Nimrod celebrated with evergreens.

As part of the celebrations, the idea of death and resurrection was further reinforced by burning a Yule log in the fireplace overnight and then replacing it with a trimmed green tree the next morning. Again, the burnt yule represented Nimrod/Tammuz' death and the green

tree his rebirth coinciding with the return of the sun! That's how come another name for Christmas is Yuletide! The word "yule" is the Chaldean (Babylonian) word for 'infant.'

That infant could not be Christ; it was Tammuz. But Satan craftily came up with the nativity feast of a fake "divine son of heaven", sun-god Nimrod/Tammuz, in anticipation of the birth of the true heavenly Son of God (see Gen. 3:15) to confuse masses and lead them astray. The plan was clearly to distort the identity of the true Messiah and thereby lead people away from Him by presenting to the world a counterfeit messiah to whom he would ascribe some of the attributes of the true Messiah such as having come from heaven as the Son of the Highest.

Even the true Messiah's death was anticipated when the sly old serpent had Tammuz slain as Adonis in one myth where Mars, the paramour of Venus, sent a wild boar to attack him out of sheer jealousy! And the death took place at just the right time to commemorate it in conjunction with his spring festival of *Eostre* (Easter) held in honour of the goddess Ishtar or Venus—the same Semiramis, the queen of heaven! Christ, the Passover Lamb of God, would be slain to atone for the sins of mankind around the same time, the season of Spring which marks the first month of God's sacred calendar, Abib. Satan's scheming had worked out the way he wanted it; his ploy had fallen into place perfectly, so to speak. Accordingly, he inspired his certified agents in the Christian church to superimpose his pagan observances of "weeping for Tammuz" (Ezek. 8:14) and the *Eostre* festival on the true Christian commemoration of Christ's death observed once a year on 14th Abib by the early Church and with unleavened bread and the "fresh fruit of the vine" (see Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; cp 1 Cor. 5:7-8). Today, the annual ritual of "weeping for Tammuz" is called Lent, while *Eostre* shamelessly still retains its pagan name Easter! Clearly, Satan has had so much success in palming off his false messiah on the world that sometimes he doesn't even care to engage in his usual trick of obfuscation and dissembling designed to deepen his conspiracy against mankind.

The Bible, of course, forewarned that the devil would employ this very artifice of mixing Christ up with false christs to deceive masses. The craftiness he employs in this direction is boundless. The apostle Paul warned:

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (2 Cor. 11:2-4).

And how does the old serpent preach his "different gospel" of a "different Jesus"? He would make sure his falsehood is not easily detected—he invents an outright lie with a veneer of righteousness:

"... such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
“Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

In a letter to the Galatians, Apostle Paul again warned the faithful under pain of divine curse not to give heed to any gospel extraneous to [i.e. not found in] the revealed truth of the scriptures:

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

“Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-9).

Preaching false christs and false gospels has been a major tool of the devil in his desire to obscure the identity and worship of the true divine Christ in pagan ceremonies which in reality only honour him, the devil. Not One ignorant of his devices, Christ sternly warned His followers:

“... Take heed that no man deceive you.

“For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matt. 24:4-5).

“Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

“Behold, I have told you before.

“Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

“For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Matt. 24:23-28; cp Rev. 1:7, 19:17-18).

But does anybody get to hear the Saviour above the din and babel of Satan’s gospel being loudly proclaimed by his false ministers?

The sad situation is that Satan has largely succeeded to enmesh the whole world in his Babylonian sun-worship. As already shown, the cult of Mother and Child was venerated one way or another in nearly all Gentile societies. In his revealing book *The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop identifies the following mother and child deities with the ubiquitous Semiramis and her son Nimrod, who started it all:

SEMIRAMIS or Ashtarte	NIMROD or Baal the sun god
------------------------------	-----------------------------------

Cybele (Goddess Mother) Asia	Deoious (Asia)
Fortuna (Pagan Rome)	The Boy Jupiter (Pagan Rome)
Isis (The Queen of Heaven) Egypt	Osiris or Horus (Egypt)
Isi (Goddess Mother) India	Iswara (India)
Venus (Rome)	Cupid (Rome)
Ashterath (Phoenicia)	Tammuz (Phoenicia)
Aphrodite (Greece)	Eros (Greece)
Irene (Goddess of Peace) Greece	The Boy Plutus (Greece)
Ishtar (Babylon)	The Winged One (Babylon)
Rhea (Mother of Gods)	Orion (Constellation)
Diana (Ephesian)	Bacchus (God of Party going) of Ancient Greece
Shing Moo (Holy Mother of China)	The Centaur (Greece)

Naturally, the celebration of Nimrod’s birthday, the high point of the religious ceremonies, would also be universal. And it was. The Babylonian prototypical celebration provided the model for all celebrations worldwide. In his book *Babylon Mystery Religion* Ralph Woodrow writes:

“In Babylon, the birthday of Tammuz was celebrated at the time of the winter solstice with great feasts, revelry, and drunkenness – the same way many celebrate it today! The ancient celebration spread and became so much an established custom that ‘in pagan Rome and Greece, in the days of the Teutonic barbarians, in the remote times of Egyptian civilization, in the infancy of the race East and West and North and South, the period of the winter solstice was ever a period of rejoicing and festivity.’

“When this mid-winter festival came to Rome, it was known as Saturnalia—Saturn being another name of Nimrod or Tammuz as ‘the hidden god’. This feast was the most vile, immoral feast that ever disgraced pagan Rome. It was a season of license, drunkenness, and debauchery where all restraints of law were laid aside. And it was from this very feast at Rome that the merry-making of this season passed into the Roman Catholic Church and on down to our present civilization!” (pp. 163-164).

