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## Why don't you celebrate Christmas?

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We have published a comprehensive booklet, titled, "Don't Keep Christmas," in which we explain, in detail, why Christmas celebrations are wrong and prohibited in Scripture. This booklet includes many quotes from historical records, proving that Christmas celebrations took place long before the birth of Christ. They were kept to honor pagan deities, such as the Persian sun god Mithras, who was born on December 25. By contrast, as our booklet proves on pages 23-25, Christ was not, and could not have been, born on December 25, or anywhere near that date.

Note the following quote regarding Mithras from pages 13 and 14 of our booklet, "Don't Keep Christmas," citing excerpts from an article of a popular magazine:

"Mithras is the name of that transcendent being from whom they expect salvation. And each year in the winter they celebrate his birthday: in the night of December 25 with a sort of service, which we could call today midnight mass... The birthday of Jesus was declared [by Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nice in 325AD] to be on the same day on which Mithras was supposedly born... Until then, Christians had not celebrated Christmas."

In fact, early Christians refused to celebrate Christmas, as they considered it to be a pagan feast. Quoting from page 3 of our booklet, "Don't Keep Christmas": "Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Vol. 3, concurs: 'The celebration of Christmas on December 25 in the church begins only in the middle of the 4th century. Until then, the opposition against it was in some cases very severe..., since it was considered a pagan custom to celebrate with festivities the birthdays of kings.'"

Our booklet presents historical evidence that Christmas carols, Christmas gifts, Christmas candles and Christmas cakes, as well as the Christmas tree, are all of pagan origin, and had been used to worship pagan gods and goddesses. In regard to the Christmas tree, note this quote from page 22 of our booklet, "Don't Keep Christmas":

"Let's also notice Jer. 10:2-5: 'Thus says the Lord: 'Do not learn the way [Note in the Lamsa Bible: 'Religion'] of the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them. For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple. They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good.'

"Here we find a description of the Christmas tree. Some have said, however, that Jer. 10 only talks about a wooden idol that was carved out of a tree, but that it does not refer to decorating a Christmas tree per se. Remember, though, that the pagans believed that their gods -- Attis, Osiris, Dinosus -- lived as tree spirits in pine trees. They believed that their gods actually changed into those trees, and they carried these sacred trees to a certain place of worship, decorated them, and adored them as deities.

"Jer. 10 condemns any kind of religious worship that includes the decoration of a pine tree or a 'green tree' (1 Kings 14:23), as well as the religious doctrines associated with such customs. Lamsa continues Jer. 10:8 as follows: 'But altogether the vain doctrines of wooden image worship shall be utterly destroyed and consumed.'"

Our booklet also explains how gradually the Roman Catholic Church "adapted" those pagan customs to make the Christian faith more attractive to Gentiles. Quoting from Earl W. Count, 4000 Years of Christmas, it is stated on page 12 of our booklet: "The [Roman Catholic] Church finally succeeded in taking the merriment, the greenery, the lights,

and the gifts from Saturn [a Roman sun god patterned after the Persian sun god Mithras] and giving them to the Babe of Bethlehem."

The age-old question is, however, why is it so important to know that Christmas and its customs were a pagan invention? What is wrong with "Christianizing" those pagan customs? We might not be able to bring Christ BACK into those customs (as He was never part of them in the first place), but why can't we bring those customs to Christ and use them to worship Him in that way?

Simply, because the Bible prohibits us to do so. The concept of adding pagan practices to godly worship, known as "syncretism," is condemned throughout Scripture. Again, we encourage our members, subscribers and friends to read or re-read our booklet, "Don't Keep Christmas," for a more comprehensive analysis of this important question.

In short, we read in Deuteronomy 12:29-32, that God commanded Israel that "you do not inquire after their [pagan] 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..."

What could be clearer? God commands us NOT to worship Him in the way that the Gentiles did. Christmas was a pagan festival in honor of pagan gods. God FORBIDS us to worship Him in that way. We read in Matthew 15:7-9 that we worship Christ IN VAIN when we teach "as doctrines the commandments of men" or pagans. The Ryrie Study Bible comments regarding the passage in Deuteronomy 12:30: "The Israelites were not even to inquire about the worship of the Canaanites, lest they be tempted to INCORPORATE ASPECTS OF IT INTO THEIR WORSHIP OF GOD."

That is, exactly, what the Roman Catholic Church did. That is exactly what God PROHIBITS His people from doing!

Throughout the Bible, God tells us NOT to ADD to God's Word (Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Proverbs 30:5-6). This prohibition includes adding customs to our worship of God, which God did not prescribe, but

which were used to honor pagan gods. Note this final quote from page 26 of our booklet, "Don't Keep Christmas":

"So if we contend that Christmas is a festival that honors God, then we add to God's Word, which has nothing to say about the celebration of Christmas... Let's also note how the apostle Paul approached the Christians in Corinth... he tells them in 1 Cor. 4:6: '... Do not go beyond what is written' (NIV). A similar reminder is recorded in the second letter of John. He states in verse 9: 'For if you wander beyond the teaching of Christ, you will leave God behind; while if you are loyal to Christ's teachings, you will have God too' (Living Bible). Those who do celebrate Christmas 'go beyond what is written,' and 'wander beyond the teaching of Christ,' thereby leaving 'God behind.'"