

CONTROLLED BY THE CALENDAR

THE PAGAN ORIGINS OF OUR MAJOR HOLIDAYS

Written by David Allen Rivera

The definitive book on the pagan origins of our major holidays, and how the observance of them may be robbing you of spiritual fulfillment

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All Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible

CHAPTER ONE

HOW IT ALL STARTED

The picture is indelibly etched in our minds. As Moses cowers on top of Mount Sinai, the voice of God commands: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." As he looks skyward, the finger of God burns the words of the Law on the tablets of stone— the Ten Commandments. I am, of course, referring to the 1956 American film classic starring Charlton Heston, which is my favorite movie. I mention it here, because it serves to illustrate the point I would like to make, which in turn will establish the basis for the underlying theme of this book— God's hatred of idolatry and paganism. Remember, it was the first commandment (Exodus 20:3), and because of that, one can assume that it was the issue most important to him.

When God revealed to Moses the final plague upon Egypt, which would prove to be the coup-de-grace, he went out of his way to address what seemed to be harmless inanimate objects (Exodus 12:12): "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord." God would later command that man was not to make any "graven image, or any likeness," "gods of silver," or "gods of gold" (Exodus 20:4, 23); and he further commanded that man was not to "bow down" or "serve them." The given reason (Exodus 20:5)— "...for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." In Exodus 23:13, he even forbid the "mention of the name of other gods..."

Exodus 22:20 mandated the punishment for anyone caught sacrificing to a false god. They were to be "utterly destroyed." This was not just a threat, or an exaggeration. After being on the mountain forty days and receiving God's law, Moses was ordered to return to the camp because Israel had made a golden calf to worship. To say that Moses was upset, would be putting it mildly. The idol was melted down into a form that could be ground into a powder-like consistency, which was then put into water. The children of Israel were made to drink it (Exodus 32:20). On top of that, Moses demanded to know who was "on the Lord's side." Those not expressing their allegiance to God, about 3,000 men, were killed (Exodus 32:27- 28).

How can it be that the all-powerful creator of all living things was jealous of a lifeless representation of a false, non-existent deity? We are given a clue in Exodus 23:33— "...for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee." There is an implication of deceit here. But, a deception by who? Ironically, the apostle Paul referred to the "snare of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:7, 2 Timothy 2:26), and therein lies the answer.

It seems that the nation of Israel found it difficult to trust and worship a God they could not see, and this certainly was a contributing factor to their periods of falling back into idolatry. The fabrication of an idol enabled them to have something they could look to. So, to counteract their lack of faith, Moses built the Ark of the Covenant, and it became a symbol of the divine presence of God. We, as Christians, know that the idols of Biblical times, as well as the gods who represent various religions today, do not exist, and are in fact a manifestation of Satan, who has deceived its practitioners into believing that they do.

So you see, just as a father would shelter and protect his children, God was doing the same to the children of Israel. Knowing that Satan would try to trick people into worshipping him, God sought to prevent it by totally banning every aspect of idol worship, which included even the mere mention of their names. In this way, there would be no possibility of Satanic influence. Certainly Paul knew of God's intention, when he wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:11— "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." His advice is just as good now, as it was then (1 Thessalonians 5:22): "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

Once you understand why God has an intense hatred of idolatry, it is all the more incredible how we have allowed ourselves to be subjected to a calendar that is a testament to the overwhelming influence of false gods in our society. To begin with, all you need to do is look at the basis for the names of some of the months, as well as for the days of the week. Our calendar actually honors false gods, in fact, when I learned these things in grade school, it caused me to get interested in Greek mythology. So in church, you learn about God; in school, you learn about false gods. I guess that is why there has to be a separation of church and state.

PAGAN NAMES FOR THE MONTHS OF THE YEAR

January: From the Latin *Januarius*, this month is named after the two-faced Roman God *Janus* who was able to look back at the past, as well as into the future.¹ One of the major gods of Roman mythology, *Janus* was initially known as the god of light and day, but later was recognized as the "god of the beginning of things." His help was solicited before important events. He was worshipped as the guardian of shipping and trade, and is sometimes said to be the masculine form of the goddess Diana. The beginning of the year was considered sacred, and a festival in his honor, *Agonia*, was held on January 9th.²

The Romans offered sacrifices to *Janus*, and in a tradition dating back to 747 BC, exchanged gifts with friends and family. The presents were called *Strenae*, named after *Strenia*, the goddess of strength. Christian emperors continued the new year tradition, but the pagan rituals became so widespread that the Church tried to prevent its observance through their method of substitution.³ A Jewish custom, based on the Gospel of St. Luke, said that Jesus was circumcised when he was eight days old.⁴ So, in 487, the date of his birth was set at December 25th, and the Church began celebrating the Feast of the Circumcision on January 1st, to observe the anniversary of the event.⁵

February: From the Latin *Februarius*⁶ which is derived from the Latin verb *februare* which means "to purify."⁷ *Februa*, the Roman festival of purification was celebrated on February 15th.⁸

March: From the Latin *Martius*,⁹ which is derived from *Mars*, the Roman god of war. It was the first month of the Roman year until the Julian calendar was initiated in 45 BC.¹⁰

¹ Liberty, Gene. *The How and Why Wonder Book of Time*. New York, NY: Wonder Books, 1963, pg. 15.

² Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977.

⁷ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 75.

⁸ Liberty, Gene. *The How and Why Wonder Book of Time*. New York, NY: Wonder Books, 1963, pg. 15.

⁹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 6, pg. 601.

April: The Romans regarded this month as being sacred to the goddess *Venus*, and honored her with a festival on the first day of the month. From the Latin *Aprilis*, or *Aphrilis*, which was derived from *Aphrodite*, the Greek equivalent to *Venus*.¹¹ However, there are some etymologists who maintain that the name stems from *aperire*, a Latin verb which means "to open" and refers to all the blooming that is associated with Spring.¹²

May: Corresponds to month of *Maius* on the old Roman calendar,¹³ which was named after *Maia Majesta*, the Roman goddess of Spring. On May 1st, the Vulcan priests made sacrifices to her. In Greek mythology, she was the oldest of the *Pleiades*, the seven daughters of *Atlas* and *Pleione*, the *Oceanid*. In a Cyllene cave, she became the mother of *Mercury* (or *Hermes*) through *Zeus*.¹⁴

June: Corresponds to the Roman month of *Junius*, which had been named for the Roman goddess *Juno*.¹⁵ Known as the queen of heaven, she was seen as the protector of women, and that is why June became accepted as the best month to marry.¹⁶

PAGAN NAMES FOR THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

Monday: Derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Monandaeg* or the "Moon's day" because the moon was worshipped as the wife of the sun.¹⁷

Tuesday: Taken from the Anglo-Saxon *Tiwesdaeg* or "Tiw's day" in honor of *Tyr*, the Norse god of war.¹⁸

Wednesday: From the Anglo-Saxon *Wodensdaeg* or "Woden's day" to commemorate *Odin*, the Norse god of storms, who was the father of *Tyr*.¹⁹

Thursday: Came from the Anglo-Saxon *Thunresdaeg* or "Thor's day" for *Thor*, the Norse god of thunder.²⁰ (20)

¹⁰ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 152.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 198.

¹² Liberty, Gene. *The How and Why Wonder Book of Time*. New York, NY: Wonder Books, 1963, pg. 15.

¹³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 6, pg. 718.

¹⁴ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 250.

¹⁵ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 5, pg. 635.

¹⁶ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 317.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 681.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 682.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 682.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 682.

Friday: Derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Frigedaeg* or "Frigg's day" to honor *Freya*, the Norse god of love, who was the wife of *Odin*.²¹

Saturday: Comes down to us from the Anglo-Saxon *Saterdaeg* of "Sater's day," which is named after *Saturn*, the Roman god of agriculture. A festival in his honor, known as *Saturnalia*, was celebrated on December 17-23.²²

Before I go on, let me make a point. I am not an alarmist. Some of you may think I am blowing things out of proportion, or that I am making mountains out of molehills, just to create an argument. In a way, I am. But I do so only to graphically illustrate the issue, and to show how it is contrary to God's word. It has been a tradition as old as time itself to name things after people, as a memorial to them and their accomplishments. For example, the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC were built as a lasting memorial to two of the greatest figures in American history, who are widely recognized as great Christian leaders. In fact, Washington was known to have said: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."²³

I am sure you'll agree that these men deserved to be memorialized. However, was it necessary to give such a distinction to false gods, unless it was actually the intention of the framers of our calendar to stimulate belief in, and the worship of, these and other deities. We are in fact, giving honor to false gods through our calendar, and since that is the case, then it is clear that exposure to this influence is in complete disagreement with God's view in this matter.

CONSTANTINE AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC INFLUENCE

Before I deal with the background information regarding Sunday, I need to give you a little historical perspective so you will have a clear understanding of how we have gotten to the point where time is literally against us, as far as our theological beliefs.

In 305, two Roman emperors, Diocletian and Maximian, stepped down, and were succeeded by their deputies, Galerius and Constantius. Constantius was then replaced by Maximinus Daia in the east, and Severus in the west.²⁴ After Constantius died, his son Constantine was proclaimed emperor by his father's army, and they prepared to march against Rome. On the evening of October 27, 312, he came face-to-face with the legions of Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge on the Tiber River.²⁵ According to the story, knowing that his small army could never match the military might of Rome, Constantine vowed that if God would help him conquer the city, he would institute Christian rule.

The earliest account of this incident was recorded in volume 9 (pages 260 - 340) of *Ecclesiastical History*, by Eusebius (264 - 340), the bishop of Caesarea, who, in 325, became a member of Constantine's Court.²⁶ He wrote: "Constantine...calling in prayer upon God who is in

²¹ Ibid., pg. 682.

²² Ibid., pg. 682.

²³ Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook: An Abbreviated Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, Regency Reference Library, 1986, pg. 18.

²⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 5, pg. 71.

²⁵ Chick, Jack T. *Sabotage?* (The Crusaders, Volume 11). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1979, pg. 19.

²⁶ Eadie, John W. (Editor). *The Conversion of Constantine*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1971, pg. 3.

heaven, and his Word, even Jesus Christ the Saviour of all, as his ally, he advanced in full force, seeking to secure for Romans their ancestral liberty..."²⁷ Lactantius, who tutored Crispus, Constantine's son, sometime between 313 - 318, wrote a pamphlet called *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*. He added a little more detail to the incident: "Constantine was admonished in a dream to inscribe on the shields (of his men) the heavenly sign of God and thus to commit himself to battle. He obeyed and inscribed (the sign of) Christ on the shields: the (Greek) letter X intersected by the (Greek) letter I, bent at the top. Armed with this sign the army took up their swords."²⁸

The third source for the account was the *Life of Constantine*, believed to have been written by Eusebius shortly before his death in 340. In Volume One he wrote:

"Being convinced, however, that he needed some more powerful aid than his military forces could afford him...he sought Divine assistance...He considered, therefore, on what god he might rely for protection and assistance...(he) felt it incumbent upon him to honor his father's god alone. Accordingly he called on him with earnest prayer and supplications that would reveal to him who he was, and stretch forth his right hand to help him in his present difficulties. And while he was thus praying, a most marvelous sign appeared to him from heaven, the account of which it might have been difficult to believe had it been related by any other person. But since the victorious emperor himself long afterwards declared it to the writer of this history, when he was honored with his acquaintance and society, and confirmed his statement by an oath, who could hesitate to accredit the relation, especially since subsequent testimony had established the truth? He said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, bearing the inscription 'In this Conquer' (*Hoc signo victor eris* which, in other sources has been translated as "In this sign you shall be the victor"). At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, as was his whole army...which witnessed the miracle...And while he continued to ponder its meaning, night suddenly came on; then in his sleep the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign...and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies..."²⁹

Now it was made in the following manner. A long spear, overlaid in gold, formed the figure of the cross by means of a transverse bar laid over it. On top of the whole was fixed a wreath of gold and precious stones; and within this, the symbol of the savior's name, two letters indicating the name of Christ by means of its initial characters, the letter P (the Greek letter *rho*) being intersected by X (the Greek letter *chi*) in its center; and these letters the emperor was in the habit of wearing on his helmet at a later period... Being struck with amazement at the extraordinary vision, and resolving to worship no other God save Him who had appeared to him, he sent for those who were acquainted with the mysteries of His doctrines, and inquired who that God was, and what was

²⁷ Ibid., pg. 9.

²⁸ Ibid., pg. 11.

²⁹ Ibid., pgs. 13-14.

intended by the sign in the vision he had seen. They affirmed that he was God, the only begotten Son of the one and only God...³⁰

Assuming therefore the Supreme God as his patron...and setting the victorious trophy, the salutary symbol, in front of his soldiers and bodyguard, and third divisions of the tyrant's forces, defeating them all with the ease at the first assault, and made his way into the very interior of Italy.³¹

Accordingly, he immediately ordered a lofty spear in the figure of a cross placed beneath the hand of a statue representing himself, in the most frequented part of Rome, and the following inscription to be engraved on it in the Latin language: 'By virtue of this salutary sign, which is the true test of valor, I have preserved and liberated your city from the yoke of tyranny'.³²

The historian Eusebius said that he had been given this account by Constantine himself, yet he didn't write about it until after the emperor's death. Most writers of the period never acknowledged the glorified account, nor was it ever mentioned by any of the 40,000 soldiers.

However, in *The History of the Church*, it was reported by P. Schaff, that in 308, Constantine presented gifts to *Apollo*.³³ Also, in AD 310, while on a march from Gaul, Constantine had an earlier vision.³⁴ At a pagan temple either in the Vosges, or near Autun, he had a vision of *Apollo*, the Roman god of sunlight.³⁵ Since then, he had been a follower of *Apollo*, whom he considered a manifestation of *Sol Invictus* ("Unconquered Sun") the god that had been worshipped by his father, Constantius Chlorus.³⁶

The worship of *Sol Invictus* had originated in Syria as Mithraism, and made its way to Rome over a hundred years earlier. *Mithra* was the Persian sun god,³⁷ and the feast to honor his rebirth was held on December 25th, during the winter solstice.³⁸ *Mithra* was identified as the god who rose to heaven with the sun.³⁹ Mithraism became the religion of the Roman legions after having been indoctrinated by Vespasian (9-79) after the victory at Commagene, a province in the Taurus mountains in what is now the country of Turkey. He was known as the god of

³⁰ Ibid., pg. 14.

³¹ Ibid., pg. 14.

³² Ibid., pg. 14.

³³ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 174.

³⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 5, pg. 72.

³⁵ Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1983, pg. 366.

³⁶ Eadie, John W. (Editor). *The Conversion of Constantine*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1971, pg. 2.

³⁷ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 62.

³⁸ Ibid., pg. 63.

³⁹ Ibid., pg. 227.

bravery and fidelity.⁴⁰ Sun worship was made the official religion of Rome during the rule of the Roman emperor Aurelian (270-275),⁴¹ and in 270, he built a temple in Rome dedicated to *Palmyrene Baal*, the sun lord of the Roman power (*sol dominus imperii romani*).⁴² In 307, the Roman emperor Diocletian (284 -305) dedicated a temple to *Mithra* at Carnuntum.⁴³

Though the worship of *Sol Invictus* was a mixture of Babylonian, Persian, Syrian, Egyptian, and Greek sun worship,⁴⁴ it was considered monotheistic because it made the sun god the chief over all others.⁴⁵ Many had believed that Maxentius was more powerful than the pagan gods, so Constantine prayed to the only god that was left, which was the supreme god his father worshipped.⁴⁶ It has been theorized that he identified Christ with *Sol Invictus*, because the "Sun of Righteousness" in the Old Testament was prophetically linked to Jesus, who was sometimes called *Sol Justitiae*, and was depicted looking like a young *Apollo*.⁴⁷

Historians now feel that the incident prior to the battle at the Milvian Bridge on October 28, 312 was a myth concocted either by Eusebius, or even Constantine. There are many things that just do not line up. For example, we are expected to believe that there was enough time between the occurrence of the dream, and the commencement of the battle,⁴⁸ to paint this sign of God on their weapons, helmets, shields, banners, and clothing; as well as the fabrication of the actual battle standard.⁴⁹

The emblem that was reproduced was not the cross he claimed to have seen, or the battle standard created with a spear and a crossbar— but was a symbol known as the *labarum*.⁵⁰

⁴⁰ Ibid., pg. 226.

⁴¹ Ibid., pg. 65.

⁴² Ibid., pg. 226.

⁴³ Ibid., pg. 65.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pg. 227.

⁴⁵ Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *The Messianic Legacy*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1986, pg. 41.

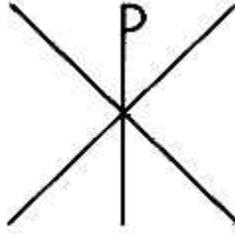
⁴⁶ Smith, John Holland. *Constantine the Great*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1971, pg. 101.

⁴⁷ Grant, Michael. *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1993, pg. 135.

⁴⁸ Smith, John Holland. *Constantine the Great*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1971, pg. 104.

⁴⁹ Eadie, John W. (Editor). *The Conversion of Constantine*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1971, pg. 17.

⁵⁰ Smith, John Holland. *Constantine the Great*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1971, pg. 102.



It was formed by an X (the Greek letter *chi*), intersected by the letter P (the Greek letter *rho*), which were the first two letters of *Christos*, the Greek word for Christ.⁵¹ The earliest known use of the symbol was found on a tomb in Pompeii, and had been put there over two hundred years before Constantine.⁵² It also formed part of an epitaph engraved in Rome in 269. However, it had become a commonly used symbol as an abbreviation for Greek words that began with *chi-rho*, such as *chrestos* (which means "useful"). It is possible that the symbol became part of a psychological strategy against Maxentius and his men when they realized that it was a sign associated with Jesus.⁵³

Some coins of that period portrayed the cross in saltire, in the form of an X, which was known as the *crux decussata* (from the Roman *decussis* and the symbol for the numeral 10), which became known as the cross of St. Andrew, and used by the Celts. Some researchers feel that Constantine modified this version of the cross to form the initials which represented the name of Christ.⁵⁴ Even though he could have very well put the symbol on his helmet, as indicated by Eusebius, the only hard evidence concerning the use of the symbol, was when it began appearing on Roman coins in 317.⁵⁵ To the Catholic Church, the symbol became known as the *pax christus* or the "peace of Christ," and is used when one is made to suffer for Mary, who will then go to Jesus to intercede for them. The belief is, that Mary also suffered while Jesus was on the cross, and there is no peace without sacrifice. So to gain the sympathy of Mary, one must suffer.⁵⁶

Regardless of what actually happened, he won the battle, taking over the government of Rome. From 312-324, Constantine Augustus ruled the Western Empire, which consisted of Britain, Gaul, Spain, Italy, and North Africa; while Licinius Augustus ruled the Eastern section.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Eadie, John W. (Editor). *The Conversion of Constantine*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1971, pg. 24.

⁵² Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1983, pg. 366.

⁵³ Smith, John Holland. *Constantine the Great*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1971, pg. 103.

⁵⁴ Eadie, John W. (Editor). *The Conversion of Constantine*. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1971, pg. 35.

⁵⁵ Smith, John Holland. *Constantine the Great*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1971, pg. 104.

⁵⁶ Chick, Jack T. *The Force* ("Alberto" Part 4) (The Crusaders, Volume 15). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1983, pg. 31.

⁵⁷ Bowder, Diana. *The Age of Constantine and Julian*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., Barnes & Noble, 1978, pg. 28.

Constantine would later defeat him in 324.⁵⁸ In February, 313, he and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan, which bestowed religious freedom,⁵⁹ and restored any personal property and real estate that had been confiscated.⁶⁰ However, this document merely echoed a decree already made by Galerius, the Eastern emperor, in 311, known as the Edict of Toleration, which permitted the existence of the Christian religion.⁶¹

While Constantine appeared to align himself with the God of the early Christian Church, through word and deed, he never really acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, and may have in fact tried to usurp that distinction, because he achieved what Jesus seemingly failed to do.⁶² The triumphal arch in Rome that was built to celebrate Constantine's victory, indicated that he won "through the prompting of the Deity."⁶³ This deity is not named, but it certainly was not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because coinage issued by Constantine featured the name of Christ on one side,⁶⁴ with *Sol Invictus* (and the inscription *sol invicto comiti* which means "committed to the invincible sun"⁶⁵ or, more precisely, as an e-mail I received indicated, "to the unconquered sun, (our) companion"), as well as *Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Hercules*.⁶⁶ In addition, while he would build a Christian church in one part of the city, in another part, he would build one that would contain statues of *Sol Invictus*, and Cybele, the mother goddess.⁶⁷ P. Schaff wrote in *The History of the Church* that sometime after 321, Constantine dedicated his home in Byzantium to the god of martyrs and the goddess of fortune, to receive their protection.⁶⁸

Constantine had his soldiers, and others, sprinkled in baptism, proclaiming them to be "Christians," although they spiritually weren't. However, those who adhered to the Babylonian mysteries wanted to retain some aspects of their religion in the new Christian movement. Thus, Mithraism would become part of the Christian movement, allowing paganism to infiltrate the

⁵⁸ Ibid., pg. 32.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pg. 28.

⁶⁰ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 5, pg. 72.

⁶¹ Grant, Michael. *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1993, pg. 156.

⁶² Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *The Messianic Legacy*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1986, pg. 44.

⁶³ Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1983, pg. 366.

⁶⁴ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 174.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pg. 174.

⁶⁶ Bowder, Diana. *The Age of Constantine and Julian*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., Barnes & Noble, 1978, pg. 26.

⁶⁷ Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *The Messianic Legacy*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1986, pg. 43.

⁶⁸ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 174.

Church, which would come to be known as the Roman Catholic Church. The historian Jerome wrote, that "the devil had by way of imitation introduced the very Christian solemnity into the mystery of *Mithra*." Justin Martyr also wrote that the Mithratic tradition was the devil's trick to mislead Christians.⁶⁹

To explain the Babylonian mysteries, we have to go back to the days of Noah. The book of Genesis talks about his three sons: Ham, Shem and Japheth. Well after Noah and his family landed on the mountains of Ararat, Ham's son, Cush, had a son called Nimrod, who became (Genesis 10:8-10) "a mighty one in the earth." He built the cities of Babel (where the tower to heaven was attempted), Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land known as Shinar (which is referred to by archaeologists as Sumer) between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The name Nimrod, in Hebrew, comes from the word *marad* which means "we will rebel."⁷⁰

Nimrod instituted a Satanically-inspired occult-based religion, which included the sacrifice of babies (2 Chronicles 33:6). It is interesting to note, that A. G. Mackey wrote in his *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, that Nimrod was one of the founders of Masonry.⁷¹ He also married his mother, Semiramis. His great uncle Shem was so repulsed and outraged, that he had Nimrod killed.⁷² As a warning, his body was chopped up into little pieces and sent to various cities as a warning.⁷³ Semiramis took over as leader of the mystery religion, and announced that Nimrod had become a god.⁷⁴ She claimed that his spirit took possession of the sun, and he became the sun god.⁷⁵ As such, as his mother/wife, she became a goddess, and called herself the "Queen of Heaven"⁷⁶ She assumed the task of retrieving Nimrod's body parts, and got them all back, except for his penis. She then created the symbol of the obelisk and established phallic worship.⁷⁷

Nimrod was symbolically portrayed as a dead tree that had been cut down, with the serpent *Aescalapius* wrapped around the stump.⁷⁸ Semiramis claimed that a full-grown evergreen tree sprouted overnight from a dead tree stump, which she said was an indication of the entry of new life into the deceased Nimrod.⁷⁹ Every year, on the anniversary of his birth, said

⁶⁹ Ibid., pg. 227.

⁷⁰ Dake, Finis Jennings. *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible* (KJV). Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, Inc., 1963, OT, pg. 9.

⁷¹ Chick, Jack T. *Angel of Light* (The Crusaders, Volume 9). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1978, pg. 30.

⁷² Ibid., pg. 14.

⁷³ Chick, Jack T. *Sabotage?* (The Crusaders, Volume 11). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1979, pg. 17.

⁷⁴ Chick, Jack T. *Angel of Light* (The Crusaders, Volume 9). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1978, pg. 14.

⁷⁵ Robertson, R. R. "Come Out Of Her My People." *The Overcomer*. (R. W. Stair).

⁷⁶ Chick, Jack T. *Angel of Light* (The Crusaders, Volume 9). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1978, pg. 14.

⁷⁷ Rivera, David Allen. *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order*. Oakland, CA: IntelliBooks Publishers, 2004, pg. 388.

⁷⁸ Meyer, Jacob O. *Christmas As the Bible Teaches It*. Bethel, PA: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1982, pg. 5.

⁷⁹ Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. Pasadena, CA: Ambassador College, Worldwide Church of God, 1970, pg. 11.

to be on December 25th, she would leave gifts at this tree, which was where the Christmas tree originated.⁸⁰

After the death of Nimrod, Semiramis became pregnant, even though she claimed to be a virgin.⁸¹ She said that she conceived after being visited by the spirit of Nimrod.⁸² She gave birth to a son, who she called Tammuz (Dumuzu), and claimed that he was a reincarnation of Nimrod. Together, they became a Satanic holy family, and would become the basis for all other gods and goddesses all over the world.⁸³ Semiramis ordered her people to observe the birthday of her son, which she said was December 25th, the time of the winter solstice, when the sun was the farthest away from the earth. In the course of this celebration, trees were decorated with little balls to represent the sun.⁸⁴

Tammuz was later killed, but it was believed that he came back to life.⁸⁵ After being killed by a wild boar, his mother was so overcome with grief, that she went into the depths of the underworld to reclaim him from death. This symbolic mourning for Tammuz was observed by the Babylonian women on the second day of the month bearing his name. In the Jewish calendar, the fourth month is named after him.⁸⁶ To the Greeks, he became known as Adonis.⁸⁷

Most Christians believe that the symbol of the cross originated during the time of Christ. Not so. It was used since the days of Babylon in sun worship.⁸⁸ It was a fabrication of Semiramis to commemorate her son Tammuz,⁸⁹ and it was shaped to represent the letter "T" to symbolize the sun god.⁹⁰ The vertical beam indicated the path to heaven, while the horizontal cross bar represented heaven.⁹¹ For anyone crucified on a cross, it was done not only as a punishment, but to be considered as a sacrifice to pagan gods. The Bible, when referring to the cross, does

⁸⁰ Rivera, David Allen. *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order*. Oakland, CA: InteliBooks Publishers, 2004, pg. 388.

⁸¹ Chick, Jack T. *The Force* ("Alberto" Part 4) (The Crusaders, Volume 15). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1983, pg. 26.

⁸² Robertson, R. R. "Come Out Of Her My People." *The Overcomer*. (R. W. Stair).

⁸³ Chick, Jack T. *The Force* ("Alberto" Part 4) (The Crusaders, Volume 15). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1983, pg. 11.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 26.

⁸⁵ Lloyd, James. *Beyond Babylon: The Last Week of the World*. Jacksonville, OR: Christian Media, 1995, pg. 82.

⁸⁶ Dake, Finis Jennings. *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible* (KJV). Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, Inc., 1963, OT, pg. 812.

⁸⁷ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 8.

⁸⁸ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 137.

⁸⁹ Chick, Jack T. *The Force* ("Alberto" Part 4) (The Crusaders, Volume 15). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1983, pg. 29.

⁹⁰ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 139.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 137.

so as a representation of self-denial, in reference to the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus; and indirectly, it symbolically represented covenant. It wasn't necessarily used as a Christian symbol.⁹²

The Chaldean name of *Bil-Nipru*, meaning "lord" and "hunter" (which equates to the "mighty hunter," which is mentioned in the Bible), has been found in excavations, and is believed to refer to Nimrod. His mother/wife is referred to as *Beltis*, and their son, as *Nin* (or *Ninus*).⁹³

In Babylon, in 586 BC, the original Chaldean name of *Bel* was changed to *Merodach*, then back to *Bel* (or *Baal*).⁹⁴ The Greek gods were merely renamed Chaldean gods which dated back to the time of Nimrod.⁹⁵ The ancient historian Herodotus wrote about a temple in Babylon in honor of *Zeus Belus*, when meant that the Greek god *Zeus* was actually *Bel*. To the Romans, he was known as *Jupiter*.⁹⁶

Out of fear, the religion became secret, and went underground. Statues soon appeared of her holding the baby Nimrod. She was symbolized by the moon, and Nimrod, her son/husband, was called *Baal*, and was symbolized by the sun. They initiated a religious system of mother and child worship. After the fall of Babylon, the religion was spread to Egypt, where she became known as *Isis*, and Nimrod became known as *Osiris*, and their son *Horus* (who was also born on December 25th).⁹⁷ The Eye of *Horus*, representing sun worship, became known as the "All-Seeing Eye" of Freemasonry, and can be seen today on the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States which appears on the back of the one dollar bill.⁹⁸ Herodotus associated *Zeus* with the Egyptian god *Osiris*.⁹⁹

In China, Semiramis was called *Shing Moo*;¹⁰⁰ to the Canaanites¹⁰¹ and Phoenicians, she was known as *Astarte*; to the Assyrians and Chaldeans, she was known as *Bilta* (*Bilta-Nipruta*) and *Ishtar*; to the Mendeans, she was known as *Ashtar*; to the Hebrews¹⁰² and Sidonians, she was known as *Ashtoreth*¹⁰³ and *Asherah*;¹⁰⁴ to the Akkadians, she was known as

⁹² Chick, Jack T. *The Force* ("Alberto" Part 4) (The Crusaders, Volume 15). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1983, pg. 18.

