THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTMAS

SCRIPTURAL FACT OR FICTION

Here are the astonishing facts which may shock you! Test yourself. How much do you know of the origin of the tree—Christmas of "Santa Claus"—of the mistletoe—holly wreath—of the custom of exchanging gifts? WHEN I was a very little boy, I was taught to hang up my stockings on Christmas eve. When I was awakened the next morning, they were filled with small toys and sacks or little boxes of candy and nuts. And beside the mantle, from which my stockings hung, a Christmas tree has suddenly appeared, decorated with shiny tinsel. And on it hung presents. Other presents for us children were piled on the floor underneath. I was told Santa Claus had come down the chimney during the night and left all these things. But did I question what my parents told me? Of course not. I accepted it—took it all for granted. Stop and think a moment! Very few have ever reflected on why they believe what they do—why they follow the customs they do, or from where those customs came. We were born into a world filled with customs. We grew up accepting them without question. Why? Sheep instinct? Well, not exactly. But by nature, we do tend to follow the crowd, whether right or wrong. Sheep follow others to the slaughter. Humans ought to check up where they are going.

HOW AND WHEN DID CHRISTMAS ORIGINATE?

Does Christmas really celebrate the birthday of YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH}? Was YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} born on December 25th? Did the original apostles, who knew YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} personally and were taught by HIM, celebrate HIS birthday on December 25th? Did they celebrate it at all? If Christmas is the most important of the Christian holidays, why do so many non-Christians observe it? Do you know? Why do people exchange presents with family members, friends, relatives at Christmas time? Was it because the wise men presented gifts to the MESSIAH {MASHIACH}? The answer may surprise you. Most people have "supposed" a lot of things about Christmas that are not true. But let's quit "supposing" and get the facts!

WHAT DO THE ENCYCLOPEDIAS SAY?

The word "Christmas " means "Mass of Christ," or, as it came to be shortened, "Christ-Mass." It came to non-Christians and Protestants from the Roman Catholic Church. And where did they get it? They did not get it from the New Testament. They did not get it from the Scriptures. They did not get it from the original apostles who were personally instructed from MESSIAH {MASHIACH}. Christmas can be traced back to the fourth century from the Roman Church and paganism. Since the celebration of Christmas has come to us from the Roman Catholic Church and has no authority but that of the Roman Catholic Church, let us examine the Catholic Encyclopedia, 1911 edition, published by that church. Under the heading "Christmas," you will find: "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church . . . the first evidence of the feast is from Egypt." "Pagan customs centering around the January calends gravitated to Christmas." And in the same encyclopedia, under the heading "Natal Day," we find that the early Catholic father, Origen, acknowledged this truth: ". . . In the Scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a great banquet on his birthday. It is only sinners [like Pharaoh and Herod] who make great rejoicings over the day in which they were born into this world" (emphasis ours). Encyclopedia Britannica, 1946 edition, has this: "Christmas (i.e., the Mass of Christ) . . .. Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church. . .." It was not instituted by Christ or the apostles, or by Bible authority. It was picked up afterward from paganism. The Encyclopedia Americana, 1944 edition, says: "Christmas . . .. It was, according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian church, as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the death of remarkable persons rather than their birth. . .." (The "Communion," which is instituted by New Testament Bible authority, is a memorial of the death of Messiah.) ". . . A feast was established in memory of this event [the birth of YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH}]. In the fifth century the Western Church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol, as no certain knowledge of the day of the birth of MESSIAH {MASHIACH} existed." Now notice! These recognized historical authorities show Christmas was not observed by Christians for the first two or three hundred years—a period longer than the entire history of the United States as a nation! It got into the Western, or Roman, Church, by the fourth century A.D. It was not until the fifth century that the Roman Church ordered it to be celebrated as an official Christian festival!

YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} WAS NOT BORN DEC. 25th

YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} was not even born in the winter season! When the MESSIAH {MASHIACH} was born "there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night," (LUKE {LUCAS} 2:8). This could never have occurred in Judaea in the month of December. The shepherds always brought their flocks from the mountainsides and fields and corralled them not later than October 15, to protect them from the cold, rainy season that followed that date. Notice that the Scriptures prove, in Song of Solomon 2:11 and EZRA 10:9, 13, that winter was a rainy season not permitting shepherds to abide in open fields at night. "It was ancient custom among Jews of those days to send out their sheep to the fields and deserts about the Passover (early spring), and bring them home at commencement of the first rain," says the Adam Clarke Commentary (Vol. 5, page 370, New York ed.)
Continuing, this authority states: "During the time they were out, the shepherds watched them night and day. As . . . the first rain began early in the month of Marchesvan, which answers to part of our October and November [begins sometime in October], we find that the sheep were kept out in the open country during the whole summer. And, as these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that, consequently, our Lord was not born on December 25, when no flocks were out in the fields; nor could He have been born later than September, as the flocks were still in the fields by night. On this very ground, the nativity in December should be given up. The feeding of the flocks by night in the fields is a chronological fact. . .. See the quotations from the Talmudists in Lightfoot." Any encyclopedia, or any other authority, will tell you that MESSIAH {MASHIACH} was not born on December 25. The Catholic Encyclopedia frankly states this fact.
The exact date of the birth of YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} is DURING THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, MESSIAH WAS TABERNACLED IN THE FLESH TO BECOME THE LAMB SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORLD.

HOW THIS PAGAN CUSTOM GOT INTO THE ASSEMBLY

Then how did this pagan custom creep into the Western Christian world? The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge explains clearly, in its article on "Christmas ": "How much the date of the festival depended upon the pagan Brumalia (Dec. 25) following the Saturnalia (Dec. 17-24), and celebrating the shortest day in the year and the 'new sun,' . . . cannot be accurately determined. The pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christian influence. . .. The pagan festival with its riot and merrymaking was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit and in manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Near East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which the birthday of YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and sun worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival."
Remember, the Roman world had been pagan. Prior to the fourth century, Christians were few in number, though increasing, and were persecuted by the government and by pagans. But, with the advent of Constantine as emperor, who made his profession of Christianity in the fourth century, placing Christianity on an equal footing with paganism, people of the Roman world began to accept this now-popular Christianity by the hundreds of thousands. But remember, these people had grown up in pagan customs, chief of which was this idolatrous festival of December 25th. It was a festival of merrymaking, with its special spirit. They enjoyed it! They didn't want to give it up! Now this same article in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge explains how the recognition by Constantine of Sunday, which had been the day of pagan sun worship, and how the influence of the pagan Manichaeism, which identified the SON of God with the physical SUN, gave these pagans of the fourth century, now turning over wholesale to "Christianity," their excuse for calling their pagan-festival date of December 25th (birthday of the SUN-god) the birthday of the SON of God. And that is how "Christmas became fastened on our Western world! We may call it by another name, but it's the same old pagan sun-worshipping festival still! The only change is in what we call it! You can call a rabbit a "lion," but it's still a rabbit, just the same. Again, from the Encyclopedia Britannica: "Certain Latin’s, as early as 354, may have transferred the birthday from January 6th to December 25, which was then a Mithraic feast, the birthday of the unconquered SUN . . . The Syrians and Armenians, who clung to January 6th, accused the Romans of sun worship and idolatry, contending . . . that the feast of December 25th, had been invented by disciples of Cerinthus. . .."

