**TRUTH VS. TRADITION: CHRIST’S BIRTH**

(Which will you follow?)

**The Tradition of Christmas Examined**

Many Christians are becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the Christmas tradition of celebrating Christ’s birth on December 25th. In fact, many no longer celebrate it due to their personal convictions. In light of the increasing revelation of its pagan origin and the falsehoods involved in its practice, this is understandable. In these last days, the Holy Spirit is calling God’s people to return to Him with all their heart ... to truly worship the Lord “in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). Consequently, it is good that we prayerfully examine any tradition that may hinder or defile our worship of God. In this brief study we will endeavour to examine different aspects of the Christmas traditions that clearly hamper God’s people from true worship. For a more detailed examination of the Christmas issue, I would encourage you to obtain the booklet entitled; “Discover the Truth About Christmas For Yourself” from Hosanna TCIF at [www.hosannatcif.org](http://www.hosannatcif.org).

**A Historical Perspective of Christmas**

Growing concern regarding the Christmas tradition is not something totally new. Christians in the past also questioned and even opposed its practice within the Christian community. Historian and Pulitzer Prize finalist Stephen Nissenbaum from the University of Massachusetts writes about this struggle in “The Battle for Christmas.” Nissenbaum relates, “In New England, for the first two centuries of white settlement most people did not celebrate Christmas. In fact, the holiday was systematically suppressed by Puritans during the colonial period and largely ignored by their descendants. It was actually illegal to celebrate Christmas in Massachusetts between 1659 and 1681 (the fine was five shillings). Only in the middle of the nineteenth century did Christmas gain legal recognition as an official holiday in New England.” Nissenbaum goes on to say, “It was only in the fourth century that the (Roman) Church officially decided to observe Christmas on December 25th. And this date was not chosen for religious reasons but simply because it happened to mark the approximate arrival of the winter solstice, an event that was celebrated long before the advent of Christianity. The puritans were correct when they pointed out – and they pointed it out often – that Christmas is nothing but a pagan festival covered with a Christian veneer.”

**Pagan Elements of the Christmas Celebration**

Nissenbaum a historian, and many others have examined and exposed the pagan heritage of the Christmas celebration. Here is a brief summary of some of the pagan elements associated with Christmas.

* December 25th is actually the celebration of Tammuz, the sun god’s birthday, and is associated with the winter solstice celebration.
* Decorating the home with red, green and white colours is a Druidic holiday tradition.
* The Romans at the festival of Saturnalia exchanged gifts and contributed this concept to the Christmas celebration.
* The Christmas tree tradition evolved from different pagan sources. The first decorating of an evergreen tree began with the heathen Greeks and their worship of their god Adonis. The practice was also found among the Romans, dragging home an evergreen to mark the winter solstice is an ancient custom in Japan.
* The tradition of the Christmas Yule is connected with the Roman festival honouring the birth of the sun god as is the Christmas tree itself.

**How Should Christians Respond to the Pagan Origin of Christmas**

The fact that Christmas of the “Christ-Mass” is rooted in pagan tradition is well documented. Any reputable encyclopedia will verify these facts. Consequently, as Christians we need to prayerfully consider how the Lord would have us to deal with a celebration that mixes pagan idolatry with the supposed birth of Jesus. Scripture reveals that our God is a Holy God and jealous for our devotion to Him alone. He does not allow the mixing of His Holy Name with the profane idolatrous practices of paganism. He does not want or allow His people to be involved in such practices as the following scriptures affirm:

***14****Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry* (1 Corinthians 10:14 KJV).

# *19What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20But 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. 21Ye 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. 22Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?* (1 Corinthians 10:19-22 KJV).

***14****Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?* ***15****And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?* ***16****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.* ***17****Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.* ***18****And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty* (2 Corinthians 6:14-18 KJV).

# *“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2 Corinthians 7:1 KJV).

Clearly God commands His people not to mix or be involved in pagan idolatrous practices because they involve demonic influence. This reason alone should be enough cause for us to honour the Lord and disassociate ourselves from a celebration like Christmas, which is rooted in idolatry.

**Falsehoods or Lies Associated with the Christmas Tradition**

There is another very strong reason that needs to be considered, one that should convince us beyond any doubt that God would not have us participating in Christmas. The second area we are going to look at is the falsehoods or lies associated with the celebration of Christmas.

* Jesus was not born on December 25th ... the date of Christ’s birth most widely accepted by biblical scholars is early in October during the Feast of Tabernacles. A Scriptural Truth that also disqualifies December 25th as the date of Jesus’ birth is found in Luke chapter 2 verse 8. The shepherds in Bethlehem area were abiding in the fields overnight at the time of Jesus’ birth. Shepherds in Bethlehem would not be dwelling in the fields overnight in late December because it is too cold. They keep them in the sheepfolds at night during this time of year. The truth is simple, the December celebration is actually associated with sun god worship as discussed earlier. It was a pagan festival adopted by the Church of Rome in the 4th Century and converted to the birth of Christ in order to more easily bring the pagans into the new state religion of Christianity.
* The “magi” or “wise men” from the East did not visit the stable where Jesus was born. They actually came to honour the new “King of the Jews” with gifts at the home where he was living when He was a child of between one to two years of age (Mathew 2:1-16).
* During Christmas season, millions of parents (including Christians) around the world teach their children the falsehood of Santa Clause (St. Nicholas). Children are taught that Santa Claus makes his home at the North Pole, and that once each year he supposedly brings gifts to good boys and girls. Is it any wonder that many times when children grow up and learn that Santa Claus is false, they question whether Jesus is also myth?