⁹³ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 18.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 35.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 56.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 35.

⁹⁷ Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. Pasadena, CA: Ambassador College, Worldwide Church of God, 1970, pg. 11.

⁹⁸ Chick, Jack T. *Angel of Light* (The Crusaders, Volume 9). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1978, pg. 15.

⁹⁹ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 59.

¹⁰⁰ Chick, Jack T. *Sabotage?* (The Crusaders, Volume 11). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1979, pg. 18.

¹⁰¹ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 68.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pgs. 22-23.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pg. 68.

Ishtar,¹⁰⁵ to the Ephesians and Asia Minor she was called *Artemis* and *Diana*; to the Phrygians,¹⁰⁶ and in Rome, she was called *Cybele* and *Venus*,¹⁰⁷ in Greece she was known as *Gaea*, and *Aphrodite*; and in India she was called *Kali*.¹⁰⁸

Another way to see the connection between the various gods and goddesses is to look at how many cultures celebrate the winter solstice. To the Arabians, this time was called "the birthday of the Lord, that is the moon"; the Romans had their "feast of *Saturn*"; and in Egypt, the son of *Isis* was born at that time. The reason for different cultures celebrating similar events, at the same time, is that they are all rooted in the same Babylonian mystery religion.¹⁰⁹

As the Catholic Church came to power, the pagans who fell under its authority were able to bring their idols into the church by changing Semiramis¹¹⁰ and Tammuz¹¹¹ into Mary and the baby Jesus. The halos around their heads symbolized sun worship.¹¹² It has even been suggested that Mary replaced the Greek goddess *Maia*, who, as previously stated, was the inspiration for the month of May.¹¹³

In his book, *The Rise of Christianity*, W.H.C. Frend, Emeritus Professor of Ecclesiastical History, wrote that by the mid-fifth century the "Virgin and the saints had replaced the gods as patrons of cities." Pope Leo I (440-61) even claimed that St. Peter and St. Paul had "replaced Romulus and Remus as the city's protecting patrons."¹¹⁴

The Bible talks about the abomination of sun worship in Deuteronomy 4:19, and 17:3, 2 Kings 23:11, and in Ezekiel 8:16-18.

In 325, Constantine set up the Council of Nicaea, and presided over it as the *Summus Pontifex* (which is the official title of the Pope), considering himself to be the head of the church, even though the Bishop of Rome (later to be known as the Pope, which was Italian for "father"), was the recognized head.¹¹⁵ To the pagans, he was the *Pontifex Maximus*; to the deceived

¹⁰⁴ Marrs, Texe. *Dark Secrets of the New Age: Satan's Plan for a One World Religion*. Wheaton, IL: Good News Publishers, Crossway Books, 1987, pgs. 26-27.

¹⁰⁵ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 118.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 68.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 37.

¹⁰⁸ Marrs, Texe. *Dark Secrets of the New Age: Satan's Plan for a One World Religion*. Wheaton, IL: Good News Publishers, Crossway Books, 1987, pgs. 26-27.

¹⁰⁹ Lloyd, James. *Beyond Babylon: The Last Week of the World*. Jacksonville, OR: Christian Media, 1995, pg. 17.

¹¹⁰ Chick, Jack T. *Angel of Light* (The Crusaders, Volume 9). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1978, pg. 27.

¹¹¹ Robertson, R. R. "Come Out Of Her My People." *The Overcomer*. (R. W. Stair).

¹¹² Chick, Jack T. *Sabotage?* (The Crusaders, Volume 11). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1979, pg. 23.

¹¹³ Hunt, Dave. *A Woman Rides the Beast: The Roman Catholic Church and the Last Days*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1994, pg. 441.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 95.

¹¹⁵ Chick, Jack T. *Sabotage?* (The Crusaders, Volume 11). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1979, pg. 20.

Christians, he was known as the "Bishop of Bishops"; however, Constantine referred to himself as the *Vicarius Christi* ("Vicar of Christ"). The Greek *anti* is translated in Latin as *vicarius*, so this title, quite literally, meant "anti-christ."¹¹⁶

In 303, emperor Diocletian destroyed all of the Christian writings he could find around Rome. So, in 331, when Constantine commissioned a Bible to be used by the Church, the lack of authentic manuscripts made it real easy for them to alter the Scriptures to fit the point of view they wanted to convey.¹¹⁷

Also, as the early Christian church began to spread the teachings of Jesus as part of the Great Commission, its leaders fell prey to a Satanic campaign whose intention was to stop the movement, and to prevent the true word of God from reaching people all over the world.

According to *The Bloody Theater (or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians)* by Thieleman J. van Braght (Herald Press: Scottsdale, PA 1950): Stephen, who was a deacon in the first Christian Church in Jerusalem, was stoned to death in AD 29; James, the son of Zebedee, was beheaded in Jerusalem in 45; Philip was tied to a pillar at Phrygia in 54, and stoned; James, the son of Alpheus, was dragged from the temple, stoned, and beaten to death with a club in 63; in 64, Mark (author of the Gospel bearing his name) was seized by a group of pagan priests and worshippers, who tied a rope around his neck, and dragged him through the streets of Alexandria till he died; Paul (Saul of Tarsus) was persecuted, then beheaded in Rome in 69; Simon Peter was crucified upside-down in Rome in 69; Andrew was tied to a cross, and left there three days till he died; Bartholomew was severely beaten in Armenia, then beheaded in 70; at Calaminia in 70, Thomas was thrown into a furnace, then speared to death; in 70 at Nad-davar, Matthew was nailed to the ground, then beheaded; Simon, the Canaanite, was crucified in Syria in 70; in 70, Judas Thaddeus was beaten to death with sticks; in 70, Matthias (who replaced Judas Iscariot as an apostle after he committed suicide) was tied to a cross, stoned, and then beheaded; Luke (another writer of the Gospels) was hung from an olive tree in Greece in 93; and in 98, Timothy was stoned to death by idol worshippers.¹¹⁸

John, the brother of James, the last of the disciples, was exiled to a penal colony on the island of Patmos in 97. He was instrumental in preserving the holy writings by informing Christians which of the manuscripts were genuine.¹¹⁹ These manuscripts were then kept hidden in the cellars of the great monasteries by such Christian and semi-Christian sects like the Waldenses, Montanists, Bogomiles, Donatists, Anabaptists, Albigensians,¹²⁰ Cathari, Patori, and Lollards. These original manuscripts were guarded with their lives in order to insure the survival of the true word of God.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Hunt, Dave. *A Woman Rides the Beast: The Roman Catholic Church and the Last Days*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1994, pgs. 45-46.

¹¹⁷ Rivera, David Allen. *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order*. Oakland, CA: InteliBooks Publishers, 2004, pg. 391.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 389.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 390.

¹²⁰ Chick, Jack T. *Sabotage?* (The Crusaders, Volume 11). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1979, pg. 24.

¹²¹ Rivera, David Allen. *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order*. Oakland, CA: InteliBooks Publishers, 2004, pg. 390.

The task of producing 50 new Bibles for the Church fell to Eusebius, a church historian who had become Constantine's confidant and chief religious advisor. He studied at Origen's School of Religion and Philosophy in Alexandria, which had become the home of many gnostic scholars. He wasn't a true Christian, and believed Jesus to be a lesser god. After reading the original manuscripts from Antioch, which were not believed to be the word of God, his translation altered them to eliminate anything that challenged Church doctrine. It was this translation that formed the basis for the Latin Vulgate Bible, written by Jerome (382-404), that became the official Bible for all Roman Catholics.¹²² It wasn't until the King James Bible was released in 1611 that the true word of God was readily accessible. They used the Hebraic Massoretic text of the Jews, as the source for the Old Testament, rather than the Greek Septuagint; and they used the uncorrupted Antioch manuscripts for the New Testament.¹²³ Standing the test of time, even in the light of archaeological discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, it continues to be the most widely used text of the Holy Scriptures.

Hopefully, I have been able to convey the true nature of Constantine, and how he influenced the origin of the Roman Catholic Church. This background information was necessary in order to understand my interpretation regarding Sunday. Again, bear with me, because I want you to see the full picture.

THE FACTS ABOUT SUNDAY

Sunday, as you are well aware, is the traditional day of worship for Christians. In the January, 1988 edition of his ministry's publication *The Evangelist* (page 11), Rev. Jimmy Swaggart gives a lengthy list on why Christians should worship on Sunday. His major points are that the Sabbath law of Moses was abolished (Colossians 2:14-17); Jesus didn't recognize nor does the New Testament command any particular day to be observed, and Christians are free to choose their own day of rest (Romans 14:5, 6; Galatians 4:9-11; Acts 15:1-29); the New Testament doesn't mention any Christian gatherings on the Sabbath, yet speaks of meeting on the first day of the week or the "Lord's Day" (Acts 20:6-12; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2); and Jesus rose from grave on Sunday.

The matter of Sunday worship is one of the most divisive subjects in religion. The point of contention is the commandment in Exodus 20:8 which says: "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy." The way in which it was given leads us to believe that it was a time already mandated as special, yet Adam was never told to observe the day, there was nothing recorded anywhere in the Scripture until it was given as part of the Mosaic law.¹²⁴ Just as the rainbow sealed the covenant with Noah, and the ritual of circumcision was representative of the covenant with Abraham, the Sabbath sealed the covenant with Moses, and it is argued, that it only pertained to the Jews.¹²⁵

¹²² Ibid., pg. 392.

¹²³ Chick, Jack T. *Sabotage?* (The Crusaders, Volume 11). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1979, pg. 28.

¹²⁴ Tardo, Russell K. *Sunday Facts & Sabbath Fiction: 25 Reasons Why the Christian Church Worships on Sunday*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1991, pg. 38.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pg. 31.

Peter said that the Gentiles were not to be controlled by the Jewish law (Acts 15:7-11)¹²⁶ and Paul criticized the church at Galatia for keeping the Sabbath (Galations 4:10).¹²⁷ The accusation was even made that Jesus didn't honor the Sabbath (John 5:18).¹²⁸ Of the Ten Commandments, only nine are mentioned in the New Testament. Except for two passages which discourages its observance, the only one not mentioned, concerns the Sabbath.¹²⁹ It is theorized that this is the case because the Sabbath is perceived as being strictly ceremonial.¹³⁰ Leviticus 23:3 refers to the day as a "holy convocation"— a term also used in the next verse to describe the various feast days.¹³¹ It has also been said that if the sunset-to-sunset Sabbath is to be pertinent today, then the strict stipulations regarding it should likewise be enforced, as well as the punishment for not observing it— which was death.¹³²

It is really amusing to see all the posturing in regard to the Mosaic Law. Who is responsible for deciding which of the laws are to be scrapped because they are outdated. Except for those which are *mala en se*, Latin for "bad in and of itself," laws like those having to do with the Sabbath and diet restrictions have been ignored, because they are not convenient. Yet, tithing, another divisive issue, is strongly urged, without regard to the Biblical guidelines for its true purpose.

Probably the most convincing argument for the preference of observing Sunday, the first day of the week, instead of Saturday, is the fact that the resurrection of Jesus occurred on Sunday (Mark 16:9, Luke 24:1, John 20:1),¹³³ and the disciples had gathered in Trois to commemorate the day (Acts 20:7).¹³⁴ It has been an accepted tradition that Pentecost, the event that initiated the establishment of the Church, occurred on Sunday (Leviticus 23:16, Acts 2:1).¹³⁵ Various historical records concerning the early Church, mention Sunday as the day of choice to worship, referring to it as the Lord's Day, in remembrance of the resurrection.¹³⁶ It appears that Ignatius (30 - 107), who wrote the noncanonical book *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians*

¹²⁶ Ibid., pg. 22.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pg. 99.

¹²⁸ Ibid., pg. 25.

¹²⁹ Ibid., pgs. 50-51.

¹³⁰ Ibid., pg. 67.

¹³¹ Ibid., pg. 69.

¹³² Ibid., pg. 73.

¹³³ Ibid., pg. 13.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pg. 15.

¹³⁵ Jeffrey, Grant R. *Apocalypse: The Coming Judgment of the Nations*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1994, pg. 48.

¹³⁶ Tardo, Russell K. *Sunday Facts & Sabbath Fiction: 25 Reasons Why the Christian Church Worships on Sunday*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1991, pgs. 81-85.

about 101, was one of the first to refer to Sunday as the Lord's Day, however, the early Church as a whole didn't adopt that term until after the second century.¹³⁷

You know it's funny, but five people can read a particular passage of Scripture and come up with five different interpretations. Whatever interpretation is adopted by the majority is usually the one that becomes the accepted view. But is it the right view? Every argument for Sunday worship can be countered with a Biblical opinion that indicates that the Sabbath should still be observed.

The Law had always existed. And though it is referred to as Moses' Law, it is actually God's Law. The Ten Commandments, the keystone of many laws, was simply an organized codification which became a covenant between God and the children of Israel (Exodus 31:17).¹³⁸ Though there are four divisions— Moral Law, Civil Law, Ceremonial Law, and Dietary Law— and the sum of their parts, is that it is still the law.¹³⁹ The Sabbath law was not a ceremonial law— it was a moral law, and that is why it was written in stone, rather than in the book of laws.¹⁴⁰ The Sabbath was not just made for the Jews, because it was observed before their emergence as a race. The word Hebrew doesn't appear till Genesis 14:13 with the story of Abraham, and the children of Judah (Abraham's great-grandson), are considered to be the first Jews. The first Sabbath was when God rested on the seventh day after completing his renovation of the earth.

When comparing the Creation passage of Genesis 2:1-3 to the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8-11, the Hebrew words for "blessed" and "hallowed" in Exodus are from the same root words used in Genesis for "blessed" and "sanctified." Both passages use the Hebrew term *yom hassbi'i* for "the seventh day," and the Hebrew word *sh* for "made." In addition, the Hebrew word *shabbat* (Sabbath) used in Exodus, comes from the root word *shbt* (*sabat*), which means "to cease from labor," which is used in Genesis. These connections point to the fact that the fourth commandment is a reflection of the Creation day of rest. It is a day to commemorate the creation of all living things by the almighty God, and therefore is a day to be observed by everyone— not just the Jews.¹⁴¹

The penalty for not observing the Sabbath was death, and it was one of the reasons that God allowed Israel and Judah to be exiled, because they didn't observe the Sabbath (Exodus 31:14).¹⁴²

The mandate to observe the Sabbath was not noted in Genesis, because this book does not deal with the law.¹⁴³ In fact, it must be pointed out that the obligation to observe the

¹³⁷ Jeffrey, Grant R. *Apocalypse: The Coming Judgment of the Nations*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1994, pgs. 45-46.

¹³⁸ Goldstein, Clifford. *A Pause for Peace: What God's Gift of the Sabbath Can Mean to You*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1992, pg. 66.

¹³⁹ Stringfellow, Bill. *All in the Name of the Lord*. Clermont, FL: Concerned Publications, Inc., 1980, pg. 81.

¹⁴⁰ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 191.

¹⁴¹ Goldstein, Clifford. *A Pause for Peace: What God's Gift of the Sabbath Can Mean to You*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1992, pgs. 51-53.

¹⁴² Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 192.

¹⁴³ Goldstein, Clifford. *A Pause for Peace: What God's Gift of the Sabbath Can Mean to You*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1992, pg. 61.

Sabbath was mentioned before the Law of Moses. Two weeks before receiving the word of the Law, when the children of Israel were being miraculously fed by manna sent from Heaven, they were instructed to gather twice as much on the sixth day, because the Lord would not provide any on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:25-30).¹⁴⁴

In Mark 2:27-28, we find out how Jesus felt about the Sabbath: "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." This comment was in response to the Pharisees criticism of the disciples for pulling off some ears of corn, because they were hungry. Invoking the seventh day of the Creation, Jesus was telling them that the day was given to man (and not just the Jews) to rest, but not as a restriction to hamper them. He was also saying that he believed in observing the Sabbath.¹⁴⁵ Just as he said that He didn't come "to destroy the law" (Matthew 5:17), it is clear that He did indeed observe the Sabbath (Luke 4:16).¹⁴⁶

Now let's look at the verse that is most used to prove Sunday worship. That is Acts 20:7, which says: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." According to the Bible, a day is measured from sunset-to-sunset. Genesis 1:5 says: "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." Evening is mentioned first, because the world emerged out of darkness (Genesis 1:2). Thus, the first day actually begins at sunset on Saturday, and ends at sunset on Sunday (see also Exodus 12:18, Leviticus 22:6-7, Judges 14:18, Nehemiah 13:19).¹⁴⁷ The next verse also refers to lights in the upper room, which certainly indicates evening, and means that the disciples actually met on Saturday, and not Sunday.¹⁴⁸

If you'll take notice, in the King James Version of the Bible, the word "day" is in italics. That is because it is not found in the original Greek manuscripts. The word was used only as a reference help by the English translators. In the *Interlinear Bible* by J.P. Green, which is translated directly from the original Greek, the passage reads "on and the one of the sabbaths."¹⁴⁹ Also, the word "week" is the plural of the Greek (Strong's # 4521)¹⁵⁰ in and means "Sabbath."

As for this meeting being a gathering to celebrate communion, there is no mention of the cup containing the "fruit of the vine." The "breaking of the bread" does not necessarily refer to

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pg. 55.

¹⁴⁵ Armstrong, Herbert W. "Why Churches Observe Sunday." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November/December 1984: pg. 14.

¹⁴⁶ Goldstein, Clifford. *A Pause for Peace: What God's Gift of the Sabbath Can Mean to You*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1992, pgs. 79, 83.

¹⁴⁷ Stringfellow, Bill. *All in the Name of the Lord*. Clermont, FL: Concerned Publications, Inc., 1980, pgs. 49-50.

¹⁴⁸ YNCA. *Ministry: Does Acts 20:7 Teach Sunday Worship?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1992, pg. 1.

¹⁴⁹ Green, Sr., Jay P. *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985, pg. 385.

¹⁵⁰ Strong, James. "A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament." *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990, pg. 64.

the communion observance (Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22, Luke 22:19), as evidenced by its mention in Acts 2:42, 46 and Acts 27:35, which merely illustrates the process of tearing off of a hunk of bread from the loaf, and dipping it in a sauce or broth. So, this verse is actually referring to a farewell dinner for Paul.¹⁵¹

With the explanation of what actually constituted a day, we can better analyze another major reason for the Sunday argument. According to Matthew 12:38-40, Jesus said He would be buried in the earth for three days and three nights, just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for the same period. As such, we can surmise that the Crucifixion occurred on Wednesday afternoon, and he was buried before sundown. So, Jesus was in the tomb on Wednesday night, Thursday night, and Friday night; as well as the days of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.¹⁵² Matthew 28:1 says: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre (see also Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; 1 Corinthians 16:2). The two women had waited until the Sabbath was over to come to the grave— which would have been after sundown on Saturday. The word "end" comes from the Greek word *opse* which means "even" or later in the day. This would seem to indicate that it couldn't be referring to early morning, as that would have been the Greek word *epiphosko*, which means to "draw on."¹⁵³ John 20:1 even mentions that it was dark, and that the stone had already been rolled away— reiterating the fact that he had already risen.¹⁵⁴

Much has been said about Paul's teaching concerning the Law of Moses. In Galatians 3:13 he said that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law..." About 63, after receiving a great revelation, Paul began speaking more in-depth concerning the theological position of Christians in relationship to their responsibilities to God. These teachings are found in Ephesians and Colossians, and they have been interpreted to indicate that the life of Jesus was a substitute for the lives of all Christians. Since He kept the law, and the commandments, died and was resurrected to sit at the Father's right hand, then, through reciprocity, Christians have advanced to a higher stage of theological development which eliminates the need for rituals, because they are now part of the body of Christ.¹⁵⁵

This assessment may be unfounded based on a closer scrutiny of the Scriptures. For example, Galatians 4:10 and its reference to the observance of "days, and months, and times, and years" have been interpreted to criticize the observance of the Sabbath, as well as the feast days. When, in fact, if you read it in the context of verse 8, actually refers to the observance of pagan holidays. Nowhere in the Bible does it use this term to describe any of the holy days.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pgs. 2-3.

¹⁵² Armstrong, Herbert W. "Why Churches Observe Sunday." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November/December 1984: pg. 14.

¹⁵³ YNCA. *Ministry: Is the First Day of the Week Holy?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 1.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pg. 3.

¹⁵⁵ Martin, Ernest L. *101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1993, pgs. 106-108.

¹⁵⁶ YNCA. *Ministry: Is the First Day of the Week Holy?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pgs. 5-6.

Paul says in Acts 24:14– "...that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." This doesn't sound like someone discouraging the observance of Mosaic Law.¹⁵⁷ He is quoted as saying in 1 Corinthians 11:1– "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Since I have shown that Jesus did observe the Sabbath, Paul is indicating here that he also observes the Sabbath, and he is telling other Christians to do so.¹⁵⁸ There are Scriptural references that prove that the Sabbath was not only being observed by the early Church, but by Paul himself (Acts 13:42, 44; Acts 17:2; Acts 18:4).¹⁵⁹ Plus, Acts 20:6 indicates that Paul also observed the feast days.¹⁶⁰

History shows that during the first century, the Sabbath was widely observed. In the writings of Flavius Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, he talked about the Sabbath being observed in the Roman empire: "...the multitude of mankind itself have had a great inclination of a long time to follow our religious observances; for there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come..."¹⁶¹

Another first century historian, Philo, in Alexandria (Egypt), recorded his observations: "And in short, it is very nearly an universal rule, from the rising of the sun to its extreme west, that every country, and nation, and city, is alienated from the laws and customs of foreign nations and states, and that they think that they are adding to the estimation in which they hold their own laws by despising those in use among other nations. But this is not the case with our laws which Moses has given to us; for they lead after them the inhabitants of continents, and islands, the eastern nations and the western, Europe and Asia, in short, the whole inhabitable world from one extremity to the other. For what man is there who does not honour that sacred seventh day, granting in consequence a relief and relaxation from labour, for himself and for all those who are near to him, and that not to free men only, but also to slaves, and even to the beast of burden."¹⁶²

Other historical references bear witness to the fact that the Sabbath was recognized by the early Christians. Athanasius wrote in 340: "We assemble on Saturday, not that we are infected with Judaism, but only to worship Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath."¹⁶³

Socrates wrote in 412: "Touching the Communion, there are sundry observations; for almost all the churches throughout the world do celebrate and receive the holy mysteries every

¹⁵⁷ YNCA. *Biblical Holy Days: Yesterday - Today - Forever*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1991, pg. 56.

¹⁵⁸ Armstrong, Herbert W. "Why Churches Observe Sunday." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November/December 1984: pg. 14.

¹⁵⁹ YNCA. *Ministry: Is the First Day of the Week Holy?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 8.

¹⁶⁰ YNCA. *Ministry: Does Acts 20:7 Teach Sunday Worship?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1992, pg. 2.

¹⁶¹ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 163.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pgs. 163-164.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pg. 179.

Sabbath. Yet the Egyptians and adjoining Alexandria, together with the inhabitants of Thebes, of a tradition, do celebrate the Communion on Sunday, when the festival meeting throughout every week was come. I mean the Saturday, and the Sunday, upon which the Christians are wont to meet solemnly in the church."¹⁶⁴

The writings known as the "Apostolic Constitutions" make a reference to Sunday, but call for the observance of the Sabbath on Saturday.¹⁶⁵

I believe that about nullifies all of the arguments concerning Sunday being regarded as the Sabbath. Jesus never taught against the Sabbath, and in fact observed it. In his Olivet discourse in Matthew 24:20, when Jesus was talking about the events of the last days, He said to pray that the abomination of desolation wouldn't happen in the winter or on the Sabbath. So, He fully expected the Sabbath to still be observed at this time. The resurrection of Jesus did not occur on Sunday, it happened on Saturday. Paul did not teach against the Mosaic Law, but is on record as having observed the law in regard to the Sabbath and the feast days. The early Church likewise observed the Sabbath when they gathered. There is nothing to indicate that Sunday was ever adopted as the day of the Lord by the early Christians.

The commandment to adhere to a day of rest certainly would have made life a lot easier. In this era of 24-hour lifestyles, drive-through convenience, and service while-you-wait, what would happen if there was a day when everything just shut down. One day, out of every week, to rest your mind and body. I wonder what that would do to alleviate mental stress in the world. I think God knew what He was doing. He gave us a day to "be still, and know that I am God..." (Psalms 46:10), to think on Him, and to give thanks for His many blessings. The Jews did this by refraining from work and business, and by gathering at the synagogues for reading and teaching from the Holy Scriptures.

If the Sabbath were to be observed today, it wouldn't necessitate the elimination of Sunday worship in order to remain Scriptural. There are no stipulations in regard to any religious activities on Saturday— only that it is a day of rest.¹⁶⁶ And just as you worship every day of the week during a revival, you can observe the Sabbath, by resting; and you can still worship God on Sunday, or any other day of the week.

However, the very origin of the word Sunday denotes the reason why it should not be accepted as the day of worship over the Biblically-mandated Sabbath. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *sunnandaeg* or the "sun's day," and stems from ancient sun worship which took place on that day.¹⁶⁷

As I have shown, Constantine was not a true Christian because he actually worshipped the sun god. In 321, he decreed Sunday to be a Roman holiday: "Let all the judges and town people; and the occupation of all trades, rest on the venerable day of the sun; but let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty attend to the business of agriculture because it happens that no other day is so fit for sowing corn and planting vines; lest the critical moment being let slip, men should lose the commodities granted by heaven."¹⁶⁸ It was identified as the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pgs. 179-180.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pg. 180.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., pg. 191.

¹⁶⁷ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 681.

¹⁶⁸ Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *The Messianic Legacy*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1986, pg. 42.

"day of the sun," not the "day of the Lord," never mentioning the resurrection of Jesus— which should prove the intent.

When it comes to sun worship, it is important to note the background for its underlying basis. When Satan was an angel, he was known as Lucifer, which in Latin, means "light-bearer."¹⁶⁹ But now, he is called the "prince of this world" (John 12:31) and "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and he is behind every false religion and doctrine which seeks to deceive men from the truth that is contained in God's word. Sun worship is actually the worship of Satan.

In 363, the Roman Catholic-sponsored Council of Laodicea decreed: "Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord's day." So, in an expression of anti-Semitism, a move was made to distance the Church from God's chosen people, who observed the Mosaic Law. Thus, the official day of worship was changed from Saturday to Sunday. Those Christians keeping the Sabbath were arrested, and sometimes put to death.¹⁷⁰

On page 168 of *Church History*, Dr. Neander wrote: "Opposition to Judaism introduced the particular festival of Sunday, very early, indeed, into the place of the Sabbath. The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century, a false application of this kind had begun to take place: for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday a sin." According to the *Theological Dictionary* by Rev. Charles Buck, a Methodist minister, he wrote: "Sabbath in the Hebrew language signifies rest, and is the seventh day of the week...and it must be confessed that there is no law in the New Testament concerning the first day."¹⁷¹

Let's look at the Catholic view on the subject. On page 89 of the book *Faith of Our Father* by Cardinal Gibbons it says: "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctified."¹⁷² In his monthly newspaper, Rev. R.G. Stair published a copy of a letter from the *Catholic Extension Magazine* that was an official response to a May, 1934 letter written to the Pope concerning the change to Sunday worship by the Church. The Editor, Peter R. Tamar, wrote:

"That Protestants, who accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and religion, should by all means go back to the observance of the Sabbath. The fact that they do not, but on the contrary observe the Sunday, stultifies them in the eyes of every thinking man...We also say that of all Protestants, the Seventh-Day Adventists are the only group that reason correctly and are consistent with their teachings. It is always somewhat laughable to see the Protestant Churches, in pulpit and legislature, demand the observance of Sunday, of which there is nothing in the Bible."¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Wheaton, D.H. "Lucifer." *New Bible Dictionary*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1982, pg. 713.

¹⁷⁰ Armstrong, Herbert W. "Why Churches Observe Sunday." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November/December 1984: pg. 13.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 13.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pg. 13.

¹⁷³ Robertson, R. R. "Come Out Of Her My People." *The Overcomer*. (R. W. Stair).

Okay, okay, I know I'm beating the proverbial dead horse, but I want no doubts in your mind in regard to the pagan origin of Sunday.

THE PAGAN INFLUENCES ON CHRISTIANITY

Up to this point, I have outlined the pagan origins for half of the months, and all seven days of the week, so you should have a grasp on the seriousness of my contention, and why I felt it was necessary to write this book. But before I finish up this chapter, I want to deal with one more thing that will further illustrate the extent to which paganism has become entrenched within the Church.

