

the
PLAIN TRUTH
a magazine of understanding

VOLUME XXII, NUMBER 12

DECEMBER, 1957



This is Africa along the Congo River in the heat of the day. What is Africa really like? How much progress have the natives made? What do African Negroes think of American Negroes?—these questions are answered in this issue!

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VOL. XXII NO. 12

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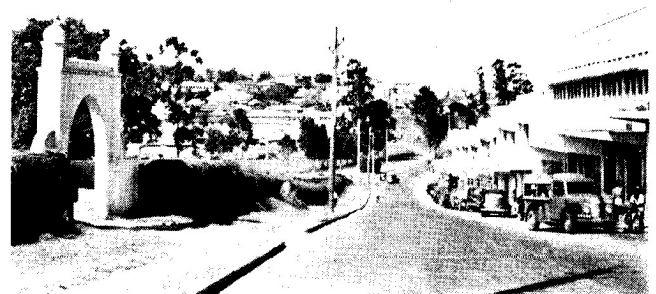
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By the Radio Church of God



A typical native market in East Africa. Natives are better clothed than in the Congo. Markets are usually clearings cut out of the "bush." These markets are the center of native life in the country.

This modern commercial city in East Africa is Kampala in Uganda. In the foreground is Namirembe Road lined with shops, many operated by Indian merchants. Notice the natives with their bicycles. —Pegas Studio, Nairobi



Much of Africa is mountainous. In East Africa, volcanic activity affords gently sloping hillsides which the natives cultivate by hand with hoes. Women do most of the work. These semi-terraced strips of cultivated areas prevent erosion. This area of Africa is beautiful with a pleasant climate.



A native village in Equatorial Africa. In this rainy climate the mud houses have to be rebuilt often. No storage place for food is necessary as food ripens all year around. Laziness is prevalent. —Pegas Studio, Nairobi



The PLAIN TRUTH about CHRISTMAS!

Where did we get Christmas? . . . from the Bible or paganism? Here are astonishing FACTS which may shock you! Do you know the origin of the Christmas tree—of "Santa Claus"—of the mistletoe, holly wreath—custom of exchanging gifts?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

DOES Christmas really celebrate the birthday of Jesus? Was He born on December 25th? Did Paul, the apostles, and the early Church of the New Testament celebrate Christmas? Do you know what the BIBLE says about the Christmas tree?

Stop and think! Very few know WHY we do the things we do, or WHERE our customs came from! We were born into a world filled with customs. We grew up practicing them, taking them for granted, but NEVER QUESTIONING WHY!

Not Christian Festival!

We have supposed CHRISTMAS to be the chief of the Christian holidays. Without asking questions, we have blindly assumed its observance must be one of the principal teachings and commands of the New Testament. We have supposed Jesus was born December 25th, and that the New Testament set this day aside as the chief Christian festival. We have supposed we exchange gifts because the wise men presented gifts to the Christ-child.

But let's quit supposing, and look into history and the Bible for the FACTS!

The word "Christmas" means "Mass of Christ," or, as it later became shortened, "Christ-Mass." It came to us as a Roman Catholic mass. And where did they get it? From the HEATHEN celebration of December 25th, as the birthday of Sol the SUN-GOD! It is, actually, an ancient rite of BAALISM, which the Bible condemns as the most abominable of all idolatrous worship!

It is not so much as MENTIONED anywhere in the New Testament. It was never observed by Paul, the apostles, the early true Christian church!

The idea that Jesus was born December 25th is one of the FABLES the

Apostle Paul prophesied (II Tim. 4:4) would deceive the world in these latter days.

The plain truth is, Christmas is NOT Christ's birthday at all! And this festival, important as it seems to so many, is not of Christian, but of pagan—Babylonish—origin! But does that make any difference? Isn't it all right to go ahead and observe it anyway? Isn't the "Christmas SPIRIT" a good and splendid thing, regardless of how it got started? WE SHALL SEE!

Jesus NOT Born December 25th

Now let's look to the interesting PROOF! When was Jesus born?

Jesus was not even born in the winter season! When the Christ-child was born "there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8). This never could have occurred in Palestine in the month of December. The shepherds always brought their flocks from the mountain sides 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 Bible itself proves in Song of Solomon 2:11, and Ezra 10:9, and 13, that winter was a rainy season not permitting shepherds to abide in open fields at night.

It was an 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 386.

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 *mid 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 the *25th of December*, 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 Christ was not born on December 25. The Catholic Encyclopedia frankly states this fact.

The exact date of Jesus' birth is entirely UNKNOWN, as all authorities acknowledge—tho if I had space in this article I could show you Scriptures which at least strongly indicate that it was in the early fall—probably September—approximately six months after Passover.