THE REAL ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS

But if we got Christmas from the Roman Catholics, and they got it from paganism, where did the pagans get it? Where, when, and what was its real origin? It is a chief custom of the corrupt system denounced all through Bible prophecies and teachings under the name of Babylon. And it started and originated in the original Babylon of ancient NIMROD! Yes, it stems from roots whose beginning was shortly this side of the Flood! NIMROD, grandson of HAM, son of NOAH, was the real founder of the system of Babylon that has gripped the world ever since—the system of organized competition—of man-ruled governments and empires, based upon the competitive and profit-making economic system. NIMROD built the tower of Babel, the original Babylon, ancient Nineveh, many other cities. He organized the first kingdom of the world. The name NIMROD, in Hebrew, is derived from "Marad," meaning "he rebelled." From many ancient writings, considerable is learned of this man, who started the great organized worldly apostasy from GOD {ELOHIM} that has dominated this world until now. NIMROD was so evil, it is said he married his own mother, whose name was Semiramis. After the untimely death of NIMROD, his so-called mother-wife, Semiramis, propagated the evil teaching of the survival of NIMROD as a spirit being. She claimed a full-grown evergreen tree sprang overnight from a dead tree stump, which symbolized the springing forth unto new life of the dead NIMROD. On each anniversary of his birth, she claimed, NIMROD would visit the evergreen tree and leave gifts upon it. December 25 was the birthday of NIMROD. This is the real origin of the Christmas tree. Through her scheming and designing, Semiramis became the Babylonian "Queen of Heaven," (JEREMIAH {YIRMEYAH} 44:17-25) and NIMROD, under various names, became the "divine son of heaven." Through the generations, in this idolatrous worship, NIMROD became the false Messiah, son of Baal the Sun-god. In this false Babylonish system, the "Mother and Child," (Semiramis and NIMROD reborn), became chief objects of worship. This worship of "Mother and Child" spread over the world. The names varied in different countries and languages. In Egypt, it was Isis and Osiris. In Asia, Cybele and Deoius. In Pagan Rome, Fortuna and Jupiterpuer. Even in Greece, China, Japan, Tibet is to be found the counterpart of the Madonna, long before the birth of יהוה {YHWH} HA-MASHIACH! Thus, during the fourth and fifth centuries, when the pagans of the Roman world were "accepting" the new popular "Christianity" by hundreds of thousands, carrying their old pagan customs and beliefs along with them, merely cloaking them with Christian-sounding names, the Madonna and "Mother and Child" idea also became popularized, especially at Christmas time. Every Christmas season you will hear sung and chanted dozens of times the hymn "Silent Night, Holy Night," with its familiar "Mother and Child" theme. We, who have been born in such a Babylonish world, reared and steeped in these things all our lives, have been taught to revere these things as holy, and sacred. We never questioned to see where they came from—whether they came from the Scriptures, or from pagan idolatry! We are shocked to learn the truth—some, unfortunately, take offense at the truth! But GOD {ELOHIM} commands HIS faithful ministers, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show MY people their transgression!" Shocking as these facts are, they are the facts of history and the Scriptures! The real origin of Christmas goes back to the ancient Babylon. It is bound up in the organized apostasy with which the devil has tricked and deceived the world these many centuries! In Egypt, it was always believed that the son of Isis (Egyptian name for "Queen of Heaven") was born December 25. Paganism celebrated this famous birthday over most of the known world for centuries before the birth of GOD {ELOHIM}. December 25 is not the birthday of YHWH THE TRUE MESSIAH {MASHIACH}! The apostles and early true Assembly never celebrated the birthday of YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} at any time. There is no command or instruction to celebrate it in the Scriptures—rather, the celebrating of birthdays is a pagan, not a Messianic custom, believe it or not! Thus, the ancient idolatrous "Chaldean Mysteries," founded by this wife of NIMROD, have been handed down through the pagan religions under new Christian-sounding names.

ORIGIN OF HOLLY WREATH, MISTLETOE, YULE LOG
Now, where did we get this mistletoe custom? Among the ancient pagans the mistletoe was used at this festival of the winter solstice because it was considered sacred to the sun, because of its supposed miraculous healing power. The pagan custom of kissing under the mistletoe was an early step in the night of revelry and drunken debauchery—celebrating the death of the "old sun" and the birth of the new at the winter solstice. Mistletoe, sacred in pagan festivals, is a PARASITE! Holly berries were also considered sacred to the sun-god. The Yule log is in reality the "sun log." "Yule" means "wheel," a pagan symbol of the sun. Yet today professing Christians speak of the "sacred yule-tide season!" Even the lighting of fires and candles as a Christmas ceremony is merely a continuation of the pagan custom, encouraging the waning sun-god as he reached the lowest place in the southern skies! The Encyclopedia Americana says: "The holly, the mistletoe, the Yule log . . . are relics of pre-Christian times." Of paganism! The book Answers to Questions, compiled by Frederick J. Haskins, found in public libraries, says: "The use of Christmas wreaths is believed by authorities to be traceable to the pagan customs of decorating buildings and places of worship at the feast which took place at the same time as Christmas . The Christmas tree is from Egypt, and its origin dates from a period long anterior to the Messianic Era."

YES, AND EVEN SANTA CLAUS!!
But surely dear old Santa Claus is not a creature of pagan birth? But he is, and his real character is not so benevolent and holy as many suppose! The name "Santa Claus" is a corruption of the name "St. Nicholas," a Roman Catholic bishop who lived in the fifth century. Look in the Encyclopedia Britannica, volume 19, pages 648-649, where you will read: "St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, a saint honored by the Greeks and Latins on the sixth of December. . .. A legend of his secret gift of dowries(monies brought by a bride to her husband at marriage) on the three daughters of an impoverished citizen . . . is said to have originated the old custom of giving presents in secret on the eve of St. Nicholas [Dec. 6], subsequently transferred to Christmas day. Hence the association of Christmas with Santa Claus. . .." Through the year, parents punish their children for telling falsehoods. Then, at Christmas time, they themselves tell their little children this "Santa Claus" lie! Is it any wonder many of them, when they grow up and learn the truth, begin to believe GOD {ELOHIM} is a myth, too? One little fellow, sadly disillusioned about "Santa Claus," said to a playmate, "Yes, and I am going to look into this 'Jesus Christ' business, too!" Is it Messianic to teach children myths and falsehoods? GOD {ELOHIM} says "You shall not bear false witness!" It may seem right, and be justified by human reason, but GOD {ELOHIM} says "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end are the ways of death!" "Old Nick" also is a term for the devil! Is there a connection? Satan appears as an "angel of light," to deceive! (II CORINTHIANS {QORINTHIYM}. 11:14; REVELATION {CHAZOWN} 12:9.) And so, when we examine the facts, we are astonished to learn that the practice of observing Christmas is not, after all, a true Messianic practice, but a Pagan custom—one of the ways of Babylon our people have fallen into!

