

A Most Mysterious Holiday: The Rest of the Story

Written by Brett Gray

WARNING: Contains extreme violence. May not be appropriate for children. Parental discretion is advised.

To tell this story, it's necessary to include the violent and disturbing parts. This is a story of Satanic worship and how Satan tricked modern society into adopting it. The mainstream Christian world has not shunned it, but has actually helped to spread it! How did this come to be? And why?

Our story begins in the land of Canaan nearly 3,500 years ago. The people of Canaan had plummeted to such depths of depravity and wickedness that God commanded His people, the Israelites, to destroy them all — men, women, children, everyone polluted by that society.

Like the Aztecs of later infamy, who ripped the hearts out of live human beings and offered those still-beating hearts to the sun god, the Canaanites slaughtered human beings in sacrifice to their gods. Not just any human beings, either, but young children in particular.

The Worship of Molech and Baal

Among other deities, the Canaanites worshiped a monstrosity known as Molech, a name that's now synonymous with child sacrifice. As the Israelites prepared to invade Canaan, God warned them about this demonic deity and its worshipers:

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

2 “Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.

3 ‘I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name.

4 ‘And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him,

5 ‘then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech’” (Lev. 20:1-5).

However, the Israelites disobeyed. They spared many of the Canaanites from destruction. The Canaanite religion proved so seductive that, with worshipers still alive and living among the Israelites, generations of Israelites turned away to the Canaanite gods, even practicing child sacrifice.

In later times, long after Israel divided into Israel and Judah, King Manasseh of Judah proved himself worse than the Canaanites (2 Chron. 33:9). Not only did he worship “the Baals,” but, “Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger” (2 Chron. 33:6).

It’s worth noting here that “Baal” simply means lord or master (Strong’s # H1168), and applied to many pagan deities. Hence the Bible often refers, not to any specific deity, but to “the Baals.”

But when God punished King Manasseh, this man, arguably the most evil man in the Bible, actually humbled himself, repented, and turned from his sins (2 Chron. 33:10-17)! God then showed him mercy, for God is merciful to all who forsake their sins and seek Him with their whole hearts.

Despite the king’s repentance, though, Baal-worship persisted in Judah. After Manasseh’s reign, God spoke through Jeremiah the prophet and condemned Judah: “They have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind” (Jer. 19:5).

As for the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, in which King Manasseh had sacrificed his children to the Baals, Jer. 7:30-33 adds,

30 “For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight,” says the LORD. “They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it.

31 “And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart.

32 “Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “when it will no more

be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room.

33 “The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten them away.”

Now we see Baal, the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and Tophet all linked together for the murder of the innocent. But there’s another piece of the puzzle.

A couple years after King Manasseh died, his righteous grandson Josiah came to the throne. King Josiah purged the kingdom of every trace of idolatry he could find, and “he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech” (2 Kings 23:10).

That brings us full circle back to Molech. The Bible connects Tophet in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom with worshiping both the Baals and Molech.

What exactly was Molech? Was it connected to the Baals somehow? As far as we know, ancient records outside the Bible never mention a deity called Molech, though they mention Baals frequently.

However, ancient peoples such as the Israelites and their Phoenician neighbors wrote without vowels, so Molech would’ve been written as “*m l kh*” or *mlk*. And that, interestingly, is a Phoenician word for sacrifices, including human sacrifices. Considering this, and the fact the Bible doesn’t necessarily dignify pagan deities with their proper names, it seems likely that Molech is the Bible’s description of one of the Baals.

The Cancer Spreads

Now the Phoenicians and the Israelites did not stay in one place, but also traveled to other places, often on ships and sometimes in league with one another, as 1 Kings 10:22 and 2 Chron. 9:21 indicate. Wherever they went, they carried their paganism with them. As Ezek. 36:19-23 tells us, wherever the Israelites went among the nations, they profaned God’s name with their words and their idolatry.

The greatest Phoenician colony, which may have included Israelites as well, was the North African city-state of Carthage, a city that grew to about 500,000 residents. The Carthaginians burned infants and small children in sacrifice (*mlk*) to a hideous deity called Baal Hammon, whom they worshiped in the fashion of Molech. Idols of Baal Hammon generally portrayed him as an old man with a beard and two horns.

The Greeks identified Baal Hammon with their own god Kronos or Cronus, the god of time and harvests, who, in Greek mythology, castrated his father and ate his own children. The Greeks traditionally represented Kronos as an old man with a long, white beard and carrying a sickle.

Sound familiar? It should. Today, we know Kronos as “Father Time” and the “Grim Reaper.”

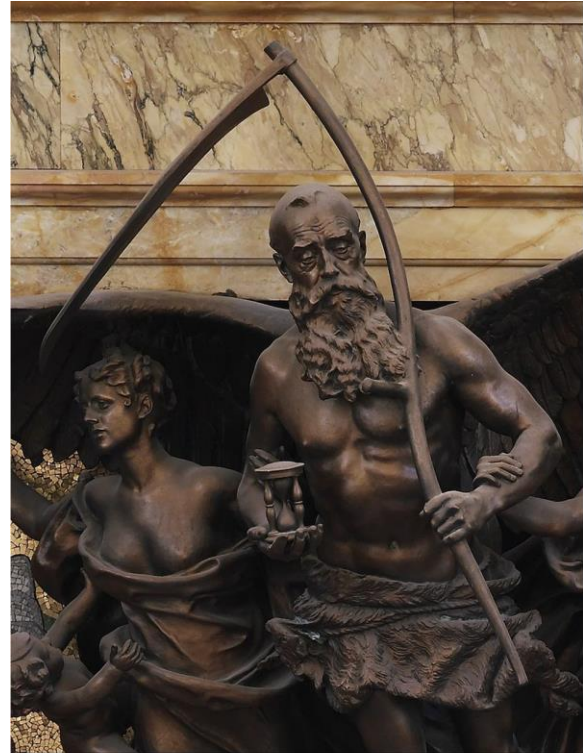
As for the worship of this demonic deity, we find some horrific passages among the Greek histories of Carthage. Bear in mind that Kronos is the Greek name for Baal Hammon, who was worshiped in the fashion of Molech.