I have already dealt with the Roman Catholic Church in what may seem to be an unfavorable manner. But, as a researcher, I have to look at history as it actually happened, and not at the altered form in which it is found in biased presentations. I am not engaging in Catholic bashing, I am merely presenting the facts. Unfortunately the facts do not paint a pretty picture. Is it any wonder that the origin and history of the Roman Catholic Church make it the likely candidate for the "great whore" of the book of Revelation. Rome is referred to as the "city of the seven hills"¹⁷⁴ and it is the only city in the world that possesses these geographical attributes. In Revelation 17:9, the woman identified as "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots," who represents the one-world single-religion super church, sits on "seven mountains." Coincidence? I think not.

One particular piece of Catholic doctrine uses an untruth to mask an incredible deception that your average Catholic just doesn't know. At the Council of Trent in 1545, that was called by Pope Paul III (1534-1549) to fight the Reformation, one of the two great pillars of doctrine was established, and that was the apostolic succession of Rome. They claimed that St. Peter was the first Bishop (or Pope) of the Church, and each Pope is said to be his successor. However, there is no evidence that he had ever been to Rome, as he had been dispatched to preach to the Jews in Jerusalem, while Paul was sent to preach to the Gentiles. Peter never claimed that distinction. Plus, Peter was married (Mark 1:30). It was even believed that the Vatican had his bones, until a report surfaced that they may have been found in Jerusalem.¹⁷⁵

The rationale for this was that Jesus (Matthew 16:18) said to Peter (originally known as Simeon or Simon): "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (from the Latin *petros*, a large movable stone), and upon this rock (from the Latin *petra*, a huge unmoveable rock, or Jesus) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The fact that Jesus was referring to himself as the rock can be verified by 1 Corinthians which refers to Jesus as the "foundation."¹⁷⁶

While Biblical history doesn't, secular history does account for the presence of a "Simon Peter" in Rome during the first century. Is this a contradiction of the facts. No it's not. Let me explain. After the establishment of the early Church, a man known as Simon Magus, a

¹⁷⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 15, pg. 1071.

¹⁷⁵ Chick, Jack T. *Four Horsemen* ("Alberto" Part 5) (The Crusaders, Volume 16). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1985, pgs. 19-20.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pgs. 19-20.

Samaritan¹⁷⁷ well-schooled in the Babylonian mysteries, gained prominence. The Samaritans were known to have lived between Judaea and Galilee, and claimed to have descended from the Ten Tribes of Israel who had been captured by the Assyrians around 8 - 7 BC. They returned to the Palestine area, where they settled around Samaria and Shechem. The Bible contradicts that lineage by saying that they were a group of people consisting of five Babylonian tribes, who worshipped five different gods, and combined their religious worship with Old Testament teaching.¹⁷⁸

According to Acts 8:9-11, Simon "used sorcery, and bewitched the people...giving out that himself was some great one." Many people "from the least to the greatest" were impressed with him, thinking him to be "the great power of God." He was, in fact, combining pagan rituals with the Mosaic Law. When the apostle Philip began to preach the gospel, and perform miracles in Samaria, Simon tried to buy his way into an apostleship, without repenting of his sins, but was rebuked. He ended up adopting some of the Christian teachings, interweaving it into a combination of Judaism, Samaritanism, and pagan teaching that became known as Simonianism.¹⁷⁹

The *Dictionary of Christian Biography* (Volume 4, page 682) said: "...when Justin Martyr wrote his 'Apology' (154), the sect of the Simonians appears to have been formidable, for he speaks four times of their founder, Simon...and tells that he came to Rome in the days of Claudius Caesar (45), and made such an impression by his magical powers, that he was honored as a god, a statue being erected to him on the Tiber, between the two bridges, bearing the inscription *Simoni deo Sancto* (or the 'holy god Simon')." ¹⁸⁰By the third century, the followers of Simon Magus, simply began calling themselves Christians,¹⁸¹ and it was this type of Christianity that was usurped by the Constantinian Church.¹⁸²

The pagan gods of the Babylonians and the Greeks were identified by the name Peter (or *Patres*). The Romans referred to *Neptune*, *Saturn*, *Mars*, and *Liber*, as "gods" of the Peter-rank. Going as far back as Nimrod, Deuteronomy 23:4 says that Balaam of *Pethor* was a sacred high place where there was an oracle temple. "Balaam" was the chief *Pantora* (or Peter) and successor to Nimrod, and *Pethor* meant "place of interpretation." The Hebrew lexicon indicates that the consonantal word P-T- R or Peter, means "to interpret." Thus, Simon Magus, who had become the interpreter of the Babylonian mysteries, became known as Simon Peter. The *Vaticano Illustrato II* even says that the Babylonian statue of *Jupiter* was renamed "Peter."¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ Martin, Ernest L. *The People That History Forgot*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1993, pg. 29.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pgs. 33-34.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 61.

¹⁸⁰ Rivera, David Allen. *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order*. Oakland, CA: InteliBooks Publishers, 2004, pg. 389.

¹⁸¹ Martin, Ernest L. *The People That History Forgot*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1993, pg. 39.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, pg. 61.

¹⁸³ Rivera, David Allen. *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order*. Oakland, CA: InteliBooks Publishers, 2004, pgs. 391-392.

This conversion of idols to saints and other religious figures came when Emperor Theodosius (378-398) made Christianity the official state religion. This edict forced many heathens, idol worshippers and pagans into the Church, and guaranteed the dilution of the true gospel of Christ.¹⁸⁴

It is at this time that we see the pagan influence affecting the representation of Jesus. The first pictures of Christ, done in the second and third centuries, were found on the walls of the catacombs below Rome, where the early Christians were forced to worship in secrecy. It is believed that they were accurate depictions, having been based on descriptions by the apostles. One such picture "is a painting of the resurrection of Lazarus in which Christ is shown youthful and beardless with short hair and large eyes...Although it is now only barely recognizable, this picture is of great interest since it is the oldest representation of Jesus that is preserved anywhere." Another similar portrayal was found during a 1931-32 excavation by Yale University at a small Christian church at Dura-Europos in the Syrian Desert. Dating back to the third century, he is shown as being "young and without a beard and wearing the ordinary costume of the time."¹⁸⁵

Augustine, a fourth century Catholic leader, said that "in his time, (there were) innumerable pictures of Christ, which were all different." Initially, the Greek god *Orpheus* (a master musician) became Christ: "Orpheus becomes a prophecy of him...and the Good Shepherd bears the lamb on his shoulders precisely as *Hermes* (another pagan god) had been wont to do, but with a new tenderness. The portrait of Christ is but seldom found, but when we do find a presentation of Him...He is represented as young and bearded, with a smile on his lips, splendid as Apollo." Roderic Dunkerly writes in his book *Beyond the Gospels* that it wasn't "until the fourth century that the familiar bearded face appears."¹⁸⁶

In light of Exodus 20:4 which forbids making graven images, and Numbers 33:52 which commanded Israel to destroy the pictures, molten images and high places of their enemies, most Church officials did not allow any pictures of Jesus in the sanctuary. However, that changed in 691, when a meeting of Catholic Church leaders in Constantinople officially approved the use of images and pictures in their churches. All opposition to this ruling ended after another Council in 842.¹⁸⁷

The Egyptian god *Serapis* had been worshipped in Egypt for 600 years by the time the movement had spread to Rome, where he was compared to the supreme Greek god *Zeus* and *Asclepius*, the Greek god of medicine (who was the son of *Apollo*, and whose staff with a snake coiled around it became the symbol of the medical profession).¹⁸⁸ The people wanted Jesus to look like their pagan gods, because their long hair and beards symbolically represented their

¹⁸⁴ Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook: An Abbreviated Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, Regency Reference Library, 1986, pg. 760.

¹⁸⁵ Martin, Ernest. "Is It Wrong to Have Pictures of Christ?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), reprint: 1959, pgs. 2-3.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 3.

¹⁸⁷ YNCA. *Ministry: Is the First Day of the Week Holy?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 2.

¹⁸⁸ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 1, pg. 572.

ancient wisdom and godliness.¹⁸⁹ So, they adopted the image of *Serapis*, who actually represented *Zeus*, and began calling him Jesus, yet, they were still worshipping *Zeus*.¹⁹⁰

Most people have some sort of picture of Jesus in their home, and I am no exception. Probably the most well known, is the portrait by Warner Sallman. But despite religious tradition, the simple fact of the matter is, Jesus did not have long hair. The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:14 that it is a shame for a man to have long hair. The Jewish historian Josephus described the Jews as having "close-cropped hair."¹⁹¹ Ezekiel 44:20 stipulates that the Levite priests were not to "suffer their locks to grow long." This is echoed by the Jewish *Talmud* which commanded that all priests were to have their hair cut every 30 days (*Ta'anith* 17a), in a style specified as a "Julian" (or "Caesar") cut (Sanhedrin 22b). Also, if you look at any busts and statues of any Greek and Roman dignitaries from that period, they all have short hair.¹⁹²

By proving that Jesus didn't have long hair, the point is further made of how much paganism has affected our society. It is unfortunate that this poison, for the most part, has been spread by the Catholic Church. There seems to be no doubt that this institution will indeed be the world church of the last days. Pope Leo X (1513-21) proclaimed that all human beings must be subject to the Roman Pontiff for salvation and said: "It has served us well, this myth of Christ." Pope Plus X (1903-14), when he was Archbishop of Venice said: "The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the veil of flesh." And in 1928, Pope Plus XI (1922-39) said that the Roman Catholic Church was the only Church of Christ.¹⁹³ Certainly, as most evangelicals and charismatics know, these are not Biblical statements, and they are presented here as an omen of things to come.

The Roman Catholic Church fervently attempted to make it appear as though they were eradicating pagan worship, and festivals; and one way to do that, was to accept the local date, but to change its meaning. Thus, the observance would be toned down and Christianized— but in reality, they would not be giving up their superstitions and traditions. Instead, the intent was to "blend and incorporate with the new faith."¹⁹⁴ Therein lies the theme behind the rest of this book, which will deal with the origin and background of the major holidays we now celebrate, and how the intent that instigated them was driven by pagan loyalty and fanaticism.

And today, they are driven by profit and greed. Patrick Polk, the archivist for the Department of Folklore and Mythology at the University of California at Los Angeles, said: "All

¹⁸⁹ Martin, Ernest. "Is It Wrong to Have Pictures of Christ?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), reprint: 1959, pg. 3.

¹⁹⁰ Martin, Ernest L. *101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1993, pgs. 166-167.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 168.

¹⁹² Eisenberg, Harry. "Did Jesus Wear Long Hair?" *Tomorrow's World* (Worldwide Church of God), June 1971: pgs. 22 - 23.

¹⁹³ Rivera, David Allen. *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order*. Oakland, CA: InteliBooks Publishers, 2004, pgs. 395-396.

¹⁹⁴ "Halloween: Where Did It Come From." Worldwide Church of God reprint, 1969, pg. 2.

those ancient traditions became a marketing tool. And the people looking to make money off the holidays were never interested in the most important thing– the religious part."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Rourke, Mary. "Holiday Traditions Lost to Commercialism." *The Patriot-News* (Harrisburg, PA), Saturday, April 6, 1996: pg. R10 (Religious Section).

CHAPTER TWO

VALENTINE'S DAY: IS IT A CHRISTIAN OBSERVANCE OR A PAGAN CELEBRATION?

Valentine's Day is the day when you are supposed to express your love for that special person in your life, and it is one of the biggest days of the year for the giving of candy and flowers. Most husbands know that they better never forget this day, or they might as well not go home that night. It seems that the basis for this holiday is rooted with good intentions— or is it? When you look at its origins, you will find some disturbing things.

Valentine became a common name in ancient Rome because of the first man who was given that name. According to tradition, his name was *Lupercus*, and he became identified with the Greek god *Pan*, the Arcadian god of light, who, by extension, was on the same level as the Phoenician sun god *Baal*. As we have seen, *Baal* is a representation of Nimrod, who the Bible (Genesis 10:9) calls "the mighty hunter." There seems to be some historical evidence that Nimrod traveled to the area now known as Italy to hunt wolves. The Apennine Mountains had been known as the Mountains of *Nembrod* (or Nimrod). Thus, he was given the name of *Lupercus*, or "wolf-hunter."¹⁹⁶ By looking at the etymology of the word "valentine," we can see evidence of a possible connection to Nimrod. It comes from the Latin word *valentinus*, which comes from the root word *valens*, which means "to be strong, powerful, mighty."¹⁹⁷

Another connection to Nimrod can be found in the symbol of the heart. This symbol originated in Babylon, which had been established and ruled by Nimrod. In the Chaldean language, which was spoken there, the word for "heart," was *bal*, which because of the similarity to *bel* (found in archaeological excavations to indicate Nimrod), became a symbol for Nimrod.¹⁹⁸ As you know, the symbol of the heart is featured very prominently in the Valentine's Day celebration as a symbolic representation for love, but the original intention was as a symbolic representation of the worship of Nimrod, who was the forerunner of all pagan gods.

Most researchers report that Nimrod was born during the winter solstice. However, during the 21st century BC, it was believed that the solstice occurred on January 6th, and his mother/wife, Semiramis, ordered that his birthday be observed on January 6th. The Eastern Orthodox Churches still celebrate Christmas on this day. It was an ancient custom for the mother of a male child to attend a purification ritual in the temple forty days after the day of birth. So, forty days after January 6th, his original birth date, was February 15th, and this was the day that Semiramis was "purified" and first appeared in public with her son.

The month of February gets its name from the word *februa*, which was the name of the thongs used by priests during *Lupercalia* (from *Lupercus*), the Roman festival for purification, which occurred on February 15th. They were made from the skins of goats which had been sacrificed.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Hoeh, Herman L. "Valentine's Day: Pagan Practice or Christian Custom?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), February 1971: pg. 40.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 40.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 40.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pgs. 40-41.

It is also believed by some researchers that *Cupid* (which means "desire"), the Roman fertility god, who shoots symbolic arrows into people's hearts to ignite love and desire,²⁰⁰ is another representation of Nimrod. The belief for this stems from the various traditions in regard to Nimrod. When Nimrod was a young boy, his mother desired him, and in fact, ended up marrying him. And when he became older, he was lusted for, and desired by many women because of the reputation that had developed.²⁰¹ To the Greeks, he was known as *Eros*, the god of love.²⁰²

The ancient Roman Feast of *Lupercalia* was a pagan fertility celebration. The festival was marked with young men cavorting around the Palatine Hill in Rome, hitting women with goat-hide whips to bestow fertility. Also, women would write love notes, and put them in a large urn, and men would randomly pull them out, and court whoever's note they pulled, for a year.²⁰³ The couples paired, by the pulling of names, would give simple presents to each other.²⁰⁴ In keeping with the spirit of the festival, the coupling generally culminated with sex.²⁰⁵

As was the case with most pagan celebrations, the only way for the Roman Catholic Church to get rid of *Lupercalia*, was to create a smoke screen, and "Christianize" it. In 494, during the reign of Pope Gelasius I, the observance was moved to February 14th, and became known as the Feast of the Purification.²⁰⁶ Instead of having a random drawing for lovers, the names of saints were substituted. The person pulling the name was to pattern their life after that saint for the next year. The observance soon became identified with Saint Valentine.²⁰⁷

While there is no absolute proof, history and tradition has recorded the existence of three Saint Valentines. One, a Roman priest and physician; another, known as the Bishop of Interamna, or Terni, about 50 miles from Rome (whose remains were later taken to Terni); and less is known about the third.²⁰⁸ However, most historians seem to think that these accounts all refer to the same person, who was martyred in the last half of the third century, on February 15th, during the persecution of the Christians by Roman emperor Claudius II Gothicus,²⁰⁹ and

²⁰⁰ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 26.

²⁰¹ Hoeh, Herman L. "Valentine's Day: Pagan Practice or Christian Custom?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), February 1971: pg. 41.

²⁰² McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 26.

²⁰³ Cunningham, Dr. Lawrence. "St. Valentine and His Day: A Short History." *Bottom Line*.

²⁰⁴ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 121.

²⁰⁵ Hoeh, Herman L. "Valentine's Day: Pagan Practice or Christian Custom?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), February 1971: pg. 39.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 40.

²⁰⁷ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 121.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 120.

²⁰⁹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 10, pg. 336.

buried on the Flaminian Way.²¹⁰ It was reported that Pope Julius I had a basilica erected over his grave.²¹¹ In ancient Rome, what was originally known as the Flaminian Gate, became known as the Gate of Saint Valentine— named for a church in the area that had been dedicated to the Saint (which has been excavated by archaeologists).²¹² It was later renamed, and is now known as the Porta del Popolo, or the Gate of the People.²¹³ St. Valentine became known as the patron saint of lovers.²¹⁴

In light of the fact that there is no substantive proof for the actual existence of a Saint Valentine, that gives further credence to the connection of Nimrod to the origin of the day. Another explanation for the association of the name Valentine with romance, was the similarity with the Norman word *gelantin* (which meant "lover of women"), because the letter "g" was frequently pronounced as "v." Also, during the Middle Ages, this became known as a time for lovers, because it was believed that birds mated on February 14th.²¹⁵

As the religious significance of the day waned and it became secularized in other cultures. It became a day that people exchanged tokens of their love for each other. The tradition evolved where young people would write down the names of the opposite sex who they would like to be married to, which were then put in a bowl, then randomly drawn. The selections made could be changed the following year.²¹⁶ The custom developed into the first paper valentines, which were first used during the sixteenth century, and was the forerunner of the greeting card.²¹⁷ By the early nineteenth century, it had become a widespread custom to send anonymous valentine cards to someone you liked.²¹⁸ The practice of exchanging valentines is especially concentrated in elementary schools.

You can see, that in perpetuating what Valentine's Day represents— by keeping alive the traditions that surround it; you are not celebrating a Christian holiday by honoring a Saint, you are engaged in the observance of a pagan festival. Besides, the celebration of a day that is dedicated to a Saint is not even Scriptural, because through the study of the origin of the Roman Catholic Church, we can see its connection to the worship of idols and false gods.

²¹⁰ Cunningham, Dr. Lawrence. "St. Valentine and His Day: A Short History." *Bottom Line*.

²¹¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 10, pg. 336.

²¹² Cunningham, Dr. Lawrence. "St. Valentine and His Day: A Short History." *Bottom Line*.

²¹³ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 120.

²¹⁴ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 25.

²¹⁵ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pgs. 120-121.

²¹⁶ Dunkling, Leslie. *A Dictionary of Days: The Curious Stories Behind More Than 850 Named Days Celebrated in Literature and Real Life*. New York, NY: Facts on File Publications, Inc., 1988, pg. 107.

²¹⁷ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 10, pg. 336.

²¹⁸ Dunkling, Leslie. *A Dictionary of Days: The Curious Stories Behind More Than 850 Named Days Celebrated in Literature and Real Life*. New York, NY: Facts on File Publications, Inc., 1988, pg. 107.

Since the schools are the biggest purveyors of this holiday, you may feel that it is not possible to completely disregard this day, without make your child some kind of an outcast, because of their beliefs. We are talking about an age that some children may not know how to deal with something like that, because this is the age they are developing their social skills. So, I believe it is possible to work around the pagan aspects of the holiday, and have your children let their light shine. Your local Christian bookstore may have Valentine cards with Scriptural themes, so they become witnessing tools. If they don't, or you can't afford to buy any, then perhaps you can help them make cards that reflect a Biblical view. For example, you can make a card that says in the front, "Guess what! There's Someone who loves you a lot!" And inside, a paraphrased version of John 3:16– "God loved this world so much, that he sent his only son, so that whoever believes in him will not die, but will live forever."

CHAPTER THREE

EASTER: WHAT DO BUNNIES AND EGGS HAVE TO DO WITH JESUS?

RETHINKING EASTER

Easter is probably the holiest day of the year for Christians because it celebrates the day Jesus conquered death and arose from the grave in fulfillment of prophecy. But, is that what we're really honoring, as we get caught up in all the festivities? Not really. Since I am covering the subject in this book, it's obvious there is a lot of pagan influence associated with the observance of this day. So much so, that there is a couple Scriptures which are appropriate warnings for the deception that has taken place here. Isaiah 5:20 says: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness..." Paul, in 2 Corinthians 6:14 echoed the same thoughts when he said: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

When Jesus ate the Passover meal, which has come to be known as the "Last Supper," he said that it was to be done in remembrance of him. So, we were given a mandate to observe his death, but he said nothing about his resurrection. Neither was anything written by the apostles, that would give us any indication that we should celebrate his resurrection.²¹⁹

It wasn't until after the death of John, the last of the twelve apostles, that the Good Friday and Easter doctrine took hold.²²⁰ The Resurrection has been used to justify the celebration of a pagan holiday; and it was used by the Roman Catholic Church to turn Sunday, a pagan worship day, into the Lord's Day.²²¹ In an 1884 lecture, T. Enright said: "I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is the law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church."²²²

WHEN DID THESE THINGS ACTUALLY HAPPEN

When I was growing up, Good Friday was a school holiday, and being raised in a Christian home, I wondered how many of my classmates actually understood the significance of this day, or was it just a day that they didn't have to go to school. Also, I always thought, why

²¹⁹ YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 13.

²²⁰ Hoeh, Herman L. *The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday*. Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1968, pgs. 7-8.

²²¹ Ibid., pg. 14.

²²² YNCA. *He Arose!...But When?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1994, pg. 21.

was it called "Good," if Jesus was crucified that day, it couldn't have been a good day for Him. Good Friday is a mistranslation of *Gott Friday*, which is German for "God's Friday."²²³

Another thing. If Jesus was crucified on Friday, and rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, how do you get three days and three nights out of that period of time. There seemed to be a contradiction here. Yet, no one seemed to question it. Jesus himself said in Mark 8:31 (and John 2:19-21) that he would be killed, and that he would rise from the dead in three days. Matthew related that Jesus would be dead for three days and nights, just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for the same amount of time (Matthew 27:63). So, if he was crucified, and buried on Friday evening, three days would not transpire until Monday night.

First of all, to fully understand the concepts of time in this regard, you need to know that the Biblical day was calculated a little differently than ours today. Where our day begins at midnight, in the middle of the night; the Jewish day begins in the evening, running from sunset-to-sunset, as set forth in Genesis 1:5 which says: "And the evening and the morning were the first day." Other references that attest to this can be found in Leviticus 22:6-7, Leviticus 23:31-32, Judges 14:18, and Nehemiah 13:15-22.²²⁴

Let's look at the events which occurred during what is now called Holy Week:

Nisan 9 (Also referred to as the month of Abib, Thursday sunset to Friday sunset): Jesus traveled through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, so He could be in the city a full six days before His crucifixion. This would fulfill Leviticus 22:27, which said that the sacrificial lamb had to be separated from its parents for seven days prior to its death. He went to Bethany to stay at the home of Mary and Martha (John 12:1).²²⁵

Nisan 10 (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset): Jesus spent the day with Mary and Martha, then had dinner with Lazarus. It was on this day that Mary anointed the feet of Jesus (John 12:3). Jesus responded to their protests (Matthew 26:12) by saying: "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." This is a reference to Exodus 12:3 when the sacrificial lamb is chosen (Revelation 13:8 identifies Jesus as the lamb). Before getting to Jerusalem (Mark 11:1), He sent two of his disciples to procure a donkey and a colt, so He could ride into the city in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9.²²⁶

Nisan 11 (Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset): Before entering the city of Jerusalem, Jesus wept over the city (Luke 19:41). He rode into Jerusalem as the people spread palm branches before him, and hailed Him as the King (Matthew 21:9). It was on this day, now known as Palm Sunday, that Jesus made a legal claim to the throne of David. He returned to Bethany (Mark 11:11).²²⁷

Nisan 12 (Sunday sunset to Monday sunset): After Jesus cleansed the Temple (Matthew 21:12-13), He taught there, then returned to Bethany (Matthew 21:17).²²⁸

²²³ Hutchings, N. W. "Was Jesus Christ Crucified On Good Friday?...Does It Make Any Difference?" (L-762) *Prophetic Observer* (Southwest Radio Church), April 1995: pg. 2.

²²⁴ YNCA. *He Arose!...But When?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1994, pg. 3.

²²⁵ Hutchings, N. W. "Was Jesus Christ Crucified On Good Friday?...Does It Make Any Difference?" (L-762) *Prophetic Observer* (Southwest Radio Church), April 1995: pg. 2.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 2.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 3.

Nisan 13 (Monday sunset to Tuesday sunset): Jesus taught at the Temple and prophesied eight woes (Matthew 23:13-39) upon that generation. He delivered what has come to be known as the Olivet Discourse on the Last Days (Matthew 24:1-25:46). He revealed when he would be crucified. (Matthew 26:1-2) Meanwhile, the Sanhedrin knew, that in order to do something about Jesus, they would have to do it before the beginning of Passover week (Matthew 26:3-5).²²⁹

Nisan 14 (Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset): This was the preparation day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 14 to 20). After sunset, on Tuesday night, as mandated by God in Exodus 12:6, Jesus and his disciples gathered in the Upper Room to eat the Passover meal.²³⁰ This meal consisted of wine, sop, and unleavened bread. There was no lamb, since Jesus was to be the Passover lamb. The next morning (9-11 AM) was the traditional time to kill the Passover lamb.²³¹ After this meal, which lasted about an hour, Jesus and his disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:30-46); Mark 14:32-42) It was there that He was arrested (9 PM), and taken to the house of Caiaphas for questioning. Around 6 AM, He was taken to see Pilate, and then judged (Matthew 26:57, Mark 14:53, Luke 22:54, John 18:12). Jesus was crucified around 9 AM. Around 12 PM, the land fell under the shadow of an unusual darkness. At 3 PM, at the time of the evening sacrifice— He died.²³² Since He died, the soldiers didn't have to break His legs in order to bring about a quick death, which fulfilled the requirements of the Passover lamb (John 19:36). He was buried right before sunset (Luke 23:54), or before 6 PM, and the start of the annual Sabbath.²³³

Given this time scenario, the resurrection had to take place three days later at sunset. When the women came to the tomb, early Sunday morning, the angel said that He had already risen. (Mark 16:6) This means that the resurrection would have been no later than sunset on Saturday night.²³⁴ The key to understanding this whole matter is the realization that there were two different and separate Sabbaths that week— an annual one, and a weekly one. In Matthew 28:1, it says: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." The original Greek actually says "sabbaths," because it is referring to both Sabbath days.²³⁵

Nisan 15 (Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset): This was the first day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, and was the annual Sabbath (which could occur on any day). John chose to call it a "high day." (John 19:31) Mark's narrative augments John's account by

²²⁹ Ibid., pg. 3.

²³⁰ Hoeh, Herman L. *The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday*. Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1968, pg. 15.

²³¹ Hutchings, N. W. "Was Jesus Christ Crucified On Good Friday?...Does It Make Any Difference?" (L-762) *Prophetic Observer* (Southwest Radio Church), April 1995: pg. 3.

²³² Swaggart, Jimmy. "Brother Swaggart, Here's My Question." *The Evangelist* (Jimmy Swaggart Ministries), April 1987: pg. 12.

²³³ Hutchings, N. W. "Was Jesus Christ Crucified On Good Friday?...Does It Make Any Difference?" (L-762) *Prophetic Observer* (Southwest Radio Church), April 1995: pg. 3.

²³⁴ Hoeh, Herman L. *The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday*. Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1968, pgs. 10-11.

²³⁵ Green, Sr., Jay P. *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985, pg. 90.

saying "when the sabbath was past," (Mark 16:1) or high day, (Nisan 16, Thursday sunset to Friday sunset), the women bought the spices necessary to prepare for the ritual anointing of the body. This would have been Friday, but with the commencement of the weekly Sabbath on Nisan 17 (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset), they would not be permitted to administer them until afterward. So, the next opportunity would have been on Sunday morning (Nisan 18, Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset).²³⁶

Also, even the phrase "in the end of the sabbath," (Matthew 28:1) refers to Saturday, before sunset. Dr. George Ricker Berry's *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* translation reads: "Now late on the sabbath, as it was getting dusk toward the first day of the week..." The words "in the end," was translated from the Greek *opse* (Strong's # 3796), which is related to *opiso* (Strong's # 3694),²³⁷ or "late in the day," which in the other two places it is used, Mark 11:19 and Mark 13:35, is more accurately translated as "even" or "evening."²³⁸ *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* said of the word: "*Opse* followed by a genitive seems always to be partitive, denoting late in the period specified by the genitive (and consequently still belonging to it)."²³⁹

Also, the word "dawn" in Matthew 28:1 is translated from the Greek word *epiphosko* (Strong's # 2020) and is related to *epiphaino* (Strong's # 2014),²⁴⁰ meaning "to shine upon." The only other place *epiphosko* appears, is in Luke 23:54,²⁴¹ where it is translated as "and the sabbath drew on." So, this word would have been the one to more accurately indicate the period of dusk, right after sunset, when the new day began, had Jesus risen from the dead at that time.²⁴²

Of course, the proponents of a Sunday resurrection have their Scriptural documentation. It says in Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene..." The wording implies that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning, when in fact it is a translation error. Commas were not used in the Scriptures until 1400 years after the original manuscripts. So, to make this verse accurate, a comma should be placed after the word "risen."²⁴³

There also seems to be a contradiction when two particular verses are compared. Luke 24:1 says: "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning they came upon the sepulchre..." But when you look at John 20:1, it says: "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre..." The reason for this, according to

²³⁶ Hoeh, Herman L. *The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday*. Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1968, pg. 11.

