

that Jesus Christ died on the day of the Passover. Yet Scripture does not mention the date of Jesus' birth, and does not recount any Christians celebrating His birthday. In fact, the Bible associates the celebration of birthdays with the practices of heathen kings, and never mentions such celebrations in a positive light. This is why Origen—one of the early "Fathers" of the Roman Church, writing in the third century—was shocked at the very idea of celebrating the Saviour's birthday.

When the early Roman Church established a festival to celebrate the Messiah's birth, it timed that festival to coincide with an existing pagan festival celebrating the birthday of the sun god. By co-opting existing pagan rituals and customs, the church sought to win the pagan masses to its idea of Christianity, allowing converts to continue to practice familiar customs—just calling them by different names.

The "mother and child" motif in religion was well known in the ancient pagan world. The ancient Babylonians and Egyptians worshipped a "Madonna" whom they revered as the "Queen of Heaven"—a title that the Roman Church would apply centuries later to Mary, the mother of Jesus. In Egypt, Isis was the mother and Horus was the child. In Mesopotamia it was Ishtar and Tammuz.

These stories trace back to Semiramis and Nimrod, in the early years after Noah's flood. Nimrod was a mighty hunter (see Genesis 10–11), and led mankind's rebellion against God at the Tower of Babel. Nimrod was one of the chief architects of the human civilization that began at Babylon, and that spread around the world as people

migrated to repopulate the earth after the great flood.

The real origin of Christmas goes back to these ancient times, before it was carried forward by an apostate "Christian" church. The winter solstice—the day with the shortest daylight in the northern hemisphere—was anciently associated with the birth of the sun god. It was a time of festivity. Called Saturnalia by the Romans, this holiday was a time very reminiscent of our modern Christmas, when gifts were given, hostilities ceased, civic functions were suspended and parties were held. "It was usual for friends to make presents to one another; all animosity ceased, no criminals were executed, schools were shut, war was never declared, but all was mirth, riot, and debauchery" (*Lempriere's Classical Dictionary*, article: "Saturnalia").

Jesus Was Not Born in Winter

"Christmas" festivities are not just "pre-Christian"—dating to pagan worship of the sun god—they in fact have no connection to the date of birth of the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. How do we know this? While the Bible does not explicitly tell us the exact day of Jesus' birth, it gives us *clear* evidence of the *approximate* time. From Scripture, it becomes obvious that **winter** is the one season in which Jesus **could not** have been born.

Luke tells us that on the night of Jesus' birth, the shepherds were still keeping watch over their flocks in the field (Luke 2:8). In ancient Israel, the rainy season began *after* the Feast of Tabernacles (which generally occurs in early October). By November,...

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Bible Baptist Church Bulletin

Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set (Prov. 22:28). Vol. 2, No. 26 20 December 2009

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Ministries

1. Bible Studies
2. Tract Drop
3. Door-Knocking
4. Personal Evangelism
5. Missions

Position

1. Independent
2. KJV 1611
3. Baptist
4. Old-Fashioned
5. Soulwinning
6. Premillennial
7. Non-Charismatic
8. Unaffiliated

Church Services

Sunday:

- 9:30 am — Sunday School
10:30 am — Worship Service
6:15 pm — Evening Service

Wednesday:

- 6:30 pm — Bible Study & Prayer Meeting

IS CHRISTMAS CHRISTIAN?

By: John H. Ogwyn

To billions around the world, no time of the year is more eagerly anticipated than the Christmas season. "Tis the season to be jolly," is how the song goes. Of course, for many people, Christmas can be a depressing season, emphasizing their loneliness and isolation from family.

The Christmas season is the time of year with the greatest number of parties and celebrations, but it is also the time of year with the highest suicide rate.

In recent decades, many have sought to "secularize" Christmas, removing from it all references to Jesus Christ and His birth. In the United States, legal challenges have successfully removed manger scenes from courthouse squares, and have created a climate in which many school choirs avoid singing Christmas carols with religious themes. Yet, as such as references to Jesus Christ and His birth have been downplayed, Santa Claus has become an unavoidable part of the season.

Millions of evangelicals have been deeply troubled by these trends. Feeling that they are in a battle with hostile secular forces that seek to eliminate everything that points to Christ and the Bible, they want to "reclaim" Christmas from the secularists.

Millions more are simply turned off or offended by the crass commercialism associated with the Christmas season. Christmas has become a sales gimmick in the modern-day U.S.—and in Canada. Christmas-related sales are the key component of yearly profit margins for most retail sales operations. That is why, by the beginning of November, familiar Christmas music blares from the public address systems of malls across...