The Christmas Customs of the Nations are Vain

Ever since it began in Babylon to wide acceptance in the pagan world, several additional traditions have come to be associated with Christmas to give it its present modern secular-religious form. However, this modern composite celebration of the winter solstice festival has in no way helped to shed its dark pagan roots; in many ways, it has only deepened them.

One such tradition is the jolly old bearded character of Christmas, known as Father Christmas or Santa Claus. He is the renowned children's gift-giver who shows up every Christmas Eve laden with presents for children. For most kids the story of Father Christmas is the first institutionalized lie they hear, narrated by none other than their parents. When they wake up with gifts tucked in a sock by their bed or placed under the Christmas tree, mom and dad would gleefully lie through their teeth that it was Santa Claus or Father Christmas who brought them the gifts with his retinue of elves and 8 flying reindeer pulling a sleigh full of goodies! The starry-eyed kids would unwrap the gifts believing with all their hearts that that bearded portly figure of Christmas, who is always attired in red suit, truly brought the presents. Furthermore, they would be told, or read in Christmas stories, that good old Santa came all the way from the North Pole, or the Lapland according to another tradition, and entered the house in the dead of night through the chimney as part of his worldwide tour of all homes that single night! To a child's mind a real super hero of a supernatural sort!

But the truth is—and every parent knows it—Father Christmas or Santa Claus is a myth; he is unreal. He lives neither in the North Pole or Lapland in Finland with his wife Mrs. Santa, nor does he have a permanent address in either place. But I would hesitate to deny his reality all together. (Reality is not limited to just the physical realm).

So who is the famous Father Christmas or Santa Claus and how did he become part of Christmas celebration?

The 'official' traditional explanation is that Santa Claus is the modern version of an actual historical figure. He was called St. Nicholas, pronounced by the Dutch (the people of the Netherlands) as *Sinterklass* or *Sinterklaas*. According to tradition, St. Nicholas was born to a wealthy family in the now southern Turkish village of Patara, in the third century. "Nicholas was brought up as a devout Christian but was orphaned at an early age; however as he grew older he heeded the words of Jesus Christ: 'Sell what you own and help the poor'. Nicholas used much of his wealth to help the needy, the suffering, the poor and the infirm. His good deeds saw him in time become the Bishop of Myra.

"In those ancient days, giving a dowry was an essential part of the marriage contract -- the greater the dowry the better the match. If no dowry could be found, the women's fate was one of drudgery or worse, to be sold into slavery.

"Nicholas heard of the plight of a poor family with three daughters whose father was unable to raise a dowry for any of them. With no prospect of marriage the daughters faced a bleak and destitute future; one of the sisters would have to support the rest by joining a bordello.

"One night a bag of gold was tossed through the old man's window and landed in a stocking hanging by a fire to dry. Twice more bags of gold found their way into each of the sisters' stockings. Legend has it that St. Nicholas was the benefactor and his largess led not just to the family's salvation but also to hanging of Christmas stockings over the fireplace to receive gifts" (John Howe, "Who Was St Nicholas, A History of Father Christmas or Santa Claus Through the Ages", Oct 15, 2008 <http://johnhowe.suite101.com/santa-claus-or-father-christmas-a73467>).

A selfless saint and a Christian hero worth emulating. But even if St. Nicholas actually existed, certain details make the story of his purported generosity highly suspect, proving it's all made up just like the Christmas story of Christ's birth on 25th December. The children of the time (300 AD) were not known to wear stockings for St. Nicholas to place gifts in them!

So, what is the true history of Santa Claus?

Again, Santa Claus is a rebranded pagan god incorporated into Christmas with all his pagan myths. The pagan god in question is the Germanic god Odin. The following excerpt from an online article gives the lie to the notion of a supposed St. Nicholas being the inspiration for Santa Claus:

"There are many similarities between the legendary St Nicholas and the Germanic Pagan God, Odin. Children would stuff their boots, left by their chimneys, with carrots, sugar and hay for Odin's fabled flying horse. In return, Odin would leave sweets and small presents for the children. This practice survived into Christian times in Germany and surrounding countries when the Pagan customs were adopted by Christian believers to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Dutch immigrants brought the legend of St Nicholas, which introduced the hanging of stockings by the chimney, to the United States, particularly in New Amsterdam, later renamed New York.

"The name, Santa Claus, was first mentioned in Rivington's Gazette (New York City) on December 23, 1773. Santa Claus is an American interpretation of Sinterklaas, the Dutch translation of Saint Nicholas. The transition from St Nicholas to Santa Claus included a change of clothing from bishop's gown and mitre to thick green coat and pipe, as described in Washington Irving's History of New York in 1809.

"The traditional Santa Claus with his reindeer pulling his sleigh became widely accepted in the early Nineteenth Century. The reindeer were first named in a poem, later accredited to Clement Clark Moore, published in the Sentinel, based in Troy, New York in 1823. Santa Claus was generally believed to live at the North Pole and in just one night of the year, December 24/25, delivered presents to every child in the world. Some tales differentiate between the gifts that good children would receive, such as fruit and sweets, and bad children who would have nothing but a lump of coal" (Paul Forrest, "Santa Claus or Father Christmas? Who Brings the Presents at Christmas?" <http://paul-forrest.suite101.com/santa-claus-or-father-christmas-a176101> Emphasis mine).

Analyzing the foregoing articles side by side, it's quite clear that Santa Claus is cast in the same mould as the pagan god Odin with his flying horse and all. Indeed, it's obvious that the pagan god Odin survives in modern society in his new identity as Father Christmas or Santa Claus. The flying reindeer pulling a sleigh full of goodies all add to the pagan magical aura and reminds us of the reborn dead Nimrod leaving gifts on his evergreen tree on 25th December.