²³⁷ Strong, James. "A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament." *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990, pg. 53.

²³⁸ YNCA. *He Arose!...But When?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1994, pgs. 7-8.

²³⁹ Thayer, Joseph H. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007, pg. 471.

²⁴⁰ Strong, James. "A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament." *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990, pg. 32.

²⁴¹ Wigram, George V. and Jay P. Green, Sr. *The New Englishman's Greek Concordance and Lexicon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1982, pg. 321.

²⁴² YNCA. *He Arose!...But When?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1994, pg. 8.

²⁴³ Hoeh, Herman L. *The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday*. Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1968, pg. 13.

scholars, is because the phrase "in the morning," in Luke, can not be found in the original text, so it can be plainly seen that both Mary's went to the tomb, before the Sabbath was over, to see if the soldiers were still stationed at the tomb, and to get ready for the embalming ritual.²⁴⁴

We looked at the phrase "the end of the sabbath," which is used in Matthew 28:1. There is a school of thought that believes that the placing of the line there was a translation error, and should have actually been put at the end of Matthew 27:66, because it deals with the sealing and the guarding of the tomb.²⁴⁵

Luke 24:21 indicates that Jesus met and talked to two of his disciples during the latter part of Sunday, and made a reference that "today is the third day since these things were done." This seemingly indicates a Thursday afternoon crucifixion, and validates the tradition of a Sunday morning resurrection.²⁴⁶ However, it should also be noted, that Luke, when making any references to time, always discussed it inclusively. Evidence of that can be found in Luke 9:28, when he gave a time frame as eight days; while Matthew (Matthew 17:1) and Mark (Mark 9:2) both gave an indication of six days. If this is the case, then his writings tend to imply a Friday crucifixion.²⁴⁷

Another interesting, but unproven theory, concerns the Feast of Firstfruits (also known as the Wave Offering), referred to in Leviticus 23:10-12, which occurred during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It occurred on the "first day" after the Sabbath that came after the Passover. So, this would have been on Saturday, after sunset, the first day of the week. Some Biblical scholars have indicated that the Jewish feast days have prophetic symbolism to them. The apostle Paul seemed to imply that the Feast of Firstfruits was fulfilled when Jesus was resurrected. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:20: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."²⁴⁸

Even though the Wednesday crucifixion and Saturday (Sabbath) resurrection, which appear to be reflect a more accurate timeline, seems to be getting more and more recognition; there are many other Scriptures which could be discussed to imply various other scenarios here. However, the bottom line is to show that at least one of these days has to be incorrect, as far as historical accuracy. You shall soon see why.

Since we have dealt with the actual day when these events occurred, let's look at the actual year that they occurred. The Passover took place on the following dates:

Saturday, April 16, AD 29
 Wednesday, April 5, AD 30
 Wednesday, April 25, AD 31
 Monday, April 14, AD 32
 Friday, April 3, AD 33

²⁴⁴ YNCA. *He Arose!...But When?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1994, pgs. 14-15.

²⁴⁵ Martin, Ernest L. *101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1993, pgs. 60-61.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pgs. 61-62.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 62.

²⁴⁸ "How the Passover Was Changed to Easter." *Today's Front Page* (Today, the Bible & You), March 1996: pg. 11.

As you can see, in both 30 and 31, the Passover occurred on Wednesday, but the correct year for these events is said to be 31, because the year of 30 had 356 days in it, and therefore was not a common year (which has 353, 354 or 355 days in it).²⁴⁹

Let me run down some of the calculations that seem to prove this. Confirmation seems to come from the Old Testament. The date that Artaxerxes issued his order to restore Jerusalem (Ezra 7) was in the seventh year of his reign. His first year began in September, 464 BC; thus, his seventh year began in September, 458 BC to September, 457 BC. According to Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:25-26), 69 prophetic weeks (69 X 7= 483 years) would pass before the Messiah would be revealed. Adding 483 years to the decree would bring us to the fall of AD 27.²⁵⁰

Daniel (Daniel 9:26-27) prophesied that the ministry of Jesus would be half of a prophetic week of seven years, and then He would be "cut-off." This seems to indicate that his ministry would last 3½ years. We can see how long His ministry was by counting the number of Passovers the gospels refer to. The first Passover took place in 28. (John 2:33), the second occurred in 29 (Luke 6:1), the third in 30 (John 6:4), and the final one was mentioned in all four gospels, and took place in the Spring of 31, thus indicating a 3½ year ministry.²⁵¹

Luke said that Jesus began his ministry when he was "about thirty," so his first Passover would have been in the Spring of 28, and it was at this time that Jesus was told that the Temple was in its 46th year of construction (John 2:20). History shows, that after three years of planning, building began after the Passover in 19 BC, which when added to the 46 years, indicates the year AD 28.²⁵²

Then there is Luke (Luke 3:1) saying that John the Baptist began to preach during the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. In order to calculate when the year was, there must be a reckoning between the dates of when he was made co-ruler with Augustus Caesar around the end of AD 11; or when his sole reign began in August of AD 14. It is believed that he used the date of AD 11/12, when he gained authority, which would make the first year of his reign as April, AD 12 to April, 13. So, his 15th year, when John started preaching, would have been April, AD 26 to April, 27.²⁵³

Luke also said that Pontius Pilate was the Governor of Judea. His administration lasted ten years, and is commonly given as being from AD 26 to 36. But, he had been dismissed before the Passover of his tenth year, and he went to Rome to appeal the decision, but Emperor Tiberius died before he got there (March, AD 37). Therefore, he began his reign as Procurator in AD 27. This also points to the fact that John began his ministry in AD 27, and Jesus began his in the Autumn of AD 27.²⁵⁴

It is common for some people to be apprehensive when attempts are made to pinpoint actual dates because of so much time being elapsed, and the accuracy of historical records being questioned. And this may be one of those times. Since there was a Wednesday Passover

²⁴⁹ Hoeh, Herman L. *The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday*. Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1968, pg. 20.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., pg. 24.

²⁵¹ Ibid., pgs. 31-32.

²⁵² Ibid., pg. 28.

²⁵³ Ibid., pgs. 29-30.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., pgs. 30-31.

also in AD 30, we have to consider that date. It just so happens, that information regarding his birth neatly dovetails with this date. So, we may have to reevaluate the year AD 31. which has been commonly accepted. I am more concerned, not in the year, but in showing what the actual day is, in order to illustrate the point of how there is pagan influence.

THE PAGAN ORIGINS OF EASTER

At the end of the winter, the season changes because the earth tilts as it rotates on its axis. Spring arrives when the sun is over the equator. On the first day of Spring, known as the vernal equinox (which means "spring equal night"), both day and night are an equal twelve hours long. This meant that the long winter nights were over, and that the sun again began to take control. It was a time was marked by celebrations and festivals to thank the pagan gods.²⁵⁵ These ancient rituals were fertility festivals, observed in hopes that the gods would bless them with fertile flocks and fields. Animal and child sacrifices were offered to the gods to receive this favor.²⁵⁶

Venerable Bede, an eighth century Christian historian, indicated that the name Easter came from the festival of *Oestre* (also found as *Ostere* or *Ostara*), the Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring and fertility.²⁵⁷ There was also a Teutonic (Germanic) goddess known as *Eostre* (also found as *Eastre* or *Estre*), who was the goddess of dawn and light, fertility, and Spring. It is from these deities where the name Easter actually originates.²⁵⁸ The festival in her honor was held during the vernal equinox.²⁵⁹

The name can be traced back to the name *Astarte*, the Syrian sun goddess, known as the "queen of heaven" (the consort of the Chaldean sun god *Baal*) who is mentioned in connection with the Canaanites (where she was known as *Asherah*),²⁶⁰ and in Jeremiah 7:17-20 and Jeremiah 44.²⁶¹ God was so upset about the people's worship of her, that he allowed Babylon to take them captive.²⁶² Some escaped to Egypt where they kept the practice alive. The worship of this goddess of love and fertility,²⁶³ who was actually a representation of the previously mentioned Semiramis (or *Beltis*), spread into various cultures, under different names:

²⁵⁵ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 3.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 4.

²⁵⁷ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 28.

²⁵⁸ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 1.

²⁵⁹ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 5.

²⁶⁰ YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 2.

²⁶¹ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pgs. 117-118.

²⁶² YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 3.

²⁶³ Lloyd, James. *Beyond Babylon: The Last Week of the World*. Jacksonville, OR: Christian Media, 1995, pg. 16.

Isis (Egypt), *Ishtar* (Babylon), *Athena* (Athens), *Minerva* and *Aphrodite* (Greece), *Diana* (Ephesus), *Cybele* and *Venus* (Rome),²⁶⁴ and *Ashtoreth* (Israel).²⁶⁵

The early Christians celebrated the Resurrection on the same day that the Jews observed Passover. The Passover is the feast that commemorates the night the angel of death passed over those homes that were "under the blood of the Lamb," and slew the first born of the Egyptians, while the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt.²⁶⁶ As they stayed inside and prepared for the journey home, they ate unleavened bread and roasted lamb, which had been killed to supply the blood needed. The Feast of the Passover, which began on the 14th day of the month of Nisan (also known as Abib), was celebrated for eight days.²⁶⁷ The Israelites were commanded (Exodus 12:24) to commemorate this event "forever." Jesus did not eliminate the Passover, he merely changed the elements, and the new focus was identified as the "Lord's Supper" or "Communion." The blood of the lamb, was represented by the cup of wine, and symbolized the shedding of his blood for our sins; and the eating of the unleavened bread symbolized his body, which was sacrificed for our sins. From that point on, this tradition was to be carried on in remembrance of him. The Passover Lamb, which prophetically symbolized the Messiah, was no longer to be killed.²⁶⁸

Eusebius, a Church historian, said that the early Christians observed the Passover on Nisan 14 (which is the seventh month of the Jewish civil calendar and the first month of the sacred calendar); and Gieseler, another early historian, wrote that "the Gentile Christians observed also the Sabbath and the Passover" late in the first century.²⁶⁹ However, with the influx of Gentiles, they began to celebrate the day on Sunday.²⁷⁰ History tells us, that early in the second century, Bishop Xystus (also known as "Sixtus") of the church of Rome, was the first to disregard the actual day for the observance of the Passover, and to celebrate it on Sunday. Irenaeus wrote that this doctrine was in direct conflict with the church, and the teaching of Paul.²⁷¹

When the Easter observance was introduced to Rome around 160, it was celebrated the Sunday after the Jewish Passover.²⁷² Polycrates, the leader of the new Christian churches in

²⁶⁴ YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 2.

²⁶⁵ Lloyd, James. *Beyond Babylon: The Last Week of the World*. Jacksonville, OR: Christian Media, 1995, pg. 103.

²⁶⁶ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 27.

²⁶⁷ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 226.

²⁶⁸ Dankenbring, William F. "Easter How Did An Ancient Pagan Custom Become 'Christian'?" *Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), March 1973: pg. 11.

²⁶⁹ *The Plain Truth About Easter!* Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1957, pg. 14.

²⁷⁰ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 4.

²⁷¹ Hoeh, Herman L. "Four Thousand Years of Easter." *Tomorrow's World* (Worldwide Church of God), March 1971: pg. 45.

²⁷² YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 15.

Asia, wrote to Victor, who became Bishop at Rome in 190: "We, therefore, observe the genuine day; neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom...All these (early Christians, Philip, and the apostle John) observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith."²⁷³

After heated debate, Constantine's Nicaean Council in 325 officially ruled that Easter was to be held on the Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox, which, because of the difficulty in correlating it with the Jewish calendar, gives us a date variation from March 22nd to April 25th.²⁷⁴ You have to ask yourself— why was there such a debate on the matter if it was passed down according to Scriptural tradition? Easter was never seen as a Christian holiday until the fourth century. In Acts 12:4, the word "Easter" is translated from the Greek word *Pascha* (or in Hebrew *Pesach*), which means "Passover," but it is not another name for the Passover (which begins on the first full moon after the vernal equinox), since the dates for the two observances are usually far apart.²⁷⁵ Today, the holiday of Easter continues to be celebrated at a different time than the Biblically-mandated observance of the Passover.

In the fourth century, Socrates Scholasticus wrote in his *Ecclesiastical History*: "Neither the apostles, therefore, nor the Gospels, have anywhere imposed...Easter...The Saviour and his apostles have enjoined us by no law to keep this feast (Easter)."²⁷⁶

Spring celebrations continued to be held at Easter to honor various fertility goddesses until 399, when the Theodosian Code banned the observance of pagan rituals during the holy days of Easter and Christmas. However, pagan worshipers were able to continue worshipping *Isis*, by calling their feast by another name— Easter. Saltman, in his book *On Roman Time: The Codex Calendar of 354 AD* said that the rituals connected with *Isis* became part of the Easter holiday.²⁷⁷ By 752, the Church had totally given up fighting the pagans, and Christianized the elements of this pagan celebration.²⁷⁸

The Puritans who founded this country were against the Catholic Church, and did not celebrate Easter or Christmas,²⁷⁹ however, after the Civil War, the Protestant churches began to observe them as special days.²⁸⁰

The warnings against idolatry are numerous in the Bible, but in 1 Timothy 1:4, Paul specifically made an attack against these pagan gods: "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions..." The word "fables" is translated from the Greek *muthos*

²⁷³ Dankenbring, William F. "Easter How Did An Ancient Pagan Custom Become 'Christian'?" *Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), March 1973: pg. 12.

²⁷⁴ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 200.

²⁷⁵ *The Plain Truth About Easter!* Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1957, pg. 6.

²⁷⁶ Hoeh, Herman L. "Four Thousand Years of Easter." *Tomorrow's World* (Worldwide Church of God), March 1971: pg. 44.

²⁷⁷ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 120.

²⁷⁸ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 10.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 17.

²⁸⁰ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 5.

(which was a legendary story that was told, as opposed to one of historical fact), which is where we get our word "mythology."²⁸¹ As we look at the pagan traditions of Easter, that predate the Resurrection of Jesus by more than 2,000 years,²⁸² we can see why Paul said this.

THE TRADITIONS OF EASTER

Easter Eggs

During the rule of Caesar Augustus, Hyginus, an Egyptian who was the librarian at the Palatine library in Rome, wrote: "An egg of a wondrous site is said to have fallen from heaven into the river Euphrates. The fishes rolled it to the bank, where the doves having settled upon it, and hatched it, out came *Venus*, who afterwards was called the Syrian goddess (*Astarte*)."²⁸³ Part of their worship to this goddess was the ritual involving the "golden egg of *Astarte*." This was where we got the tradition of the Easter egg.²⁸⁴

Albert Pike, an Illuminati member, in his Masonic treatise *Morals and Dogma*, indicated that the egg was a mystical symbol to the pagan religions of Egypt, Japan, Greece, Persia, Phoenicia, India, and Babylon. He wrote:

"The serpent entwined around an Egg, was a symbol common to the Indians, the Egyptians, and the Druids. It referred to the creation of the Universe. A Serpent with an egg in his mouth was a symbol of the Universe containing within itself the germ of all things that the sun develops. The property possessed by the Serpent, of casting its skin, and apparently renewing its youth, made it an emblem of eternity and immortality."²⁸⁵

Thus, we see an indication that the egg initially represented serpent worship, and, by extension, Satan worship.²⁸⁶

The most common Easter custom is the brightly colored Easter egg. Eggs, the origin of life, have always been considered as symbols of fertility, and represented renewal.²⁸⁷

The ancient Persians believed that the earth was hatched from an egg during the Spring equinox.²⁸⁸ The ancient Egyptians believed that the universe was created from a huge egg by a

²⁸¹ "Did You Know?" *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), April 1995: pg. 6.

²⁸² YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 8.

²⁸³ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 123.

²⁸⁴ Lloyd, James. *Beyond Babylon: The Last Week of the World*. Jacksonville, OR: Christian Media, 1995, pg. 16.

²⁸⁵ Pike, Albert. *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*. Richmond, VA: L.H. Jenkins, Inc., 1947, pg. 496.

²⁸⁶ YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 7-8.

²⁸⁷ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 6.

²⁸⁸ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 202.

god of the sky, out of which came the sun-bird which ruled over the earth and sky. They hung eggs in their temples, as did the Greeks. The Hindus and early Phoenicians taught that an immense egg split, and formed heaven and earth. In Rome, pregnant women wore eggs around their necks to protect them from evil. They were planted with seeds, in hopes of having a productive harvest.²⁸⁹ A procession in honor of the Roman goddess *Ceres* was always preceded by an egg.²⁹⁰

As far back as 722 BC, the Chinese colored eggs for their Spring observance, as did the Egyptians and Persians.²⁹¹ A grave excavated in Germany, which dated back to AD 320, contained two goose eggs that had been decorated with stripes and dots.²⁹²

Pope Gregory (590-604), forbid the followers of the Catholic Church to eat eggs during Lent, so they became a treat at Easter. The people in Poland said that the Virgin Mary dyed eggs in various colors for Jesus to play with when He was a child. The Ukrainians incorporated blue dots in the design of their eggs, which they say represent the tears of Mary. They believe she took a basket of colored eggs to Pontius Pilate as a gift, in hopes of convincing him to have mercy on Jesus. As she was making them, she began crying and the tears fell on the shells, making the dots. The orthodox of Romania dyed their eggs red, because they believed Mary left a basket of eggs at the cross during the crucifixion to appease the soldiers so they would treat Jesus better. They were not accepted, and his blood dripped on them. In Russia, there is a tradition that Mary Magdalene gave an egg to the Roman emperor as a symbolic token of the resurrection of Jesus.²⁹³

The Rabbit

To begin with, it is actually the hare, and not the rabbit which is Easter's main character, because according to ancient tradition, the hare was a symbolic representation for the Moon, since they only came out at night to eat. Also, the Egyptian name for the hare was "Un" (which means "open"), because they are born with their eyes open, while a rabbit's are not. Legend has it, that the hare never blinks or closes its eyes.²⁹⁴ To some pagan cultures, the Moon was the "open-eyed watcher of the skies."²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 7.

²⁹⁰ "Did You Know?" *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), April 1995: pg. 5.

²⁹¹ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 7.

²⁹² Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 6, pg. 784.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, pg. 784.

²⁹⁴ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 7.

²⁹⁵ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 9.

The hare is associated with the goddess Ishtar, and was the symbol of fertility because they reproduce so quickly.²⁹⁶

There is also a pagan tradition concerning a bird who wanted to be a rabbit, so the goddess *Oestre* turned the bird into a rabbit, who could still lay eggs. Every Spring, during the festival dedicated to *Oestre*, the rabbit laid beautiful colored eggs for the goddess.²⁹⁷ This tradition is exemplified in the Cadbury television commercial for the filled chocolate eggs. Another tradition, which has been passed down, comes from Germany. According to the legend, during a famine, a poor woman dyed some eggs and hid them in a nest, as Easter presents for her children. When the children found the nest, a big rabbit leaped away, the story that the rabbit brought the eggs.²⁹⁸

Lent

The word "lent" comes from the old English *lencten*, which means "Spring." Created by the Catholic Church around 525, under the guidance of Abbot Dionysus the Little, Lent is the 40-day period from Ash Wednesday until Easter that is set aside for fasting and seeking repentance. The observance is not found in the Bible, so it was not recognized by Jesus, the apostles, or the early Christian Church.²⁹⁹ However, now-a-days, it usually just means "giving-up" something, usually some bad habit, or even just cutting back, in order to please God. This period of abstinence actually originated in Babylon, as a preliminary to the annual day that honored the death and resurrection of Tammuz,³⁰⁰ and later was observed in Egypt to honor *Osiris*, the son of *Isis*, who was the counterpart of Tammuz.³⁰¹

When Nimrod died, and was made the sun god, Semiramis then had an illegitimate son called Tammuz, who she claimed to be the son of Nimrod. She said that he was the "promised seed of the woman," (Genesis 3:15) and demanded that both her and Tammuz be worshipped. He became symbolized by the golden calf.³⁰² She became known as the "queen of heaven," and was the prototype from which all other pagan goddesses came. Her representation can be seen in the Roman Catholic Church's worship of Mary, who is called the "Mother of the Church," the "Queen of Heaven and Earth," and the "Queen of the Universe." These titles can not refer to

²⁹⁶ YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 6.

²⁹⁷ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 29.

²⁹⁸ "Did You Know?" *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), April 1995: pg. 6.

²⁹⁹ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pgs. 12-13.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 12.

³⁰¹ YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pg. 11.

³⁰² Ingraham, David A. "Rain on Your Easter Parade." (L-714) *The Gospel Truth* (Southwest Radio Church), April 1993: pg. 1.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, because nowhere in the Bible does it talk about Mary's role in such a way.³⁰³

According to Babylonian tradition, when Tammuz was killed, his mother cried so much, that he came back to life. The manifestation of this was the rebirth and blooming of all vegetation in the Spring, which came to symbolize his resurrection, and why Tammuz is honored in the Spring.³⁰⁴ Very similar, is the story in the ancient writings of the Sumerians, in Mesopotamia, which said that Tammuz was married to the goddess *Inanna (Ishtar)*, the "mother goddess." When he was killed, she was so overcome with grief, that she followed him to the underworld, and in her absence, the earth began dying, crops stopped growing, and animals stopped mating. *Ea*, the god of water and wisdom, sent a message that *Inanna* was to be brought back. This messenger sprinkled both *Inanna* and Tammuz with the water of life, and they were given the power to return to the light of the sun for six months of the year. Then Tammuz would again have to return to the underworld, prompting *Inanna* to seek him, and again, *Ea* would have to retrieve them.³⁰⁵

Ezekiel 8:12-13 talks about the women weeping for Tammuz and this actually refers to what became the 40-day Lenten period.³⁰⁶

Easter Sunrise Worship

The Jews during the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel had blended sun worship with the worship of God, as we can see in the Scriptural references in regard to the "queen of heaven." Ezekiel 8:15-16 talks about men standing with their backs to the Temple of God, facing the east and worshipping the sun. Albert Pike wrote that all pagan religions worshipped the sun. Whether they knew it, or not, they were actually worshipping Satan, because, as an angel, he was known as Lucifer, or the "bearer of light." The Jewish Temple faced the east, so that when they worshipped God, they would be turned away from the rising sun in the east.³⁰⁷

The sunrise service actually stems from the pagan rite of Spring that was held during the vernal equinox to welcome the coming sun.³⁰⁸ According to pagan tradition, when the sun would rise on Easter morning, it would dance in the heavens, so, those who would congregate, would dance in honor of the sun.³⁰⁹

³⁰³ "How the Passover Was Changed to Easter." *Today's Front Page* (Today, the Bible & You), March 1996: pg. 11.

³⁰⁴ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 3.

³⁰⁵ Dankenbring, William F. "Easter How Did An Ancient Pagan Custom Become 'Christian'?" *Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), March 1973: pg. 16.

³⁰⁶ YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pgs. 5-6.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 9.

³⁰⁸ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 8.

³⁰⁹ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 14.

The verse found in Mark 16:2 is given to justify the promotion of sunrise services: "And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising sun."³¹⁰ While it has been a long-standing tradition that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, the Scriptural study on the matter that you just read above seems to indicate that he rose from the dead on Saturday. Millions of people all over the world who attend sunrise services on Easter morning are actually keeping alive a ritual of worshipping the sun god *Baal*, and his consort, the queen of heaven.

Easter Candles

Fire ceremonies had also become a part of Springtime pagan celebrations. In Europe, Easter was celebrated by lighting large bonfires to commemorate the renewal of Spring. A doll, said to symbolize winter, was sometimes burned, which was called "burning the Judas."³¹¹ Teutonic tradition called for new fires to be ignited during the vernal equinox.³¹²

The Celts had a May Day celebration for their sun god, because they believed that he had been held prisoner through the winter months by evil spirits, and every year, on May 1st, he escaped, bringing with him sunlight to warm the earth. So, to help him escape, giant bonfires were built on the highest hills in an attempt to scare the evil spirits into freeing the Sun. Some Germans, Dutch, and Swedes still burn these Springtime fires.³¹³ The tradition of burning special Easter candles is directly connected with these fire rituals.³¹⁴

Easter Ham

The pig was sacred to the Greek goddess *Demeter*, the corn goddess, who represented fertility and abundance, and is another counterpart of *Astarte*. In various depictions of her, she is either shown carrying, or being accompanied by a pig. So, pigs were regularly sacrificed to her, and it was believed, that by eating what they felt represented and embodied their goddess, they were in fact, eating of her body. The prophet Isaiah warned of this in Isaiah 65:3-5.³¹⁵ Another source says that the pig represents the wild boar that killed Tammuz, and eating ham was done in remembrance of him.

³¹⁰ YNCA. *He Arose!...But When?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1994, pg. 14.

³¹¹ Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 6, pg. 764.

³¹² Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 10.

³¹³ Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 6, pg. 764.

³¹⁴ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 10.

³¹⁵ YNCA. *The Counterfeit Called Easter*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1995, pgs. 10-11.

The tradition of the Easter Ham evolved from an English tradition of eating a gammon (smoked buttock or thigh of a pig) of bacon to show their resentment and contempt for the Jewish custom of not eating pork.³¹⁶

The Easter Lily

The Easter Lily, the flowery symbol of Easter, which turns up at church altars everywhere that day, is actually not a Spring flower.³¹⁷ It was a pagan phallic symbol that represented a sexual reproductive organ.³¹⁸ It obviously reflected on the fertility aspect of the celebration.

Hot Cross Buns

The history of the hot cross bun goes back to the Babylonian queen of heaven (*Ishtar*), and a reference to it is made in Jeremiah 7:18, which talks about making "cakes to the queen of heaven." The Hebrew word for "cakes" is *kavvan* and is more properly translated as "buns."³¹⁹

At Athens, about 1500 years before Christ, these buns or sacred bread, were used in the worship of the goddess. They were called *boun*.³²⁰ Egyptians made buns inscribed with two horns in honor of the moon goddess, and the Greeks changed it to a cross, so it could be easily separated. The Angle-Saxons made buns with a cross on them in honor of their goddess of light.³²¹

Easter Clothing

Everyone knows that Easter is the day that everyone has to wear their new Easter clothing. This mentality stems from the pagan tradition that it was unlucky not to wear some sort of new clothing or personal adornment, because it symbolically signified the end of the old, and the beginning of the new.³²²

³¹⁶ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 202.

³¹⁷ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 8.

³¹⁸ Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 11.

³¹⁹ *The Plain Truth About Easter!* Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1957, pg. 7.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 7.

³²¹ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 9.

³²² Tardo, Russell K. *Rabbits, Eggs & Other Easter Errors*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, 1994, pg. 11.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The substantial amount of evidence that I have presented, proves the pagan origin of what is probably considered the holiest of Christian observances. Yet, most aspects of it do more to honor pagan gods, and I don't think that is pleasing to the one, true God, that, as Christians, we claim to serve. This is one example of why the Body of Christ needs to get back to a Bible-backed fundamentalism that seems to be slowly slipping through the cracks of the churches.

As a Christian, it is important that the pagan aspect of Easter is eliminated. And if you decide to do that, you may feel that a gradual weaning from all of its trappings is necessary, to prevent culture shock. We need to emphasize that Jesus died for our sins, so that we may have everlasting life; and that He rose from the grave, just like He said he would. Wouldn't it be nice to rename the day to reflect its true meaning. How about "Resurrection Day." Again, even though this is a day that the Bible doesn't tell us to observe, it should be understood that the intent of the day is to celebrate a risen and living Saviour; and that it has nothing to do with chocolate candy, jelly beans, Easter eggs, and bunnies.

CHAPTER FOUR

HELLOWEEN: HALLOWEEN UNMASKED

HALLOWEEN GETS ITS FOOT IN THE DOOR

A few years ago, I was going through some of the papers my son had brought home from school, to pick out the ones I wanted to put away and keep. I came across something that really got me thinking. And the more I thought about it, the more agitated I became. What I found, was a picture of a witch that my son had colored at Halloween. A couple years later, my daughter also brought home the same kind of pictures. What was particularly disturbing was a picture of a warlock with occult symbols on his robe. The thing about it was, that whoever designed the picture, had to have some knowledge of the occult, because it contained symbols of the sun, full moon, partial moon; and two different types of stars, which I believe differentiated between the star or pentagram used in witchcraft, and the inverted star used in Satanism.

I know this is something that is done every year in the schools, and I had done it in school when I was young. But, in going through all of their papers, I didn't find any pictures of Jesus done at Christmas or Easter time. Why? Because that would be a conflict of church and state, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) would be going to court to prevent the school from doing this. It was the ACLU who complained about crosses being put on the Christmas tree at the Capitol building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I don't see the ACLU trying to do anything about kids coloring pictures of witches in school, even though it is just as much of a conflict between church and state.

Whether you know it or not, the Church of Wicca, the largest church in the country devoted to the practice of Witchcraft, is a federally recognized, tax exempt, non-profit, religious organization in the United States.³²³ Some other well-known churches are the Wicca Church of America, Church of All Worlds, Universal Church of Wicca, Aquarian Tabernacle Church, The Church of the Iron Oak, and the Church of Universal Brotherhood. The Church of Satan, which was founded in San Francisco in 1966, is also considered a tax exempt religious organization.³²⁴ The April 25, 1989 edition of *USA Today* reported that Patricia Hutchins, a self-proclaimed Wiccan serving in the U.S. Air Force, was granted religious leave by the military to observe the eight Sabbats of her "religion."³²⁵

Witches are so organized that they hold seminars and conventions that are publicized by the media.³²⁶ In 1970, the New York City Parks Department issued a permit for the Witches International Craft Associates (WICA) to have a "Witch-In" in Sheep Meadow on Halloween.