If God had wished us to observe and celebrate Christ's birthday, He would not have so completely hidden the exact date.

What Encyclopedias Say

There is not one word in the New Testament, or anywhere in the Bible, telling us to observe Christmas. The Christians of the first century, under the inspired teachings of Peter and Paul and the other apostles, never observed it. There is NO BIBLE AUTHORITY for its observance, strange as it may seem.

Then where did we get "Christmas"? Since it has come to us thru the Roman Catholic Church, and has no authority but that of the Roman Catholic Church, let us examine the Catholic Encyclopedia, published by that Church. Under the caption "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, further, we find this truth acknowledged: ". . . in the Scripture, *sinnners alone*, not saints, celebrate their birthday."

Encyclopedia Britannica 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 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 Christ.) ". . . a feast was established in memory of this event [Christ's birth] *in the fourth century.* 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 Christ's birth existed."

HOW This Pagan Custom Got Into The Church

Now notice! These recognized historic 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!

Then HOW did this heathen custom CREEP INTO a so-called Christianity?

The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia explains it clearly, in its article on "CHRIST-

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MAS:" "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 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 merry-making 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.*"

Remember, the Roman world had been PAGAN. Prior to the fourth century, Christians were few in number, tho 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 merry-making, with its special SPIRIT. They ENJOYED it! They didn't want to give it up! Now this same article in Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia explains how the

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2AY—Albury—Sun., 10:00 P.M.

2GN—Goulburn—Sun., 10:00 P.M.

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3AW—Melbourne—Sun., 10:30 P.M.

3BO—Bendigo—Thurs., 4:15 P.M.

4KQ—Brisbane—Sun., 10:30 P.M.

4TO—Townsville—Fri., 10:15 P.M.

4CA—Cairns—Sun., 10:00 P.M.

4WK—Warwick—Tues., 9:30 P.M.

6IX—Perth—Sun., 10:00 P.M.

7HT—Hobart—Sun., 10:25 P.M.

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" got into our so-called Christianity! 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 a RABBIT, just the same.

Again from the Britannica: "Certain Latins, as early as 354, may have transferred the birthday from January 6th to December 25, which was then a Mithraic feast, . . . or 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 thru 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 Babylonish system 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 this world's first kingdom. 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 that has dominated this world until now. Nimrod was so evil, it is said he married his own mother, whose name was Semiramis. After Nimrod's untimely death, his so-called mother-wife, Semiramis, propagated the evil doctrine 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 25th was the birthday of Nimrod.

This is the real origin of the Christmas tree.

Thru her scheming and designing, Semiramis became the Babylonian "Queen of Heaven," and Nimrod, under various names, became the "divine son of heaven." Thru the generations, in this idolatrous worship, Nimrod also 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

WHY THE PLAIN TRUTH HAS NO SUBSCRIPTION PRICE

So many ask: "How can you publish a magazine, without subscription price, and without advertising?"

The answer is simple. The GOSPEL must go to the whole world, and it must go FREE. It must not be sold like merchandise. "Freely ye have received," Jesus said to His disciples whom He was sending to proclaim the Gospel, "freely GIVE." Without money and without price, is God's way. We proclaim a FREE salvation. Therefore, we cannot put a PRICE upon The PLAIN TRUTH.

We have been called of God to conduct this work. It is not our work, but God's. We have set out to conduct God's work God's way. We rely, in FAITH, upon God's promises to supply every need.

God's way is the way of LOVE—and that is the way of giving, not getting. God expects every true child of His to GIVE of tithes and offerings that His work may go FREE—that His true ministers may GIVE the precious Gospel to others. We simply TRUST GOD to lay it on the minds and hearts of His people to give of their tithes and offerings that we may be enabled to GIVE the good things of God's Word to the hundreds of thousands who hear the Message over the air, and the scores of thousands who read The PLAIN TRUTH.

Many times our faith has been severely tried, but God has never failed us. We must not fail HIM!

Rome, Fortuna and Jupiterpuer. Even in Greece, China, Japan, Tibet are to be found the counterparts of the Madonna, long before the birth of Christ!

Thus, during the fourth and fifth centuries, when the pagans of the Roman world were "accepting" the new popular "Christianity" by the 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'll 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 BIBLE, OR FROM PAGAN IDOLATRY!

We are SHOCKED to learn the TRUTH—some, unfortunately, take offense at the PLAIN TRUTH! But God commands His faithful ministers, "CRY ALOUD, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and SHOW MY PEOPLE THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS!" Shocking as these facts are, they are the plain facts of history and the Bible!

