**Uncovering the ‘false gods’ and Revealing the Truth About Christmas and Easter**

I’m sure many of you have spent time in the church or still attend church and have at some point listened to a church pastor give an “Easter” or “Christmas” sermon. Although there may be much meaning behind the sermon, is it in fact scriptural? What does our Heavenly Father have to say concerning these celebrations or church “holy days”? This paper will address whether or not Christmas and Easter are “holy days” and determine, from scripture, what are Yahweh’s1 “Holy Days” (1the name of our Heavenly Father, translated in English as ‘LORD’). We will also study out scripture to see whether or not our Heavenly Father “changed” any of His “Holy Days”. The plan of the adversary (satan/devil) from the beginning of time has been to change the truth of Yahweh’s word and he has no other plan but to add to or take away from Yahweh's word. If anything, satan wants to mix truth with a lie. As you read this and study out scripture, you may be shocked and/or angry with what you find. You may say to yourself “Well, that’s not what it means to me!” I understand where you are coming from, but I would like to ask you a question. If we are our Heavenly Father’s creation and He is our Creator, then shouldn’t we be concerned about what it means to Him? After all, He is the potter and we are the clay (Isaiah 64:8). Our Heavenly Father’s desire is for His people to worship Him in “Spirit and Truth” (John 4:23-24). I would encourage you to please study out what is written here (be a Berean), pray to Our Heavenly Father and ask Him for wisdom, guidance, and understanding concerning these important matters. With that being said, let’s continue.

Throughout the Bible there are many verses containing "false gods" of the nations and even "false gods" that the Israelites fell into worship of. Our Heavenly Father, Yahweh, instructed us (that includes You and Me!) to NOT FOLLOW AFTER OTHER gods...here are a few verses from the Bible of what Yahweh says concerning "other gods":

\*Exo 20:3 You shall have no other gods before (besides) me. (2nd Commandment of the 10 Commandments)

\*Exo 20:4-5 You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them: for I Yahweh your Elohim2 (2the Hebrew word rendered ‘God’ in our English Bibles) *am* a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. (3rd Commandment of the 10 Commandments)

\*Deu 5:7 You shall have no other gods before me. (2nd Commandment repeated again in Deuteronomy)

\*Deu 6:14 You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you...

\*Deu 8:19 And it shall be if you forget Yahweh your Elohim, and walk after other gods: and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.

\*Deu 11:16 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and you turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them...

\*Deu 28:14 And you shall not go aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

The above scriptures were spoken to the Israelites after they were delivered out of Egypt by Yahweh, the True Elohim, through His mighty acts and wonders. The Israelites were given these instructions before they entered into the promised land; the land Yahweh gave to our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to their descendents forever.

Our Heavenly Father knew that the children of Israel would be drawn to the worship of idols and false gods and warned them of the consequences of disobedience to Him:

\*Deu 30:16-18 In that I command you this day to love Yahweh your Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply: and Yahweh your Elohim shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that you shall surely perish, *and that* you shall not prolong *your* days upon the land, where you pass over the Jordan to go to possess it.

After the children of Israel settled into the "promised land", Joshua, a servant of Yahweh, warned the people about serving "other gods".

\*Jos 23:16 When you have transgressed the covenant of Yahweh your Elohim, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of Yahweh be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land which he has given unto you.

The children of Israel did follow after other gods and Yahweh would raise up judges from among them to bring the people back to Him.

\*Jdg 2:12 And they (children of Israel) forsook Yahweh, Elohim of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked Yahweh to anger.

\*Jdg 2:16-19 Nevertheless Yahweh raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of Yahweh; *but* they did not so. And when Yahweh raised them up judges, then Yahweh was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented Yahweh because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, *that* they returned, and corrupted *themselves* more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

Throughout the time of the judges of Israel, the people would continue to backslide into the worship of other gods. Our loving, merciful Heavenly Father time and time again would have compassion on His people and deliver them, but our ancestors continued to fall back into false worship of other gods.

After the time of the judges of Israel, soon Israel wanted to be like the other nations that were around her.

\*1Sa 8:4-8 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, you are old, and your sons walk not in your ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto Yahweh. And Yahweh said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto you: for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto you.