³²³ Phillips, Phil and Joan Hake Robie. *Halloween and Satanism*. Lancaster, PA: Starburst Publishers, 1987, pg. 17.

³²⁴ *Halloween Special* (A 700 Club Special Video). Virginia Beach, VA: The Christian Broadcasting Network, 1990, 60 minutes.

³²⁵ Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pg. 52.

³²⁶ Todd, John. *Witchcraft*. Chambersburg, PA: Open Door Church (Pastor Dino Pedrone), February 1978: 60-minute audio tape.

Over 1,000 people attended.³²⁷ In 1980, Joyce Clemow, a spokesman for the New York Center for the Strange, a nonprofit research group that investigates "the myriad aspects of prognostication, prophecy, and divination," said that America's practicing witches included three Congressmen, a syndicated financial columnist, the president of one of the nation's largest banks, a well-known television newscaster, and a man who held a top foreign affairs position in the Nixon administration.³²⁸ Margot Adler, a reporter for National Public Radio, is a well-known witch, and author of a book on neo-Paganism called *Drawing Down the Moon*.³²⁹

Early in the 1980's, the book *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980's* by Marilyn Ferguson (published in 1980 by J. P. Tarcher, Inc. in Los Angeles, CA) was introduced at the World Congress on Futurology in Toronto, Canada, and was to be used to begin a new campaign for recruitment into the occult. Though the New Age movement began in 1975 with the teachings of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, this book ignited the movement into one of the fastest growing "religions" today.³³⁰ The New Age movement is nothing more than a politically-correct form of witchcraft.

So, you see, those pictures of witches that your children bring home from school, are not only a conflict of church and state, but a conflict of right and wrong.

Every fall, this country gears up to celebrate a day when children dress up in costumes and go door-to-door to collect candy. The school has encouraged this observance by allowing costumes and having parties; and local governments have joined in the act by supporting trick-or-treating and having parades. Yet, few people know the origin of Halloween, and what significance it actually has.

THE DRUIDS

The roots of Halloween can be found with the ancient Celts, who were the people of Gaul (France, Switzerland, Belgium, Bohemia, Galicia in Spain, as well as Galatia in what is now known as Turkey),³³¹ and the forerunners of those living today in the British Isles, Scotland, and Ireland.³³² Their culture flourished for hundreds of years before the Christian era, peaking around 1200 BC. They became caught up between the encroachment of the Roman Empire and the invasions from barbaric Germanic tribes.

³²⁷ Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pg. 133.

³²⁸ "Hunch...Witches Predict Carter Will Win." (From United Press International report).

³²⁹ Manfred, Erica. "A Return to the Circle." *New Age Journal*, September/October 1996: pg. 83.

³³⁰ Rivera, David Allen. *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order*. Oakland, CA: InteliBooks Publishers, 2004, pg. 382.

³³¹ MacCrossan, Tadhg. *The Truth About the Druids*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1993, pg. 6.

³³² Uselton, Bill. *Trick or Treat: The History of Halloween*. Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1994, pg. 3.

The Druids were members of a priesthood who came from the upper class of Celtic society, who were exempt from taxes and manual labor.³³³ Their name comes from the Celtic word *daur* which means "oak tree," and in the Gaelic, it means "knowing the oak tree." They performed their rituals and ceremonies in sacred oak groves, as well as river sources and lakes, because they also considered water to be sacred.³³⁴

The earliest mention of these "men of the oak," was in the 3rd century BC, from Julius Caesar,³³⁵ and what little information that is available, comes from 30 references in Greek and Roman writings from the second century BC to the fourth century AD,³³⁶ and ancient records found in Ireland. For the most part, their legacy has been passed down orally from generation to generation,³³⁷ because they considered it "profane" to write down their teachings.³³⁸

White-robed Druids met on a hill where there was an altar containing a sacred fire that was kept alive throughout the year. Once a year it was put out, as well as all the other fires in area homes. A new fire was then lit, and all other fires were relit from this one, which the people had to buy.³³⁹ This was said to protect the home from evil spirits.³⁴⁰

An aura of mystery surrounded the Druids, and they were considered evil.³⁴¹ It was alleged that they possessed strange powers, such as being able to produce mists, storms, floods, and cast spells.³⁴² In the writings of an ancient Greek, he compared the Druids to the Magi of Persia, who were the group from which the Wise Men came.³⁴³ They could also be compared to the Medicine Man of the American Indians. In fact, I kind of thought they might have been a Satanic perversion of the Levite tribe of Israel, from which came the priests. The Druids worshipped the sun, the moon, and the stars, and many of their rites centered around

³³³ Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 6, pg. 719.

³³⁴ Guiley, Rosemary Ellen. *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*. New York, NY: Facts on File Publisher, Inc., 1989, pg. 108.

³³⁵ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 3, pg. 674.

³³⁶ Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 6, pg. 719.

³³⁷ "Halloween: Kid's Treat or Pagan Trick?" *The Patriot Review* (Christian Patriot Association).

³³⁸ MacCrossan, Tadhg. *The Truth About the Druids*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1993, pg. 4.

³³⁹ Shepard, Leslie (Editor). *Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology: A Compendium of Information on the Occult Sciences*. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Inc., 1991, pg. 29.

³⁴⁰ Daniels, Cora Linn and C.M. Stevens (Editors). *Encyclopaedia of Superstitions, Folklore and the Occult Science of the World: A Comprehensive Library of Human Belief and Practice in the Mysteries of Life*. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Company, 1971, Vol. 3, pg. 1485.

³⁴¹ Uselton, Bill. "Halloween: Festival of the Dead." (L-678) *The Gospel Truth* (Southwest Radio Church), October 1991: pg. 3.

³⁴² "Halloween: Kid's Treat or Pagan Trick?" *The Patriot Review* (Christian Patriot Association).

³⁴³ MacCrossan, Tadhg. *The Truth About the Druids*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1993, pg. 15.

such astronomical occurrences as equinoxes and solstices. As it turned out, there was reason to fear these men, because some of their rituals included both animal and human sacrifice.

Their biggest night of the year was October 31st, known as the "Vigil of *Samhain*" (pronounced "sow-win"), in honor of *Samhain*, Lord of the Dead.³⁴⁴ This ritual commemorated the end of the year, for November 1st was the beginning of the Celtic new year.³⁴⁵ At this time of the year, the transition from autumn to winter, the sun was at its lowest point, the weather was getting colder, and the leaves were falling from the trees. In a sense, the earth would symbolically die, as it rested in preparation of again bringing forth new life— a fitting time to commemorate the dead.³⁴⁶ Even today, symbols of death, such as coffins, gravestones, skulls, ghosts, mummies, and graveyards, continue to have a prominent role in the Halloween tradition.³⁴⁷

It was believed that, at death, the souls of good men were carried by good spirits to paradise; but the souls of the wicked were left to wander the unseen space between the earth and the moon.³⁴⁸ It is during this time that the veil that separated the living from the dead, was at its thinnest,³⁴⁹ and the gates that divided these two realms were opened.³⁵⁰ It was on the night of October 31st, that *Samhain* called together these lost souls and released them upon the earth.

The souls of the dead would return home, seeking food, and shelter from the cold.³⁵¹ Food and drink would be set up on a table in the home's main room, while the family would build bonfires to light the way for these spirits,³⁵² or go outside with torches to welcome them and invite them in. Inside, they would kneel around the table, and pray that the spirits would accept their offerings.³⁵³ Even though this was a time of the year when food was scarce, and a period in history when food was difficult to preserve, the people were not expected to put out just any old

³⁴⁴ Hoeh, Herman L. and Gerhard Marx. "Why the Strange Customs of Halloween?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), October/November 1970: pg. 14.

³⁴⁵ Mansager, Alan. "It's Time to Rip the Mask from Halloween." *YNCA Light* (Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly), September/October 1995: pg. 16.

³⁴⁶ Leek, Sybil. *The Complete Art of Witchcraft*. New York, NY: Signet, New American Library, 1971, pg. 186.

³⁴⁷ Tardo, Russell K. *What's Wrong With Halloween?* Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 2.

³⁴⁸ Marx, Gerhard O. "The Origin of Hallowe'en." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), October 1967: pg. 13.

³⁴⁹ Tardo, Russell K. *What's Wrong With Halloween?* Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 4.

³⁵⁰ Santino, Jack. "Introduction: Festivals of Death and Life." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. xv.

³⁵¹ Uselton, Bill. *Trick or Treat: The History of Halloween*. Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1994, pgs. 4, 6.

³⁵² Santino, Jack. "Introduction: Festivals of Death and Life." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. xv.

³⁵³ Marx, Gerhard O. "The Origin of Hallowe'en." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), October 1967: pg. 14.

thing, or spoiled food. Only the best food and drink could be made available.³⁵⁴ If the spirits were satisfied, they would leave in peace. If not, they would cast an evil spell upon the house,³⁵⁵ or perhaps instigate other problems, such as the death of cattle, or cause milk to sour or food to spoil. Afterwards, the villagers would put on masks and costumes, which represented the souls of the dead, to lead a procession out of town— hopefully to lead the spirits away, just in case they hadn't satisfied them.³⁵⁶

On the night of October 31st, taking advantage of the superstition and fear of the people, the Druids would go from home to home in search of a suitable female for human sacrifice. When they found one, and the "treat" satisfied them, they would leave a "jock-o-lantern," a hollowed-out turnip, carved into a demonic face, which contained a lighted candle made from human fat, to protect those inside from being killed by demons that night. The Druids had people believing that demons masqueraded as fairies, goblins, vampires, and werewolves, and were unleashed upon the earth that night. If the Druid priests were refused, then came the "trick," and a hexagram was painted on the front door. That night, demons were to kill someone in that household.³⁵⁷

"Jock" was the name of the demonic spirit guide which dwelled inside the turnip. The story is told of a blacksmith named Jock who made a contract with Satan, so that for seven years, he could be the best blacksmith around. After that, Jock would have to give up his soul. One day, Jesus, and the apostle Peter came to his shop and tried to get him to change his mind— but it didn't work. Peter gave him three wishes, so Jock wished that when he told someone to climb a nearby tree, sit in a chair, and shrink themselves into his purse, they would have to do it and stay there till Jock would allow him to come out. When Satan came to claim his soul, Jock tricked him three times, and each time, Satan granted him seven more years in exchange for his freedom. When Jock died, Peter would not allow him to enter Heaven; and Satan would not allow him through the gates of Hell because of the trick that he played. Before he left, Jock used a turnip he was eating to scoop out a fiery coal, which, because it was eternal, would never be extinguished. Thus Jock's spirit roamed the earth, carrying this unusual lantern, the "jock-o-lantern."³⁵⁸

In America, the tradition was continued, but with pumpkins, because they were bigger and easier to carve.³⁵⁹ It became known as the "jack-o-lantern."³⁶⁰ It is put in front of a home to keep away the evil spirits that are believed to be roaming the earth that night.

³⁵⁴ Uselton, Bill. "Halloween: Festival of the Dead." (L-678) *The Gospel Truth* (Southwest Radio Church), October 1991: pg. 4.

³⁵⁵ Hoeh, Herman L. and Gerhard Marx. "Why the Strange Customs of Halloween?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), October/November 1970: pg. 14.

³⁵⁶ Mansager, Alan. "It's Time to Rip the Mask from Halloween." *YNCA Light* (Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly), September/October 1995: pg. 16.

³⁵⁷ Chick, Jack T. *Spellbound?* (The Crusaders, Volume 10). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1978, pg. 14.

³⁵⁸ Uselton, Bill. "Halloween: Festival of the Dead." (L-678) *The Gospel Truth* (Southwest Radio Church), October 1991: pg. 4.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 4.

³⁶⁰ Taylor, David N. *Halloween: A Celebration of Devils*. Hattiesburg, MS: The Storehouse Church, pg. 3.

The Druids believed that the sinful souls of those who died during the previous year, were being held in a place of torment by *Samhain*, and would be released only if he was pleased with their sacrifice. Their victims, both animal (such as horses, because they were sacred to the sun god) and human (mostly criminals³⁶¹ and prisoners of war³⁶²), would be hung inside huge baskets, and it was believed that the Druids would call forth fire from out of the earth to consume their sacrifice. They believed that by watching the victim die, they would be able to see into the future as the fire carried their victim from this world, into the afterlife.³⁶³ They became known as "bone-fires" (or bonfires).³⁶⁴ The people would not go near this area because of the smell of death, and the presence of evil.³⁶⁵ Exodus 22:20 says: "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed."

Sacrifices to Satan are also burned. Satanists exhume dead bodies in an attempt to call up the spirits of people who died the previous year. However, it is actually demon spirits which are produced.³⁶⁶

Bonfires have also been used to ward off evil spirits,³⁶⁷ to deflect the dead away from people's homes until their journey was complete.³⁶⁸ In the British Isles, bonfires on hills were a familiar sight. In northern Wales, each family built one, and each person would then throw a marked white stone into the ashes, followed with a prayer. If the stone was missing the next day, it was believed that the person who threw it in, would die before the next Halloween.³⁶⁹

Bonfires have remained part of the Halloween observance. In the United States, it has survived in the form of arson attacks. Most notable, is Detroit, where, in the past, there were so many fires set on Halloween, that it was called "Devil's Night."

Some sources claim that Stonehenge, on the Salisbury Plain, in southwestern England, was a Druid temple.³⁷⁰ However, archaeological evidence dates it back to 2750 B.C., which

³⁶¹ Mansager, Alan. "It's Time to Rip the Mask from Halloween." *YNCA Light* (Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly), September/October 1995: pg. 16.

³⁶² Phillips, Phil and Joan Hake Robie. *Halloween and Satanism*. Lancaster, PA: Starburst Publishers, 1987, pg. 26.

³⁶³ Uselton, Bill. *Trick or Treat: The History of Halloween*. Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1994, pg. 7.

³⁶⁴ "Halloween: Kid's Treat or Pagan Trick?" *The Patriot Review* (Christian Patriot Association).

³⁶⁵ Peoples, Nicole. "Druidic 'Bonfires'." *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), October 1995: pg. 7.

³⁶⁶ Young, John. "*Halloween*" *Trick or Treat: Historical and Modern Day Notes About Halloween*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Christians Against Satanism, pgs. 2-3.

³⁶⁷ Uselton, Bill. *Trick or Treat: The History of Halloween*. Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1994, pg. 4.

³⁶⁸ Uselton, Bill. "Halloween: Festival of the Dead." (L-678) *The Gospel Truth* (Southwest Radio Church), October 1991: pg. 2.

³⁶⁹ Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 1, pg. 67.

³⁷⁰ Chick, Jack T. *Spellbound?* (The Crusaders, Volume 10). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1978, pg. 14.

indicates that it was built before the time of the Druids.³⁷¹ The general consensus is that Stonehenge, and 900 other prehistoric stone structures like it throughout the British Isles, were probably burial sites for tribal chiefs or warriors, or meeting places.³⁷² The argument has also been made that Stonehenge was an astronomical observatory that revealed the occurrences of the equinoxes and solstices.³⁷³ But the bottom line is, that there is no concrete proof that Stonehenge was a structure exclusive to the Druids.

The Roman Senate outlawed human sacrifice in 97 BC, which led to the Druids being suppressed in Gaul, by Romans under Tiberius (AD 14-37), and later in Britain.³⁷⁴ In AD 43, Claudius banned the practice of Druidism. The religion began to fade away around AD 60-61, when the Romans attacked their headquarters on the island of Mona.³⁷⁵ The religion was outlawed between AD 98 - 180, causing the Druids to go underground.³⁷⁶ There are a number of people who claim to be of direct Druidic descent, and continue to practice the old religion. Members of this group still meet at Stonehenge.³⁷⁷

Dr. Raymond Buckland, who was the foremost authority of witchcraft (Gardnerian Wicca) in this country, when discussing its history, also talks about this period. He says:

"Even some of the new religion's (Catholicism) ministers retained much of their old pagan background— mixing both the old and the new, until admonished by their superiors. Finally however, the church grew impatient. It wanted Wicca dead, and it wanted Christianity to be the only religion. Pope Gregory the Great made tremendous strides by ordering the destruction of ancient temples, and the smashing of so-called idols. New churches were built on the old sites, so that the church could cash in on the local populace's habit of going to them. Happily, most of the stonemasons and woodcarvers available for building the new churches were themselves pagans. So in the decorations, they incorporated figures of their own old gods. In this way, the people, although forced to attend the churches of new religion, could still worship the gods of the old.

Obviously with this sort of oppression, the old religion could not continue openly. If it was to continue, then it had to go into hiding. Wiccan groups, covens, had to meet secretly. Perhaps in an isolated clearing in the woods, or in a cottage, far from the rest of the village. Outwardly, witchcraft had finally died. Beaten to death by the earthly representatives of the God of love, and the Prince of Peace. Yet, covertly, the old religion did continue. Here and there, a sprinkling of pagan practices managed to survive, more

³⁷¹ Hadingham, Evan. "The Secrets of Stonehenge." (pgs. 82 - 91) *The World's Last Mysteries*. Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1976, pg. 87.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, pg. 90.

³⁷³ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 306.

³⁷⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 3, pg. 674.

³⁷⁵ Guiley, Rosemary Ellen. *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*. New York, NY: Facts on File Publisher, Inc., 1989, pgs. 108-109.

³⁷⁶ Chick, Jack T. *Spellbound?* (The Crusaders, Volume 10). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1978, pg. 16.

³⁷⁷ "Halloween: Kid's Treat or Pagan Trick?" *The Patriot Review* (Christian Patriot Association).

or less openly; or occasionally disguised as Christianity. Old festivals, which refused to lie down, were frequently taken into the Christian church, perhaps with a new name. Many pagan gods suddenly became Christian saints. The Church took over many of the old holy days, such as Yule, Easter, Hallows Eve."³⁷⁸

WITCHCRAFT

The lineal successor to the religion of the Druids, was British witchcraft, which became strong in the 1200s. The word "witchcraft" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *wiccecraft* or "craft of the wise."³⁷⁹

Witches say that their religion is not anti-Christian, because they worship deities that were in existence before the advent of the Christian era.³⁸⁰ They are pantheists who observe the ancient Celtic holy days. They worship nature and earth, and they believe this power to be manifested in the form of various gods and goddesses.³⁸¹ In this pluralistic system, there is a Moon goddess, who controls fertility rites, and the process of birth and life; and also a horned god, who represents the masculine side of nature. Known as *Cernunnos*, the god of hunting, fertility, and wild animals,³⁸² he is the god of the underworld who controls the gates of life and death.³⁸³ Even though witches say that they don't believe in Satan, unknown to them, this "horned hunter of the night" is a descendant of Nimrod, who became the sun god, and was the symbolic representation of Satan.³⁸⁴ You must remember, that Nimrod, and his wife, Semiramis, were the prototypes for all gods and goddesses that permeated all subsequent cultures and societies.

According to former witches and Satanists, the deities that witches worship are actually demons.³⁸⁵

One thing that a lot of people try to do, is to pigeonhole witchcraft into one single category, and you can't do it. Within the realm of Christianity, you have many religions, such as Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, etc. And within each of these, you have a further breakdown, which divides the various churches according to their own variations

³⁷⁸ Buckland, Raymond. *Witchcraft: Yesterday and Today*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1991, 60 minute video tape.

³⁷⁹ Hill, Douglas and Pat Williams. *The Supernatural*. New York, NY: Signet, New American Library, 1965, pg. 160.

³⁸⁰ *Halloween Special (A 700 Club Special Video)*. Virginia Beach, VA: The Christian Broadcasting Network, 1990, 60 minutes.

³⁸¹ Guiley, Rosemary Ellen. *The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft*. New York, NY: Facts on File Publisher, Inc., 1989, pg. 376.

³⁸² Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pg. 128.

³⁸³ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 182.

³⁸⁴ Hill, Douglas and Pat Williams. *The Supernatural*. New York, NY: Signet, New American Library, 1965, pg. 160.

³⁸⁵ Todd, John. *Witchcraft*. Chambersburg, PA: Open Door Church (Pastor Dino Pedrone), February 1978: 60-minute audio tape.

in philosophies. Well, since witchcraft is a religion, the same divisions also exist. There are different denominations, so-to-speak. The terms most used are White and Black Witchcraft, Traditional (who believe power must be inherited through family lineage), Modernist, Gardnerian (revival of the "old religion" established by anthropologist Gerald Gardner), and Alexandrian (an offshoot of the Gardnerian tradition by Alexander Sanders). But there are many others. There has been a connotation of evil given to witchcraft as a whole, but it can't be as easily defined as that, because there are some gray areas that require an understanding. I am not condoning any aspect of witchcraft, but I do have to be fair.

The most well-known of the witchcraft sects are the Wiccans, who represent what could be considered White Witchcraft. I have talked to some Wiccans, and they do not fit the stereotype that one expects to find when they meet a witch. They do not dress in all black, and in fact, do not dress any differently than anyone else. You have probably talked to a witch, and never even knew it.

As serious as you may be about your religion, and faith; they are just as serious about their religion. Besides their holy days, some covens even have weekly meetings, just like a traditional church.

Wiccans have become more open in their religion in the past few years, as they try to dispel the myth, fear, and discrimination that surround them. In August, 1995, our local paper had a front page article about a couple local witches, and how their religious activities were just like anyone else's. They have distanced themselves from Satanism, by emphasizing that they don't believe in Satan or demons. They have tried to separate themselves from the dark side of the occult, by saying that it is against their religion to harm anyone; that they're not out there trying to get people, by putting curses on them. In fact, their primary directive (known as the Witch's Rede) is: "An it harm none— do what thou wilt." This gives them the freedom to do what they want, just as long as it doesn't affect the rights of others, or cause physical harm.³⁸⁶

And indeed, Wiccans have gone out of their way to help people. Out of their yearning to help, many enter helping professions, such as social workers, nurses, and counselors. They also do tarot card readings, and are the driving force behind the onslaught of the psychic phone hot lines.

It is estimated that there could be as many as 800,000 Wiccans in this country, and since 1987, they have "grown tremendously."³⁸⁷ They are out there spreading their word, through books in secular bookstores, occult bookstores, classes, and pagan festivals. They are filling what they see as a void. A religion that is more accepting of women in leadership positions, gays, interracial couples and unmarried couples; that features solemn ritualistic ceremonies; that makes one feel like they're part of a family; and a religion that offers real power.³⁸⁸

We live in a time where the constitutional right of religious freedom has forced us to tolerate and accept any religion, no matter how foreign it is to our belief system, and how contrary it is to the Bible. But on the other hand, in a growing anti-Christian climate in this country, we are also being allowed to exercise our faith because of those same rights. So, we have a responsibility to treat someone else's beliefs with respect, because they have the same rights we do. However, I don't have to agree with them, or like it, and I don't have to allow this false doctrine to permeate our society unanswered.

³⁸⁶ Buckland, Raymond. *Witchcraft: Yesterday and Today*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1991, 60 minute video tape.

³⁸⁷ Manfred, Erica. "A Return to the Circle." *New Age Journal*, September/October 1996: pg. 85.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 83.

No matter how honorable Wiccans intentions are, as a Christian, I must abide by the tenets of the Holy Scriptures in my assessment of their religion and practices. Do I hate them. No. In fact, the witches that I talked to were very pleasant, very nice, and very respectful of my religious beliefs. Which is more than I can say about some Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons that have come knocking on my door. It is very easy to forget a very fundamental Biblical teaching, that we must hate the sin, but love the sinner. God loves everyone, even a witch. So as a Christian, we need to let Witches know, if ever given the opportunity, that they are living a lie. That the gods and goddesses they are worshipping do not exist, and that they have been deceived by a very real Satan, who is the father of lies. Many witches have come to realize, that in order to get more "power," they have to surrender more of themselves, moving into the darker side of witchcraft, and sometimes into Satanism. Satan does not care what he does, or who he destroys, in order to achieve his goals.

As I said earlier, witches have a golden rule that prohibits them from hurting anyone. But, not all witches are "good" witches. And not all witches share that philosophy. Irene Park, a former witch, and author of the book *The Witch Who Switched*, said the worst thing she had ever done to someone was to "demolish them. To see them removed off the face of the earth." She further elaborated: "You can kill them, or else they will commit suicide...you drive them to do that...you can do it by thought...or something like making a potion...and chanting and doing an incantation, and it works— the spirits work."³⁸⁹

In a chapter called "Vengeance and Attack" in the book *Mastering Witchcraft: A Practical Guide for Witches, Warlocks and Covens* it says: "With all the power of your imagination, and all the faith and intent you can muster, you must actually try to see your spell working its mischief, visualizing your victim suffering all the pangs you wish on him. This type of spell is perhaps best employed for encouraging general misfortune rather than any specific disaster..."³⁹⁰ It goes on to provide actual instructions and incantations for various curses.

This book was written by a well-known witch named Paul Huson, a Traditionalist from San Francisco, who studied under Dr. Raymond Buckland, who, as I said, is probably the leading Wiccan authority in this country.³⁹¹ Compare that with this, from *The Satanic Bible*: "Be certain you do not care if the intended victim lives or dies, before you throw your curse, and having caused their destruction, revel, rather than feel remorse."³⁹² So, with their own writings, you can see, that regardless of any moral code they claim to have, the seduction of power and the ability of being able to use it, may be a more overriding determinant in regard to the actions of a witch.

Observing the sacred Celtic calendar of the Druids, witches have eight special holy days through the year, which are known as "Sabbats." Some researchers have purported that the Sabbat is the witches sabbath, a corruption of the Jewish day of rest. Others have said that the word "sabbath" is taken from *Shabbathai*, or Saturn, the planet which governs the seventh day; while "sabbat" comes from *Sabadius* (or *Sabazius*), which was the title of *Dionysus*, the god of

³⁸⁹ Dooley, Tom. *A Christian Perspective on Halloween*. Nashville, TN: HMS Creative Projects, 1992, audio tape.

³⁹⁰ Huson, Paul. *Mastering Witchcraft: A Practical Guide for Witches, Warlocks & Covens*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam Sons, Berkley Medallion, 1971, pg. 196.

³⁹¹ Berry, Dr. Tom. *The Christian During Riot and Revolution*. Elkton, MD: Bible Baptist Church, 1978.

³⁹² LaVey, Anton Stander. *The Satanic Bible*. New York, NY: Avon, 1969, pg. 118.

ecstasy, who was worshipped with partying and orgies.³⁹³ However, just like the Jewish calendar, the Sabbath mirrors the Celtic day, which began at sunset, and ended the next sunset.³⁹⁴

There are two great fire festivals, known as Grand Sabbats, which divide the Celtic year in half.³⁹⁵ October 31st, Halloween (also known as the October Festival), which celebrates the beginning of winter,³⁹⁶ and is also the beginning of the witches New Year;³⁹⁷ and April 30th, *Beltane* (also known as *Bealtaine*), which celebrates the beginning of summer.³⁹⁸ Known as the day of *Bel's* fire because of the bonfires that accompanied their fertility rituals, the Druids held this feast in honor of *Bel*, a derivative of *Baal* (mentioned in the Old Testament) and can be associated with *Apollo*.³⁹⁹ This day has become associated with *Walpurgis* Night, a festival to honor *Walburga* (*Walpurga*), the daughter of King Richard the Lion-Hearted, a nun who moved to Germany and became abbess of the monastery of Eichstatt. After she died in 779, she was canonized by the Church, and is recognized as the protector against magic.⁴⁰⁰ However, witches are actually honoring *Waldborg*, a fertility goddess.⁴⁰¹ The spirits of the dead are said to be very active on this day.⁴⁰²

According to Anton LaVey, the self-proclaimed high priest of the Church of Satan in San Francisco, the two major Satanic observances are also Halloween and *Walpurgisnacht*.⁴⁰³

There are two other minor feasts, which divide the half-year into quarters.⁴⁰⁴ February 2nd, *Imbolg*, the Winter festival (also known as *Imbolc* or *Oimeic*), which was a pagan celebration marked with a torchlight procession to honor the various deities associated with

³⁹³ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 294.

³⁹⁴ Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 1, pg. 67.

³⁹⁵ Cavendish, Richard. *The Black Arts*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967, pg. 306.

³⁹⁶ Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 1, pg. 67.

³⁹⁷ Huson, Paul. *Mastering Witchcraft: A Practical Guide for Witches, Warlocks & Covens*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam Sons, Berkley Medallion, 1971, pg. 38.

³⁹⁸ Cavendish, Richard (Editor). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Guide of the Supernatural*. New York, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp., 1970, Vol. 1, pg. 67.

³⁹⁹ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 252.

⁴⁰⁰ Santino, Jack. "Introduction: Festivals of Death and Life." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. xix.

⁴⁰¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 10, pg. 18.

⁴⁰² Santino, Jack. "Introduction: Festivals of Death and Life." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. xix.

⁴⁰³ LaVey, Anton Stander. *The Satanic Bible*. New York, NY: Avon, 1969, pg. 96.