Cleitarchus wrote about Carthaginians sacrificing their children, “There stands in their midst a bronze statue of Kronos, its hands extended over a bronze brazier, the flames of which engulf the child. When the flames fall upon the body, the limbs contract and the open mouth seems almost to be laughing until the contracted body slips quietly into the brazier.”¹

Diodorus Siculus’s account differs only in minor details: “There was in their city a bronze image of Kronos extending its hands, palms up and sloping toward the ground, so that each of the children when placed thereon rolled down and fell into a sort of gaping pit filled with fire.”²

The Jewish scholar Rashi (11th century AD) elaborated on the connection between Baal Hammon and Molech, writing, “Moloch... was made of brass; and they heated him from his lower parts; and his hands being stretched out, and made hot, they put the child between his hands, and it was burnt; when it vehemently cried out; but the priests beat a drum, that the father might not hear the voice of his son, and his heart might not be moved.”

Sickening! Some, wanting to believe humans incapable of such things, have doubted the ancient accounts. But archaeologists have uncovered, around the ruins of Carthage, fields



Statue of Kronos as Father Time.

¹ Roger Pearse, “Sacrifices of children at Carthage – the sources,” May 31, 2012. Accessed 12/18/2022 at <https://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2012/05/31/sacrifices-of-children-at-carthage-the-sources/>

² Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, book 20, chapter 14, accessed 12/18/2022 at https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/20A*.html#3

filled with urns containing the charred bone fragments of infants and small children.³ Often, these bone fragments are mixed in with the bone fragments of animals sacrificed in the same ceremony.

Isn't it remarkable how Satan and his followers prey upon children? Satan preys on the weak and vulnerable, prowling "about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). His followers are no different. Sometimes they blatantly and openly prey upon children — through such things as abortion, pedophilia, transgenderism, and forced "gender reassignment" mutilation — while other times they're much more subtle. Those predators today are no better than the ancients butchering their children on the altar of Molech! By any means necessary, Satan wants to destroy humanity, especially innocent children.

Satan and his demons rejoice at the shedding of innocent blood — the blood of children and of God's servants. In addition to what we've already read about the reign of King Manasseh, 2 Kings 21:16 adds this: "Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD."

According to Diodorus Siculus, Carthaginian nobles, reluctant to sacrifice their own children, often bought children from the poor and raised them for sacrifice. After a defeat by the king of Syracuse, however, the Carthaginian nobles blamed their defeat on neglecting to sacrifice their own children. Accordingly, they tried to appease their demonic "gods" by sacrificing 200 of their own children, along with 300 other children.⁴

Plutarch described this senseless slaughter of innocent life as follows:

"...but with full knowledge and understanding they themselves offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan; but should she utter a single moan or let fall a single tear, she had to forfeit the money, and her child was sacrificed nevertheless; and the whole area before the statue was filled with a loud noise of flutes and drums so that the cries of wailing should not reach the ears of the people."⁵

Perhaps now we're seeing the historical context of Biblical passages about idolatry. We can certainly see why God commanded that worshipers of Molech and Baal be destroyed, even

³ Maeve Kennedy, "Carthaginians Sacrificed Own Children, Scientists Say," *The Guardian*, Jan. 21, 2014. Accessed 12/12/2022 at <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/jan/21/carthaginians-sacrificed-own-children-study>

⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, book 20, chapter 14, accessed 12/18/2022 at https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/20A*.html#3

⁵ Plutarch, *Moralia: On Superstition*, sect. 13. Accessed 12/18/2022 at <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0189%3Asection%3D13>

entire societies! In time, Carthage, too, would meet its just end.

Judgment on the Wicked

Before that happened, though, Carthage fought three wars with Rome for control of the Mediterranean. During the second war, the legendary Hannibal led a Carthaginian army across the Alps into Italy and began mauling every Roman army sent against him. At the Battle of Cannae, Hannibal's troops, though out-numbered nearly 2-1, encircled the Romans and hacked 50,000 of them to death in hand-to-hand combat, capturing 20,000 more. Hannibal lost less than 6,000 of his own men.

News of this disaster threw Rome into a panic. Supposing that their gods had deserted them, the Romans seized two Gauls and two Greeks within the city and buried them alive as a sacrifice to the gods. The Roman historian Livy described this sacrifice as “wholly alien to the Roman spirit.”⁶

The Romans generally frowned upon human sacrifice, or so they said. On one hand, many years after this, they outlawed human sacrifice and attempted to stamp it out throughout their empire, going so far as to crucify pagan priests who sacrificed children.⁷ On the other hand, they continued to practice it under other names. More on that later.

Though Hannibal continually defeated the Romans on the battlefield, he never managed to deal a truly decisive blow. Rome would ultimately weather the storm and prevail.

Seventy years after Hannibal's great victory at Cannae, Carthage fell. The Romans slaughtered most of the city's half million inhabitants — men, women, and children alike — sparing only 50,000 whom they sold into slavery. They also burned the city and sowed the ground with salt. The Carthaginians would no longer burn their children in sacrifice to Baal Hammon, as they themselves perished in the flames or by the swords of the Romans. It was a just end to a violently wicked city.

Murder For Worship and Entertainment

But the worship of Molech, aka Baal Hammon, aka Kronos, continued. The Romans

⁶ Titus Livius, *The History of Rome*, book 22, chap. 57. Accessed 12/18/2022 at <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0152%3Abook%3D22%3Achapter%3D57>

⁷ Tertullian, *The Apology*, chap. 9, sect. 2. Accessed 12/18/2022 at https://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-05.htm#P253_53158

identified Baal Hammon of the Carthaginians and Kronos of the Greeks with their own Saturn, the god of time, wealth, and agriculture. They often portrayed Saturn as an old man with a long white beard and a sickle, like the Greek Kronos.