The people of Israel continued to be rebellious of Yahweh's instructions (Torah) and instead followed after other gods and wanted to be like the other nations of the earth. This brought about more trouble for the Israelite nation and eventually the Israelite Kingdom split into two Kingdoms. The House of Israel/Ephraim [Northern Kingdom of Israel], and the House of Judah [Southern Kingdom of Israel]. Eventually in 721 BCE, the Assyrians invaded the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Northern Kingdom was conquered. The people were either dispersed into other nations, captured, or killed. After a series of previous years wars, in 685 BCE the Babylonians invaded the Southern Kingdom of Israel, ransacked the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and conquered the Southern Kingdom. After 70 years in Babylonian captivity, Yahweh was merciful towards His people and allowed a remnant of His people from Babylon to return to their land.

A second Holy Temple was dedicated to Yahweh but during the 2nd Century BCE, a Selucid (Greek-Macedonian) King by the name of Antiochus IV Epiphenes invaded the territory which Judah had occupied since returning from Babylonian exile. Antiochus moved to assert strict control over Israel, sacking Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, suppressing Jewish religious and cultural observances, and imposing practices that went against Yahweh's instructions (Torah) for His people.

During this time there was an uprising of a group of Jews who were zealous for Yahweh's Torah and eventually gained independence from the Selucids and were able to "rededicate the temple" in Jerusalem. This is where we get the word "Hannukah" meaning "dedication" from. From this point in history, Israel became an independent nation under Hasmonean rule but eventually Israel became a ‘Client State’ to the Roman Empire. In 70 CE, Jerusalem and the Holy Temple was destroyed by the Roman 10th Legion and Israel lay desolate until it became a nation again in 1948. The reason for this "short" history lesson (which can be found in about any encyclopedia) is to show what happened to the Israelite people and the consequences of not obeying our Heavenly Father's instructions. And yes, our Heavenly Father did warn them of the consequences if they followed "other gods".

I remember a friend of mine, after reading the entire Bible, came to me saying, "The G-d of the Old Testament was a bad dude." Really? I think a more appropriate statement would be: "The ancient Israelites offended Yahweh by not loving Him and Keeping His Commandments. They are the "bad dudes", as they went astray of what Yahweh required of them. Are WE any different? I would have to say NO. By following Yahweh's instructions: through obedience comes blessings, through disobedience comes curses. I don't know about you but I like to have blessings from my Heavenly Father! Our desire should be to love Him and keep His instructions (Torah) in order to draw closer to our Heavenly Father and have a deeper relationship with Him.

So just who were these false gods that the children of Israel came to know about? The Bible mentions several of these throughout scripture. I will list Bible verses that contain a few of these false gods including information about them and the Strong's Concordance # for easy searching [i.e. H1168].

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**Tammuz** [H8542] EZEKIEL 8:14

\*Eze 8:14 “Then he brought me (Ezekiel) to the door of the gate of Yahweh’s house (the Holy Temple) which *was* toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.” (emphasis mine)

In Ezekiel 8:14, we see the Prophet Ezekiel relates the idolatries of Israel as seen by him in a vision from Yahweh; it is stated that before the North door of the Holy Temple women were sat weeping for Tammuz. In Yahweh’s Holy Temple there were Israelites “weeping for Tammuz”. Tammuz was a pagan deity that originated in ancient Sumeria and Babylon. There are numerous resources (listed at the end of this paper) which contain information explaining that Tammuz was worshiped along with a female deity known as ‘Ishtar’. According to tradition, Tammuz would die each year and was mourned (in the month named after him which occurred just before the summer solstice) not only by Ishtar, but by male and female mourners with musical instruments such as flutes. Tammuz was not only one of the oldest worshipped deities, but also one of the most popular gods of the Sumerians. It can be shown that Adonis, the deity of the Greeks, and Tammuz, the deity of the Babylonians, are one in the same. The Greeks adopted Adonis very early in the 8th Century BCE. The transfer of names came about through the Phoenicians- through the Temples where Phoenicians had settlements (throughout the Mediterranean). There is also a connection between Tammuz, the beloved of Ishtar, and Adonis, the beloved of Aphrodite. Furthermore, there is evidence showing the similarities with the Egyptian gods, Attis and Osiris, with Tammuz-Adonis and Ishtar. Tammuz-Adonis was considered a sun-god, a common relation to the celebration of death and resurrection of the seeds, connected with the harvest cycle: a god of spring approaching the summer solstice. It can be shown throughout many different cultures and civilizations (Babylonian, Assyrian, Sumerian, Phoenician, etc.) that there is a link to Tammuz =(Adonis) and Ishtar =(Balthi-Astarte-Venus-Aphrodite). I highly encourage you to study out these gods and see for yourself the many similarities which I have only briefly covered.