The notion of a magical god who sneaks into the homes of children at night and leaves presents for them can only come from paganism. The Bible teaches no such thing. The living

and true God Yah instructs children to honour their parents (His first commandment with promise) together with the keeping of all His other commandments, and His promised reward is peace and long life:

Eph. 6:1-3

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

“Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

“That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (see Ex. 20:12).

Prov. 3:1-2

“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

“For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee”.

Sadly, contemporary Christianity, which is largely paganized, would rather have children believe in Santa Claus and other Christmas fairy tales. And it's all because Satan, “the father of lies” (John 8:44), has entered and taken over the church through the backdoor, and the people, from the clergy down, love to have it so (Jer. 5:31; Isa. 30:9-11). They don't have the love of the truth (2 Thess. 2:10-12). The world church, “Babylon the Great”, has become the home of pagan gods and demons through the embrace and observance of their traditions. Therefore Babylon, a syncretistic pagan religion with a veneer of token Christian belief, has fallen:

“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

“And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Rev. 18:1-2).

And why not? The tradition of Santa Claus has ensured that the practices of the ancient medicine men of Europe are revived each Christmas. As men who consulted with evil spirits, the preservation of their activities through the tradition of Santa Claus only serves to invite the *still existing* evil spirits into supposed Christian homes where Santa Claus is acknowledged just as they entered the homes of pagans centuries ago. In another online article, writer Abbi Gray points out:

“Shamans have possibly played a large role in the development of Santa Claus. As the legends go, during the winter solstice, shamans climbed poles in skin tents, often constructed from evergreen trees, to the heavens (i.e. Otherworld, spirit realm). They wore bells to frighten away evil spirits and announce their presence. Once in the heavens, they ran with reindeer in spirit form, retrieving prophecies and seasonal foresights to offer as gifts. Fire, representing warmth and eternal light, was also frequently given” (<http://abbi-gray.suite101.com/the-pagan-and-multicultural-origins-of-santa-claus-a393698>).

Santa Claus is deeply rooted in paganism and sorcery. Any suggestion about it being inspired by the gifts presented to the baby Jesus by “the wise men from the east” (Matt. 2) is untenable. That would only be a facile attempt to hide the truth of Santa Claus' pagan origins. After all, the wise men did not visit baby Jesus through a chimney accompanied by

elves and a team of reindeer pulling a sleigh! The same applies to the Christmas tradition of giving/exchanging gifts. It's as far removed from the Bible as the sun from the earth!

Sadly, but understandably, this is exactly what the world buys into. Because the unregenerate world has been blinded to the truth of God by Satan, "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:3-4), all it requires for a festival or tradition to gain wide acceptance is for it to be unbiblical. People love darkness rather than light (John 3:19). People the world over have rejected God's Sabbath (the seventh day of rest) and, by and large, His "just and good law", yet they fall over themselves to perpetuate such outright satanic traditions and myths as Santa Claus—popular and observed in all countries. The following are the different names by which Santa Claus is known in the under-listed countries:

- Italy – *Babbo Natale*, which means Father Christmas. He is Santa and comes on Christmas Eve.
- Spain, Puerto Rico and Mexico – The 3 Kings come on January 6th. Children leave their shoes under the Christmas tree on January 5th evening, to find treats left for them the next morning.
- Switzerland & Austria – *Christkind* or the Christ Child
- England – Father Christmas
- France and French Canada – *Pere Noel*, Father Christmas & Christ Child
- Morocco – *Black Peter*
- Japan – Santa Clause, Santa or *Santa no ojisan*, meaning "Uncle Santa"
- Sweden – *Jultomen* .
- Norwegian – *Julenissen* .
- Finland – *Joulupukki*
- Dutch – *Sinter klaas*
- Russia – *Grandfather Frost*
- German – *Kris Kringle* (means Christ Kind or Christ Like)
- China – *Shengdan Laoren*
- Afghanistan - *Baba Chaghaloo*
- Armenia - *Gaghant Baba*
- Brazil - *Papai Noel*
- Czech Republic - *Ježíšek*
- Denmark - *Julemanden*
- Germany - *Weihnachtsmann*
- Iraq and South Africa – *Goosaleh*
- Ireland & Scottish Highlands - *Daidí na Nollag*
- Portugal - *Pai Natal*
- Romania - *Mos Craciun*
- Spain and Mexico - *Papá Noel*
- Netherlands and Belgium - *Sinterklaas*

SANTA CLAUS has his CLAWS all over the place, and it turns out they are actually **Satan's Claws** (*Santa* rearranged to read *Satan*). The damage the myth of Santa Claus inflicts spiritually and morally is incalculable. A minister insightfully observed:

"The name "Santa" rearranged spells SATAN." Whether coincidence or not, Santa has allowed Satan to lead children astray from the *doctrine of Christ*, i.e., the Word of God (2nd John 1:9).

"Santa = Satan

"America's public school children are growing up confused, with no moral compass, devoid of the knowledge of God. Even worse, they're being brainwashed that there is NO God, and that the universe evolved over billions of years from stardust. From the lie of Santa Claus to the lie of Evolution, America's children are being woefully deceived. All we hear about at Christmas time is songs praising Santa Claus, Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, Frosty the Snowman, Oh Christmas Tree, Jack Frost, Old Man Winter, Little Saint Nick, and so forth. Sadly, the name of Jesus is seldom if ever mentioned throughout the Christmas holiday. It is no coincidence that "Santa" rearranged spells SATAN! The average person is woefully ignorant of these obvious attempts to remove Jesus Christ from society.

