

CHRISTMAS

This tract has been created to introduce those who are searching for truth set forth in God's word, and not based on the traditions of men and pagan religions.

The first question is, are we taught to celebrate the birth of Jesus? Did the early Church fathers leave us an example to do this? In fact no is the answer! We will see that Christmas was not kept till around the mid 300 AD the following information is found in the World Book Millennium 2000 under Christmas.

"The first mention of December 25 as the birth date of Jesus occurred in A.D. 336 in an early Roman calendar. The celebration of this day as Jesus' birth date was probably influenced by pagan (unchristian) festivals held at that time. The ancient Romans held year-end celebrations to honour Saturn, their harvest god; and Mithras, the god of light. Various peoples in northern Europe held festivals in mid-December to celebrate the end of the harvest season. As part of all these celebrations, the people prepared special foods, decorated their homes with greenery, and joined in singing and gift giving. These customs gradually became part of the Christmas celebration."

We see that Christmas was born out of Paganism this was implemented by Rome under Constantine who accepted Christianity as a means to bring together all the people; the Romans that were holding fast the old ways and those who had accepted Christianity, by taking a most popular pagan festival and combining it with the birth of Jesus. He was able to compromise both groups. The early Protestant movement saw Christmas for what it was a continuance of pagan teachings in the guise of Christianity and put it out of the church. The World Book states the following.

"The popularity of Christmas grew until the Reformation, a religious movement of the 1500's. This movement gave birth to Protestantism. During the Reformation, many Christians began to consider Christmas a pagan celebration because it included nonreligious customs. During the 1600's, because of these feelings, Christmas was outlawed in England and in parts of the English colonies in America. The old customs of feasting and decorating, however, soon reappeared and blended with the more Christian aspects of the celebration."

Another question we need to deal with is can we find when Jesus was born from the word of God, the answer is yes.

We will take a walk through God's word to see when Jesus was born, but to do this we have to start with the conception of John the Baptist. First we have to find when Elisabeth conceived John. We find this in Luke 1:5

5 ¶ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

Zacharias was serving in the Temple as was his duty handed down from generation to generation, and as we see his course was from his ancestor Abia or from the original Hebrew Abijah. The following is from the Online Bible Lexicon.

"7 Abia Abia ab-ee-ah' of Hebrew origin 029 hyba;; pr n m
AV-Abia 3; 3

Abijah =" my father is Jah (Jehovah)"

1) a priest, the head of a priestly family from whom when David divided the priests into 24 classes, Abia was the 8th order

2) son and successor to Rehoboam on the throne of Judah "

The scriptures tell us that Abi's or Abijah's temple service fell in the 8th course same person as seen earlier.

1 Chronicles 24:10 The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah,

The Jewish religious new year starts in the last of March or first of April with two watches per month this puts Zacharias' temple service the end of July. This is when Zacharias was told that Elisabeth would have a son.

Luke 1:8-13; 23, 24

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall

bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

So Elisabeth conceived the end of July we are told next that Mary comes to Elisabeth in her sixth month to tell her that she too is with child.

Luke 1:30,31,36

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

So now let us count forward from the end of July six months. This brings us to the end of January. Then Mary had become pregnant with Jesus by the end of January now we can count nine months to see the time of Jesus birth. This will bring us to the end of October this is the closes time we can come to for Jesus birth. A very important question left is does it really matter? First we should consider what was Adam and Eves sin in one word disobedience! In fact human kinds continual sin is disobedience to God's word. Both the old and new testament books clearly state God's view on his people following after the ways of the heathen.

Jeremiah 10:1-5

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

2 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.

3 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.

4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

5 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.

The key words here are "Learn not the way of the heathen", but can we find these same instructions in the New Testament?

1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

The fact is there is even more instruction dealing with serving two master.

1 Corinthians 10:14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.

1 Corinthians 10:21,22

21 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.

22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

2 Corinthians 6:15-17

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,

The scriptures speak for themselves; God is not willing to share his chosen with any other form of worship. We are told in Jeremiah 10 not to learn the way of the heathen. The letters sent by Paul an Apostle to the Corinthians tell us we can not sit with idols or false worship this is the same thing, and still come to Jesus table we must choose one or the other. Paul and John both tell us we must stay from idols. Paul's call to keep ourselves from idolatry really reaches beyond to the very acknowledging that homage can be given these false God's when we acknowledge their feast by putting our Lord's name on them and believing this makes them okay.

1 Kings 18:21 ¶ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

How different is our response today when we are called to ponder our will to serve the living God in truth and purity. So many times have I heard the arguments what harm is it. After all isn't it a time of family fun, merry making and gathering together. Yes it is, but more importantly as we have seen it is disobedience to God's word. What is more important obeying God or man? Peter answer that question with a resounding "we rather obey God than man"

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

If we can not conform to God's will here on these small issues. Then we will not conform in the new kingdom and there will not be a place for us.

Don't fall into the group of believers who think they are obeying God's word to only find out in the last days that Jesus will say to them.

Matthew 7:21-23

21 ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

The key word here is "he that doeth the will of my Father" Is it God's will that we celebrate pagan festival even if under the guise of Jesus name. No!

Nor do we want to fall into this group.

Mathew 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Finally think on this.

1 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them,

Revelation 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

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