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**Dagon** [H1712] JUDGES 16:23, I SAMUEL 5:1-7, 1 CHRONICLES 10:10, 1 MACCABEES 10:82-85, 11:4

\*1Sa 5:1-5 And the Philistines took the ark of Elohim, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of Elohim, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of Yahweh. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of Yahweh; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of* Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

Dagon was one of the gods of the Philistines if not the main god of that people. Archeology has proven that temples were present at one time in Gaza and Ashdod. Beth-Dagon (house of Dagon) is mentioned in Joshua 15:41. Dagon was also worshipped by the Phoenicians and this worship was spread by other Semites to the East. It is also possible that Dagon may have originated in Sumeria with the god "Ea", a deity derived from the water.

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**Milcom** [H4445] 1 KINGS 11:5,33; 2 KINGS 23:13, ZEPHANIAH 1:5

Milcom was the national god and chief divinity of the Ammonites. The name 'Milcom' has been explained as meaning "Am is king," Am ('Am) being the name of an older deity. It is noteworthy that one of the places of worship was on the Mount of Olives while that of Molech was in the Hinnom Valley (Jeremiah 32:35).

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**Chemosh** [H3645] NUMBERS 21:29; JUDGES 11:24, 1 KINGS 11:7,33; 2 KINGS 23:13; JEREMIAH 48:7,13,46

Chemosh was the national god of the Moabites according to the Old Testament, confirmed through archeology by the Moabite Stone. The worship of Chemosh became a snare to the Israelites during the time of King Solomon.

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**Molech** [H4432] LEVITICUS 18:21, 20:2-5; 1 KINGS 11:7; 2 KINGS 23:10; JEREMIAH 32:35; AMOS 5:26

\*Lev 18:21 And you shall not let any of your seed pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shall you profane the name of your Elohim: I *am* Yahweh.

\*Jer 32:35 And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

In Jeremiah 32:35, Judah was worshipping Baal and Molech, false deities and not worshipping the true Elohim, Yahweh. Moloch/Molech is the name of a West-Semitic deity whose cult was introduced into Israel between the time of King Solomon and King Ahaz and was practiced by both the king and the people. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol XIII states: "It was long the custom, in this as in other matters, on account of inexact knowledge of Assyrian and Babylonian practices, to refer the origin of the "Moloch" cult to the Assyrian-Babylonian religion." pp 451. According to Biblical sources, Molech was a chief deity of the Ammonites.

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**Ashtoreth** [H6253] 1 KINGS 11:5,33; 2 KINGS 23:13

Ashtoreth was another goddess worshipped along with the Baals and became a snare to the Israelites as shown in 1 KINGS 11:5. "Ashtoreth" is defined by the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon as:

1) the principal female deity of the Phoenicians, worshipped in war and fertility

1a) also ‘Ishtar’ of Assyria and ‘Astarte’ by the Greeks and Romans.

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**Asherah** [H842] OVER 40 SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES IN THE BIBLE

The common translation of the word "asherah" in the KJV Bible is rendered into English as "grove" or "groves". "Asherah" is defined by the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon as “groves (for idol worship)”, also:

1) a Babylonian (Astarte)-Canaanite goddess (of fortune and happiness), the supposed consort of Baal, her images

1a) the goddess, goddesses

1b) her images

1c) sacred trees or poles set up near an altar

According to The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (pp312), “The "ashorah" was a part of normal "Baal-worship". A "high place", or shrine of the Baal consisted of an altar (with or without a "sanctuary"), a pillar (made of stone or other materials), and an "asherah (sacred tree or poles)". The pillar was a survival of the old stone-worship. The "asherah" or sacred pole was in like manner a survival of the old tree-worship... At a later stage the "asherah" became transfigured into a goddess and naturally took the place of the old "Ashtoreth"... The fact that the worship of "Ashtoreth" had been combined with that of the Baals, or rather absorbed into it, doubtless helped toward the substitution.”

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**Baal** [H1168] OVER 45 SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES IN THE BIBLE INCLUDING ROMANS 11:4

According to the BDB Hebrew and English Lexicon: Baal was a supreme male divinity of the Phoenicians or Canaanites (noun proper masculine). According to Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries, Baal is listed as a Phoenician deity.