Since the Christmas tradition involves the practice of falsehoods and lies, should we as Christians be participating in its celebration? God’s command is to abstain from every appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22). Celebrating Christmas involves the practice of lies and pagan idolatry. How can we justify our participation in such God dishonouring practices? When we participate in Christmas, are we worshipping the Lord *“in spirit and in truth?”* God’s Word declares in Colossians 3:9 ... *“Lie not to another.”* In Ephesians 4:25, we are commanded to put “away lying,” and to *“speak every man truth with his neighbour.”* We need to take heed to the admonition in Revelation 22:14-15 MEV.

***14****Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.****15****Outside are dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and practices a lie.*

**There is Life after Christmas**

For many of us, Christmas has been a very enjoyable and pleasurable experience which will be difficult to discontinue. Speaking as one who loved and enjoyed its celebration as much as anyone, I can now sincerely say that since discontinuing its practice I have been greatly blessed. It is now (14) years that I have honoured the Lord in not participating, and throughout these years I have experienced the joy of His peace, His blessing and even great relief of not having to be involved. So let me encourage you that there is life after Christmas. It is a more blessed, more relaxed, and a less stressful life for certain. It is life with one less significant distraction to your intimacy with the Lord. It is a life where you will have more disposable income to give to the Lord’s work because you won’t blow it all at Christmas. Another thing I enjoy personally is that you can enjoy a good turkey dinner any time you please. It will not mean a life alienated from family and friends who continue practicing the tradition. When you share your personal convictions in a loving and non-condemning fashion, they will still love you. They will still have you over for birthdays and Thanksgiving dinners with the whole family. Family life will continue to go on even though you opt out of Christmas. In fact, you eventually will find others who will examine the Christmas tradition for themselves and decide to break free of it as well. You will still be able to express your love by giving gifts throughout the year and not be restricted to the Christmas binge. So, life will go on after Christmas is gone – it will be better! I will discuss an alternative later that you may prayerfully consider to the falsehood of Christmas.

**The Consequences of Good Men who Compromise**

There are those who may wonder, “If involvement in Christmas is displeasing to the Lord, then why are so many good Christian leaders still participating?” I believe the Lord revealed to me a tremendous spiritual parallel from the Old Testament that helps to explain this problem. If you study the lives of the Kings of Judah in 1st and 2nd Kings and 1st and 2nd Chronicles, you will discover that several were very godly men. However, they allowed the people to continue in certain pagan practices, which were even adopted as a means to “worship” the true God.

***17****“Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only”* (II Chronicles 33:17 KJV).

There were several good Kings in Judah, most notably King Asa (I Kings 15:9-14) and King Jehoshaphat (I Kings 22:41-43) who were commended for their devotion to the Lord, yet for each one there is recorded this black mark against them, “During his reign, however, he failed to remove all the pagan shrines, (high places) and the people still offered sacrifices and burned incense there” (I Kings 22:43b). Even though these men were godly men, they were unwilling to deal with certain pagan shrines or high places which the people enjoyed using as part of their religious practice. Though this was displeasing to God and a compromise of their righteous stand for Him, they allowed it, rather than disturb a long-standing pagan-based religious practice that people enjoyed. In conjunction with this, they most likely felt it was acceptable because for the most part it was being done “as unto the Lord.” I believe that this is much the same attitude among Christian leaders today, in regards to Christmas. Most of them know that Christmas is pagan in origin, but because it has been “Christianized” and is being done “as unto the Lord” it makes it acceptable in their minds. They are also afraid that if they were to attempt stopping the practice of such a long-standing and fleshly pleasing celebration as Christmas, they would have a major uprising on their hands. However, in this hour the Lord is looking for men of God like King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:106) and King Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-2; 23:1-25) who fearlessly and relentlessly worked to remove every pagan object or practice from Israel’s public religious life. These men in uncompromisingly standing for the Lord were highly commended and recognized above all their peers (2 Kings 18:5; 2 Kings 23:25). I believe the Lord is looking for men today like King Josiah of old who have the courage to remove the modern “pagan high places” such as Christmas and Easter. Men who are not afraid of man and what he thinks, but only fear God and are concerned about what He desires. I thank God for men like Rev. Dr. Joseph Grubb our pastor here at Toronto Christian International Fellowship. He faithfully led our congregation out of the bondage of these traditions more than ten years ago. He is the one who encouraged me to write these studies on Truth vs. Tradition. I pray that God will raise up leaders like him across our nation who will have the courage to lead their people back to serving the Lord with all their hearts. Men who will lead their people away from unholy traditions like the Christ-Mass (Christmas), which is nothing more than thinly disguised and Christianized sun-worship. Men who like Josiah diligently and relentlessly pulled down every pagan high place. In this hour, God does not need just good men like King Jehoshaphat who are compromisers. He is looking for godly men like Josiah who are uncompromising in their stand for righteousness. Compromise is very costly as the following scripture attests:

***33****“Howbeit the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers”* (II Chronicles 20:33).

Compromise with Satan and his influence as the *“father of lies”* (including false pagan-based tradition; John 8:44) will hinder God’s people from being fully committed to the Lord, as revealed in the above scripture. The traditions of Christmas and Easter hamper God’s people from being “fully committed” to the Lord. They are truly “high places” to be pulled down, that God’s people may be free to fully serve Him ... that we may become the glorious and triumphant church without spot or wrinkle He desires before His return (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Satan has been endeavouring for centuries to use ungodly traditions to defile our worship of God and lead us away from Him. But thank God for the restoration of the truth of His Word in these last days that’s setting His people free. Thank God for the Josiah’s He is raising up to lead us out of the compromise and into the fullness of His endtime purpose.

**What is the Truth Regarding Christ’s Birth?**

In these end times, God is bringing forth a greater revelation of truth in order to set His people free to worship Him as He desires “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). In the article “The Golden Report” by Jerry Golden, he wrote on the subject of Sukkot as “The Birthday of Yeshua” (dated January 14, 2004). In this article, he shares about the timing of the birth of Yeshua or Jesus. What he shared in this regard really bore witness bibiblically and “in my spirit” as being from the Lord. In the article, he conveyed how many of the major New Testament events surrounding the life of Christ coincided with Old Testament Festivals or Holidays. For example, Jesus died on the Passover, He rose from the grave on the Festival of First Fruits and the holy Spirit was poured out on the Feast of Pentecost. Brother Golden in his article notes that God has established a pattern in this respect and “something as important as the Birth of Messiah would surely fit into this pattern.” Let me summarize his conclusions for the sake of brevity. A copy of the full report can be obtained through his website at [www.thegoldenreport.com](http://www.thegoldenreport.com). As a result of his research, he concludes that Jesus’ birth took place during Sukkot which is the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles takes place in late September or early October in relation to the variability of the Jewish Calendar. He bases his conclusion on the consensus of research by scholars who have diligently studied the timing of Jesus’ or Yeshua’ birth. Most biblical scholars agree that His birth took place in the fall around the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. He includes additional evidence in relation to the text in John 1:1,14 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God … And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”* (John 1:1,14 KJVER).

Brother Golden declares that John by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit used the Greek word “skene” which was translated from the Hebrew word for “tabernacle.” He contends that John in using this word was not only referring to the fact that God Himself came and “tabernacled among us” in the person of Jesus Christ, but that it also refers to the Feast of Tabernacles when the incarnation would take place. The date brother Golden gives for Jesus’ birth is during the Feast of Tabernacles Tishrei 15th 5764 (on the Jewish Calendar). On our calendar for 2004 it would fall on October 11th. Each year this date will change in accordance with the variability of the Jewish calendar.

**The Truth is Our Alternative**

If we prayerfully believe that the Lord would have us to commemorate His birth in some manner, it should be based on truth! The best theological research I have seen thus far indicates that Jesus was born in the fall on the Feast of Tabernacles. Jerry Golden, Greg Killan and other Messianic Ministries and scholars have determined that Yeshua / Jesus’ birth took place at the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles on Tishrei 15 (for a detailed analysis of how this date was calculated see Greg Killan’s website at [www.betemunah.org](http://www.betemunah.org) See article entitled: “The Birth of the Yeshua (Jesus) During Succot).” The Jewish calendar is variable, but when coordinated to our modern calendar this date would fall on a day in the latter part of September or in early October. If we truly desire to worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth regarding His incarnation, then December 25th is definitely out because it is not based on truth and it is a pagan festival. Therefore, we should prayerfully consider commemorating this wonderful event during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. It is very interesting to me that this feast falls very close in timing to our Canadian Thanksgiving holiday. Even before I knew anything about this research regarding Jesus’ birth, I was sensing to do something at Thanksgiving to celebrate the Lord’s incarnation. This could involve the reading of Scriptural account of the Lord’s birth, a singing of some related hymn, and a time of prayer and thanksgiving for God’s unspeakable gift of His Son. I know that if the Lord would have you to celebrate His birth and incarnation, He would have you to do it prayerfully and “in spirit and truth.” I encourage you to prayerfully consider what has been shared in this study and ask the Lord what He would have you do. I sincerely pray that the Lord will help you to lay aside every weight, including the weights of ungodly tradition, so that you may *“run with endurance the race He has set before you”* (Hebrews 12:1). May the Lord richly bless His truth to your heart.

July 24, 2004 (updated December 30, 2020) Michael LeClair

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