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS TREE

But if the Scriptures are silent about telling us to observe Christmas or recording any such observance by the apostles or early true Church, it does have something to say about the Christmas tree! This will come as a real surprise to many. But here it is: JEREMIAH {YIRMEYAH} 10:2-6,"YHWH ELOHIM {GOD} says, Learn not the way of the heathen. . .. For the customs of the people are vain; . . . for one cuts a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and gold, they fasten it with nails and hammers, that it does not move." There is a perfect description of the Christmas tree, termed by the Eternal as "the way of the heathen, the custom of the people." We are commanded not to learn that way or follow it! It is also viewed in this passage as idolatry. The fifth verse shows that these trees cannot speak—cannot walk—must be carried. "Be not afraid of them, for they [the trees] cannot do evil neither also is it in them to do good." They are not gods to be feared. Some people misread this to make it say there is no harm in having a Christmas tree, but that is not what it says.

IS THE EXCHANGING GIFTS SCRIPTURAL?
But when it comes to the most important part of all in this Christmas observance—the Christmas SHOPPING season—the buying and exchanging of gifts—many will exclaim triumphantly, "Well, at least the Scriptures tell us to do that! Did the wise men give gifts, when MESSIAH {MASHIACH} was born?" Again, we are due for some surprises, when we learn the truth. First, let us look at the historic origin of trading gifts back and forth, then see exactly what the Scriptures do say about it. From the Bibliotheca Sacra, volume 12, pages 153-155, we quote, "The interchange of presents between friends is alike characteristic of Christmas and the Saturnalia and must have been adopted by Christians from the Pagans, as the admonition of Tertullian plainly shows." The fact is, this custom fastened upon people of exchanging gifts with friends and relatives at the Christmas season has not a single trace of Truth about it, strange though that may seem! This does not celebrate the birthday of MESSIAH {MASHIACH} or honor it or honor HIM! Suppose someone you love has a birthday. You want to honor that person on his or her birthday. Would you buy many gifts for everyone else, trading gifts back and forth with all your other friends and loved ones, but ignore completely any gift for the one whose birthday you are honoring? Rather absurd, ridiculous, and meaningless when viewed in that light. Yet this is exactly what people the world over are doing! They honor a day that is not the birthday of MESSIAH {MASHIACH} by spending every dime they can scrape together in buying presents to trade back and forth among friends and relatives. But I can say by years of experience, as I believe most pastors and ministers can say, that when the month of December rolls around, almost all professing Christians forget to give gifts to MESSIAH {MASHIACH} and His cause of evangelizing the world almost altogether! December always is the most difficult month to keep the work of MESSIAH {MASHIACH} from dying! People are too busy trading gifts back and forth among themselves to think of HIM and HIS Work, it seems. Then, in January and even into February it seems they have to catch up from what they spent for Christmas, so they seldom get back to normal in supporting MESSIAH {MASHIACH} and HIS Work before March! Now consider what the Scripture says about giving gifts when MESSIAH {MASHIACH} was born. It is in MATTHEW {MATTITHIAH} 2: 1-11. "Now when YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is HE that is born King of the Jews?' . . . And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary HIS mother, and fell down, and worshipped HIM: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto HIM gifts; gold and frankincense, and myrrh."

WHY GIFTES PRESENTED TO MESSIAH {MASHIACH}
Notice, they inquired for the child YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH}, who was born KING of the Jews! Now why did they present gifts to Him? Because it was His birthday? Not at all, because they came several days or weeks after the date of His birth! Was it to set an example for us, today, to trade gifts back and forth among ourselves? No, notice carefully! They did not exchange gifts among themselves, but "they presented unto HIM gifts." They gave their gifts to YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH}, not to their friends, relatives, or one another! Why? Let me quote from the Adam Clarke Commentary, volume 5, page 46: "Verse 11(They presented unto him gifts.) The people of the east never approach the presence of kings and great personages, without a present in their hands. The custom is often noticed in the Old Testament, and still prevails in the east, and in some of the newly discovered South Sea Islands."
There it is! They were not instituting a new Messianic custom of exchanging gifts with friends to honor the birthday of YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH}. They were following an old and ancient eastern custom of presenting gifts to a king when they come into his presence. They were approaching HIM, born KING of the Jews, in person. Therefore, custom required they present gifts—even as the Queen of Sheba brought gifts to Solomon—even as many people today take a gift along when they visit the White House for an appointment with the President. No, the custom of trading GIFTS back and forth does not stem from this scriptural incident at all, but rather, as quoted from history above, it is the continuance of an ancient pagan custom. Instead of honoring Messiah, it invariably retards His Work, often sets it back, at the Christmas season every year.