"It is no coincidence that Santa Claus is given the same powers as God. This is an attempt to mislead children at a young age. Santa is given omnipresence and omniscience, knowing whether each child has been bad or good. Santa is given omnipotence, being able to visit every child's home in the entire world in a single night. This is something that only God alone could do. Santa is given the power to understand and speak any language, which again, is something that only God could do. Also, Santa is portrayed as being righteous, i.e., the "good guy," who is always happy, and is the higher moral authority. Clearly, whoever designed Santa Claus wanted to make children believe that he was a god".

Santa Claus is a false god—none other than Satan himself, who has transformed himself into "an angel of light" and his religious ministers into "the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:14-15). The deceitful righteousness of Satan and his ministers as in Santa Claus presenting goodies through their proxies (Santa-advocating parents) will not change their eventual fate of condemnation before God. Their perpetuation of satanic beliefs will incur God's just punishment. Their end will correspond to or be "according to" their deeds carried out to turn people away from the true God, not according to their pretensions—their deceptive righteous exterior and speciousity.

So, Santa Claus is pagan and possibly a representation of Satan himself. Now, what about the Christmas Tree? Is it another pagan custom?

I am afraid, yes. And not only the decorated Christmas tree but almost all the other customs observed in the name of Christmas celebration to this day. Collectively our holy Father calls all these customs inherited from pagan nature worshippers "vain". He warns His people Israel in Jeremiah chapter 10:

"Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:

"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

"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.

“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.

“Forasmuch as *there is* none like unto thee, O LORD; Thou *art* great, and Thy name *is* great in might.

“Who would not fear Thee, O King of nations? for to Thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise *men* of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, *there is* none like unto Thee.

“But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock *is* a doctrine of vanities.

“Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple *is* their clothing: they *are* all the work of cunning *men*.

“But the LORD *is* the true God, He *is* the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation” (Jer. 10:1-10).

Yahweh cites one example of the customs of the heathen He labels as “vain”, and the description unmistakably points to the Christmas tree decorated with glittering baubles and tinsels and placed or fastened in a particular spot. Remarkably, the observance of this custom of decorating trees is connected with “the signs of heaven” which produce dismay among the heathen!

What are these “signs of heaven” which cause dismay among the heathen, and yet the “dismayed” heathens end up decorating trees?

The dismay-causing heavenly signs no doubt refer to the sharp variations in the hours of sunlight during the winter solstice when the hours of sunlight starts to shorten as from 21st December, creating shorter days, until it regains its strength by 25th December! But it was not the whole phenomenon which dismayed the heathen. Only one aspect did—the phase of the winter solstice in which the sun seemed not to move in the sky (in Latin *solstitium* means ‘sun stands still’). The sun-worshipping Gentiles were “dismayed” by this omen because they feared that the sun would not return but desert them. But the sun did begin to return, and they celebrated this with festivities in which decorated trees featured prominently in the celebrations, if not at the centre of them. The festivities were held in honour of the sun-god on 25th December.

Today, those festivities held in honour of the solar deities of the pagans are called Christmas, while the decorated tree has been renamed Christmas tree. But has God changed His stance towards this worldwide Babylonian Gentile celebration, just because of changes in names?

His answer is, “I am the LORD, I change not” (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8). But some claim the Christmas tree is not the object of the divine denunciation in the text but rather an ancient pagan practice of worshipping trees as deities. Moderns who celebrate Christmas don’t worship the Christmas tree, they argue. But this is where they get it all wrong. Nature

worshippers don't worship trees as deities but the spirits which indwells the trees. The adorned trees represent and act as the medium by which the spirits interact with them.

The same applies to the Christmas tree. It symbolizes something but that something is not Christ. In fact, its religious significance as a symbol predates Christ, and the Bible nowhere teaches it as associated with Christ. The so-called Christmas tree is the pagan symbol of a pagan god or spirit whose symbol came to be synonymous with him as with the winter festival itself.

So, how did the Christmas tree became part of the Christmas mix?



German Christians introduced it into the church from their pagan past. The website www.worldofchristmas.net reports:

“One of the most awaited Christmas decor items, especially by kids, is undoubtedly the magical looking Christmas tree. It is said that Christmas tree was included in the celebrations ever since humans observed these evergreen trees glistening in the moonlit sky on a clear night sparkling against the backdrop of white snow. One of the most import[ant] Christmas symbols for centuries, Christmas trees were used in many pagan festivals to honor their gods and spirits. Vikings in North Europe considered these evergreen trees a reminder of the Spring that is about to approach and that the Winter will end soon. In ancient England and France, Druids used to honor God of harvests by decorating oak trees with fruit and candles, just as Romans adorned trees with trinkets and candles on Saturnalia.”

“It is said that the German Christians were the first to bring the trees into their homes to decorate or use a Christmas pyramid made of wood in areas where there was a scarcity of trees. Soon, whole Europe caught up with the trend and the English Royalty popularized it among the elite. Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, decorated the first Christmas tree. They had then used candles, candies, fruits, and gingerbread. Christmas tree came to America with the German immigrants and was accepted by the general public only in the late 1800s. At the time of the first public display of a Christmas tree by German settlers in”

Pennsylvania, it was considered a symbol of pagans. Till then, apples, nuts, cookies, candies, colored popcorn and candles were the popular Christmas tree ornaments.

“In the early 20th century, electricity brought a revolution in Christmas tree decoration. Electrical Christmas lights grew more and more popular every year and now most communities throughout the US feature public displays of Christmas trees. The President of the United States now lights the National Christmas Tree every year in Washington as an indication of the beginning of Christmas celebrations. The huge lighted tree at Rockefeller Center in New York is quite a spectacle and skaters spinning beneath it look like angels. Christmas Tree has now gained popularity all over the world and choosing the right Christmas tree and its ornaments, placing gifts beneath it and opening them at midnight is all now part and parcel of Christmas fun and revelry” (“Christmas Tree” <http://www.worldofchristmas.net/christmas-trees/index.html>).