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There are many available resources that can be found showing the "history" of the false gods listed above. Dictionaries, Encyclopedia Britannica, and Religious Encyclopedias such as The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol XIII: George William Gilmore, M.A. Index. by Philip Schaff... Michigan, 1954 ( I highly recommend), and various books and online resources have good information and are fairly accessible. One thing I found in my studies is that many of these false gods have a point of origin; many of which, came out of ancient Sumeria and Babylon. From that point of origin, the practices of idol worship were spread abroad through either 1.)commerce (land and sea) 2.) through war (instituting idol worship upon the conquered people or incorporating/ combining idol worship amongst the conquering nation and conquered nation) and 3) through what I like to call "social networking" of civilizations. This idol worship mainly worshiped the "creation"- deities of: the sun/solar, moon/lunar, crops (agricultural), sexual (pro-creation), and animals - to name a few. Many of these deities were worshipped yearly during times centering around the equinoxes and solstices. Many of these idols (graven images) were made out of any one of the following: gold, silver, bronze, wood, or stone. Our Heavenly Father did not want man to worship that which He created, He wanted man to worship HIM, Our Creator! Our Heavenly Father not only wanted us to NOT worship false gods or speak of them, He wanted us to DESTROY them.

\*Deu 7:25 The graven images of their gods shall you burn with fire: you shall not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto you, lest you be snared therein: for it *is* an abomination to Yahweh your Elohim.

\*Exo 20:4-5 You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: You shall not bow down to them, nor serve them: for I Yahweh your Elohim *am* a jealous Elohim... (3rd Commandment).

\*Isa 42:8 I *am* Yahweh: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

\*Exo 23:13 And in all *things* that I (Yahweh) have said unto you take heed: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth.

There were many "pagan" or "false" gods during the time of our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob leading up to the time of our Messiah, Yahshua (Jesus) of Nazareth. Even today many people worship these same "false gods" either knowingly or unknowingly. Many proclaiming Christians know that Christmas was not the birthday of Messiah Yahshua (Jesus), but continue to follow the "traditions of men". Not only was Yahshua talking about the "traditions" of our Jewish brethren, these "traditions" can also apply to Christians as well. What does Messiah mean when he is addressing "traditions"? The traditions that Messiah is talking about are those practices and rulings of man that transgress AGAINST our Heavenly Fathers Word and His instructions concerning His people. Our Messiah had something to say concerning traditions of men.

\*Mar 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, you hold the tradition of men...

\*Mar 7:9 And he (Yahshua) said unto them, Full well you reject the commandment of Elohim, that you may keep your own tradition.

\*Mar 7:13 Making the word of Elohim of none effect through your tradition...

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

The Apostle Paul (Rav Shaul) and Yahshua's disciple, Peter (Kefa), also said the following words:

\*Col 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Messiah.

\*1Pe 1:18-19 Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

So, now that we have a general understanding of who these “false gods” were and what our Heavenly Father instructs us concerning them, what about the Christian holidays, "Easter" and “Christmas”? Are these "holy-days" something that we are to keep and celebrate? Is it something our Heavenly Father instructed us to follow?

ORIGINS OF EASTER & CHRISTMAS:

To be point blank, there is no reference in the Bible concerning Christmas or Easter nor is there anywhere listed concerning the observance of either one. There is one place in the King James Version of the Bible where the word “Easter” appears, located in the book of Acts 12:4. However the Greek word from which our English word is translated from is “pascha” (from Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament - #G3957), which comes from the Hebrew word “pesach” meaning “Passover” in English. There are 27 verses in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament) which contain the English word “Passover” from the Greek word “pesach” (#G3957). Apparently, an earlier translator decided to put in the word “Easter” when the word clearly means “Passover”. Again, out of all the translations, this is the ONLY place where we see the word “Easter” used, albeit incorrectly. While we are on the subject of Easter, let’s look at the historical account of the meaning of “Easter”.

At one point in time I used to believe that “Easter” meant the “resurrection of Christ”. You may be surprised to know that professing Christians were not the only ones who celebrated a festival called “Easter”. Easter was observed thousands of years before the time of Christ (Messiah). According to the Columbia Encyclodpedia, 6th Ed. 2008, "...the name [Easter] is connected with an Anglo-Saxon spring goddess ‘Eostre’. The derivation is uncertain, but some Easter customs, e.g. the giving of eggs as gifts, are certainly pre-Christian…" According to The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, Elizabeth Knowles, 2006, "The name [Easter] is recorded from Old English (in form *ēastre*) and is of Germanic origin, related to *east*. According to Bede the word is derived from *Ēastre*, the name of a goddess associated with spring." According to the New World Encyclopedia online, "The ecclesiastical historian Socrates Scholasticus (b. 380) attributes the observance of Easter by the church to the perpetuation of local custom, 'just as many other customs have been established,' stating that neither [Jesus](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Jesus) nor his Apostles enjoined the keeping of this or any other festival." According to Wikipedia online, the article “Easter” states that "The first Christians, Jewish and Gentile, were certainly aware of the Hebrew calendar, but there is no direct evidence that they celebrated any specifically Christian annual festivals." You can find in just about any encyclopedia the "pagan" origins of “Easter”. In the book by Alexander Hislop, The Two Babylonians, (p.103) Hislop states that Easter “bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the ‘queen of heaven’, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country.”