⁴⁰⁴ Cavendish, Richard. *The Black Arts*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967, pg. 306.

agriculture, which was to purify and fertilize the fields prior to the planting season.⁴⁰⁵ It became known as the Feast of Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary which is celebrated by the Roman, Greek, and Anglican churches. It is supposedly held to observe the event described in the 2nd chapter of Luke, when Mary went to the Temple for purification, which according to tradition happened forty days after the birth of Jesus.⁴⁰⁶

It was originally observed on February 14th, when Jesus was thought to have been born on the day of Epiphany. But when the date of his birth was changed to December 25th, the day was moved. It became known as Candlemas, because church candles are blessed that day, due to Simeon's reference to the "light to lighten the Gentiles." It was believed that these blessed candles, when put in a home, would protect it from evil. Pope Innocent XII (1691-1700) said: "Why do we in this feast carry candles? Because the Gentiles dedicated the month of February to the infernal gods, and at the beginning of it *Pluto* stole *Proserpine*, and her mother *Ceres* sought her in the night with lighted candles, so they, at the beginning of the month, walked about the city with lighted candles, Because the holy fathers could not extirpate the custom, they ordained that Christians should carry about candles in honor of the Blessed Virgin; and thus what was done before in honor of *Ceres* is now done in honor of the Blessed Virgin."⁴⁰⁷

The other day is August 1st (July 31st according to *A Witches' Bible*)⁴⁰⁸ the Summer festival, when the first corn was harvested.⁴⁰⁹ This was the Druid festival of *Lughnasadh*, which was dedicated to *Lugh*, the Celtic sun god. It has become known as *Lammas* ("loaf-mass").⁴¹⁰ Witches celebrate this day to honor the sacred union of the goddess and the horned god.⁴¹¹

Also celebrated, to a lesser extent, are the four solar fire festivals: The vernal equinox of March 21st (*Alban Eilir*, or the spring festival), and the autumnal equinox of September 23rd

⁴⁰⁵ Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pg. 17.

⁴⁰⁶ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 77.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pgs. 77-78.

⁴⁰⁸ Farrar, Janet and Stewart Farrar. *A Witches Bible: The Complete Witches' Handbook*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1984, pg. 102.

⁴⁰⁹ Huson, Paul. *Mastering Witchcraft: A Practical Guide for Witches, Warlocks & Covens*. New York, NY: G. P. Putnam Sons, Berkley Medallion, 1971, pg. 38.

⁴¹⁰ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 217.

⁴¹¹ Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pg. 97.

(September 21st according to *A Witches' Bible*,⁴¹² *Alban Elfrad*, or the autumn festival),⁴¹³ and the two solstices (a Latin word which means "the sun stops").⁴¹⁴

June 22nd (*Alban Hefin*, or the mid-summer night festival) has become associated with the eve of St. John's Day (June 24), which is when the Feast of Saint John the Baptist is held. This is the oldest Church observance, and is celebrated on the day of his birth. The exact day is unknown, but the Bible indicates that he was born six months before Jesus.⁴¹⁵ It became part of the mid-summer celebrations because of the summer solstice, which is the beginning of summer (June 20), and the longest day of the year.⁴¹⁶

December 22nd, known as Yule (*Alban Arthan*⁴¹⁷ or the mid-winter festival), has become associated with the eve of St. Thomas Day (December 21), which is when the Feast of Saint Thomas is held. The observance was initiated in the 12th century to honor the apostle Jesus appeared to and showed his wounds after the Resurrection, because of his doubts.⁴¹⁸ He is known as the patron saint of masons and architects. It became part of the winter celebrations because of the winter solstice, which is the beginning of winter (December 21), and the longest night of the year.⁴¹⁹

HALLOWEEN BECOMES A CHURCH OBSERVANCE

In 118, Emperor Hadrian rebuilt the Pantheon in Rome, dedicating it to the pagan goddess *Cybele* and other Roman deities who were worshipped there. In 608, the building was given to Pope Boniface IV, and in 609 it was dedicated as the Church of the Sta. Maria Rotonda,⁴²⁰ and consecrated to the Virgin Mary, all the saints of both sexes, and the martyrs.⁴²¹

⁴¹² Farrar, Janet and Stewart Farrar. *A Witches Bible: The Complete Witches' Handbook*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1984, pg. 116.

⁴¹³ Hill, Douglas and Pat Williams. *The Supernatural*. New York, NY: Signet, New American Library, 1965, pgs. 141-142.

⁴¹⁴ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 317.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 356.

⁴¹⁶ Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pg. 76.

⁴¹⁷ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 98.

⁴¹⁸ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pgs. 650-651.

⁴¹⁹ Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pgs. 157-158.

⁴²⁰ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th Edition), 1977, Vol. 7, pg. 725.

⁴²¹ Marx, Gerhard O. "The Origin of Hallowe'en." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), October 1967: pg. 14.

Here the dead were worshipped. An annual festival, the Feast of All Saints, was established to epitomize this, and it became known as All Saints Day. Nearly every day of the year was dedicated to a Saint, and since there were more Saints, then days in a year, May 13th, the anniversary of the Pantheon's dedication, was set aside to commemorate all remaining Saints who had no day. Over a hundred years later, in 731,⁴²² Pope Gregory III dedicated a chapel in St. Peter's Basilica to all the Saints.⁴²³

In 837, as part of their campaign to Christianize pagan festivals, All Saints Day, the date of which had remained unchanged for two centuries, was moved to November 1st by Pope Gregory IV, and its name changed to "Hallowmass," which meant "All Hallow" (or "All Holy"). The word "Halloween" is a combination of the two words "hallowed evening," because it occurs on the eve of "All Hallow."⁴²⁴ The Vatican even encouraged people to dress up like their favorite saint.⁴²⁵ This was the same day the Druids, the Norsemen in Scandinavia, and pagan Germans were celebrating to worship *Samhain*, the horned hunter of the night; *Kernos*, the Oak God of the Underworld; and the God of the Dead.

Pope Gregory decreed that Hallowmass was to be a universal church observance and proclaimed: "They are no longer to sacrifice beasts to the devil, but they may kill them for food to the praise of God, and give thanks to the giver of all gifts for his bounty."⁴²⁶

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*: "...the theological basis for the feast (of All Souls Day) is the doctrine that the souls which on departing from the body are not perfectly cleansed from venial sins, or have not fully atoned for past transgressions are debarred from the Beatific Vision, and that the faithful on earth can help them by prayers, alms, deeds, and especially by the sacrifice of the mass." It was first introduced by St. Odilo, abbot of Cluny on January 1st.⁴²⁷ Because the Church realized that All Saints Day didn't really correlate with the pagan festival it was intended to replace, in 1006,⁴²⁸ All Souls Day was moved to November 2nd.⁴²⁹

The Church's attempts at getting rid of the pagan observance failed, and All Hallows was removed from the Church calendar until 1928, when it was revived by the Church of England, who felt that the pagan feasts and festivals of the past were no longer observed.⁴³⁰ Our founding

⁴²² Belk, Russell W. "Carnival, Control and Corporate Culture in Contemporary Halloween Celebrations." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. 111.

⁴²³ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 576.

⁴²⁴ "Halloween: Kid's Treat or Pagan Trick?" *The Patriot Review* (Christian Patriot Association).

⁴²⁵ Belk, Russell W. "Carnival, Control and Corporate Culture in Contemporary Halloween Celebrations." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. 111.

⁴²⁶ "Halloween: Kid's Treat or Pagan Trick?" *The Patriot Review* (Christian Patriot Association).

⁴²⁷ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pgs. 579-580.

⁴²⁸ Belk, Russell W. "Carnival, Control and Corporate Culture in Contemporary Halloween Celebrations." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. 111.

⁴²⁹ Santino, Jack. "Introduction: Festivals of Death and Life." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. xvi.

⁴³⁰ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 165.

fathers refused to allow the holiday to be celebrated because they realized it was pagan in nature, so it was not widely observed here in America until the early 1900s.⁴³¹ During the 1800s, the potato famine brought thousands of Irish Catholics to America, and they brought Halloween with them.⁴³²

THE TRADITIONS OF HALLOWEEN

After the Druids were forced to practice their rituals in secrecy, the Celts continued the tradition by dressing up like fairies, witches, and demons, singing and dancing in exchange for food and drink, in a practice called "mumming," which evolved into "trick-or-treating."⁴³³ Even today, witches, ghosts, and skeleton figures are still dominant costumes.⁴³⁴ Besides the fact that trick-or-treating is rooted in the occult, children have been conditioned to beg, in order to get something for nothing. Parents have to be constantly worried about the treats received by their children. Razor blades have been found in apples, needles in candy bars, and ground-up glass in cookies;⁴³⁵ as well as fish hooks, poisoned candy and heroin.⁴³⁶ It has gotten to the point that hospitals have offered free x-rays in an attempt to detect the presence of foreign objects in the treats.⁴³⁷ Some of it is put there by sick, demented people; and some put there by occult practitioners who consider any children injured or killed by the "treats" as sacrifices to Satan.⁴³⁸

There is no doubt that Corporate America has encouraged the growth of the Halloween tradition. It is now the 2nd most popular holiday, and one of the three top candy selling seasons,⁴³⁹ and in September, the stores start to get swamped with all sorts of masks, costumes, and decorations. On page 168 of *Good Housekeeping's Book of Entertainment* it says: "...the decorations must be bold to be effective. Orange, black and red, the devil's colors, are the colors associated with Halloween and this scheme should be carried out as far as

⁴³¹ "Halloween: Kid's Treat or Pagan Trick?" *The Patriot Review* (Christian Patriot Association).

⁴³² Uselton, Bill. *Trick or Treat: The History of Halloween*. Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1994, pg. 18.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, pg. 14.

⁴³⁴ Uselton, Bill. "Halloween: Festival of the Dead." (L-678) *The Gospel Truth* (Southwest Radio Church), October 1991: pg. 4.

⁴³⁵ Steep, Clayton D. "What's So 'Hallowed' About Halloween?" *The Good News* (Worldwide Church of God), October/November 1970: pgs. 10-11.

⁴³⁶ Ellis, Bill. "Safe Spooks: New Halloween Traditions in Response to Sadism Legends." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pgs. 26-27.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 34.

⁴³⁸ "Halloween: Kid's Treat or Pagan Trick?" *The Patriot Review* (Christian Patriot Association).

⁴³⁹ Steep, Clayton D. "What's So 'Hallowed' About Halloween?" *The Good News* (Worldwide Church of God), October/November 1970: pg. 11.

possible."⁴⁴⁰ All of this commercialism has put the retail market squarely behind Halloween, because its various by-products bring in millions of dollars every year.

We have gone over the origins of trick-or-treating, bonfires, and pumpkins— how about some of the other traditions. Bobbing for apples and giving out nuts, are the Roman contributions to Halloween. They stem from rites performed during the Roman Feast of Pomona, to honor the goddess of the harvest⁴⁴¹ and the end of the growing season.⁴⁴² While kneeling at a tub of water, if you were successful in snaring an apple without using your hands or feet, it meant that you would be protected "from evil for one year."⁴⁴³ One source indicates that bobbing for apples came from the Druid tradition of boiling apples in a cauldron of water, and if any of their victims were able to pick one up with their teeth on the first attempt, they were allowed to live, and were set free. The permanent disfigurement they received would be a constant reminder of their ordeal.

Another tradition would be for one to attempt to peel an apple all in one piece, which gave them special power.⁴⁴⁴ The peel would then be twirled around their head three times and released over the left shoulder, onto the floor, where it would assume the shape of the first letter of their next lover's (or wife's) name.⁴⁴⁵ The nut tradition came to us from the practice of a couple putting nuts beside each other in a dying fire. If they cracked apart, or moved away from each other,⁴⁴⁶ it meant that they were destined for domestic unrest. But if they burned together, their marriage or relationship would be peaceful.⁴⁴⁷

Even tales about witches flying about on broomsticks during Halloween has a basis in fact. The broomstick is a phallic symbol of fertility, and is representative of the male sex organ. This is evidenced by later traditions where a couple would get married by "jumping-over-the-broomstick" (a ceremony depicted on the ABC-TV miniseries "Roots" when Kunte Kinte got married) and the folklore which said that if an unmarried girl would step over a broomstick, she would become a mother before she was married.⁴⁴⁸ Witches would "ride" their broomsticks in

⁴⁴⁰ Hoeh, Herman L. and Gerhard Marx. "Why the Strange Customs of Halloween?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), October/November 1970: pg. 46.

⁴⁴¹ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 565.

⁴⁴² Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pg. 137.

⁴⁴³ Young, John. "Halloween" *Trick or Treat: Historical and Modern Day Notes About Halloween*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Christians Against Satanism, pg. 2.

⁴⁴⁴ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 13.

⁴⁴⁵ Daniels, Cora Linn and C.M. Stevens (Editors). *Encyclopaedia of Superstitions, Folklore and the Occult Science of the World: A Comprehensive Library of Human Belief and Practice in the Mysteries of Life*. Detroit, MI: Gale Research Company, 1971, Vol. 3, pg. 1490.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 1481.

⁴⁴⁷ Peoples, Nicole. "Druidic 'Bonfires'." *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), October 1995: pg. 7.

⁴⁴⁸ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 48.

the cornfields as they jumped around.⁴⁴⁹ However high they would jump, that's how high the corn would grow. To onlookers, it looked as though they were trying to fly.⁴⁵⁰

THE DANGERS OF HALLOWEEN

Doreen Irving, the former ruling witch of Western Europe and the British Isles, and also the mistress of the area's high priest of Satan, who later became a Christian, said: "If Christian parents had any idea of what Halloween really is, they wouldn't even mention the word around their children."⁴⁵¹ Halloween is nothing more than a subtle introduction to the occult. In fact, witches perform rituals that night to draw kids into witchcraft. It has been said that curses are placed upon Halloween candy before it's even given out, so that its partakers will get interested in the occult.

But beyond that, the various aspects of Halloween, and the graphic manner in which the media portrays the occult, are succeeding in breeding fear, in not only our children, but also in adults, who allowed it to take root when they were children. This fear is an open door for the devil to manipulate, control, and torment. This fear can become so overwhelming, even debilitating, in how it can affect your life. But God can deliver people from the fear, and show you how to take authority over the enemy.

As Christians, we know that we have nothing to fear. When people visualize the concept of good and evil, they automatically think of God and Satan, on the same level, only at different ends of the spectrum. But that is not true. Remember, Satan was Lucifer, an angel, before he was cast down. So, as an angel, he was created by God. Thus, God is more powerful, so we have nothing to fear. James 4:7 says: "...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." In fact, as Christians, we have been empowered to cast out demons.

In this age of political correctness, practitioners of Black Magic and Satanists, seemed to have emerged as the "bad boys" of the occult. That's not to say that the other groups or traditions are "good," only that the fringe groups representing the dark side of the occult, have shown themselves to be dangerous in the way they choose to worship.

Many Satanists believe that Halloween is Satan's birthday,⁴⁵² and is the evening most favored for the unholy of rituals— the Black Mass.⁴⁵³ Participation in Satanic rituals is on the increase, and includes animal and human sacrifice. Though mutilated chickens, cows,⁴⁵⁴ and

⁴⁴⁹ Mansager, Alan. "It's Time to Rip the Mask from Halloween." *YNCA Light* (Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly), September/October 1995: pg. 8.

⁴⁵⁰ *Halloween Special* (A 700 Club Special Video). Virginia Beach, VA: The Christian Broadcasting Network, 1990, 60 minutes.

⁴⁵¹ Taylor, David N. *Halloween: A Celebration of Devils*. Hattiesburg, MS: The Storehouse Church, pg. 5.

⁴⁵² *Halloween Special* (A 700 Club Special Video). Virginia Beach, VA: The Christian Broadcasting Network, 1990, 60 minutes.

⁴⁵³ Uselton, Bill. *Trick or Treat: The History of Halloween*. Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1994, pg. 22.

⁴⁵⁴ Belk, Russell W. "Carnival, Control and Corporate Culture in Contemporary Halloween Celebrations." *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994, pg. 127.

horses have been found, it is believed that dogs and cats are sacrificed the most. Cats, because of the superstition regarding their nine lives, seem to have special significance.⁴⁵⁵ In fact, during the fall season, some SPCA shelters will not allow black cats to be adopted until after Halloween, because of their connection to the occult and reincarnation.⁴⁵⁶

The blood that runs through our veins represents life. So, for hundreds of years, it has come to symbolically represent the life-force. But beyond that, there is an added element here that has special significance to occultists. And that is the substance known as adrenaline, a chemical mediator for conveying nerve impulses in the human body. I'm sure you have heard stories of people who have exhibited extraordinary levels of strength during emotionally traumatic events. Well, it is the release of an overabundance of this substance from the adrenal glands that allows that to happen. In the course of human sacrifice, the creation of fear and terror in the intended victim is a necessary element, in order to artificially create the secretion of this substance in the body, prior to the ritual killing. During these rituals, they drink the blood in order to gain power, and it is considered a communion to Satan.

The ritualistic abuse and sacrifice of animals and humans have been labeled by some law enforcement officials as "the crime of the 1990s." Their primary victims are children and teenagers, and former Satanists have admitted that many runaways have ended up as victims.⁴⁵⁷

Investigators now readily admit that there is a highly secretive underground cult that deals in child pornography and prostitution, who use ritual abuse to achieve control over their minds, thus making them willing participants.⁴⁵⁸ They identified the three types of ritual abuse as: abuse done for "religious" reasons; "pseudoritual" abuse, which is usually done to receive sexual gratification; and "psychopathological ritualism" or abuse done as a result of mental illness.

Part of the reasoning behind the Satanic ritual abuse of children, is that they are "God's favorites, because of their innocence, and so their desecration represents a victory over God."⁴⁵⁹

One clinical psychologist revealed the following reports of ritual abuse from young patients: "They said that had been forced to watch helplessly as other children were beaten and raped. They spoke of sitting nude in a circle, surrounded by candles and by adults in black robes. They drew pictures of altars. They said they had witnessed scenes of bestiality and animal sacrifice. They told of being forced to drink blood and urine and to eat excrement. They said they had been injected with drugs, and that photographs had been taken of them while they were engaged in forced sex. They wept as they told of having to kill infants and of having witnessed the killing of adults."⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁵ Tardo, Russell K. *What's Wrong With Halloween?* Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 2.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pgs. 4-5.

⁴⁵⁷ *Halloween Special (A 700 Club Special Video)*. Virginia Beach, VA: The Christian Broadcasting Network, 1990, 60 minutes.

⁴⁵⁸ Blood, Linda. *The New Satanists*. New York, NY: Warner Books, Inc., 1994, pg. 20.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 127.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 18.

Law enforcement officials are now being trained in how to recognize and deal with ritual killings. The book *Occult Crime Control: Law Enforcement and Prevention* which is the manual used by the National Association of Chiefs of Police, says: "If you think there is a problem with self-styled Satanists in your community— and there almost certainly is, the situation is epidemic—start with the schools."⁴⁶¹

It has been reported that nearly 100 million people in this country fool around with some aspect of the occult.⁴⁶² Ed Warren, one of the leading paranormal investigators in the country, said: "Evil Satanic cults are spreading like cancer. They are particularly rampant among the nation's young people. Every year we speak at 120 colleges, high schools, and grammar schools, and each time we ask the audience for a show of hands of those who practice Satanism. Incredibly, at every lecture the hands have shot up!"⁴⁶³ On many college campuses, Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible* has been a best-seller, even outselling the *Holy Bible*.⁴⁶⁴ In the early 1990s, sales tripled.⁴⁶⁵

During their convention in 1980, Skip Tarrant, a head witch in the Church of Wicca, said: "Being a witch makes one feel more alive."⁴⁶⁶ That sounds real nice, and that's the beauty of its deceit. But Anton LaVey hit the nail squarely on the head, when he said: "Call it black, call it white, call it what you will, it's all evil, and it all gets its power from the source of hell." So, even though a witch is practicing white, or "good" witchcraft, they have been deceived by Satan's little white lie. And once this fact is understood, it puts things in a whole new perspective about how serious it is to be dabbling in the occult. You just never know what doorways will be opened.

Many kids are seduced into the occult because of the allure of having power. Do you know that your child can go into an occult bookstore and buy books that give detailed instructions on how to cast all kinds of spells. Other kids get involved in the occult, out of the need to feel accepted, because they come from dysfunctional homes, and are growing up in an environment void of love and attention. These children will go into occult bookstores looking for answers, because they don't know where else to turn.

The danger lies in what happens when there is dabbling in the occult, such as playing with an Ouija board, participating in a seance, or casting spells. Because anyone doing these things, opens themselves up, and exposes themselves to demonic forces. Since they often get into this stuff without a full understanding of what it is they are dealing with, when physical manifestations occur, or when they start hearing voices, questions are raised. But, when they go to their church for answers, many churches don't know how to deal with it, and end up shunning and disillusioning them because of their ignorance in such matters. That is why it is so important that churches become knowledgeable in the occult and occult practices, and have the training in spiritual warfare that is necessary to bind, take authority, and cast out any demonic influences.

⁴⁶¹ Buehrer, Eric. *Teacher's Trick or Treat*. Lake Forest: Gateways to Better Education, 1993, pg. 2.

⁴⁶² Uselton, Bill. *Trick or Treat: The History of Halloween*. Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1994, pg. 19.

⁴⁶³ Fitz, Reginald. "Terrifying Devil Cults Are Sweeping the U.S." *National Enquirer*.

⁴⁶⁴ "Trick or Treat: The History of Halloween." (L-384) *The Gospel Truth* (Southwest Radio Church), October 1984: pg. 4.

⁴⁶⁵ Buehrer, Eric. *Teacher's Trick or Treat*. Lake Forest: Gateways to Better Education, 1993, pg. 7.

⁴⁶⁶ "Witches Deplore Texas Hostility from Christians." *The Patriot-News* (Harrisburg, PA).

The parents of this generation are allowing their children to "do their own thing." The problem with this mentality is that there are too many external conflicts. Foremost, is that God has been taken out of the schools. Nothing has done more damage to the youth of this country, than to have prayer taken out of our schools. The rapid decline of morality in this country can be traced to that single incident. With the weapon of first amendment rights, our children are being bombarded with sex, violence, and drugs. Without the proper guidance, role models, and teaching, they are vulnerable— "ripe for the picking."

The Bible is very clear concerning the occult. Exodus 22:18 says: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Witchcraft practitioners claim that this verse doesn't refer to witchcraft, because the word "witch" is translated from the Hebrew word *chasaph* which actually means "a poisoner."⁴⁶⁷

However, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* identifies the original word out of the Massoretic text to be *kashaph* (Strong's # 3784),⁴⁶⁸ a root word which means to "whisper a spell, i.e. to inchant (sic) or practise (sic) magic." The word *kesheph* (Strong's # 3785) is magic or witchcraft, as used in 2 Kings 9:22, Micah 5:12, and Nahum 3:4; and *kashshaph* (Strong's # 3786) is a magician or sorcerer. The Hebrew word *chemah* (Strong's # 2534) means "poison."⁴⁶⁹ A verse that corresponds to this sentiment can be found in Leviticus 20:27, which says: "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them."

Jeremiah 10:2 says: "...Learn not the way of the heathen..." Deuteronomy 18:10-12 says: "There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a neocromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord..." 1 Peter 5:8 charges us to "be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Ephesians 5:11 says that we are to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." And 2 Corinthians 6:11, says: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?"

DEALING WITH HALLOWEEN

If you were not aware of the origin and background of Halloween, you're probably reeling right now with all of this information. The bottom line is, you should not be forced into accepting Halloween. Our children are too precious to allow ourselves to be sucked into this lie.

Halloween, because it is so inherently evil, is probably the easiest holiday to deal with. I was finally able to convince my wife a few years ago about the evil nature of this day (and that's about all the farther I have been able to get). She originally felt, that if you didn't have that intent when you participated, it was okay. But, it's not.

My wife and I have talked to our children's teachers, and we have told them that we would appreciate if they were not asked to color or draw any pictures of witches, ghosts,

⁴⁶⁷ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 41.

⁴⁶⁸ Strong, James. "A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible." *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1980, pg. 58.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Sec. 3, pg. 40.

goblins, or any other representation of the Halloween tradition. On the day that they were expected to wear a costume, and they had a party, we did not send them to school. The next day, we sent a note indicating that the practice of the school to uphold a holiday that deals so much with the occult is against our religious philosophy, and we were not going to have our children subjected to the celebration of it. Of course, the best course of action would be to begin a campaign to ban the observance all together. That can be done by writing to school administrators and board members, to register your opinion; and to circulate a petition to present to officials at a school board meeting.

Needless to say, we do not take our children trick-or-treating, or go to the Halloween parade. Again, you should start an organized effort to convince your local government officials to discontinue their support of Halloween. What I have done in the past, to begin weaning our kids off of this holiday, was to bring some bags of candy home with me, and to divide it up between them. This does seem to keep them from feeling as though they are missing out on a "fun day." Remember, that's the deception. As you have read, it is much more than a fun day. The solutions are harsh, and for good reason. Kid's may be upset at first, but you can't let that stop you from putting your foot down, and putting God first.

When it comes to answering the door for trick-or-treaters, we have chosen not to. We do not light our porch light or do anything to invite them to our front door. There are some Christians that do, and along with candy, give out religious tracts and information that reveal what Halloween is all about.

It is important that you are aware of what your children are listening to on the radio, and the kinds of things that they are playing in their stereos and tape players. You should know what they are watching on television, and what they are renting from the video store. It is of paramount importance that you know what your children are being exposed to, and to eliminate anything which, not only have occult overtones, but have excessive violence and sexual content.

The occult is real, and Satan is real. It has been said: "Know your enemy." Well, that is the purpose of this book, to provide the knowledge you need to defend yourself and your family against the onslaught of Satanic attacks. This is a war we can not lose.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHRISTMAS UNWRAPPED: IT'S NOT COOL TO YULE

A favorite phrase at this time of year is people wishing you a merry Christmas. It's a most joyous time of year, yet, more people commit suicide during the holiday season, than at any other time of the year. Our country begins preparing for this day right after Halloween, and in its scope, it is the biggest holiday of them all. The mother of all holidays. So much money is spent by people, that Christmas revenue is often the determining factor in whether a business makes a profit for the year. And the consumer, more often than not, finds themselves going into debt to provide a traditional Christmas for their family.

Is this the way that it should be? Is this the way God intended for the birth of His son to be honored? Again, as we look at the roots of this observance, you will find that Christmas is not what it seems to be. Christmas is celebrated all over the world. The French word for Christmas is "Noel," and originates from the Latin *Dies Natalis*, which means "birthday." In England, the name for the day is "*Cristes Maesse*" and dates back to the eleventh century; in Dutch, it is *Kerst-misse*; in Italy, *il Natalis*; and to the Germans, it is *Weihnachtsfest*.⁴⁷⁰

In ancient Rome, December 25th, which occurred around the time of the winter solstice, was the birthday of *Sol Invictus*, which celebrated the rebirth of the Unconquerable Sun.⁴⁷¹ The Romans celebrated *Saturnalia*, while the Greeks celebrated *Helia* (from *helios* which meant "sun"), which were winter festivals that invited the return of the sun, and involved the exchange of gifts, and the decorating of trees and homes— customs that carried over into the Christmas we celebrate today.⁴⁷²

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

First of all, let's look at why we think we celebrate Christmas— which some like to refer to as the "reason for the season." As you know, this is the day that Jesus Christ, the son of God, was born upon this earth. And to honor Him, we celebrate His birthday. But how do we really know that He was born on this day? The Bible doesn't say, and neither are we directed to observe this day.

Early Egyptian religious leaders placed the date of the birth of Jesus on May 20th, while others said it was April 19th or 20th.⁴⁷³ Though it was said to be first recognized in AD 98,⁴⁷⁴ the earliest record of its observance was found in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, near the

⁴⁷⁰ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pgs. 658-659.

⁴⁷¹ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 146.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, pg. 42.

⁴⁷³ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 658.

⁴⁷⁴ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 13.

end of the second century,⁴⁷⁵ who placed the date of His birth at November 17th.⁴⁷⁶ In 137, Telesphorus, the Bishop of Rome, said that it was to be a feast day.⁴⁷⁷ In the *Commentary on Daniel*, by Hippolytus (170-235), he placed the date at December 25th,⁴⁷⁸ as did Julius Sextus Africanus, a historian in Alexandria, Egypt, who wrote a chronicle of world history in AD 221.⁴⁷⁹

In 351, Pope Julius I ruled that December 25th was to be the day when the Roman Catholic Church would hold the "Mass of Christ,"⁴⁸⁰ which is how Christmas got its name.⁴⁸¹ In 354, Bishop Liberius of Rome officially recognized the date of His birth as December 25th.⁴⁸²

One of the few coordinating factors we have in the determination of the actual birth of Jesus is the Star of Bethlehem. Many people have maintained that it was a supernatural event. In fact, it has even been suggested that it could have been an angel, since stars have been used to symbolize them (Job 38:7, Jude 13, Revelation 1:20).⁴⁸³ Others have tried to explain it as an actual astronomical occurrence, such as a comet, nova, ball lightning, or a planetary conjunction.