As noted above, the Romans outlawed human sacrifice and recognized it as murder. Yet Saturn / Kronos / Baal / Molech thirsted for human blood.

What do I mean by this? Surely the pagan “gods” were just lifeless idols, right? Yes and no. The idols themselves were worthless, “idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk” (Rev. 9:20).

But as the Apostle Paul explained to the Corinthians, the pagan “gods” were none other than Satan and his demons: “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons” (1 Cor. 10:20-21).

And when God executed “judgment against all the gods of Egypt” (Ex. 12:12), He executed judgment, not against the lifeless idols, but against Satan and his demons.

This is why all the pagans worshiped similar gods in similar ways. Satan authored all of the pagan religions, and all the pagans worshiped him, even without realizing it. As Rev. 12:9 tells us, Satan “deceives the whole world.”

So how did the Romans worship Satan and his demons? How did they offer them human blood after banning human sacrifice? Simple. They offered human sacrifice and called it something different: gladiator combat.

You see, the gladiator games weren’t just a public spectacle; they were meant to honor the Roman gods. Gladiator games began with sacrifices to the gods, and the organizers brought images of the gods into the arena to “witness” the proceedings, as if idols could do such a thing! The Romans considered gladiators who died in the arena to be an offering to Saturn, believing also that he received their souls. Ten gladiator games happened in December during the Saturnalia season, which, as the name implies, celebrated Saturn.

If gladiators, who were generally slaves or war captives, refused to fight, their masters whipped or prodded them with red-hot pokers until they did. Thousands of cheering Romans packed the Colosseum to watch gladiators kill each other, men kill exotic animals, animals tear each other in pieces, and condemned men be torn apart by wild beasts. Undoubtedly, the glee of the Roman spectators was exceeded only by that of Satan and his demons.

More Than Human Sacrifice

But human blood wasn't the only way for the Romans to worship Saturn. Satan desires many other forms of wickedness as well — drunkenness, sexual immorality, and every vice imaginable. So it should come as no surprise that the pagans practiced these things in their religious ceremonies.

When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai and saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, he noted that they were “unrestrained” (Ex. 32:25), which in Hebrew can also mean naked or bare (Strong's # H6544). Again later, when many Israelites worshiped Baal Peor, the shameful incident involved fornicating with Moabite women (Num. 25). Over and over again, the Bible records the existence of “perverted persons” in pagan worship, that is, sodomites and temple prostitutes (1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7).

Secular history confirms that pagan worship all over the world involved prostitution and sexual orgies, from Babylon and Canaan to Greece and Rome, and from India and China to the Aztecs and Mayans. Strabo wrote that, in Corinth, the temple of Aphrodite (called Venus by the Romans) had over 1,000 temple prostitutes.⁸ Herodotus wrote that Babylon required young women to serve as prostitutes in the temple of Ishtar (Venus / Aphrodite) at some point in their lives.⁹

The Roman festival of Saturnalia carried on in the normal pagan tradition of drunken where feasts. During the 7 days of Saturnalia, December 17-23, ancient historians wrote that it was rare to see a sober person.¹⁰ Drunken revelers stumbled through the streets, often naked, singing Saturnalia songs and greeting passersby with a lusty “Io Saturnalia!”

The normal social order and laws were suspended. Courts, schools, and shops closed. Slaves and masters shared equal status. Men dressed as women, and women as men. Romans of all classes set aside their normal attire in favor of gaudy colors and pointed felt hats called “freedmen's caps.”

Romans brought fir trees into their houses and temples, and adorned their houses with wreaths and all sorts of greenery. They also turned these, the shortest days of the year, into a festival of lights, lighting multitudes of candles.

Though the Romans no longer burned human beings as sacrifices, murdering them by other

⁸ Strabo, *Geography*, Book 8, Chapter 6, Section 20. Accessed 12/19/2022 at https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/8F*.html

⁹ Herodotus, *The History*, Book 1, Chapter 192. Accessed 12/19/2022 at <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Hdt.+1.199>

¹⁰ Cato the Elder, *De agricultura* 57; Aulus Gellius 2.24.3; Martial 14.70.1 and 14.1.9; Horace, *Satire* 2.3.5; Lucian, *Saturnalia* 13; *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Alexander Severus 37.6

means instead, there were reminders everywhere. On all the shrines, the Romans hung small wooden dolls as offerings to the gods. Throughout the festival, too, the Romans gifted one another small wax or clay dolls called *sigillaria*. And, of course, the Romans slaughtered human beings in the Colosseum during the Saturnalia season.

Naturally, Saturnalia involved lavish feasting as well, especially roasted pork. God had forbidden His people to either eat or sacrifice pigs (Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8), so of course the heathens did both.

When the Apostle Paul instructed the Corinthians not to allow in their congregation anyone “who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner” (1 Cor. 5:11), bear in mind that the pagans not only did those things, but did so to honor their gods, Satan and his demons! As God said of the heathen, “every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods” (Deut. 12:31).

During Saturnalia, the Romans lavished one another with gifts, for Saturn was the god of wealth and prosperity. And accompanying the gifts, the Romans also gave one another cards with Saturnalia greetings, often in the form of poems.¹¹

If the revelry, candles, Saturnalia songs, gift-giving, wreaths, fir trees, and holiday greetings remind you of something else, they should. If not, don’t worry; we’ll get there.

It’s no wonder the Apostle Paul wrote to Roman converts in Rom. 13:12-13, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.”

In 1 Pet. 4:3-4, the Apostle Peter added, “For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.”