The English name “Easter”, is translated from the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian word “Ishtar”. Ishtar was known as an ancient Assyrian and Babylonian goddess from old Teutonic mythology where she is known as “Ostern”. In Phoenician times, the name of this goddess was “Astarte”. According to C.Scott Littleton’s book Mythology (2002 ed.), Littleton writes that “Astarte” was worshipped in Egypt in the 2nd millennium BCE (p.40). He states that during the mid-second millennium BCE Egypt assimilated a wave of immigrants from other countries who added further deities from their own mythologies to the Egyptian pantheon (p.49). Littleton also comments that the Mesopotamian goddess “Inana” in Sumerian means ‘lady of heaven’, in Akkadian her name is “Ishtar”, related to that of the Syrian goddess “Astarte”. Just as many different peoples brought their false gods into Egypt, the Phoenicians also introduced the worship of “Astarte” (Ishtar) and “Molech” to Crete and other nations within the Mediterranean area. The ancient Canaanites believed that “Ishtar” was one of their most important deities and this also included nations of the near east. It can be shown throughout many different cultures and civilizations (Babylon, Assyrian, Phoenician, etc.) that there is a link to Tammuz= [Adonis] and Ishtar= [Balthi-Astarte-Venus-Aphrodite]. Many of the rituals and traditions of Easter: egg laying rabbits, Easter egg coloring, 40 days of lent, hot cross buns, Easter ham and even Easter morning “sunrise” services, are **all birthed out of Ishtar worship** of man-made pagan religion. Again, Yahweh has something to say concerning the worship of “false gods”.

\*Jer 10:2 Thus saith Yahweh, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

It wasn’t until 325 CE when Constantine the Great, Emperor of Rome, held the Council of Nicaea along with 250-318 bishops in which, among other things decided, was the celebration of Easter on the Sunday after the Passover! Man decided to change Yahweh’s Feast days which is clearly against what He said NOT to do (Deu 4:2)!

Now that we have exposed the origins of Easter and shown that it is not scriptural, we now turn our attention to the celebration of “Christmas”. As with Easter, Christmas is not found anywhere in the Bible nor are we told to celebrate this day in any way. Proponents of Christmas will bring up that it is the day of Messiah’s (Christ’s) birth. But is it? Let’ take a look at the historical account concerning “Christmas”. Just about any encyclopedia will show that “Christ” (Messiah) was not born on December 25th, even the Catholic Encyclopedia states this fact. Scripture does not verify if Messiah was born on December 25th, but interestingly a pagan festival known as “sol-invictus” was celebrated on this day. This day was the birthday of Sol, the sun god! It was an ancient rite of Baal worship which Yahweh condemns! Christmas is not Christ’s (Messiah’s) birthday; in fact, this festival is of pagan Babylonian origin.

So where did we get the term “Christmas” from? According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, under the title “Christmas”: “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.” The Encyclopedia Americana states: “Christmas (i.e., the Mass of Christ)…was not among the earliest festivals of the church…” The Encyclopedia Americana says this regarding 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…”

So how did this custom slip into “Christianity”? In its article on “Christmas”, the New Schaff-Herzog Encylopedia explains: “How much the date of the festival depended upon the pagan Brumalia (December 25th) following the Saturnalia (December 17th-24th), and celebrating the shortest day of 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 Christ’s birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and sun-worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival.”

Interestingly, the worship of Mithra developed in ancient Persia and then made its way west to Rome as early as 70 BCE, possibly earlier than this date. Mithra’s (“the god of light”) birthday on December 25th was celebrated long before Messiah came to earth to pay for the sins of mankind. Mithraism was spread throughout the known world and by the 4th century CE, Temples of Mithra were located from Scotland to India. The Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol VI, states the following: “The myth of Mithra formed the origin of the cult of Mithraism, which flourished in the Roman Empire and was for a time the chief rival of Christianity…One of the most well known festivals of ancient Rome was the ‘Saturnalia’, a winter festival celebrated from December 17th-24th. Because it was a time of wild merrymaking and domestic celebrations- businesses, schools, and law courts were closed so that the public could feast, dance, gamble, and generally enjoy itself to the fullest. December 25th, the birthday of Mithra, the…god of light and the day devoted to the invincible sun, as well as the day after the Saturnalia, was adopted by the church as Christmas, the nativity of Christ, to counteract the effects of these festivals.” Do you see a correlation to the false god “Sol” (god of the sun) and “Mithra” (the god of light)? They are one in the same!