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CHURCH TIMES

Sunday:

- 9:30 am** — Sunday School
10:30 am — Worship Service
6:15 pm — Evening Service

Wednesday:

- 6:30 pm** — Bible Study & Prayer Meeting

Saturday:

- 8:00 am** — Door-Knocking & Tract Distribution

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRAYER REQUESTS

- This BBC Bulletin can be downloaded online on biblebaptist.net.au/bbcbulletin.html
- Bring-A-Plate day, Dec. 20, 2009 after Morning Service at Pastor's house.
- Sunday & Wednesday services in Bible Baptist Church, Kalgoorlie.
- Wisdom for Bro. Robert's leading the Friday's Bible Study (6:30pm) for PNG folks in Kalgoorlie.

CHURCH BULLETIN

For those who have prayer requests, Christian articles, poems, or announcements for inclusion in the next issue of the Church Bulletin, please ring or email Mrs. Ethel Macale.

Deadline: Friday, 5:00 pm.
 Phone: (08) 9022 8323
 Email: ethel@macale.org

- Need for church car.
- Pastor Eugene Macale's ministries' financial needs: Bible Baptist Mission (Liloan, Southern Leyte, Philippines).
- Dondoy (Pastor Macale's brother) from alcoholism.
- Edna, Pastor Eugene Macale's sister-in-law, for complete healing of her stage-4 cancer.
- Kylie Mell's (Chris' wife) healing from multiple sclerosis.
- Financial needs of Bible Baptist Church, Talisay, Cebu under Pastor Gemmo Suberano.
- Complete healing of Bro. Jerry Penie's illness.
- New Christians for baptism.
- Needs of Pastor Sherwin Ramos & his family — Missionary to Paraguay.
- Travelling mercies to PNG for the Javapros, Gordan, and Donna.
- The Ngutliks Australian Residence application.
- A man of God to replace Pastor R. Macale for Bible Baptist Church, Kalgoorlie.
- Pastor R. Macale's new mission work in Perth.
- House in Perth for Pastor R. Macale's family.

Websites worth visiting:

<http://www.biblebaptist.net.au>
<http://www.oldkjv.org>
<http://www.macale.org>
<http://www.av1611.info>
<http://www.biblebaptist.ph>
<http://www.mbbc.com.au>

Is Christmas... *Continued from Page 1*

...North America. Retailers are trying to get the public "in the mood" to begin Christmas shopping early.

Decrying the commercial exploitation of the holiday season—and deeply bothered by efforts to remove all reference to God and the Bible from public life—many well-meaning religious people are demanding that Christ be put back into Christmas. The secularists, they claim, have hijacked a sacred Christian holiday for their own ends.

Western society is increasingly described as "post-Christian," and secular elites have been dubbed "the new pagans." In such an environment, should Christians join together to somehow *reclaim* Christmas? In a society that is more and more disconnected from God, can this disconnect be healed by encouraging more references to Jesus Christ during the Christmas season?

What approach *does* God want His people to take regarding Christmas? Is Jesus Christ, in fact, "the reason for the season?" You may be shocked to learn that Christmas is actually **not** Christian in its origins! For centuries before Jesus Christ's birth in Bethlehem, December 25 was associated with decorating evergreen trees, exchanging gifts and carousing at parties and celebrations.

How did Christmas become the chief "Christian" holiday? Is it—and *can it be*—Christian at all? You can search the New Testament from start to finish, and you will *never* find a reference to any sort of Christmas party. Moreover, you will never read of a religious service held to commemorate Jesus' birth.

But if the first Christians did not celebrate Christmas, then **why** did they not do so? When and how did this celebration achieve such prominence on the calendar of professing-Christian churches?

Where Did Christmas Originate?

Did you know that there were Christmas celebrations in Rome long before there were any in Jerusalem? How could a holiday that most associate with Jesus Christ of Nazareth have its origins in Babylon and Egypt many centuries before His birth? And how could such a holiday come to be so widely accepted as Christian?

To help us understand, we can look at the word "Christmas" itself. It means "mass of Christ," and has its origins in the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet even Catholic sources acknowledge that Christmas was **not** among the earliest festivals of the church, and that it does not have apostolic origins. Notice: "Christmas (i.e. the Mass of Christ), in the Christian Church, the festival of the nativity of Jesus Christ... As late as 245 Origen, in his eighth homily on Leviticus, repudiates as sinful the very idea of keeping the birthday of Christ 'as if he were a king Pharaoh.' The first certain mention of Dec. 25 is in a Latin chronographer of A.D. 354, first published entire by Mommsen.... [December 25 was] a Mithraic feast and is by the chronographer above referred to, but in another part of his compilation, termed *natalis invicti solis*, or birthday of the unconquered Sun" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., article: "Christmas").

The New Testament makes certain key dates plain; for example, it tells us