Indeed, how strange must the pagans have thought the Christians, who refused to partake in the Saturnalia celebrations! The Christians may have been the only sober people on the streets of Rome during that week of wickedness. And when the pagans shouted out “Io Saturnalia” and the Christians didn’t return the greeting, or when the Christians refused to join in singing the drunken Saturnalia songs, how strange it must have seemed.

¹¹ Nicole Budrovich, *Getty.edu*, “The Wild Holiday That Turned Ancient Rome Upside Down,” Dec. 17, 2020. Accessed 12/20/2022 at <https://www.getty.edu/news/the-wild-holiday-that-turned-ancient-rome-upside-down/>

New Ingredients in the Poison Stew

Though Saturnalia was already a poison stew of murder, drunkenness, idolatry, and whoredom, it was about to get some new ingredients, too. Or, more accurately, old ingredients repackaged as new ones.

In the first century AD, or perhaps earlier, an eastern mystery religion called Mithraism began to spread through the Roman Empire, taking root especially in the Roman army. Reminiscent of Freemasons, Mithraists shrouded their beliefs in secrecy, adhered to grades or degrees of initiation into the religion's mysteries, and called one another *syndexioi* (those united by the handshake).

The Mithraists worshiped the Indo-Iranian sun god Mithra or Mithras, prayed to the sun, and revered Sunday as their day of worship. Mithraism merged with the worship of the Roman sun god Sol and led to a renewed fervor for the sun god.

In this relief of Mithra slaying a bull, notice, in the upper left corner, the image of the sun god driving the “chariot of the sun.” This belief the Mithraists held in common with the Greeks, who held that the sun god Helios “traveled across the sky in a flaming chariot pulled by four fiery, winged horses.”¹² But other pagans believed this, too. In 2 Kings 23:11, we learn that King Josiah, as he purged idolatry from his kingdom, “removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.”

The Mithraists celebrated their sun god's birthday each year at the winter solstice, which on the Julian calendar fell on December 25th. On this, the shortest day of the year, Roman sun worshipers believed that Sol Invictus, “the unconquered sun,” was reborn. They called this day *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti*, or “Birthday of the Unconquered Sun.” In AD 274, the Roman Emperor Aurelian reaffirmed December 25th as Sol's birthday.



Color-restored relief of “Mithra Slaying the Bull.”

¹² Jaime McLeod, *Farmer's Almanac*, “Chariot of the Sun: A Weather Folklore,” May 9, 2021. Accessed 12/17/2022 at <https://www.farmersalmanac.com/weather-ology-chariot-of-the-sun-12276>

A New Festival?

It must be noted here that the pagans venerated the supposed birthdays of their gods. In contrast, Jews and early Christians rejected any celebration of birthdays.

First century Jewish historian Josephus wrote, “Nay, indeed, the law does not permit us to make festivals at the birth of our children, and thereby afford occasion of drinking to excess” (*Against Apion*, 2:26).

The Bible mentions not one birthday of any of God’s servants. As King Solomon wrote, “A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one’s birth” (Eccl. 7:1). For the righteous, death is the conclusion of a life well-lived, a life of service and accomplishment. The day of one’s birth, on the other hand, bears no mark of accomplishment or good character.

Accordingly, the Bible tells us to commemorate Jesus’ death (1 Cor. 11:26), but never His birth. It tells us when He died, the preparation day for the Passover (John 19:14, 31), which was Abib 14th (Ex. 12:6), but never when He was born. It mentions not one follower of Jesus ever commemorating His birthday.

Famed preacher Charles H. Spurgeon commented, “We find no Scriptural warrant whatever for observing any day as the birthday of the Saviour; and, consequently, its observance is a superstition, because [it’s] not of divine authority. Superstition has fixed most positively the day of our Saviour’s birth, although there is no possibility of discovering when it occurred.”¹³ He added, “We venture to assert, that if there be any day in the year, of which we may be pretty sure that it was not the day on which the Saviour was born, it is the twenty-fifth of December.”¹⁴

The Catholic Encyclopedia observes, “**Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. Irenaeus and Tertullian omit it from their lists of feasts; Origen, glancing perhaps at the discreditable imperial Natalitia, asserts (in Lev. Hom. viii in Migne, P.G., XII, 495) that in the Scriptures sinners alone, not saints, celebrate their birthday; Arnobius (VII, 32 in P.L., V, 1264) can still ridicule the ‘birthdays’ of the gods.**”¹⁵

So when, how, and why did Christmas, the supposed birthday of Christ, come into the churches? Was it genuinely because of Jesus, or did it simply continue pagan traditions under

¹³ Charles H. Spurgeon, *A Joy Born at Bethlehem*, Dec. 24, 1871. Accessed 12/12/2022 at <https://ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons17/sermons17.lix.html>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, “Christmas.” Accessed 12/12/2022 at <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03724b.htm>

a different name?

Paganism Evolves

Remember, the Saturnalia and Sol Invictus celebrations honored Saturn and Sol, the Roman gods of time and the sun. Saturn corresponded to Kronos of the Greeks, Baal Hammon of Carthage, and Baal and Molech of the Canaanites. Ultimately, devotees of these pagan gods worshiped and sacrificed to Satan and his demons (1 Cor. 10:20-21). In honor of their Satanic, demonic gods, the pagans engaged in ritual murder, adultery, prostitution, sodomy, pedophilia, bestiality, theft, vandalism, drunkenness, and every other form of wickedness that God condemned.

Because the Canaanites practiced these things, God commanded the Israelites to destroy the Canaanite society in its entirety, and to kill every Canaanite. He commanded them to wipe that evil off the face of the earth.

But did the Israelites obey? No, they did not. Instead, they adopted that wickedness and facilitated its spread.