DOES IT REALLY HONOR MESSIAH?
Now come two arguments often used to justify Christmas observance.

1) Many will reason this way: "But, even though the exact date of the birth of YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} is unknown, should we not select some date to celebrate as His birthday?" The answer is positively no! Did you not notice the statement quoted from the Catholic Encyclopedia: "Sinners alone, not saints, celebrate their birthdays." The celebration of birthdays is not a Messianic custom, but a pagan custom, observed by sinners!

2) But, many still reason, "Even so—even though Christmas was a pagan custom, honoring the false sun-god, we do not observe it to honor the false god, we observe it to honor MESSIAH." But how does Elohim answer in HIS Word? "Take caution to yourself that you be not snared(trapped) by following them [the pagans in their customs] . . . that you enquire not after their gods, saying, how did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. You shall not do so unto YHWH thy GOD {ELOHIM}: for every abomination to the Eternal, which HE hates, have they done unto their gods" (DEUTERONOMY {DEVARIM} 12:30-31). GOD {ELOHIM} says plainly in HIS Instruction Book to us, that HE will not accept that kind of worship, even though intended in HIS honor. To HIM, HE says, it is offering what is abominable to HIM, and therefore it honors, not HIM, but false pagan gods. Elohim says we must not worship HIM according to the "dictates of our own conscience"—a term we often hear. But YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} says plainly, "Elohim is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). And what is truth? The Word of Elohim—the Holy Scriptures—said YHWH Messiah, is truth (John 17:17); and the Scriptures say Elohim will not accept worship when people take a pagan custom or manner of worship and try to honor MESSIAH {MASHIACH}with it.
Again, YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} said: "In vain they do worship ME, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (MATTHEW {MATTITHIAH} 15:9). Christmas observance is a tradition of men, and the commandments of GOD {ELOHIM}, as quoted, forbid it. YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} said, further, "full well you reject the commandment of ELOHIM {GOD}, that you may keep your own tradition." That is precisely what the millions are doing today. They ignore the commandment of ELOHIM {GOD}. HE commands, regarding taking the customs of the pagans and using them to honor or worship ELOHIM {GOD}:" You shall not do so unto YHWH thy GOD {ELOHIM}." Still, most people today take that command of ELOHIM {GOD} lightly, or as having no validity whatsoever, and follow the tradition of men in observing Christmas. Make no mistake! ELOHIM {GOD} will allow you to defy and disobey Him. He will allow you to follow the crowd and the traditions of men. He will allow you to sin. But He also says there is a day of reckoning coming. As you sow, so shall you reap! YHWH MESSIAH {MASHIACH} was the living Word of ELOHIM {GOD} in Person, and the Scriptures are the written Word of ELOHIM {GOD}. And we shall be judged, for eternity, by these words! They should not be taken lightly or ignored of ELOHIM {GOD}. And we shall be judged, for eternity, by these words! They should not be taken lightly or ignored.

WE ARE IN BABYLON AND HAVE NOT KNOWN IT
Christmas has become a commercial season. It is sponsored, kept alive, by the heaviest retail advertising campaigns of the year. You see a masqueraded "Santa Claus" in many stores. Advertisements keep us deluded and deceived about the "beautiful spirit." The Christmas newspapers, who sell the advertisements, print flowery editorials exalting and eulogizing the pagan season, and the "spirit of Christmas." A gullible people has become so inoculated, many take offense when told the TRUTH. But the "Christmas spirit" is created each year, not to honor Messiah, but to sell merchandise! Like all the delusions, lies, and deceptions of Satan it appears as an "angel of light," is made to appear good. Billions of dollars are spent in this merchandising spending every year, while the cause of MESSIAH {MASHIACH} must suffer! It is part of the economic system of Babylon! We have professed to be Messianic nations, but we are in Babylon, as Scriptural prophecy foretold, and we do not know it! "Come out of her, my people, that you are not partakers of her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues"—now soon to fall—is the warning of REVELATION {CHAZOWN} 18:4.