An excerpt from our earlier online article “The Pagan and Multicultural Origins of Santa Claus” corroborates:

“Throughout the history of mankind, from the Greeks to the Celtic people, people have worshiped trees. Realizing they could not completely stop the idolatry, German church leaders incorporated the popular fir tree into their worship. Pictures of the Virgin Mother replaced pagan images on the trees, or half of a fir would be stripped bare to represent the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life.

“Stories abounded in medieval times of trees blooming on Christmas day, which eventually led to their symbolism of [reborn hope](#). To celebrate the birth of Christ, German families would bring fir trees into their homes, decorating them with candles, baubles, apples, and cookies. Thanks to Prince Albert and “Dutch immigrants to America, the Christmas tree found its way to English-speaking nations with Santa Claus” (<http://abbi-gray.suite101.com/the-pagan-and-multicultural-origins-of-santa-claus-a393698>).

Rather than overcome ignorance and idolatry with the unvarnished, uncompromising Word of truth, German church leaders capitulated to paganism and “incorporated the popular fir tree into their worship” (of the Creator God whose name is Jealous? Ex. 34:14). He sternly warns His people not to even desire to learn, much less accommodate, “the way of the heathen”. But the German church found it expedient to wave aside the directive of Heaven and embrace “the way of the heathen”, and the universal church agreed with it! Strangely, the Great Commission Christ gave the church to “make disciples of all nations ... TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU” has been turned upside down! The church has been converted by pagans!

And the churchgoers love it! The people are hard of hearing when it comes to hearing the solid meat of the unadulterated Word of God. But let the pulpit spew fairy tales, and the same dull ears are all cocked up! In an epistle to his protégé, Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote prophetically:

“I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom;

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

“And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:1-4).

God’s word does not contain fables but the pure words of life and power, “able to save the soul” (Ps. 12:6; Prov. 30:5; Acts 1:14; Jam. 1:21; Heb. 4:12). This pure, living and powerful Word of God clearly forbids the veneration of trees along with all other customs of the heathen, but churchgoers today would rather pay heed to fables and perform pagan customs detestable to God right in His sanctuary! The scriptural warnings are unambiguous and straightforward:

Deut. 16:21

“Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee.

Ex 34:12-16

“Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:

“But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:

“For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

“Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice;

“And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods”.

‘But’, somebody may ask, ‘what if I do it for Christ?’ After all, isn’t Christ the object of modern-day Christmas celebration? God’s answer is that He has prescribed the way He should be worshipped; the heathen way of worship should not be used as a model for worshipping Him. Their abominations thoroughly repulse Him! We read in Deut 12:29-32:

“When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;

“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; 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: for every abomination to the LORD, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

“WHAT THING SOEVER I COMMAND YOU, OBSERVE TO DO IT: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it”.

The church's adoption of pagan customs does not sanctify them (only God blesses or sanctifies 1 Chron. 17:27 and that by His truth John 17:17); neither is the addition of Christ's name licence for keeping them. The Spirit of God foretold "expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim 4:1). Because it is the goal of the "seducing spirits" to entrap people to sin against God, they don't go about their deceptive activities blatantly; they go about it with cunning. They try to coax people into transgression in a way they would hardly suspect. The Christmas tree is a good example of how the modus operandi of the "seducing spirits" works: the tree is only for decorative purposes, for effect (for example to create the right festive ambiance), but in placing the children's presents under it, people bow the knee to the decorated tree and, in effect, worship it just as the early pagans did! The apostle Paul said it as it is: "The mystery of lawlessness is already at work" (2 Thess. 2:7).

So why not separate ourselves from all things pagan as God commands so we would avoid all such traps? The Almighty plainly warns believers not to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
"And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?
"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,
"And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

The Almighty has made Himself clear: He has no agreement or relationship with Belial (an epithet for Satan) and hence all his false gods. He, the true God, and Belial are contrary to each other and irreconcilable like light and darkness. Therefore He only accepts those who separate themselves from the false gods of Belial and their pagan customs. He doesn't allow room for a compromise. How repugnant to God then must be the tired old excuse, 'we observe 25th December in honour of Christ, the Son of God, not the sun-god'!

Regrettably, like what God showed the prophet Ezekiel in a vision in which some apostates worshipped the sun in the temple of God, one abomination only leads to another until it produces "greater abominations" (Ezek. 8:14-16). Such is Christmas. The whole fabric of the festivity is tainted with customs utterly abominable to God.

A pro-Christmas writer makes a frank admission:

"While Christmas is a holiday set apart to celebrate the birth of Jesus, through the years Christmas has become largely a celebration of traditions that have little to do with the sacred birth in the minds of those who celebrate the season.

“Winter was selected arbitrarily by the Church as early as the 4th century as the season to celebrate Christmas. The calendar of church feasts was divided by major holidays with Christmas and Easter set on the solstices.

“This selection was a perpetuation of the popularly followed pre-Christian celebration of the winter solstice designated as December 25th on the ancient Roman calendar. It was also the season of the Scandinavian Yule, Germanic feasts, and Near Eastern Mithraic customs. Some Christian traditions are actually pre-Christian in origin, such as the Yule log, mistletoe, and the Christmas tree” (Paul I. Nielson, “Christmas and Its Many Merry Traditions” <http://paula-i-nielson.suite101.com/christmas-day-and-its-warm-traditions-a317824>).