Now, the early Christians lived in a Roman society similarly bathed in bloodshed and debauchery. In the blood-drenched arena of the Colosseum, the Romans murdered countless thousands, including thousands of Christians, in honor of their gods. During the days of Saturnalia and Sol, in honor of those gods, the Romans engaged in every vice known to man.

Did the “Christians” learn from the Israelites? Did they shun this evil and stamp it out as soon as they got the opportunity?

Why, no. No, they did not.

Eventually, many decades after the Romans officially converted to “Christianity,” they finally got around to abolishing the gladiator games. But the rest of the pagan worship? It continued unabated.

The church often found converts reluctant or unwilling to give up their pagan traditions. So it came up with a novel solution: it would adopt the pagan customs and relabel them. It must be noted that relabeling paganism as “Christianity” doesn’t make it Christian. Slapping a Ford logo on a Chevy doesn’t make it a Ford.

In fact, God commanded the Israelites not to do that, and they, as usual, disobeyed Him. We read in Deut. 12:29-32,

29 “When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,

30 “take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’

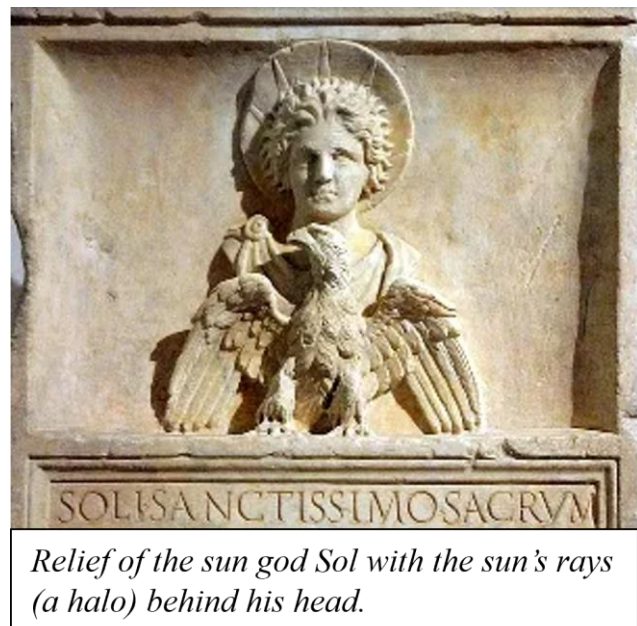
31 “You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

32 “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

Like the Israelites, the church, too, disobeyed God and inquired after the pagans. From the Mithraists, the church adopted Sunday instead of the seventh-day Sabbath as the day of worship. The rays of the sun glowing around the head of Sol magically transformed into a halo around the head of Christ.

How far the church had strayed from the days of Christ and His apostles! They “exchanged the truth of God for the lie” (Rom. 1:25). The Apostle Paul had predicted mass apostasy, warning, “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).

For a time, the church still shunned the Saturnalia and Sol Invictus celebrations. After all, how could any Christian participate in drunken, murderous, whore-fests set aside for the worship of Satan and his demons?



In the 3rd century AD, Tertullian warned Christians not to celebrate Saturnalia or the birthdays of the gods, observing that they involved “every pomp of the devil.”¹⁶ And, as *The Catholic Encyclopedia* noted above, church writers of this era didn’t list Christmas among the church festivals, not at this or any other time of year.

¹⁶ Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, chapter 10. Accessed 12/12/2022 at <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0302.htm>

But the church eventually compromised here, too. In the 4th century AD, some 60 years after Emperor Aurelian had affirmed December 25th as the birthday of Sol, Christmas finally appears among the church festivals — on December 25th.

A certain Scriptor Syrus, in the 4th century AD, noted on a church calendar, “It was a custom of the pagans to celebrate on the same 25 December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and revelries the Christians also took part. Accordingly, when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnized on that day.”

As Benjamin Franklin would write centuries later, “How many observe Christ’s Birth-day! How few, his Precepts! O! ’tis easier to keep Holidays than Commandments.”¹⁷

Yet slapping Christian labels on pagan customs didn’t stop pagan worship. Even in the 5th century AD, Pope Leo I complained that church-goers worshiped the sun on the very steps of his church:

From such a system of teaching proceeds also the ungodly practice of certain foolish folk who worship the sun as it rises at the beginning of daylight from elevated positions: even some Christians think it is so proper to do this that, before entering the blessed Apostle Peter’s basilica, which is dedicated to the One Living and true God, when they have mounted the steps which lead to the raised platform, they turn round and bow themselves towards the rising sun and with bent neck do homage to its brilliant orb.¹⁸

The irony of condemning sun worship while worshiping on the days set aside by sun-worshippers, Sunday and December 25th, seems to have been lost on the man.

Mixing Christianity and Paganism

As King Solomon wrote, “That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9). Thus the parallels between Israel’s backsliding away from God and the church’s backsliding away from God should come as no surprise.

There’s still another parallel from the Old Testament. Weary of Israel’s wickedness, God

¹⁷ Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard’s Almanack* (1743)

¹⁸ Leo I, *Sermon 27: On the Feast of the Nativity, VII* (Pt. IV). Accessed 12/12/2022 at <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/360327.htm>

allowed her to fall to the brutal and sadistic Assyrians, who carried the northern ten tribes away captive out of their own land and resettled other peoples in their place (2 Kings 17).

The new inhabitants, later called Samaritans, also worshiped idols and proved themselves no better than the Israelites, “therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them” (2 Kings 17:25). The Samaritans begged the Assyrian king to send an Israelite priest to teach them “the rituals of the God of the land” (v. 26), and he obliged. The result, as we read in 2 Kings 17:33, was that the Samaritans learned a new religion: “they feared the LORD, yet served their own gods.” They mixed truth with paganism.

And so it was with the early church. The revelry, drunkenness, and debauchery of Saturnalia continued, but now in Christ’s name. Sunday worship continued in place of the seventh-day Sabbath, but now in Christ’s name. The celebration of the sun god’s birthday on December 25th continued, but now in Christ’s name. Even blatant sun worship continued alongside the worship of Christ!