It has been argued that the Greek work for "star" which is *aster*, could refer to a comet, meteor, or planet. However, in order to fit the Biblical description, a comet or meteor would not be able to sustain the trajectory necessary to travel in a guiding pattern— though it would be more noticeable than a planetary conjunction.⁴⁸⁴

There was an early connection between Halley's Comet, and the Star of Bethlehem, because the 14th century artist Giotto, in his painting "The Adoration of the Magi" (now hanging in the Scrovesni Chapel in Padua, Italy), portrays the Star of Bethlehem as Halley's Comet. Dr. Jerry Vardaman, an archaeologist at the Cobb Institute of Archaeology, at the Mississippi State

⁴⁷⁵ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 658.

⁴⁷⁶ Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pg. 3.

⁴⁷⁷ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 13.

⁴⁷⁸ Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pg. 4.

⁴⁷⁹ Meyer, Jacob O. *Christmas As the Bible Teaches It*. Bethel, PA: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1982, pg. 2.

⁴⁸⁰ Stump, Keith W. "Jesus' Birth: The Untold Story." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November/December 1985: pg. 27.

⁴⁸¹ Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. Pasadena, CA: Ambassador College, Worldwide Church of God, 1970, pg. 6.

⁴⁸² YNCA. *Ministry: Is Christmas A Biblical Observance?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1994, pg. 3.

⁴⁸³ Stump, Keith W. "Jesus' Birth: The Untold Story." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November/December 1985: pg. 21.

⁴⁸⁴ Maier, Paul L. *In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and the Early Church*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, pg. 55.

University, deciphered a stone tablet known as the *Amelius Secundus*, which had been discovered in Beirut, Lebanon, over 300 years ago, and is now at the Venice Museum. Written in 10 BC, Vardaman says it refers to a census ordered by Quirinius, the governor of Syria, which took place before that, and seemed to be the one referred to by Luke. With Josephus placing (in error), the ministry of Jesus around AD 17-19; and the fact that the Wise Men saw the Star twice, which would fit the characteristic of Halley's Comet, which is visible twice— before and after it travels behind the sun. He suggested that the Star of Bethlehem was actually the famous comet which made an appearance from August 24th to October 17th in 12 BC.⁴⁸⁵ However, in light of all the evidence, it occurred too early to fit into this event.

Chinese astronomical records indicate the appearance of what is identified as Comet No. 52, which made an appearance in March and April of 5 BC around the constellation of Capricorn that would have been visible in the east. Each night the comet would appear to be moving westward across the southern sky. Again, too early. Another, more serious candidate, is identified as Comet No. 53, which followed in March and April, of 4 BC, in the constellation of Aquila, which was reported as a tailless comet, leading some researcher to speculate that this could have been a nova— a star which exhibits an intense brilliance because of an explosion.⁴⁸⁶ However, again we have the problem of an astronomical body capable of sustaining its trajectory, as well as its light.

In the past, many scholars have concentrated on the period of 7 to 4 BC in regard to the birth of Christ, and thus, astronomical occurrences during that time were scrutinized.

Josephus wrote about a rumor concerning a sign from heaven that announced the birth of a Jewish king,⁴⁸⁷ and in the rabbinical writings of Abarbanel, there were references that the Messiah would be born when there was a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces.⁴⁸⁸

On December 17, 1603, astronomer Johannes Kepler saw a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter on the same longitude in the constellation of Pisces, which appeared to be a bright star. Remembering the Star of Bethlehem, he did some calculations, and found out, that in 7 BC, there were three such conjunctions— May 29th, October 3rd, and December 4th, with only the third one actually converging on the same longitudinal degree. His theory, that this was the Star of Bethlehem, was accepted for a while, but later fell by the wayside.⁴⁸⁹

His theory was resurrected in 1925 by P. Schnabel, a German scholar, after examining Babylon cuneiform found at the School of Astrology at Sippar, which had a reference regarding these three conjunctions in 7 BC.⁴⁹⁰ Another astronomer, named Ideler, also reported that there were three conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces in 7 BC (May 27th, October 6th, and December 1st), as well as a triangular configuration of Jupiter, Mars, and

⁴⁸⁵ Goodrich, John. " 'Comet Sunday' to Draw Attention to Heavens." *The Patriot-News* (Harrisburg, PA).

⁴⁸⁶ Maier, Paul L. *In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and the Early Church*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, pg. 58.

⁴⁸⁷ Keller, Werner. *The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1956, pg. 392.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 388.

⁴⁸⁹ Roddy, Lee, Charles E. Sellier Jr. *In Search of Historic Jesus*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1979, pgs. 31-32.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pgs. 31-32.

Saturn in 6 BC, which was not really enough to be considered a planetary configuration.⁴⁹¹ Because of the proximity to the setting sun, it is questionable whether all three could be seen.⁴⁹² There was no significant astronomical action in 5 BC.⁴⁹³

In 1979, Dr. David Hughes, a physicist and astronomer at the University of Sheffield in London, published a book known as *The Star of Bethlehem Mystery*, where he identified the astronomical event as a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces,⁴⁹⁴ which he said occurred on September 15, 17 BC.⁴⁹⁵

It is believed, that the Magi, or Wise Men, familiar with astronomy, would have attached great significance to certain elements of this astronomical configuration. In the Chaldean culture, Pisces represented the Mediterranean countries, but in Israel, it indicated the Messiah. Jupiter was a sign of royalty, and Saturn was the protector of Israel. The Babylonians believed that Saturn was a special star to the nearby lands of Palestine and Syria, and those who studied at the School of Astrology in Sippar, were no doubt excited about this planetary conjunction, because it led them to believe that a king would be born in the land of Israel, which prompted these Wise Men to journey there from the east.⁴⁹⁶

It is theorized that the scenario in 7 BC went like this: When the first conjunction was seen, knowing that another would occur on October 3rd, the Jewish Day of Atonement, because of the heat, they decided to wait until then to leave. It is believed that they would have gotten to Jerusalem near the end of November. Because they had "seen his star in the east," they announced (Matthew 2:2-3) that they had come to worship "he that is born King of the Jews." This worried King Herod who immediately began an inquiry, and he was told there was a reference in the book of Micah (Micah 5:2) concerning a ruler that was to come out of Bethlehem. Upon seeing the third conjunction on December 4th, they made their way to Bethlehem.⁴⁹⁷

The insistence on dating the birth of Jesus prior to 4 BC, stems mainly from the first century writings of Jewish historian Yoseph ben Mattityahu ha-Cohen, known as Josephus Flavius (37- 95, who wrote *Antiquities of the Jews* and *Wars of the Jews*) on the death of King Herod. Matthew says that Jesus was born (Matthew 2:15) before Herod died. Josephus wrote that Herod ruled for 34 years, when he actually had been made king by the Romans for 37 years, having been appointed in 40 BC.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹¹ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 29.

⁴⁹² Maier, Paul L. *In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and the Early Church*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, pg. 55.

⁴⁹³ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 29.

⁴⁹⁴ Zindler, Frank. *The U.F.O. of Bethlehem*. Austin, TX: American Atheist Press, 1991, pgs. 9-11.

⁴⁹⁵ Finke, Nikki. "Still Another Theory: Was Christ Born in September." *The Patriot-News* (Harrisburg, PA).

⁴⁹⁶ Keller, Werner. *The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1956, pg. 391.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pgs. 391-393.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 393.

The last year of his rule was believed to be from April, 4 BC to April, 3 BC.⁴⁹⁹ He said there was an eclipse of the moon shortly before his death, and there was a partial eclipse on March 13, 4 BC. But it wasn't the only one.⁵⁰⁰ Also, Josephus wrote that Herod died before the Spring Passover, and since the March 13th eclipse was a month before, this seems to be a logical assumption, but it is wrong, because it's too early, and it would only allow 30 days for quite a few events to take place. There were two visible lunar eclipses in 5 BC— May 23rd and September 15th,⁵⁰¹ and there were no eclipses in 3 BC, or 2 BC, but there was a total lunar eclipse on January 10, 1 BC.⁵⁰²

Remember, Herod's order to kill all male children under the age of two, gives us an indication that Jesus could have been close to this age when Herod died, which nullifies a pre-4 BC birth for Jesus.⁵⁰³ In Bethlehem, a town of about 2,000 people, in an event now known as the "Slaughter of the Innocents," it is believed that 15-30 children were killed.⁵⁰⁴

We have to consider the simple fact that the dating of the birth of Jesus to the period of 3 to 1 BC by early Christian scholars cannot be overlooked, because they did have access to many ancient records, some of which no longer exist, including the Alexandrian library, the Pergamum library, and also the repository in Caesarea; not to mention libraries around Rome, as well as official government records.⁵⁰⁵

The knowledge of certain astronomical events, that occurred from May, 3 BC to December, 2 BC, have caused some scholars to seriously consider a later birth for Jesus.⁵⁰⁶

On May 19, 3 BC, there was a conjunction of Saturn and Mercury. On June 12, 3 BC, there was a conjunction of Saturn and Venus. On August 12, 3 BC, there was a "morning star" conjunction of Jupiter and Venus, in the constellation of Cancer.⁵⁰⁷

About an hour and a half before sunrise, on the morning of August 12, 3 BC, Jupiter (the "King Planet") rose as a morning star, and entered into a conjunction with Venus, which began a course of six other conjunctions with other planets and Regulus. The Wise Men would have perceived Venus as being symbolic of *Ishtar* (the Queen Mother, and the goddess of fertility), and could have indicated the birth of a king. When this conjunction occurred, the Sun (Supreme

⁴⁹⁹ Hoeh, Herman L. *The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday*. Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1968, pg. 26.

⁵⁰⁰ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 105.

⁵⁰¹ Jeffrey, Grant R. *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1988, pg. 241.

⁵⁰² Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pgs. 120-121.

⁵⁰³ Hitchcock, Mark. *Three Responses to Christmas*. (B-826) Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 3.

⁵⁰⁴ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 47.

⁵⁰⁵ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pgs. 34-35.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 16.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pgs. 12-13.

Father), the Moon (Mother), and *Mercury* (the messenger of the gods), all appeared in the constellation of Leo. About 20 days later, after the Sun entered the constellation of Virgo (the Virgin), Mercury had moved away to be involved in a conjunction with Venus, near the constellation of Leo, just as Jupiter was entering Leo.⁵⁰⁸

After these astronomical occurrences, Regulus came in close proximity to Jupiter on September 14, 3 BC, in the constellation of Leo, while the Sun was located in the constellation of Virgo; on February 17, 2 BC, with the moon positioned between the two, the lower part of which covered Regulus; and May 8, 2 BC, when the same arrangement occurred, but the top part of the moon was covering Regulus.⁵⁰⁹ The planet of Jupiter, in effect, traveled in a line, then over the star, made a circling maneuver, almost like a halo or crown, then continued on its trajectory.⁵¹⁰

But, early on the evening of June 17, 2 BC, an incredible astronomical event took place. Venus and Jupiter had positioned themselves so close together, that they almost appeared as one, and not two stars.⁵¹¹ This conjunction occurred along with a full moon, inside the constellation of Leo the lion, the main symbol of the Zodiac, which was the sign of the tribe of Judah. It was believed to be the "royal constellation," the main star of which was known as Regulus, which was known as the "King Star,"⁵¹² and is symbolically recognized as the "Star of the Messiah."⁵¹³

On August 27, 2 BC, there was a rare collection of the planets of Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury in the constellation of Leo. The moon had just entered Leo, and the sun was entering Virgo.⁵¹⁴ This happened near the end of a period of Roman celebrations (the dedication of the temple of the Sun and Moon).⁵¹⁵

After this regal gathering, Jupiter pulled away from the other three planets in a westward trajectory, and this is what the Wise Men followed, in the direction of Jerusalem. These astronomical events, happening at just this precise time, give us an explanation for the amazing claim, that the star stopped over the place where Jesus was located. That statement by Matthew was nothing more than a simple explanation for a complex astronomical concept involving the "retrogression and progression" of Jupiter, in relation to the speed of its orbit, and the velocity of the earth's rotation. So, it is a scientific fact that Jupiter did appear to hover over Bethlehem. This occurred before dawn, in the constellation of Virgo, on December 25, 2 BC, and it remained in that proximity for about six days.⁵¹⁶

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., pgs. 47-48.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., pgs. 51-52.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., pgs. 13-15.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., pg. 3.

⁵¹² Ibid., pg. 10.

⁵¹³ Ibid., pg. 50.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., pgs. 53-54.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., pg. 11.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., pgs. 56-58.

During this time, Augustus had been emperor for some 25 years (he had become emperor on January 16, 27 BC), and it was also the 750th year from the establishment of Rome.⁵¹⁷ To Rome, the conjunction of June 17th symbolized Roman domination, because Jupiter was the guardian of the Roman Empire, and Venus was said to be the mother of the Augustus family. Also, the full moon had special significance, and a sheep was sacrificed to Jupiter to commemorate the day.⁵¹⁸ In fact, all of these astronomical events seemed to confirm Rome's quest for world domination. However, there was a group of men in the east, known as Magi (or Wise Men), who felt that the divine mandate that was indicated, had nothing to do with Rome, and they made their way to Jerusalem.⁵¹⁹

THE WISE MEN

The Bible doesn't give us any indication as to the country of the Wise Men's origin, only that they came from the "east." Herodotus, the Greek historian, wrote that the Magi (from the plural *magus*, the root word for the word "magic")⁵²⁰ were a priestly group of men, who had been part of the six original tribes of the Medes, who lived in what is now Iran,⁵²¹ in the northeast section, known as Parthia.⁵²² They rose to prominence around 250 BC on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, which was said to be an area where some of the exiled people from the lost tribes of Israel were absorbed into the population.⁵²³ Their main pursuits were magic,⁵²⁴ the interpretation of dreams and astronomical occurrences, and because of their knowledge, were employed as teachers, advisors (Daniel 2:27) and consultants to royalty.⁵²⁵

It is assumed that the Magi probably learned about the things of God from the prophet Daniel,⁵²⁶ for according to Daniel 2:48, he was made chief over them.⁵²⁷ Around 500 BC,

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., pg. 7.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., pg. 11

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., pg. 15.

⁵²⁰ Chester, Craig. "The Star of Bethlehem." *Imprimis* (Hillsdale College), December 1993, pg. 2.

⁵²¹ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 24.

⁵²² Hitchcock, Mark. *Three Responses to Christmas*. (B-826) Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 15.

⁵²³ Dorothy, Charles V. "The Greatest Story Never Told!" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), December 1966: pg. 41.

⁵²⁴ Daniel, John. *Behold, There Came Wise Men*. Tyler, TX: JKI Publishing, 1994, pg. 1.

⁵²⁵ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 27.

⁵²⁶ Daniel, John. *Behold, There Came Wise Men*. Tyler, TX: JKI Publishing, 1994, pg. 3.

⁵²⁷ Dorothy, Charles V. "The Greatest Story Never Told!" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), December 1966: pg. 41.

Zerdascht (probably a form of the name Zoroaster, the chief Magi, who founded a religious movement that bore his name) said that a Messiah was coming, who would be born from a virgin, that his birth would be announced by a star, they would be the first to know, and that they should take him gifts. It is a logical assumption that this knowledge had to come from Daniel.⁵²⁸

The Bible doesn't say how many there were, however, some traditions say that there were twelve, because of the symbolic link to the twelve tribes of Israel; however, estimates and theories have ranged anywhere from 2 to 14. The most common depiction are of 3 kings, either because of a correlation to the three sons of Noah,⁵²⁹ or because there were three gifts given.⁵³⁰

They are sometimes called the Three Kings of Cologne, although the Bible doesn't refer to them as such. It was believed that they represented the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and their names were given as Caspar (or Gaspar, said to be the king of Tarsus), Balthasar (said to be the king of Sheba), and Melchior (said to be the king of Arabia).⁵³¹ Some depictions even feature one of them as being black, which is to represent his Ethiopian roots,⁵³² yet it must be pointed out that Ethiopia is in the south, and not the east.⁵³³ Another legend says that Melchior was a Persian, Balthasar an Arabian, and that Caspar was from India, The three have also been portrayed as one being old, one middle-aged, and one young.⁵³⁴ The bottom line is, that there is no concrete evidence as to who they were, and how many there were.

Matthew 2:2 says: "We have seen his star in the east," however, Biblical scholars believe that this has been mistranslated. In the original Greek, "in the east," has been translated from "*en te anatole*" yet,⁵³⁵ in other places, "the east," is translated as *anatolai*, which is the plural form of the word. So the line is more properly translated as: "We have seen his star appear in the first rays of dawn."⁵³⁶ This more accurate translation of "the rising of his star," better represents a statement from somebody who was accustomed to observing the regularity of

⁵²⁸ Daniel, John. *Behold, There Came Wise Men*. Tyler, TX: JKI Publishing, 1994, pg. 7.

⁵²⁹ Dorothy, Charles V. "The Greatest Story Never Told!" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), December 1966: pg. 41.

⁵³⁰ Zindler, Frank. *The U.F.O. of Bethlehem*. Austin, TX: American Atheist Press, 1991, pgs. 2-3.

⁵³¹ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 17.

⁵³² MacArthur Jr., John F. *God With Us: The Miracle of Christmas*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989, pg. 100.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, pg. 102.

⁵³⁴ Hitchcock, Mark. *Three Responses to Christmas*. (B-826) Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 15.

⁵³⁵ Berry, George Ricker. *The Interlinear KJV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English*. Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollinsPublishers, ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1897, pg. 3.

⁵³⁶ Keller, Werner. *The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1956, pgs. 390-391.

astronomical movements, especially the unique movement of a particular star that prompted them to journey to Jerusalem.⁵³⁷

Matthew writes about two different sightings of the Star of Bethlehem. The first, when it rose in the east, and the second time, after they reached Bethlehem. There is no indication as to what the time lapse was.⁵³⁸ Balaam prophesied in Numbers 24:17 about a future star that will appear: "...there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel..." The fact that the star was seen rising in the east, and was referred to as "morning star," may be reflected in the Revelation 22:16 reference to Jesus as "the bright and morning star."⁵³⁹

For those who believe the Star of Bethlehem to be a miraculous, supernatural act, as opposed to an astronomical occurrence, remember Genesis 1:1, which said that God created the heavens and the earth. Psalm 97:6 says: "The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory." You may not know it, but the earliest known Zodiac chart came from the Hebrews, and is known as the Mazzaroth. Psalm 147:4 says: "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names."⁵⁴⁰ The Mazzaroth actually represented a prophetic revelation of Jesus before it became Satanically perverted.⁵⁴¹ For instance, Virgo, the Virgin (known in Hebrew as Bethulah), represented the prophecy given in Isaiah 7:14 and Zechariah 1:8, that Jesus would be born of a virgin.⁵⁴² And Leo the Lion (known in Hebrew as *Arieh*) was the symbol of the tribe of Judah, and it was foretold that he would reign as a mighty lion.⁵⁴³

Since Roman astrologers had also witnessed the celestial display, their interpretation was made to shed favorable light on Rome, so Herod wanted to know what the interpretation of the Magi was. Once he found out, and how serious they were in finding the child, Herod made the decision to kill all male children under the age of two to prevent this future king from becoming a man.⁵⁴⁴

In the course of analyzing all of the astronomical activity, it must be noted that the Wise Men didn't show up in Jerusalem at the time Jesus was born, as tradition would lead us to believe. The fact of the matter is, by the time of their arrival, Jesus had been circumcised, presented at the Temple, and was back home. In Matthew 2:11, in the original Greek, Jesus was identified as *paidion* (child), not a *brephos* (baby), which would seem to indicate the passing of many months.⁵⁴⁵ The 4th century Egyptian papyrus Bodmer V of the *Protevangelion*

⁵³⁷ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 30.

⁵³⁸ Chester, Craig. "The Star of Bethlehem." *Imprimis* (Hillsdale College), December 1993, pg. 2.

⁵³⁹ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 46.

⁵⁴⁰ Lawrence, Troy. *The Secret Message of the Zodiac: What You Don't Know Might Hurt You*. San Bernardino: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1990, pg. 14.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 55.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, pg. 20.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, pgs. 52, 56.

⁵⁴⁴ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 31

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 55.

of James claims that the Wise Men saw Jesus "standing by the side of his mother Mary."⁵⁴⁶ Plus, Matthew also indicates that the Wise Men went to a house, and not a stable or cave.⁵⁴⁷ And in fact, the date most likely for this seems to have been around December 25, 2 BC.⁵⁴⁸

The gifts that the Wise Men left seem to have prophetic significance as to who Jesus was, and what He would be. Gold, the most precious of all metals, to recognize his place as a king; frankincense, a fragrant gum resin which was burned as an incense, and symbolized His future priesthood; and myrrh, an aromatic resin produced by the small thorny trees of the Commiphora family, that was used in perfumes, anointing oil, medicinal purposes, and embalming, which prophetically symbolized death.⁵⁴⁹ Also, myrrh was mixed with wine to make an anesthetic, and this was the mixture that was offered to Jesus while He hung on the cross—which He refused.⁵⁵⁰ The *Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament* said that in the east, it was a custom for people who sought an audience with a king, to present gifts.⁵⁵¹

When the Wise Men left Jesus, instead of reporting back to Herod, to tell him where Jesus was, they went back home, where, according to tradition, they built a chapel in honor of Jesus in the town of Resaieh, in northern Iran, that is said to still exist.⁵⁵² Another story indicates that they abdicated their thrones, giving all they owned to the poor, and then began to proclaim the word about the coming King. Forty years later, the Apostle Thomas ran into them in India, where he baptized them, and ordained them as priests. They were later killed for their faith, and the three martyrs were buried together. Empress Helena found what she believed to be their bones, and took them to the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople. During the First Crusade, their remains were taken to Milan, where Barbarossa captured them and had them put in the Cathedral at Cologne.⁵⁵³

LOOKING AT THE OTHER EVIDENCE

It should be noted, at this point, that one consideration that needs to be made, in regard to the calculation of when Jesus was born, is how our present method of calculating years of

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., pg. 229.

⁵⁴⁷ Hitchcock, Mark. *Three Responses to Christmas*. (B-826) Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 3.

⁵⁴⁸ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 67.

⁵⁴⁹ Maier, Paul L. *In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and the Early Church*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, pg. 50.

⁵⁵⁰ MacArthur Jr., John F. *God With Us: The Miracle of Christmas*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989, pg. 113.

⁵⁵¹ Clarke, Adam. *Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament*. Philadelphia, PA: J. Fagan & Son, 1814, pg. 25.

⁵⁵² Daniel, John. *Behold, There Came Wise Men*. Tyler, TX: JKI Publishing, 1994, pg. 15.

⁵⁵³ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 18.

time was established. In 532, Dionysius Exiguus⁵⁵⁴ (also known as Dionysius the Little or Denys le Petit),⁵⁵⁵ a 6th century Scythian monk and Roman Catholic abbot, labeled the years prior to Christ as *Ante Christum* or "Before Christ" (BC); and the years after as *Anno Domini* or "In the Year of Our Lord (AD)." Where astronomers would put a year between 1 BC and AD 1, Dionysius mistakenly did not. He established the Roman year 753 AUC (*ad urbe condita*, or "from the foundation of the city") as 1 BC, when he said Christ was born. Thus 754 became AD 1, and so on.⁵⁵⁶ The fact that the Roman emperor Augustus had ruled under his family name of Octavian for four years also eluded him.⁵⁵⁷

A theory that contributed to the 4 BC birth scenario, stemmed from Daniel 9:25, which says: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks..." The decree to do that came during the seventh year that Artaxerxes I, the King of Persia, was on the throne (Ezra 7:8), or 457 BC. Multiplying the 69 weeks, times 7 days, equals 483 years; which, when added to 457 BC, works out to AD 27, which indicates when Jesus would have started His ministry. It has been commonly accepted that he began preaching in the autumn, after His baptism, since His ministry lasted 3½ years, and had ended in the spring. So, when Luke reported that He was around thirty, then He had to have been born around the end of summer, or early fall of 4 BC This calculation takes into consideration the addition of another year to compensate for the lack of a zero year.⁵⁵⁸ But a 4 BC date doesn't fit with the astronomical facts.

Luke writes that the ministry of Jesus began during the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Jesus was "about 30 years of age." Since he became emperor August 19, AD14, then his 15th year was between AD 27 to AD 28, which would make the birth of Jesus in 3 B.C.⁵⁵⁹

If Jesus began teaching in the fall of AD 28, then his first Passover would have been on the 14th of Nisan, AD 29. It was at this time, that Jesus prophesied that He would be killed, but rise from the dead in three days. Not thinking that Jesus was talking about Himself, the people thought He was referring to the Temple, and they responded by saying (John 2:19-20): "Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" Various historical records, including the writings of Josephus, indicated that Herod the Great initiated the

⁵⁵⁴ Keller, Werner. *The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1956, pg. 393.

⁵⁵⁵ Roddy, Lee, Charles E. Sellier Jr. *In Search of Historic Jesus*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1979, pg. 32.

⁵⁵⁶ Armstrong, Garner Ted. "Was Christ Born 'B.C.?' " *Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), September/October 1972: pg. 31.

⁵⁵⁷ Keller, Werner. *The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1956, pg. 393.

⁵⁵⁸ Stump, Keith W. "Jesus' Birth: The Untold Story." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November/December 1985: pg. 21.

⁵⁵⁹ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 74.

restoration of the Temple in 18 BC. Adding 46 years to that date, remembering that there is only 1 year between 1 BC and AD 1, takes us to AD 29.⁵⁶⁰

Luke writes that Jesus was born during the reign of emperor Caesar Augustus (who ruled 63 BC to AD 14), when Publius Sulpicius Quirinius (also known as Quirinius or Cyrenius) was the governor of Syria, and during a census.⁵⁶¹ However, it had been formerly stated by historians and scholars, they had been unable to find any evidence of such a census from 7 - 1 BC. They believed that Luke had gotten his facts mixed up with the one that took place around AD 6-7, when Quirinius was governor.⁵⁶² However, coins indicate that he held that position from 6 - 4 BC; and Josephus wrote that he succeeded Sentius Saturninus (who served 4 - 2 BC), and assumed the role again from 2 BC to about AD 1. This has been verified by an inscription discovered near Rome in 1764.⁵⁶³ However, another source claims that he ruled as governor of Syria from 7 - 4 BC, and from 4 - 1 BC.⁵⁶⁴

The *Chronicle of John Malalas* (491- 578), who was a historian in Antioch, Syria, indicated that there was an order for a census by Augustus in July, 5 BC.⁵⁶⁵ It says on pages 32-33: "In the 39th year and the 10th month of his reign he commanded the taking of a census of all his lands, including all that the Romans held during the consulship of Agrippa II, and Donatus. And all the earth under the Romans was registered by Eumenes and Attalus, the Roman senators."⁵⁶⁶

It turns out that the census that Luke referred to in his writings, was the registration to confer the title of *Pater Patriae* ("Father of the Country"), Rome's highest honor, on Caesar Augustus, which was given to him on February 5, 2 BC, and it was this registration, which took place between August and October of 3 BC, that Luke refers to when he writes about the tax of Cyrenius.⁵⁶⁷ Josephus wrote that "the whole Jewish nation took an oath to be faithful to Caesar."⁵⁶⁸ So we find that the men Luke wrote about, were in power in 3 BC, and there was an organized registration of people that same year. Although Luke reports the purpose for it as being for taxation, this may have been a statement of opinion, based on his anti-Roman sentiments, and what he saw as the ultimate purpose for it.

Another indication that points against Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem to just be taxed is that, if that were the only reason, only Joseph, the head of the household would have to

⁵⁶⁰ Jeffrey, Grant R. *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1988, pg. 244.

⁵⁶¹ Roddy, Lee, Charles E. Sellier Jr. *In Search of Historic Jesus*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1979, pg. 30.

⁵⁶² Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 181.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, pgs. 169-170.

⁵⁶⁴ Jeffrey, Grant R. *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1988, pg. 240.

⁵⁶⁵ Hoeh, Herman L. *The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday*. Pasadena, CA: Worldwide Church of God, 1968, pg. 26.

⁵⁶⁶ Dorothy, Charles V. "The Greatest Story Never Told!" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), December 1966: pg. 27.