Much of what we have today concerning Christmas can be traced back to 274 CE when the winter solstice fell on December 25th, the pagan Roman emperor Aurelian proclaimed Decemer25th as ‘Natalis Solis Invicti’, the festival of the birth of the invincible sun. Constantine the Great, Emperor of Rome, intervened in ecclesiastical affairs to achieve unity among his subjects as he presided over the council of Nicaea in 325 CE. Constantine believed that the Roman sun god, Sol, was the visible manifestation of an invisible “highest god”, who was the principle behind the universe. He “mixed” pagan religion with other Christian religion to strengthen his kingdom. Ultimately, it was a "mixing" of Yahweh's word and that of man-made traditions and "false god" worship. Yahweh had something to say about this false worship. See if these verses remind you of a “Christmas Tradition”.

\*Jer 10:1-4 Hear ye the word which Yahweh speaks unto you, O house of Israel: Thus says Yahweh, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. 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 with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

Christmas trees, Nativity sets, Santa Claus, Yule log, Mistletoe- this is just a sampling of all the paganism associated with “Christmas”, much of which was **birthed out of “Mithra” and “Sol” worship, centering around the sun**! The word “Christmas” itself is a combination of the words “Christ” & “Mass” from the Catholic Church which wasn’t introduced until 1038 CE. Again, all of these man-made religions and traditions are “mixing” with Yahweh’s word, something that Yahweh instructed us NOT to do. We as believers are not to add to or take away from Yahweh's word: Deu 4:2, Deu 12:32, Pro 30:5-6, Rev 22:18-19.

\*Deu 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim which I command you.

\*Pro 30:5-6 Every word of Elohim *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add not unto his words, lest he reprove you, and you be found a liar.

Did you know that the celebration of Christmas was illegal in England and was condemned for its pagan roots by the Methodists, the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Puritans, and also the Quakers and the Amish! Not until 1856 was it even made a legal holiday in the state of Massachusetts!

Why would we want to mix that which is holy with something that is profane? So, according to the Bible, does Yahweh instruct us to keep Easter and/or Christmas? The answer is a simple one – NO!

“BUT I THOUGHT JESUS WAS BORN ON DECEMBER 25th “

Contrary to popular Christian teachings, Messiah Yahshua (Jesus) was NOT born on December 25th. Using the Holy Bible as our guide, let us see what the scriptures say concerning Messiah’s birth.

In 1 Chronicles Chapter 23, King David set up the priestly functions for the Holy Temple and in 1 Chronicles Chapter 24, he separated the Priests into divisions for their appointed times of service in the Holy Temple. 1 Chronicles 24:7-18 details the appointed order of Levite service in the Holy Temple with each division of priests ministering there from Shabbat (Sabbath) to Shabbat (1 Chron. 23:1-8). The priestly rotation began at the beginning of the month of Aviv (Nisan) of the Hebrew calendar (Normally late March or early April according to the Gregorian calendar) and continued throughout the year.

\*1Ch 24:19 These *were* the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of Yahweh, according to their manner, **under Aaron their father**, as Yahweh Elohim of Israel had commanded him.

\*1Ch 24:10 The seventh to Hakkoz, the **eighth to Abijah**,

[Take note of what is in bold writing above as we will tie this in later with Luke 1:5.] According to 1 Chronicles 24, there were 24 courses of Levite Priests who ministered in the Holy Temple. In addition to their normal service, the Priests, all 24 courses, served for three extra weeks during the year in conjunction with the Feasts of YHWH: Unleavened Bread, Shavuot, and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles).

\*Deu 16:16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Yahweh your Elohim in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks (Shavuot), and in the feast of tabernacles (Sukkot): and they shall not appear before Yahweh empty:

Doing a little bit of arithmetic we can figure out the following: 24 courses times 1 week equals 24 weeks that have been served by each of the 24 courses of Priests. Next we add the three extra weeks when all the 24 courses of Priests served and come to 27 courses which equates to 27 weeks. But what about the remaining weeks of the year? A Biblical year consists of twelve lunar months with each month equaling 29.5 days, which total 354 days. This is eleven days less than a solar year of 365 days. This means we have to cover 24 more weeks of Levite courses. We can conclude that each Priestly course served a week at the beginning of the year and a week towards the end of the year. The Mishnah (The first written recording of the oral law) also agrees with this conclusion. Each priestly course, therefore, served for one week twice a year, and three times when all 24 courses served during the three appointed Feasts of YHWH. Each Priestly course would then serve a total of 5 weeks out of the year.