As far as the church was concerned, the strategy paid off. During the 4th century AD, nearly the whole Roman Empire adopted Christianity as its official religion. Rome itself became the headquarters of the future Roman Catholic Church.

Yet something seems rather hollow about this victory, doesn’t it? As one fellow observed, “When the church feels it must become like the world to win the world, it has not won the world. The world has won it.”

New Conquests

Even as the church celebrated its hollow victory over Rome, the Roman Empire hurtled to its doom. The empire fragmented and, in the west, succumbed to its foes. Goths, Franks, Lombards, Anglo-Saxons, and other Germanic tribes overran western Europe and founded the modern European nations.

Most of these tribes, especially the Franks and Anglo-Saxons, followed their own pagan religion and had scarcely heard of Christianity. Like their Viking cousins who burst onto the scene a few centuries later, these Germanic peoples worshiped the gods Odin and Thor, the goddess Freya, and other deities.

Like most other pagans, the Germanic tribes celebrated a mid-winter festival, too, this one called Yule. In addition to sacrifices, it included bonfires, ale-drinking, and feasting on animal flesh, especially pork. Reminiscent of the Canaanites, ancient Israelites, Celts, and others, the Germanic peoples held religious rites and festivals in groves of green trees.

The church's method of converting these pagans differed little from its method of converting the old Roman pagans. Both the Franks and Anglo-Saxons accepted the church's brand of Christianity in fairly short order. The Yule celebrations, along with the Anglo-Saxons' own "Mother's Night" on Christmas Eve, morphed into Christmas celebrations.

In the 10th century, the Norwegian king Haakon "the Good" adopted Christianity alongside his own Norse paganism and thenceforth practiced both. Icelandic chronicler Snorri Sturluson wrote,

King Hakon was a good Christian when he came to Norway; but as the whole country was heathen, with much heathenish sacrifice, and as many great people, as well as the favour of the common people, were to be conciliated, he resolved to practice his Christianity in private. But he kept Sundays, and the Friday fasts, and some token of the greatest holy-days. **He made a law that the festival of Yule should begin at the same time as Christian people held it**, and that every man, under penalty, should brew a meal of malt into ale, and **therewith keep the Yule holy** as long as it lasted.¹⁹

And thus Christmas and Yule merged into one feast, with many Yule traditions, such as the Yule goat, the Yule ham, Yule singing (or wassailing), and the Yule log, being added to the Roman Saturnalia traditions.

Notice how seamlessly the pagan traditions all blend together, for Satan is the author of them all. Molech, Baal, Saturnalia, Yule — they all blend together into one poisonous stew! And into this stew, Satan has poured today's obsession with consumerism and greed.

Medieval and Modern Feasting

So far, we've seen how paganism gave birth to much of modern "Christianity," especially Christmas. To its credit, the church put an end to human sacrifice. But Christmas continued to be celebrated in much the same manner as Saturnalia and Yule. Even the vestiges of human sacrifice remain, albeit not acted upon. More on that shortly.

It must be noted that Christmas was, and is, more than just a single day. Like Saturnalia and Yule, it encompasses the whole "Christmas season," especially the period between Christmas and New Year's, but often extending to January 6th. This has been traditionally called "the twelve days of Christmas."

At each Saturnalia, the Romans elected a "King of the Saturnalia" to preside over the

¹⁹ Snorri Sturluson, *Hakon the Good's Saga*, 15. Accessed 12/13/2022 at <https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/heim/05hakon.htm>

festivities. In England and France, revelers elected a “Lord of Misrule” each Christmas season to preside over the “Feast of Fools,” celebrated by church clergy and lay members alike.

The Sunday Mail noted,

Until the mid-19th century, Christmas was a time for drunkenness and debauchery.

Men dressed like women, women dressed like men, servants dressed like masters, boys dressed like bishops, everyone else either dressed as animals or wore blackface — all to subvert the godly order in the safety of anonymity.

Christmas was a carnival of drink, cross-dressing, violence and lust during which Christians were unshackled from the ethical norms expected of them the rest of the year.

In early modern England, it was common practice to elect a “Lord of Misrule” to oversee Christmas celebrations. Revellers under the auspices of the “Lord” marched the streets dressed in costume, drinking ale, singing carols, playing instruments, fornicating and causing damage to property.

The 16th century bishop Hugh Latimer lamented that many Christians “dishonoured Christ more in the 12 days of Christmas than in all the 12 months besides.”²⁰

What better description of Satan the Devil than the “Lord of Misrule”? Or what better feast for his worshipers than the Feast of Fools?

King Solomon wrote, “The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools. For like the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool. This also is vanity” (Eccl. 7:4-6).

In 1687, Puritan clergyman Increase Mather noted that December was called “the voluptuous month” for a reason, as the drunken revelry of the Christmas season included much fornicating and out-of-wedlock pregnancies, which led to a good many shotgun weddings and September and October births.²¹

Ancient Romans sang Saturnalia songs while stumbling drunk and often naked through the streets. This, of course, became Christmas caroling. This custom has had some variations

²⁰ James A. T. Lancaster, *The Sunday Mail*, “The Sordid Underbelly of Christmas Past,” Dec. 24, 2021. Accessed 12/17/2022 at <https://www.sundaymail.co.zw/new-the-sordid-underbelly-of-christmas-past>

²¹ Ibid.

over the centuries.

English peasants merged traditions from both Yule and Saturnalia to create wassailing, best described as a mix of Halloween trick-or-treating and Christmas caroling. Peasants went door to door among the wealthy and the nobility, singing carols in exchange for food and drink. As the practice evolved over the centuries, if the wealthy didn't allow carolers into their homes or give them free food and drink, the carolers often vandalized their homes and threw rocks through their windows.