Among the “many merry traditions” of Christmas are the following:

- exchanging giving gifts with family and friends wrapped in beautiful Christmas paper and ribbon
- giving gifts and money to strangers and charities
- singing and listening to Christmas carols, performing or listening to Handel’s Messiah
- sending greeting cards
- attending church celebrations and services
- making traditional candy and cookies and giving plates of these goodies to others
- gathering for special meals or treats and appetizers, drinking egg nog
- decorating the house with Christmas ornaments often in red and green, including wreaths, holly and mistletoe
- decorating Christmas trees
- use of colored lights, sometimes red and green, throughout the house, on the Christmas tree, and outside the house, especially along the rafters
- decorating with nativity scenes
- decorating with scenes of winter, including houses and people in the snow
- decorating with Santa Claus, his elves, his sleigh and reindeer
- waiting from Christmas Eve for Santa Claus to arrive
- opening presents on Christmas morning, including those left by Santa Claus” (ibid.).

With the exception of possibly one or two, all the above Christmas traditions are in no way related to Jesus Christ of the scriptures or to His birth. Take the Christmas decorations. Each and every one of them is pagan in origin. In her article “The Pagan Origins of Christmas Decorations”, Joanne E. Brannan writes from a pagan perspective:

“Pagans celebrate the rebirth of the sun at midwinter, rather than the birth of the Son of God celebrated by Christians at this time. The renewed ascent of the sun in the sky beginning at the winter solstice was symbolically reenacted as a battle between the oak tree of the summer and the holly tree of the winter.

“The bright red berries of the holly bush represented fertility in the depths of the dormant winter, a promise of the return of light, warmth and light.

“The Winter Solstice occurs on December 21 in the Northern hemisphere, June 21 in the Southern Hemisphere. Known as the Festival of Yule to pagans, the winter solstice is the shortest day, and the longest night of the year. The Celtic fire festival of Yule was a time of renewal and rebirth, celebrated by lighting fires to welcome back the lengthening days. The remnants of this practice may be found in the charming tradition of the [Yule log](#), still enjoyed by many people at Christmas even today.

“The lighting of candles and modern Christmas lights is also a relic of this ancient need to bring light to the darkest time of the year, and even in this era of electric lights that dispel the gloom all year round, many people still enjoy the warming feeling of seeing a beautifully lit tree or an array of lighted candles” (<http://joanne-e-brannan.suite101.com/the-pagan-origins-of-christmas-decorations-a178426>).

The candles lit at Christmastime have nothing to do with Jesus being the light of the world; it has everything to do with the sun-god!

Similarly, Santa Claus with his team of elves, reindeer and sleigh is not an image borrowed from the Bible (it's so atypical of the culture and topography of the Bible world, especially the Holy Land). It was borrowed from the pagan Scandinavians: “Modern Christmas elves find their origin in the house gnomes of the Scandinavia present since the pagan times. It was believed that these gnomes guarded homes against evil and were benevolent and helpful to good people” (<http://www.worldofchristmas.net/santa-claus/index.html>).

Not to put too fine a point on it, Santa Claus and his elves are Satan and his demons in fine Christmas disguise!

And it could get sordid still. There's such Christmas tradition as kissing under the mistletoe tree (quite apart from decorating with it). How did it come about and for what purpose?

“The tradition of kissing under the mistletoe is said to be associated with the Greek festival of Saturnalia. The use of mistletoe was also found in the primitive marriage rites, as it was believed that mistletoe had the power to confer fertility. Another belief connected with the mistletoe was that it possessed 'life-giving' powers. Scandinavian people considered mistletoe to be a plant of peace and people coming under it, including couples fighting amongst themselves and even enemies, had to make up or declare truce, at least temporarily.

“In the 18th century, the people of England introduced the concept of 'kissing ball'. During Christmas time, if a young lady was caught under the ball of mistletoe, she could not refuse to be kissed. Even today, the custom of exchanging a kiss under the mistletoe is found in many European countries and even Canada. Kissing under the mistletoe is an art in itself and its better to be well prepared for the time you catch, or are caught by, someone under the mistletoe” (“Kissing under the Mistletoe <http://www.worldofchristmas.net/christmas-mistletoe/kissing.html>).

And the custom comes complete with its superstitions:

- “Mistletoe, also known as Celtic-All-Heal was popular by the 19th century. Since the times of druids, it was associated with fertility and kissing.

- Earlier, an ethical man was supposed to present a mistletoe berry for each kiss. When berries finished, so would the kissing.
- Luck favors those who kiss under the mistletoe but turn against those who avoid it.
- It is bad luck to take Christmas mistletoe down and should only be replaced on the following Christmas.
- Unmarried girls used to steal sprigs of mistletoe from church decorations and hid them under their pillows as a charm to dream of their future husbands.
- Burning old mistletoe was said to predict marriage prospects of an unmarried girl. Steady flames ensured happy marital life while the spluttering flames predicted bad tempered and cross husbands.
- Although of Mistletoes is considered to be a healing plant but the berries are in fact poisonous and should not be touched by children.
- It was believed that kissing under Mistletoe would lead to marriage of the couple whereas; if the girl standing under it was not kissed by anyone her marriage is not at all predicted in the next year.
- In some parts of England the Christmas mistletoe is burned on the twelfth night lest all the boys and girls who have kissed under it never marry” (<http://www.worldofchristmas.net/christmas-superstitions/mistletoe.html>).

But is stealing a kiss from a young woman, which she is bound by Christmas convention not to refuse, not an act of sexual harassment? And such lewdness perpetrated in the name of supposedly celebrating the birth of the holy Saviour Jesus?

Now, what about the custom of exchanging gifts? While gift giving has merit, why is there such a seeming compulsion to give and to receive only at Christmastime?