We read an interesting verse in the Gospel according to Luke:

\*Luk 1:5 There was in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain **priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah**: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

Luke 1:5 lines up perfectly with the verses in 1 Chronicles 24:10 & 19 in that Zacharias (Zechariah) was of the High Priestly order of the **sons** (descendants) **of Aaron** and of the **eighth course**. His time in the Holy Temple would have been the eighth course or eighth week of the year in the month of “Sivan”. The eighth course would, therefore, serve during the tenth week having allowed for the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Weeks (in which all 24 courses of Priests would have ministered), which both occur during the first eight weeks of the year. This is the second Sabbath of Sivan and the week that follows would be approximately Sivan 12-18. This would be around late May or early June according to the Gregorian calendar.

Elizabeth conceived John the Immerser AFTER Zechariah had finished his Temple service. So, she would have become pregnant after the third Sabbath of Sivan (approximately Sivan 19-25). Carrying the baby to full term, there is a very good possibility that John was born around/ during Passover! According to Jewish tradition, Elijah is supposed to come during Passover. Quite possibly, John the Immerser was a shadow picture of Elijah who came in the spirit of Elijah!

Exactly six months after John’s conception, Mary conceives Yahshua (Jesus).

\*Luk 1:23-33 And it came to pass, when the days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed unto his house. And after these days Elisabeth his wife conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord done unto me in the days wherein he looked upon *me*, to take away my reproach among men. Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord *is* with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name YAHSHUA. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

If we count six months from the 3rd week of Sivan, we arrive at the 9th month called Kislev. If John the Immerser was conceived in the eleventh week, the third Sabbath week of Sivan, Yahshua would have been conceived six months later in the month of Kislev. Mary would have conceived Yeshua after the third Sabbath of Kislev, approximately Kislev 19-26. Kislev 25 is Chanukah. It is noteworthy that our Messiah, the "light of the world", was more than likely conceived during the festival of lights (Chanukah)!

Six months after John the Immerser is born, Yahshua is born. Therefore, since John was born around the 15th day of the first month (Aviv/Nisan), Yahshua would more than likely be born on the 15th day of the seventh month (Tishri), six months later. The 15th day of the seventh month is known as Succoth, or the Feast of Tabernacles. It is quite possible that Messiah Yahshua was born on Sukkot (The Feast of Tabernacles)!

Looking at some of the information and using logical reasoning (and mathematics) regarding Yahshua’s birth, December 25th does not even come close to the birth day of our Messiah. Looking at this historically has caused many in the Church to cringe when they recognize that this December 25th date is probably a result of the Church fathers accepting pagan traditions. Our Heavenly Father tells us to not mix the Holy with the profane!

THUS SAITH YAHWEH (YHWH) !

According to the Bible, Yahweh instructs His people to celebrate the following feasts. Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Shavuot, Yom Teruah, Yom Kippur, and Feast of Tabernacles. These feasts show Yahweh’s plan of redemption and salvation. **Passover** is the feast of redemption and salvation. Just as the blood of the lamb on the Israelite doorposts protected them from death (redemption) and delivered them from slavery, Messiah’s blood (as the lamb of Elohim) redeems us from slavery and represents our “salvation”. Yahshua3 (3 is the Hebrew name of our Messiah translated as ‘Jesus’ in our English Bibles. In Hebrew, Yahshua means “Yah is salvation”). The **Feast of Unleavened Bread** is the second feast. Leaven in the Bible symbolizes sin. Unleavened bread represents our Messiah, who was without leaven (sin), and poured himself out for us as the perfect, sinless sacrifice to die for our sins. Yahshua is the “bread of life” (John 6:35). **First fruits** is when the Israelites would bring in the early crops from their spring planting and “wave the sheaf” before Yahweh. Yahshua fulfilled this feast as Yahweh resurrected His Son from the dead. Fifty days from First fruits brings us to the next feast, Shavuot. **Shavuot** is when the Israelites would bring in the first fruits of the summer harvest. Two loaves of leavened bread would be waved before Yahweh. These first four feasts reveal how Yahshua fulfilled the plan of Yahweh. Yahshua was crucified on **Passover**, buried during **Unleavened bread**, resurrected on **First fruits**, and sent the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) on **Shavuot**.