Paganism and You

Today, the face of Christmas is Santa Claus, a fat fellow dressed in scarlet with a long white beard. The name Santa Claus itself is a corruption of the words "Saint Nicholas," though the appearance and character of Santa Claus has nothing to do with St. Nicholas.

The appearance and character of Santa Claus has more to do with the Germanic god Odin, who was often portrayed as an old man with a long white beard, like Baal Hammon, Kronos, and Saturn. In an ironic twist, Kronos, the child murderer, is still associated with children, but now as a bringer of gifts!

Every year at Yule, the Germanic peoples believed that Odin, riding an eight-legged steed, flew through the skies to lead the Wild Hunt, a procession of ghosts and departed spirits, for Odin, among many other things, was the god of the dead. To the good, Odin would bring gifts; to the bad, he would bring misfortune or even death. In this form, Odin again resembles the Greek Kronos, from whom comes the character of the Grim Reaper. The gift-bringer Odin employed elves and dwarves to make gifts.

Like Satan the Devil, whom the pagans have worshiped under many different names and disguises, Odin was a god with dozens of names and disguises.

Small wonder, for Odin, of course, IS Satan. Among his many names was *Jolfaer*, that is,



Odin disguised as a traveler, one of his favorite disguises. Satan, when asked by God where he came from, replied, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it" (Job 1:7; 2:2).

“Yule Father.” Or, as generations of British children have known him, “Father Christmas.”

At this point, it shouldn't surprise anyone that Odin's worshipers occasionally honored him with human sacrifice. Recounting the fate of a Swedish king who failed to properly honor the Norse gods, Snorri Sturluson wrote,

The Swedes took it amiss that Olaf was sparing in his sacrifices, and believed the [famine] must proceed from this cause. The Swedes therefore gathered together troops, made an expedition against King Olaf, surrounded his house and burnt him in it, giving him to Odin as a sacrifice for good crops.²²

The very similarity between the names “Santa” and “Satan” has, on occasion, resulted in children mistakenly addressing their Christmas letters to Satan rather than Santa. Further, the modern depiction of a red-dressed Santa evokes Rev. 12:3, where Satan is described as “a great, fiery red dragon.” Even “Old St. Nick,” another name for Santa Claus, evokes Satan, who is occasionally called “Old Nick.”

Santa is, of course, a lie and the object of lies. Parents the world over, for no sensible reason, lie to their children that Santa Claus is real and that he is the source of gifts. As Jesus rebuked His enemies, “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44).

God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2), but Satan is the father of lies and has no truth in him. “Every good gift and every perfect gift” comes from Almighty God (Jam. 1:17), but Satan would have you believe they come from him instead. That parents lie to their children for no reason, like Satan does, shows that they themselves have been tricked and deceived by Satan.

Where parents once placed their children in the hands of Molech/Baal, they now place them in the laps of strangers pretending to be Santa Claus. And how bizarre is that? Why do parents put their children in the laps of strangers? In Seattle, parents learned to their horror, after twenty-six years, that they'd put their children in the lap of a mall Santa who turned out to be a child molester!²³

And what about the elves associated with Santa Claus and frequently used as Christmas decorations? Remember, Satan has helpers, too; they're called demons. In Germanic

²² Snorri Sturluson, *The Ynglinga Saga*, 47. Accessed 12/18/2022 at <https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/heim/02ynglga.htm>

²³ *The Lewiston Tribune*, “‘I was Satan,’ not Santa, molester says; Ex-shopping mall Santa gets 26-year jail term for child rape,” Feb. 28, 1998. Accessed 12/16/2022 at https://lmtribune.com/nation/world/i-was-satan-not-santa-molester-says-ex-shopping-mall/article_0376e0ec-8ebe-5105-9a53-eba072bd0f4f.html

mythology, elves were considered supernatural beings and associated with magic, mischief, and seduction. Just as Santa is Satan, so the elves are demons.

On par with Santa Claus and the elves, the item most associated with Christmas is the Christmas tree. Christmas-keepers go out to the woods, select an evergreen tree, cut it down, bring it into their house, stand it upright, decorate it with lights and all sorts of trinkets and baubles, and put their Christmas gifts under it.

Putting gifts underneath the Christmas tree stems from the pagans of old offering incense and sacrifices to their gods under every green tree, as the Bible mentions repeatedly: “Are not ye children of transgression? A false seed? Who are inflamed among oaks, under every green tree, slaughtering the children in valleys, under clefts of the rocks” (Isa. 57:4-5; YLT).

Worshippers today adorn the Christmas tree with all sorts of trinkets and baubles, just as the pagans once adorned the shrines and images of their gods. At Saturnalia, the Romans decorated the shrines of their gods with wooden dolls as tokens of human sacrifice.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote in Jer. 10:1-5,

1 Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.

2 Thus says the LORD: “Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them.

3 “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.

4 “They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple.

5 “They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good.”



Relief of Indo-Iranian sun god Mithra adorning an evergreen tree.

Does that sound like what people today do with their Christmas trees?

Of course it does! It describes a Christmas tree down to the last detail, for the heathens have

practiced this custom for millennia.

“But I don’t worship my Christmas tree!” someone might exclaim, as he kneels, bows down, and places the Christmas presents beneath it, softly singing, “O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree...” And the next morning, his children likewise kneel before the green tree and remove their presents. But they don’t worship the Christmas tree!

Be that as it may, a Christmas tree is part of a religious festival, part of religious worship, and comes straight from the devil worship of the pagans.

The next key ingredient of Satan’s poison stew, of course, is the lights. They’re so pretty; people drive around neighborhoods just to ooh and ah over all the pretty Christmas lights. Remember, the pagans worshiped the sun god around the winter solstice, along with all sorts of other devilish deities. In honor of the sun’s rebirth during the shortest days of the year, the pagans celebrated with lights. Festivals of light exist in every pagan culture around the world. The Romans lit candles for Saturnalia; the Germanic peoples lit bonfires for Yule. Today, of course, many folks light Yule logs along with all their Christmas lights.