The real origin of Christmas goes back to the ancient Babylon. It is bound up in the organized apostasy with which Satan has gripped a deceived world these many centuries! In Egypt, it was always believed that the son of Isis (Egyptian

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name for "Queen of Heaven") was born December 25th. Paganism celebrated this famous birthday over most of the known world for centuries before the birth of Christ.

December 25th is NOT the birthday of Jesus the true Christ! The apostles and early true Church never celebrated Christ's birthday at *any* time. There is no command or instruction to celebrate it in the Bible—rather, the celebrating of birthdays is a HEATHEN, not a Christian custom, believe it or not!

Nowhere does the Bible tell us to worship "Mother and Child." The apostles and early *true* Christians never did it! The Scriptures show an angel saying to Mary, "Hail, thou art highly favored, the Lord is with thee"—the addition "blessed art thou among women," is omitted in the best original manuscripts (in Greek). Elizabeth said to Mary, "Blessed art thou among women." And Mary herself said, "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:28, 42, 48).

She *was* highly blessed by God, and this has been acknowledged by all generations from that time—but this does not mean she is to be deified, worshipped, made a divine being, when she was merely human. The wide-spread worship of Mary as "the Mother of God," the doctrine of the immaculate conception, which refers to her as counterfeit mediatrix between man and God, is a continuation of this ancient babylonian idolatry, begun by the clever deceptions of Semiramis, wife of Nimrod! It is inextricably bound up with the "Christmas" idea!

Thus the ancient idolatrous "Chaldean Mysteries," founded by this wife of Nimrod, have been handed down thru the pagan religions into the Catholic Church under new Christian-sounding names, and from there into the Protestant denominations and on to all of us today!

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 YULETIDE season!"

Even the lighting of fires and candles as a Christian 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 Americana says: "The holly, the mistletoe, the Yule log . . . are relics of pre-Christian times." "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 Christian 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 5th century. Look in the Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 19, pages 648-9, 11th edition, where you'll read: "St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, . . . a saint honored by the Greeks and Latins on the sixth of December . . . A legend of his surreptitious bestowal of dowries 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 . . ."

Thru 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 is a myth, too?

One little fellow, sadly disillusioned about "Santa Claus," said to a playmate, "Yes, and I'm going to look into this 'Jesus Christ business,' too!" Is it CHRISTIAN to teach children myths and falsehoods? God says, "Thou shalt not bear FALSE WITNESS!" It may *seem* right, and be justified by human reason, but God says, "There is a way that *seemeth* RIGHT to a man, but the end thereof 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!

And so when we examine the facts, we are astonished to learn that the practice of observing Christmas is not, after all, a true Christian 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 Bible is 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 10: 1-6 "Thus saith the Lord, *Learn not the way of the heathen . . . For the customs of the people are vain; for one cutteth a TREE out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.*"

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 *mis*-read this to make it say there is no harm in having a Christmas tree, but that is not what it says.

But when it comes to the most im-
(Please continue on page 23)

of thee: and a THIRD PART SHALL FALL BY THE SWORD round about thee; and I will SCATTER A THIRD PART INTO ALL THE WINDS, and I will draw out a sword after them!" (Ezek. 5:11-12).

Two years ago, Mr. Herman Hoeh showed in this magazine how God's word prophesied DISEASE EPIDEMICS would strike the United States in TWO SHORT YEARS!

THOSE EPIDEMICS ARE BEGINNING NOW!

And they will grow MUCH WORSE!

God prophesies that finally, within the next fifteen years, fully ONE THIRD of our whole population will die of disease and famine! *While* we are so weakened—with a monstrous problem of dead and dying in our lands, we will "call" upon our "hired lovers" such as Germany.

The book of Lamentations represents the cryings of God's people in their affliction. It deals NOT ONLY with Judah, but also with all of *Israel* whose descendants finally settled America, Britain, and other Democracies of Northwest Europe (See Lam. 2:2-3).

"I called for *my lovers* (allies), but they deceived me . . ." (Lam. 1:19). "Behold O Eternal, for I am in distress," cries the voice of afflicted Jacob (Israel), "I have grievously rebelled, *abroad* [in our outlying possessions] the sword be-reaveth [enemies attack our colonies, our outposts, our embassies], at *home there is as death* [from the disease and famines sweeping our lands]. They have heard that I sigh [the world KNOWS of our terrible plight]: there is NONE to comfort me, all mine enemies have *heard* of my trouble, they are GLAD that thou hast done it" (Lam. 1:20-21).

"All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee, they say, 'We have swallowed her up, certainly this is the day that we looked for! We have found, we have seen it'" (Lam. 2:16). All our supposed "friends" will literally REJOICE in our abject misery and punishment. There will be DANCING and SINGING in foreign capitals over our fall from our present positions of power.

"Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens." "We have given the hand to the Egyptians and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread."