The answer is Saturnalia, the Roman festival held in honour of their god Saturn around the time of the winter solstice, not the wise men who presented gifts to the infant Jesus. The Roman underclass considered it a time to get freebies from the rich and the rich felt obliged to give away. Strange as it sounds, even social stations were reversed at this time, and slaves briefly became masters and masters slaves amid feasting and great rejoicing and debauchery! Saturnalia was the time to let the hair down and turn society topsy-turvy! Abbi Gray writes again:

“For the first 1800 years following Christ’s time on earth, in the cold winter months called the winter solstice, several pagan celebrations pervaded the people in what is now known as the United Kingdom and, eventually, the United States. During these celebrations, especially the Saturnalia, slaves and citizens alike would abandon their daily chores to eat and drink. The poor would enter rich neighborhoods, asking for food and money, and raid the houses of uncharitable owners” (“Original Winter Celebrations and How Christ Came Into Christmas” (<http://abbi-gray.suite101.com/original-winter-celebrations-and-how-christ-came-into-christmas-a393384>)).

This should set us thinking: Isn’t Saturnalia the reason why so much rioting and debauchery characterize the celebration of Christmas?

The answer is yes. The wild, out-of-control spirit of Saturnalia comes around every Christmastime; the gentle Jesus completely goes out of action! Firecrackers crackle and rend the cold air day and night; bottles of champagne and other alcoholic drinks pop and fizz as millions around the world engage in orgies of drunkenness and indiscriminate sex. It's booze, it's wild and bestial enjoyments, and that's Christmas. Pagan god Saturnalia has reclaimed what is supposed to be his Christianized festival:

“Christmas has roots in Saturnalia, a week long holiday, celebrating Saturn (Roman God of harvest). The celebration coincided with the winter solstice, a traditional celebrating time of the year in many pagan cultures on the Northern hemisphere. According to the Greek historian Lucian's observations, the Saturnalia was a wildly celebrated event: human sacrifice, singing naked on the streets, public copulation and other unruly behaviour- all going on lawfully and unsanctioned in this particular week. This manner of celebration was widely spread and involved a large population. So much so, that the early Roman-Christian authorities deemed it wise to accommodate (at least to an extent) the existing rituals in order to compete with the pagan customs.

“By promising the continuation of the customs the Christian authorities achieved a considerable success in converting a significant portion of population. However, the problem of religious compatibility remained as there was nothing quintessentially Christian about Saturnalia. So, they decided on naming the concluding day of Saturnalia, falling on 25th December, as the Jesus' birthday. While this ensured the large observance on this prominent day it, initially, did little to change the manner of celebration--the old habits die hard. Eventually, the influence of the Christian church and establishment of Christmas as the most important day in the Christian calendar did it. The human sacrifice are long gone and though you might, nowadays, get a glimpse of exposed cleavage on a high street, it is as likely on Christmas as on any Saturday night” (Bekir Sabic, “Christmas Story: Christmas Tree, Christmas Decor and its Origin” <http://bekir-sabic.suite101.com/christmas-story-christmas-tree-christmas-decor-and-its-origin-a306039>).

All of this takes us to the heart of the matter: Would God ever find Saturnalia, though repackaged as Christmas, acceptable? And should we His children?

He has already stated His position—all the customs of the Saturnalia festivity, from tree decoration to riotous partying, are “vain customs”. They bring no real benefit to the celebrants; it only depreciates them and makes them objects of His anger. He utterly despises and deplores such heathen vanity:

“... 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.

“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.

“Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and Thy name is great in might.

“Who would not fear Thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto Thee.

But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities.

“Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple is their clothing: they are all the work of cunning men.

“But the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation” (Jer. 10:3-10).

Is the continued celebration of Saturnalia deceptively in the name of Christ not in defiance of the everlasting living God who ought to be feared?

Redeemed by the Blood from Pagan Vanities

As the redeemed of the Holy and True God, it's unbecoming of true believers to stoop to observing a bunch of old pagan vanities re-christened as Christmas traditions. We are far too precious for that. We have been redeemed with the precious blood of the Lamb of God to live a holy life like God:

“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

“But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear:

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your **vain** conversation *received* by **tradition** from your fathers;

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

“Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Pet. 1:14-21).

We are no longer “ignorant”, so our “former lusts” no longer rule us. We have been redeemed from the vain traditions of the forbears with the precious blood of the Messiah who was foreordained for this purpose before the foundation of the world and has since accomplished it. We cannot treat the blood of Jesus with contempt by persisting in the same vain traditions He redeemed us from—at the price of His priceless blood and life!

Heb. 10:29 poses a question to ponder: “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”

We dare not defy Him; we are not stronger than Him. His express wish and command is that we don't mix our worship of Him with pagan rituals or traditions. We cannot have fellowship with Him and the same time fellowship with the demonic spirits of the pagan Gentile gods or idols:

"Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?
"What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?

"But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

"Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (1 Cor. 10:18-22).

Yahweh could not have made Himself clearer: Those who purport to worship Him must make a clean break with paganism or they should forget all about worshipping Him. He calls for a clear and decisive choice as to whether to serve Him or other gods, not an attempt to lump Him together with the false gods of paganism (in worship) by bringing together disparate elements of the true faith and heathenism. Joshua hammered home to the Israelites in his last address to them:

"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:14-15).

The Joshua choice is the choice of every true Christian. Either we serve the LORD "in sincerity and truth" or our worship is in vain: "But IN VAIN they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN" (Matt. 15:9).

This is the evil of Christmas in Christianity. The scriptures are totally silent on 25th December being the birthday of Christ, let alone sanction it. That means neither Christ nor any of His apostles enjoined it on Christians. It found its way into Christianity simply because apostate 'ecclesiastics' sanctioned it by their own HUMAN DECREES and made it 'Christian' by renaming it! With such crypto-pagans in authority in the Church, Christianity would never be the same again. Not the life-giving commandments of God (John 12:50), but the pagan philosophies of the world would henceforth dictate, sanction and institute. Sadly, the congregation is held spellbound! The apostle Paul warned the believers in Colosse:

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8). The *English Standard Version* translation brings out the point more clearly: "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ".