Yes, the lights are pretty, even alluring to many. Satan designed it that way. “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). Satan wants pagan worship to be as sparkling and alluring as possible.

Now, every great lie has a few grains of truth mixed in, and Satan is the greatest of all liars. Therefore, he made sure Christmas had some truth in it, so that people could point to it and use it to excuse all the paganism.

For Christmas, the truth is that Jesus Christ came to earth in the flesh, was born in Bethlehem, and that his parents Joseph and Mary put him in a manger. That’s it. That’s the full extent of the truth in Christmas. Everything else is a pagan lie.

Jesus was not born on December 25th, or in winter at all. He was born at a time of year when the shepherds lived out in the fields watching over their flocks (Luke 2). Some may protest that the date isn’t important; it’s just the intent of celebrating Christ’s birth that matters. If the date isn’t important, then why not celebrate at some other time of year, in some altogether different manner? The fact is, the date and the manner of celebration IS important — to Satan and his demons!

And another fact also remains: there is no Biblical tradition of celebrating anyone’s birthday; that comes from paganism. God’s Word could’ve easily told us what day Jesus was born, but it didn’t — likely because God doesn’t want us celebrating it! God’s Word told us, not to celebrate Christ’s birth, but to commemorate His death.

There's one more Christmas tradition to cover. No Christmas would be complete without a Christmas dinner, a dinner which usually involves a ham or stuffed pig.

The Romans ate roasted pork at Saturnalia; the Germanic peoples did the same at Yule. In Deut. 14:8, God told all His people, Israelites and non-Israelites alike, "Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud; you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses." Basically, Satan encouraged his worshipers to eat pork because God said not to.

In Dan. 11:31, Daniel the prophet foretold that the Greeks under Antiochus IV would defile God's temple in Jerusalem and "place there the abomination of desolation." History records that Daniel's prophecy came true. Antiochus IV, who blasphemously took the title "Epiphanes," or "God manifest," set up an idol of Zeus in the temple and sacrificed pigs on the altar of God.²⁴ This offering of swine was part of the abomination of desolation.

When the Romans ate pork at Saturnalia, it was part of their pagan worship. When the church followed suit in eating pork at Christmas, it yet again followed the customs of the pagans and disobeyed God's Word.

Everything about Christmas is pagan. Every major Christmas tradition stems from the heathen traditions of Yule and Saturnalia. Those in turn stem from the religion of the child-murdering Canaanites, the worship of Baal and Molech.

"But I would never dream of burning my children in the fire to Molech!", someone will say. No, but they decorate their homes with Satan and his demons in various disguises, and unwittingly invite him into their homes. Satan is a predator who wants to be near your children; he'll get to them any way he can; he wants their souls!

Come Out From Among Them

Considering, then, that Christmas is steeped in paganism; that both its date and manner of celebration stem from the most disgusting and sickening forms of devil worship, including child sacrifice; that the Bible nowhere mentions the date of Christ's birth, or anyone else's; that the very celebration of birthdays is pagan; and that God's Word commands us to commemorate Christ's death, not His birth, what should we do with the celebration of Christmas? God's Word is clear!

Jesus Christ said that those who worship God "must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

²⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 12, Chapter 5, Section 4. Also 1 Maccabees 1:47.

Christmas isn't truth; it's a festival of lies.

God commanded the Israelites in Deut. 12:2-4:

2 You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.

3 And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place.

4 You shall not worship the LORD your God with such things.

The Israelites didn't obey, the early church didn't obey, but we can. If you have a Christmas tree, take it out and burn it! Take down the lights, the wreaths, the ornaments, the elf demons, and the images of Satan, I mean Santa, and destroy them.

Let no one follow the example of Israel in adopting the ways of the Canaanites. "Are not ye children of transgression? A false seed? Who are inflamed among oaks, under every green tree, slaughtering the children in valleys, under clefts of the rocks" (Isa. 57:4-5; YLT).

Let no follower of Christ indulge in the customs of the heathen. As the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 6:14-17,

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

17 Therefore, "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."

Come out from among the heathen and be separate! Paganism isn't cute; it isn't fun or nostalgic; it isn't edgy; it's demonic and evil. It's wickedness wrapped up in a shiny bow.

Cast off the "aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers" (1 Pet. 1:18).

Remember the example of King Manasseh. No matter what you've done before now, it's not too late to repent and change. God's mercy to the repentant knows no bounds.

Instead of following the example of the pagans, let's follow the example of righteous King Josiah, who stamped out every trace of paganism he could find. Let's follow the example of Nehemiah, governor of the Jews, who "cleansed them of everything pagan" (Neh. 13:30). Let's stamp out every trace of paganism in our lives and cleanse ourselves and our families of everything pagan.

Conclusion

There is no "putting Christ back in Christmas" because He was never there. Christ is not now, nor has He ever been, "the reason for the season." If He was, it wouldn't even be necessary to repeat it over and over, because it would be self-evident!

Christmas is a commemoration of child sacrifice, sun worship, and debauchery, melded with the modern tradition of consumerism. It's the crown jewel of paganism, idolatry, and wickedness. It's Satan's finest work: paganism disguised as worship of Christ.

Nearly everyone knows Halloween is pagan and demonic, yet many choose to celebrate it anyway. That's a choice everyone must make. Christmas is no less pagan than Halloween, yet many try to convince themselves otherwise.

It's not just that Christmas is pagan; it's that Christmas is a demonic and Satanic holiday masquerading as a good one. In that way, it's more insidious and cunning than a holiday such as Halloween. During this festival season of lights, remember that "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light." Don't be fooled!

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