This is used as a *type* of modern

Israel and not of Judah only. Note Lamentations 2:1-5, where God shows this prophecy is for JACOB, or ISRAEL, as *well* as the tribe of Judah.

YOU Can KNOW

Keep reading *The PLAIN TRUTH* magazine—write in for the *Correspondence Course*—keep listening to *The World Tomorrow* program.

The PLAIN TRUTH about CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 8)

portant 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 Bible tells us to do THAT! Didn't the wise men give gifts when Christ was born?"

Isn't Exchanging GIFTS Scriptural?

Again, we are due for some SURPRISES, when we learn the PLAIN TRUTH! First, let's look at the historic origin of trading gifts back and forth, then see exactly what the Bible *does* say about it.

From the Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. 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 Christianity about it!* Strange tho that may seem! This does NOT celebrate Christ's birthday or honor it or Him! Suppose someone you love has a birthday. You want to honor that person on his or her birthday. Would you lavishly buy 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, when viewed in that light, isn't it?

Yet this is exactly what people the world over are doing! They honor a day that is NOT Christ's birthday by spending every dime they can scrape together

You can know what is coming. God has not left us in the dark! He has set His watchmen to cry aloud, to publish the warnings—showing the specific day by day fulfillments of prophecy—warning of the TREMENDOUS events just ahead. THIS WORK IS CARRYING OUT THIS MISSION AS NO OTHER WORK ON THE FACE OF THIS EARTH IS DOING!

Will YOU heed?

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, nearly all professing Christians forget to give gifts to CHRIST and HIS CAUSE almost altogether! December often is the most difficult month to keep CHRIST's work 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 CHRIST and HIS WORK before March!

Now consider what the Bible says about giving gifts when Christ was born. It is in Matthew 2:1-11. "Now when Jesus 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 Gifts Presented to Christ

Notice, they inquired for the child Jesus, 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 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*

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gifts among themselves, but "they presented unto HIM gifts." They gave THEIR gifts to CHRIST, not to their friends, relatives, or one another!

WHY? Let me quote from the Adam Clarke Commentary Vol. 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 Christian custom of exchanging gifts with friends to honor Christ's birthday. 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 Christ, it invariably RETARDS His work, often sets it back, at the Christmas season every year!

Does It Make Any Difference?

But isn't it all right to keep Christmas if we do it to honor Christ?

Listen! *Your eternity* may depend on the answer! These are the authentic facts of history! YOU are soon—very soon—going to stand before the judgment bar of Christ! Don't say carelessly: "Well, here's the way I look at it"; or, "I don't think it makes any difference."

God says *it makes a difference*. God says there is a way that *seems right* to a man—to YOU—but the end thereof are the ways of death! You will be judged by WHAT GOD SAYS—not by what you think! God says this whole world today is DECEIVED!

Jesus Christ—the Word of God—spoke to Moses to warn YOU not to follow these Christmas customs of the heathen. Here is what Jesus Christ said:

"Take heed . . . that thou inquire *not* after their gods, saying: 'How used these nations to serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.' THOU SHALT NOT DO SO UNTO THE ETERNAL THY GOD; FOR EVERY ABOMINATION TO THE ETERNAL, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods" (Deut. 12:30-31).

Here is what *God says*—it doesn't matter what we think—but it DOES MATTER what God thinks. He calls these pagan Christmas customs *abominations*.

No wonder the apostles did not teach the early spirit-filled New Testament Church of God to observe these traditions of men!

Consider *doubly* what Jeremiah was inspired to write: "Learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain?" (Jer. 10:2).

No, God *forbids* you to worship Him by the pagan custom of Christmas!

We're IN BABYLON, and Haven't KNOWN IT!

Christmas has become a COMMERCIAL season. It's sponsored, kept alive, by the heaviest retail advertising campaigns of the year. You see a masqueraded "Santa Claus" in many stores. Ads keep us deluded and deceived about the "beautiful Christmas SPIRIT." The newspapers, who sell the ads, print flowery editorials exalting and eulogizing the pagan season, and its "spirit." 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 Christ, but to SELL MERCHANDISE! Like all Satan's delusions, it appears as an "angel of LIGHT," is made to appear GOOD. BILLIONS OF DOLLARS are spent in this merchandising spree every year, while the CAUSE OF CHRIST must SUFFER! It's part of the economic system of BABYLON!

We are God's people ISRAEL! Yes, we're IN BABYLON, as Bible prophecy foretold, and we don't know it! "Come OUT of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her SINS, and that ye receive not of HER PLAGUES"—now soon to fall—is the warning of Rev. 18:4. THIS YEAR, INSTEAD OF GIFT-TRADING, WHY NOT PUT THAT MONEY INTO GOD'S WORK?