It's no surprise that human traditions and elemental spirits are good bedfellows. Doesn't the Bible make it plain that the world of unregenerate man is under the sway of Satan, "the prince of the power of the air", and his demons? (Eph. 2:2-3; 1 John 5:19).

But we, true believers, have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and delivered from the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the dear Son of God (Col. 1:13). We must not turn back to elemental and/or astral spirits of the world by observing pagan religious days:

"Formerly when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods at all.

"But now that you have come to know God (or rather to be known by God), how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless basic forces? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again?

"You are observing religious days and months and seasons and years.

"I fear for you that my work for you may have been in vain" (Gal. 4:8-11 *NET Bible*).

Paul knew better and he concurred with Christ: Any religious observance or practice observed not by the express command of God but in deference to pagan traditions amounts to vain worship! But then, who genuinely seeks the truth of God today?

Incredible—Pope Admits Year of Jesus' Birth is Wrong but Christmas Remains!

It beats understanding, but it appears the hold of the elemental spirits and their traditions is so strong that with all the facts that have been discovered and laid bare about the pagan origins of Christmas, leading men of the world church still endorse it, even when they themselves acknowledge it as an UNTRUTH!

Such is the frank admission that has been made by the reigning Roman Pontiff, Pope Benedict XVI, in a recent book of his launched in Rome. Not only is the celebration of Jesus' birth nowhere to be found in the Bible, but also the traditional year of Jesus' birth is absolutely wrong, he asserts! Ghanaweb, an online newsmagazine, reported in its Thursday, 22nd November, 2012 edition of religious news:

"The entire Christian calendar is based on a miscalculation, the Pope has declared, as he claims in a new book that Jesus was born several years earlier than commonly believed.

"The 'mistake' was made by a sixth century monk known as Dionysius Exiguus or in English Dennis the Small, the 85-year-old pontiff claims in the book 'Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives', published on Wednesday.

"The calculation of the beginning of our calendar – based on the birth of Jesus – was made by Dionysius Exiguus, who made a mistake in his calculations by several years,' the Pope writes in the book, which went on sale around the world with an initial print run of a million copies.

"The actual date of Jesus' birth was several years before." (Nick Squires, "Jesus was born years earlier than thought, Pope" <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/religion/artikel.php?ID=257194>).

The report goes on to say:

"The assertion that the Christian calendar is based on a false premise is not new – many historians believe that Christ was born sometime between 7BC and 2BC. But the fact that doubts over one of the keystones of Christian tradition have been raised by the leader of the world's one billion Catholics is striking.

"Dennis the Small, who was born in Eastern Europe, is credited with being the 'inventor' of the modern calendar and the concept of the Anno Domini era. He drew up the new system in part to distance it from the calendar in use at the time, which was based on the years since the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian.

"The emperor had persecuted Christians, so there was good reason to expunge him from the new dating system in favour of one inspired by the birth of Christ. The monk's calendar became widely accepted in Europe after it was adopted by the Venerable Bede, the historian-monk, to date the events that he recounted in his Ecclesiastical History of the English People, which he completed in AD 731. But exactly how Dennis calculated the year of Christ's birth is not clear and the Pope's claim that he made a mistake is a view shared by many scholars" (ibid.).

Citing scholarly authorities, the article states further that the traditional birthday of Jesus on 25th December is unbiblical and that the Pope further admits that myths have been added to the nativity story:

"The Bible does not specify a date for the birth of Christ. The monk instead appears to have based his calculations on vague references to Jesus' age at the start of his ministry and the fact that he was baptised in the reign of the emperor Tiberius.

"Christ's birth date is not the only controversy raised by the Pope in his new book – he also said that contrary to the traditional Nativity scene, there were no oxen, donkeys or other animals at Jesus' birth.

"He also weighs in on the debate over Christ's birthplace, rejecting arguments by some scholars that he was born in Nazareth rather than Bethlehem.

"John Barton, Professor of the Interpretation of the Holy Scripture at Oriel College, Oxford University, said most academics agreed with the Pope that the Christian calendar was wrong and that Jesus was born several years earlier than commonly thought, probably between 6BC and 4BC.

"There is no reference to when he was born in the Bible - all we know is that he was born in the reign of Herod the Great, who died before 1AD,' he told The Daily Telegraph. 'It's been surmised for a very long time that Jesus was born before 1AD - no one knows for sure.'

“The idea that Christ was born on Dec 25 also has no basis in historical fact. ‘We don't even know which season he was born in. The whole idea of celebrating his birth during the darkest part of the year is probably linked to pagan traditions and the winter solstice’” (ibid.).

Now, where lies the difference between nominal Christianity which knows Christmas to be pagan in origin and yet still keep it and the true believer who abstains?

The latter has been truly redeemed from the vain traditions of the (so-called church) fathers by the ever efficacious precious blood of the Lamb of God! This certainly calls for the expression of gratitude to God. We have known His truth, and His truth has set us free from the pagan tradition of Christmas among other pagan customs. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Halleluiah!

For more enlightenment, contact:

Pastor Enoch Ofori Jnr

Seventh Day Pentecostal Assemblies (Esreso)

P.O. Box 481, Kumasi, Ghana, W/A

Tel: 233-322095507 Mobile Phones: 233-02-7499933/233-24-4235015

Websites: www.asdpagh.com; www.enochevangelism.org. Email: info@asdpagh.com