So we see the feasts/ holy days of Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Shavuot were fulfilled through Yahweh’s Son, Messiah Yahshua, at his first coming as the suffering servant (Moshiach Ben Yosef). The remaining feasts/ Holy days of Yom Teruah (feast of trumpets), Yom Kippur, and Feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled at the second coming of Messiah Yahshua as the conquering King (Moshiach Ben David).

Nowhere in scripture is it written that these feasts have been replaced by something else. These feasts/ holy convocations are found throughout scripture: Leviticus 23:4-44, Deuteronomy 16:1-16, Exodus 23:14-19, Num 29:1,7,12,35. These feasts are recorded in scripture showing that the Israelites observed them: Joshua 5:10-11, 2 Kings 23:21-23, 2 Chronicles 30:15-21, Ezra 6:19-22, to name a few. Our Messiah, Yahshua, observed the feasts/ holy convocations. The gospels show Messiah Yahshua celebrated **Passover** {Luke 2:41-42, John 2:23}, and **Tabernacles** {John 7:2}, and most importantly, OUR MESSIAH WAS THE PASSOVER SACRIFICE! If our Messiah did not honor these feasts or changed them in any way, then according to scripture (Deuteronomy 18:15-20) he could not be the Messiah! Even after Messiah Yahshua was crucified, Passover was still being observed well into the 3rd century CE.

Currently, the altar and Temple are not standing in Jerusalem but we should “set-apart” these days in honor of Yahweh our Elohim. Our motive in celebration should be as Elohim originally intended- to remember and honor Yahweh that He is our Elohim. Yahweh said that His feasts were to be celebrated forever (Leviticus 23)! Yahweh does not change (Malachi 3:6) and therefore He still desires for us to worship him. It is a dress rehearsal for us (as the bride) while we wait for the return of our “bridegroom”, Messiah Yahshua! It is also recorded in scripture that in the future we will still be honoring Yahweh’s feast days: See Zechariah Chapter 14 and Ezekiel Chapter 45.

One important point to remember: these “Feasts” were and are “The Feasts of Yahweh”. They are not just “Jewish feasts” for only the Jewish people as ALL people who identify with the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are instructed to keep these Feast days and Holy convocations!

Not only did the “church fathers” change the feast days of Yahweh (council of Nicaea, 325 CE), they also changed the Sabbath from the 7th day to the 1st day, “Sun-day” (the day of the venerable sun). I have written another teaching concerning the Sabbath day on my website [www.returnoftheremnant.com](http://www.returnoftheremnant.com) I would highly encourage you to download the teaching and study out the Sabbath as well.

So to recap, Christmas and Easter are man-made pagan holidays (shown through just about any encyclopedia) that are NOT scriptural and are a violation of Yahweh’s instructions and an abomination to Him! Yahweh tells us to “…not learn the way of the heathen.” (Jer 10:2) and to “…not go after other gods…” (Deu 6:14). There is NO indication of the observance of Easter or Christmas in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament) or in the writings of the apostolic fathers. Messiah Yahshua, the apostles, and the early body of believers kept Yahweh’s feasts and continued to keep them long after Messiah was resurrected from the dead. We, as believers, should observe the Feasts of Yahweh because we love Him and desire to keep His instructions (Torah). This is a basic, foundational teaching that does not address everything in detail, but is written to show the general overview regarding Christmas and Easter. Remember, even if you think “Well, that’s not what it means to me!”, ask yourself if we are our Heavenly Father’s creation and He is our Creator then shouldn’t we be concerned about what it means to Him?

I pray that this teaching has been a blessing to those who have read this and studied out the scriptures. I also pray that studying this out will cause you to search for more truth. If there is anything that you disagree with or have any questions or comments, please email me at: [returnoftheremnant@gmail.com](mailto:returnoftheremnant@gmail.com) All praise and honor to Yahweh.

Shalom

<http://www.returnoftheremnant.com>

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Yahweh =translated 'LORD' in our English bibles, is THE NAME of our Heavenly Father.

Yahshua =translated ‘Jesus’ in our English bible, is the name of our Messiah which means “Yah is salvation”.

Elohim =translated 'God' or 'god'/'gods' in our English bibles, in the simplest form means “mighty one”.

Note: I would also encourage you to purchase a Hebrew/Greek/English Interlinear Bible and also a “Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance” of the Bible to aid you in studying scripture.

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