⁵⁶⁷ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 75.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 188.

go. Since Judea was only a protectorate of Rome, they had not yet begun direct taxation— only a tribute for Herod, who collected it in his own way, which was to have it coincide with the end of the Jewish harvest, and the end of their civil year, when agricultural produce and tithes were paid. The reason there was no room at the inn, was not because of this registration, it was because of the observance of the holy days. Even though Bethlehem was only five miles south of Jerusalem, it was still close enough to be crowded also. In fact, Josephus wrote that over two million Jews went to Jerusalem for Passover. So, Joseph and Mary, in the 7th month of Tishri, were in Bethlehem to observe the Feast of the Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of the Tabernacles.⁵⁶⁹

It is highly unlikely that such a registration would have been ordered in the winter, when travel would have been difficult because of the wind, rain and cold. It is more logical to assume that it would have taken place in September or October, after the harvest.⁵⁷⁰

And, with Luke's mention that the shepherds that night were attending their flocks in the fields (Luke 2:8), that seems to eliminate the possibility of Jesus being born during the winter. The Talmud indicates,⁵⁷¹ that it wasn't the Jewish custom to have the flocks out in the field near the end of October,⁵⁷² because according to the Song of Solomon 2:11, and Ezra 10:9, 13, it began the cold and rainy season. The sheep would be put out at Passover, and then taken back in after the first rain, which was early in the month of Marchesvan (or Bul, which corresponds to October/November).⁵⁷³ Some researchers have suggested that this was "lambing time," when the sheep would have been fenced in. However, the Jewish Mishnah said that some sheep around Bethlehem were to be used for Temple sacrifice, and thus would not have been sheltered. Visitors to the area today, have reported seeing flocks there in the fields during the Christmas season,⁵⁷⁴ thus the argument could be made, that the exception to the rule, would be, if there was a mild winter, there could have been sheep in the fields. However, general principal would dictate that there were no sheep in the fields in December, thereby nullifying a December or winter birth.⁵⁷⁵

Another method for calculating the birth of Jesus, has been to use a correlation with the conception of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-13). Luke wrote that the priest Zacharias, was of the "course of *Abia*" (*Abijah*), which was the eighth of 24 priestly courses, or shifts, that were held in the Temple. The course changed every week, on the Sabbath. Thus, each course was held twice a year. Based on a 4 BC birth scenario, he would have been in the Temple, Sivan 12-18

⁵⁶⁹ Martin, Ernest. "When Was Jesus Born?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), September/October 1972: pg. 18.

⁵⁷⁰ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 3.

⁵⁷¹ Keller, Werner. *The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1956, pg. 394.

⁵⁷² Lloyd, James. *Beyond Babylon: The Last Week of the World*. Jacksonville, OR: Christian Media, 1995, pg. 17.

⁵⁷³ Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. Pasadena, CA: Ambassador College, Worldwide Church of God, 1970, pg. 8.

⁵⁷⁴ Maier, Paul L. *In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and the Early Church*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, pgs. 28-29.

⁵⁷⁵ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 79.

(June 13-19, 5 BC), and allowing time for him to get home, would place the conception of John around Sivan 23 (June 24), and by extension, the conception of Jesus on Tebeth 1 (December 25, 5 BC). John's birth would then be calculated to be on Nisan 7 (March 28, 4 BC), and the birth of Jesus, according to Luke, six months later, on Tishri 15 (September 29, 4 BC).⁵⁷⁶ This was the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles.⁵⁷⁷ This would place his circumcision, when he was eight days old, on the last day of the feast.⁵⁷⁸

This theory is bolstered with the following verse in Zechariah 14:16, which says: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles,"⁵⁷⁹ as well as the statement in John 1:14 (in the Greek), which said that he "tabernacled among us," which has been interpreted to indicate that he was born during the Feast of the Tabernacles.⁵⁸⁰

However, a September 29, 4 BC birth on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles does not mesh with the astronomical evidence that has been laid out.

Another 4 BC theory based on the same premise has Zacharias serving in the Temple from Iyar 27 to Sivan 5 (June 1- 8, 5 BC), but he had to stay in Jerusalem until Sivan 12 (June 15th) to observe Pentecost. So, it was basically right after he got home, that conception took place, or around Sivan 16. By adding a normal human gestation period of 280 days, would take us to Nisan 1 (March 27, 4 BC); and adding six months would then give us Tishri 1, or a mid-September birth date.⁵⁸¹ Even though the date is right on, the problem is that our astronomical activity rules out 4 BC.

However, when we apply this concept to a 3 BC birth scenario, things start to gel. The beginning of the priestly courses was on Nisan 1 (March 29, 4 BC), so the eighth course would have occurred from May 19 to May 26. Shortly thereafter, Elizabeth would have conceived John, and he would have been born about March 10, 3 BC; which would place the birth of Jesus at mid-September, 3 BC.⁵⁸²

Besides the astronomical references in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, it is believed that Revelation 12:1-5 gives us a symbolic description of the astronomical events which occurred at the time Jesus was born.⁵⁸³ If the information is to be taken literally, then the

⁵⁷⁶ McLain, C. E. *The True Birthdate of Jesus: It's Prophetic Significance* (B-013). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1974, pgs. 5-6.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 9.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 10.

⁵⁷⁹ Hutchings, N. W. "Christ Was Conceived on Christmas Day." (L-778) *Prophetic Observer*. (Southwest Radio Church), December 1995: pg. 4.

⁵⁸⁰ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pgs. 79-80.

⁵⁸¹ Martin, Ernest. "When Was Jesus Born?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), September/October 1972: pg. 18.

⁵⁸² Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pgs. 77-78.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, pg. 81.

references to the sun and the moon, and it being a "sign" and a "wonder" must be seriously considered. The word "wonder," in the original Greek, is the same word which indicated a "sign of the Zodiac." From August 27th to September 15th, the sun was found in the sign of Virgo ("midbodied," or "clothing her"), the only female in the Zodiac, which correlates to the fact that Jesus was to be born of a virgin.⁵⁸⁴ A thorough analysis indicates that the only time that Jesus could have been born "under the feet" of Virgo, would have been from 6:15 PM to 7:45 PM on September 11, 3 BC,⁵⁸⁵ or Tishri 1 on the Jewish calendar, which is *Rosh HaShannah*, the Day of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25), the Jewish New Year (as far as the commerce and governmental fiscal year),⁵⁸⁶ when all the kings in Judah were crowned.⁵⁸⁷ According to calculations made from the Jewish Talmud; Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Joseph, and Samuel, were all born on *Rosh HaShannah*. Also on that day, Joseph was freed from prison in Egypt to become the viceroy of Egypt.⁵⁸⁸

Even if you think the evidence which I have presented here is too circumstantial, you have to admit that the evidence is overwhelming against the notion that Jesus was born on December 25th, and that He was born in the fall, and most likely in the month of September.

Let me throw one more thing at you. Besides the commandment by Jesus to observe the communion in remembrance of him, we are also charged with observing the Sabbath. They are the only two days that Gentiles are expected to honor.⁵⁸⁹ However, Leviticus 23 also specified seven feasts that were to be observed by the Jewish people. Exodus 31:13-17 said that these holy days were a special sign between God and his people. It now seems that these days were actually prophetic indications of future events (Colossians 2:16-17).⁵⁹⁰ To illustrate the point, let me briefly cover the Hebrew Calendar, and these Jewish Feast Days.

⁵⁸⁴ Martin, Ernest L. *101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1993, pg. 58.

⁵⁸⁵ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pg. 86.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 90.

⁵⁸⁷ Martin, Ernest L. *101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1993, pg. 59.

⁵⁸⁸ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pgs. 100-101.

⁵⁸⁹ Jeffrey, Grant R. *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1988, pg. 44.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 242.

HEBREW CALENDAR⁵⁹¹

The Hebrew Calendar is directed by the position of the moon, while the Gregorian calendar relied on the cycle of the sun.⁵⁹²

- 1) Nisan (or Ahib), March - April
- 2) Zif (or Iyar), April - May
- 3) Sivan, May - June
- 4) Tammuz, June - July
- 5) Ab (or Av), July - August
- 6) Elul (Ellul), August - September⁵⁹³
- 7) Tishri, September - October
- 8) Bul (Marheshvan or Heshvan), October - November⁵⁹⁴
- 9) Chisleu (Kislev), November - December⁵⁹⁵
- 10) Tebeth, December - January
- 11) Sebat (Shebat), January - February⁵⁹⁶
- 12) Adar, February - March

THE JEWISH FEAST DAYS⁵⁹⁷

Passover: Nisan 14 (*Pesah*)⁵⁹⁸ When God spared the lives of the firstborn Hebrews, causing the angel of death to "pass over" the houses that had lamb's blood spread around door posts.⁵⁹⁹ Jesus was crucified on the day of the Passover.⁶⁰⁰

Unleavened Bread: Nisan 15 (which continued till Nisan 21)⁶⁰¹ Was in remembrance of the exodus from Egypt.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., pg. 46.

⁵⁹² Ibid., pg. 38.

⁵⁹³ Spier, Arthur. *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*. Nanuet, NY: Feldheim Publishers, 1986, pg. 10.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., pg. 10.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., pg. 10.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid., pg. 10.

⁵⁹⁷ Jeffrey, Grant R. *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1988, pg. 44.

⁵⁹⁸ Spier, Arthur. *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*. Nanuet, NY: Feldheim Publishers, 1986, pg. 10.

⁵⁹⁹ Miller, D. A. *Forbidden Knowledge or Is It...* Fountain Valley, CA: Joy Publishing, 1991, pg. 41.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid., pg. 51.

⁶⁰¹ YNCA. *Biblical Holy Days: Yesterday - Today - Forever*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1991, pg. 13.

⁶⁰² Miller, D. A. *Forbidden Knowledge or Is It...* Fountain Valley, CA: Joy Publishing, 1991, pg. 59.

First Fruits: Nisan 17 (Nisan 16)⁶⁰³ When the Israelites got to the Promised Land, they were to give glory to God for the harvest by having the High Priest bring one sheaf of the first harvest and wave it before God.⁶⁰⁴ There seems to be some question as to when this day was to be observed. It was to take place the Sabbath after the Passover,⁶⁰⁵ however, in the belief that the Sabbath referred in Leviticus 23:11 was that of Unleavened Bread, so then First Fruits would have to be celebrated on Nisan 16, as evidenced by the writings of Josephus, and the interpretation of the Pharisees. But the Sadducees believed it referred to the seventh-day Sabbath, which made for a different day every year. The general consensus, is that it is to be celebrated "the Sunday after the Sabbath following Passover."⁶⁰⁶ With the statement in 1 Corinthians 15:20: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." This feast is considered a prophetic celebration of the resurrection of Christ, so three days after the Passover on Nisan 14, the Crucifixion, would be Nisan 17 (while the Sunday after the Sabbath would be Nisan 18). This is also the day that Noah's Ark settled on dry ground.⁶⁰⁷

Pentecost: Sivan 6 (*Shavuoth* - Festival of Weeks)⁶⁰⁸ Was to be celebrated 50 days from the weekly Sabbath during Unleavened Bread.⁶⁰⁹ This was the day that God sent his Holy Spirit, and represents the birth of the Church, which was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. After the Temple was destroyed in AD 70, the rabbis began to teach that God gave the Law of Moses to the Israelites 50 days after they crossed through the Red Sea. Though there seems to be a correlation, the Bible doesn't concretely indicate that.⁶¹⁰

Trumpets: Tishri 1 (*Rosh HaShanah* - New Year)⁶¹¹ This feast represented the call for repentance, when man was judged, and the nation of Israel is to be regathered among the nations of the world. It is associated with the blowing of the shofar (ram's horn), as is *Yom Kippur*, however, this feast refers to the ram that was sacrificed in place of Isaac. The left horn of this ram was blown when they received the law, and was known as the "first trump," while the right horn is the one blown on *Rosh HaShanah*, and is known as the "last trump," and was believed to be a prophetic indication of when the rapture would be.⁶¹²

⁶⁰³ Spier, Arthur. *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*. Nanuet, NY: Feldheim Publishers, 1986, pg. 10.

⁶⁰⁴ Miller, D. A. *Forbidden Knowledge or Is It...* Fountain Valley, CA: Joy Publishing, 1991, pg. 63.

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 37.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pgs. 64-66.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 66.

⁶⁰⁸ Spier, Arthur. *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*. Nanuet, NY: Feldheim Publishers, 1986, pg. 10.

⁶⁰⁹ YNCA. *Biblical Holy Days: Yesterday - Today - Forever*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1991, pg. 13.

⁶¹⁰ Miller, D. A. *Forbidden Knowledge or Is It...* Fountain Valley, CA: Joy Publishing, 1991, pgs. 71-75.

⁶¹¹ Spier, Arthur. *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*. Nanuet, NY: Feldheim Publishers, 1986, pg. 10.

⁶¹² Miller, D. A. *Forbidden Knowledge or Is It...* Fountain Valley, CA: Joy Publishing, 1991, pgs. 81-84.

Atonement: Tishri 10 (*Yom Kippur*)⁶¹³ The most holy day to the Jews, when the ritual offering a sacrifice to atone for the sins of Israel took place. On this day, God seals the book opened on *Rosh HaShanah*, when a person can have his name written in the Book of Life.⁶¹⁴ This may be a prophetic indication of the second coming.⁶¹⁵

Tabernacles: Tishri 15 (*Succoth*)⁶¹⁶ This is when the Jews give thanks to God for providing for them after they left Egypt.⁶¹⁷ It was the day that Solomon dedicated the original Temple,⁶¹⁸ and when people were to leave their homes and congregate together.⁶¹⁹ It is also considered by some researchers to be a prophetic indication of the millennium.⁶²⁰

It would stand to reason, that if the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ were represented by prophetic feast days, then the same could be said for the Feast of Trumpets in connection to the birth of Jesus, since a majority of the evidence seems to point in that direction anyway. So, that gives us the following chronology of Jesus.⁶²¹

September 11, 3 BC, Jesus is born
 September 18, 3 BC, circumcision ritual takes place
 October 20/21, 3 BC, temple dedication/return to Nazareth
 Spring/Summer, 2 BC, moved to Bethlehem
 December 25, 2 BC, Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt
 January 28, 1 BC, King Herod dies
 October/November, AD 27, Jesus is baptized
 Passover, AD 28, Jesus begins his ministry
 April 5, AD 30, Jesus is crucified
 April 8, AD 30, Jesus is resurrected

SATURNALIA

Hopefully, by now, you're convinced that Jesus wasn't born on December 25th. So where did they get that date? You better strap on your seat belt, because I'm about to take you on a real wild ride.

⁶¹³ Spier, Arthur. *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*. Nanuet, NY: Feldheim Publishers, 1986, pg. 10.

⁶¹⁴ Miller, D. A. *Forbidden Knowledge or Is It...* Fountain Valley, CA: Joy Publishing, 1991, pgs. 91-92.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 105.

⁶¹⁶ Spier, Arthur. *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*. Nanuet, NY: Feldheim Publishers, 1986, pg. 10.

⁶¹⁷ Miller, D. A. *Forbidden Knowledge or Is It...* Fountain Valley, CA: Joy Publishing, 1991, pg. 107.

⁶¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 110.

⁶¹⁹ Robertson, R. R. "Come Out Of Her My People." *The Overcomer*. (R. W. Stair).

⁶²⁰ Miller, D. A. *Forbidden Knowledge or Is It...* Fountain Valley, CA: Joy Publishing, 1991, pg. 111.

⁶²¹ Martin, Ernest L. *The Star That Astonished the World*. Portland, OR: ASK (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge) Publications, 1996, pgs. 229-230.

According to the book *On Roman Time: The Codex Calendar of 354* by Salzman, December 17-23 (some sources claim the festival ran until the 24th)⁶²² was the Roman holiday of *Saturnalia* to honor the god *Saturn* (god of agriculture).⁶²³ According to tradition, the celebration was established by Romulus, under the name *Brumalia*, to honor the goddess *Bruma* (which means "winter solstice"). In 274, December 25th was set aside as the pagan festival to celebrate the birthday of *Sol Invictus*, the unconquered sun, representing the birth of the new sun, as well as the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year.⁶²⁴ It doesn't take much of an imagination to see that *Saturnalia* was the direct descendant of the festival of *Bacchus* that was celebrated at the same time of the year in Babylon.⁶²⁵

The second day of the celebration was *Eponalia*, the feast to honor *Epona*, Celtic goddess who was the patron of horses. The third day was *Opalia*, the feast to honor *Ops*, the harvest goddess of fertility and success, who was the consort of Saturn. And December 21st, the longest night of the year, known as the winter solstice, was also observed.⁶²⁶ The Roman feast of *Brumalia* took place on the final day.⁶²⁷

During *Saturnalia*, no business was transacted,⁶²⁸ schools were closed, wars were temporarily stopped,⁶²⁹ and social status was put aside as servants and slaves were served by the heads of the house.⁶³⁰ Somebody would masquerade as a king dressed in red robes, in a symbolic representation of *Saturn*.⁶³¹

During the 7-day festival, public places were decorated with various types of evergreens.⁶³² Tertullian wrote that gifts were exchanged. Romans exchanged⁶³³ gifts in a custom called *Strenae*, which was a mid-winter ritual in which they exchanged twigs from a

⁶²² Bowder, Diana. *The Age of Constantine and Julian*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., Barnes & Noble, 1978, pg. 152.

⁶²³ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 125.

⁶²⁴ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 10.

⁶²⁵ Meyer, Jacob O. *Christmas As the Bible Teaches It*. Bethel, PA: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1982, pg. 6.

⁶²⁶ Dunwich, Gerina. *The Wicca Book of Days: Legend and Lore for Every Day of the Year*. New York, NY: Carol Publishing Group, Citadel Press, 1995, pg. 27.

⁶²⁷ Stump, Keith W. "Jesus' Birth: The Untold Story." *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November/December 1985: pg. 27.

⁶²⁸ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 30.

⁶²⁹ Wachtel, Diane. "Diane's Corner." *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), December 1995: pg. 1.

⁶³⁰ Valiente, Doreen. *An ABC of Witchcraft*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing Inc., 1973, pg. 358.

⁶³¹ "Did You Know?" *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), December 1995: pg. 9.

⁶³² Wachtel, Diane. "Diane's Corner." *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), December 1995: pg. 1.

⁶³³ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 12.

sacred grove in honor of the goddess *Strenia*.⁶³⁴ The most common gifts were candles. And children were given clay dolls, which represented the human sacrifices that had been made to *Saturn* in the past.⁶³⁵

In 274 the Roman emperor Aurelian made the sun god the primary deity of Rome.⁶³⁶ The pagan monotheistic religion of *Sol Invictus* originated in Syria, and on December 25th, his followers celebrated the festival of *natalis solis invicti* or the "birth of the unconquered sun."⁶³⁷

It is the birthday of the sun god that was Christianized by the Roman Catholic Church to be the birthday of the son of God.⁶³⁸ In addition, December 25th, which the Julian calendar incorrectly identified as the winter solstice (it is actually December 21st), was also the birthday of the Persian god *Mithra* (the god of light and truth), known as the Sun of Righteousness; *Horus*, the son of *Osiris* (the Egyptian sun god) and *Isis* (the queen of heaven),⁶³⁹ as well as *Bracchus*, *Adonis*, *Jupiter*, *Tammuz*, and *Saturn*.⁶⁴⁰

In 354, after December 25th was officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as the day Jesus was born,⁶⁴¹ its observance soon spread to Constantinople in (379), Cappadocia (380), Antioch (386), and Alexandria (431).⁶⁴² Around 394, the Mass of Christ was first observed on December 24th.⁶⁴³ Christmas Eve is known to the Catholic Church as the "Vigil of our Blessed Lord Jesus," and Christmas is known as the "Feast of the Nativity."⁶⁴⁴ Soon, Christians everywhere adopted that day, except for the Eastern churches, who celebrate the day on

⁶³⁴ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 37.

⁶³⁵ YNCA. *Ministry: Is Christmas A Biblical Observance?* Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1994, pg. 3.

⁶³⁶ Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pg. 7.

⁶³⁷ Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1983, pg. 367.

⁶³⁸ Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. Pasadena, CA: Ambassador College, Worldwide Church of God, 1970, pg. 10.

⁶³⁹ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pgs. 127-128.

⁶⁴⁰ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 5.

⁶⁴¹ Keller, Werner. *The Bible as History: A Confirmation of the Book of Books*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, Inc., 1956, pg. 394.

⁶⁴² Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pg. 5.

⁶⁴³ Chick, Jack T. *The Force* ("Alberto" Part 4) (The Crusaders, Volume 15). Chino, CA: Chick Publications, 1983, pg. 26.

⁶⁴⁴ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pgs. 657-658.

January 6th, and it was made into an official Church observance in the fifth century.⁶⁴⁵ The Catholic Encyclopedia admitted that it was not among the early church observances.⁶⁴⁶

January 6th has come to be known as the Feast of Epiphany (from the Greek, meaning "manifestation"), and is said to mark the arrival of the Wise Men from the east, the baptism of Jesus, when He changed water into wine at the wedding celebration at Cana,⁶⁴⁷ and the "manifestation of Christ to the gentiles."⁶⁴⁸ However, it actually marked the date of the pagan festival in honor of *Aion*, the god of eternity.⁶⁴⁹

According to an ancient Syrian Christian source, the reason why the birth of Jesus was moved from January 6th to December 25th, was that it "was a custom of heathen to celebrate on the same twenty-fifth of December the birthday of the sun at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnized on that day and the festival of the Epiphany on the sixth of January."⁶⁵⁰

By 529, December 25th had become a civic holiday, with the emperor Justinian prohibiting the conducting of business. In 567, the Council of Tours mandated that the 12 days from December 25th to Epiphany on January 6th, to be holy.⁶⁵¹

THE FACTS ABOUT BETHLEHEM

It was generally accepted by the Catholic Church, that Mary gave birth to Jesus in a limestone cave in Bethlehem that was used to shelter animals, even though the Bible never indicated that.⁶⁵²

In 325, Constantine built a church on the location of a grotto that had been identified as the place where Jesus was born by Justin Martyr in AD 150, and in the early 200s by Origen, a

⁶⁴⁵ Rives, Richard M. *Too Long in the Sun*. Charlotte, NC: Partakers Publications, 1999, pg. 133.

⁶⁴⁶ Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. Pasadena, CA: Ambassador College, Worldwide Church of God, 1970, pg. 6.

⁶⁴⁷ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 16.

⁶⁴⁸ Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pg. 11.

⁶⁴⁹ Bowder, Diana. *The Age of Constantine and Julian*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., Barnes & Noble, 1978, pg. 157.

⁶⁵⁰ Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pg. 9.

⁶⁵¹ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 5.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, pg. 47.

church leader.⁶⁵³ Though that fact can not be proven, the location was known to be a pagan gathering place for the worship of *Adonis*, who was Aphrodite's lover.⁶⁵⁴ In 135, after the Roman emperor Hadrian put down the Jewish rebellion led by Bar-Kokhba, he began a campaign to defile all of the holy places, which included the establishment of a grove dedicated to *Adonis* over the traditional site of the birth of Jesus.⁶⁵⁵ Women came here on a particular day every year to mourn the death of *Adonis*.⁶⁵⁶

Known as the Holy Grotto, it was destroyed, then rebuilt in the 5th or 6th century by the emperor Justinian, and it is now known as the Church of the Nativity.⁶⁵⁷ It is the oldest church still being used. There are steps that lead down to a 13' X 33' cave directly under the altar.⁶⁵⁸ The spot where Jesus was believed to have been born on is identified by a 14-point silver star imbedded on the floor which bears the Latin inscription: *Hic de Maria Virgine, Jesus Christus natus est* ("Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary").⁶⁵⁹

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS TREE

According to the ancient myth, *Loki*, the great snake of lightning, possessed fire which had been stolen from the heavens, and hurled it to earth, where it destroyed everything it hit.⁶⁶⁰ Thus the fire it created was illegal to possess, and for a while, fear prevented people from utilizing it, because they were worried that they would be punished for using the stolen fire.⁶⁶¹ Since lightning strikes, as well as volcanic eruptions were rare occurrences, the fire that was obtained was put in a place where it could be kept burning permanently. The guardian of this

⁶⁵³ Maier, Paul L. *In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and the Early Church*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, pg. 39.

⁶⁵⁴ Bowder, Diana. *The Age of Constantine and Julian*. New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., Barnes & Noble, 1978, pg. 63.

⁶⁵⁵ MacArthur Jr., John F. *God With Us: The Miracle of Christmas*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989, pg. 39.

⁶⁵⁶ Grant, Michael. *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1993, pg. 206.

⁶⁵⁷ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 665.

⁶⁵⁸ Maier, Paul L. *In the Fullness of Time: A Historian Looks at Christmas, Easter, and the Early Church*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991, pg. 35.

⁶⁵⁹ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 48.

⁶⁶⁰ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 5.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 8.

fire, in charge of making sure that the flames were kept alive, was the shaman of the tribe, and he was known as the "keeper of the flame."⁶⁶²

As man left the warmer climates, and migrated northward to Europe and Asia, they began experiencing the harshness of the seasons, and the cold of winter. They thought the world was dying because the leaves were falling from the trees, and that the sun was dying because the days were shorter. Because it was strange to them, it gave root to fear and superstition. It was perceived as a punishment for stealing fire, so, once a year, they sought to receive forgiveness by hanging gifts on a holy tree, and setting it on fire as a sacrifice, to symbolically return the fire.⁶⁶³

The original tree of fire, which became known as a holy tree, was the oak, as evidenced by the earliest known depiction of the Christmas tree, which is adorned with red ornaments, symbolizing fire. Later, the evergreen tree became holy, because of the fact that it stayed green through the winter season, and was more plentiful.⁶⁶⁴

During the winter solstice, the Druids worshipped the oak, as well as the fir tree. They tied apples to the branches to thank the god *Odin* for their bounty, and also hung lighted candles from them to honor the sun god.⁶⁶⁵

The Bible even talks about this tree worship, which some scholars believe originated with the Tree of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden.⁶⁶⁶ It says in Jeremiah 10:2-5: "Thus saith the Lord, 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 in vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."

Egypt (palm), Babylonia, and Rome (fir), all used trees during their pagan mid-winter celebrations.⁶⁶⁷ The first evergreen tree to be decorated was done to honor the god *Adonis*, who, after his death, was brought back to life by the serpent *Aesculapius*. This is symbolically represented by a tree stump, with a snake wrapped around, from which emerged an evergreen tree. In Egypt, the name of this god was *Baal-Tamar*, and in Rome, it was *Baal-Berith*.⁶⁶⁸

Evergreens, like mistletoe, which bears fruit in mid-winter, as well as ivy and holly, became holy symbols and were sacred to the sun, because they represented immortality.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶² Ibid., pg. 36.

⁶⁶³ Ibid., pg. 9.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid., pg. 47.

⁶⁶⁵ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 32

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., pg. 31.

⁶⁶⁷ Condon, R. J. *Our Pagan Christmas*. Austin, TX: American Atheist Press, 1989, pg. 14.

⁶⁶⁸ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 10.

⁶⁶⁹ Condon, R. J. *Our Pagan Christmas*. Austin, TX: American Atheist Press, 1989, pg. 15.

Mistletoe is derived from the word *misteltan*, which means "different twig," because of the semi-parasitic manner in which it grows on trees.⁶⁷⁰ Both the Greeks and the Romans believed that mistletoe was produced when lightning struck the trees. The Germanic tribes taught that anyone who was underneath the mistletoe was given sexual prowess by *Freya*, the goddess of fertility. To the Celts, mistletoe was an ancient fertility symbol representing both the male and female sexual organs.⁶⁷¹ The Druids, who cut it off of the oak tree with a gold sickle, used it in their rituals. They burned it as a sacrifice on their altars, and also gave out sprigs to be hung in houses.⁶⁷² They also believed that when it was held over a woman's head, she lost all power to resist sexual advances.⁶⁷³ This gave rise to the tradition that a gentleman was able to kiss a girl who was found under it. He would then remove a berry, and give it to her. When all the berries were gone, no more kisses could be taken.⁶⁷⁴

Being that no part of the plant ever touched the ground, they thought it came from heaven, and it was perceived as a representation of divine forgiveness.⁶⁷⁵ It was a symbol of peace and prosperity, and sprigs were hung above doorways as a sign that "old grievances and old enmities" were forgotten.⁶⁷⁶ Because of this, enemies were able to put down their arms in truce under the mistletoe.⁶⁷⁷

The Druids also believed that mistletoe cured a variety of ailments, and that the wax-like berries could be used as an aphrodisiac.⁶⁷⁸

The prickly green holly leaves and red berries were thought to be a protection against the power of witchcraft, and could be used as a good luck charm.⁶⁷⁹ It was also believed that holly had the power to protect against lightning strikes. Its significance was later Christianized as the

⁶⁷⁰ Armstrong, Garner Ted. "What do Rudolph's Red Nose and Eggnog Have to Do With Christmas?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), December 1970: pg. 19.

⁶⁷¹ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 60.

⁶⁷² Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 659.

⁶⁷³ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 22.

⁶⁷⁴ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 19.

⁶⁷⁵ Condon, R. J. *Our Pagan Christmas*. Austin, TX: American Atheist Press, 1989, pg. 15.

⁶⁷⁶ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 26.

⁶⁷⁷ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 659.

⁶⁷⁸ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 19.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 19.

holly leaf became a symbolic representation of Christ's crown of thorns, and its berries represented drops of blood.⁶⁸⁰

Ivy also had a mystique. According to the legend, ivy was named after a young lady who danced so intensely before the god *Dionysius*, that she died at his feet. He turned her to ivy, so she could wrap around and embrace everything that was close by.⁶⁸¹ In Ireland, a man put ivy leaves under his pillow to help identify the girl he would marry. It was a tradition, that when an ivy leaf was placed in a covered dish of water from New Year to Old Christmas, that it would reveal the future. Ivy was said to bring good luck,⁶⁸² and it was also used for medicinal purposes to relieve burns, headaches, earaches, and toothaches. To the Church, it became a symbol for man submitting his soul to the Lord and achieving eternal life for doing it.⁶⁸³

Holly (considered masculine) and ivy (considered feminine), according to tradition, have to be present together for a house to be blessed.⁶⁸⁴ They were first used together during *Saturnalia*, and it was believed that they created a magical force to push back one's enemies.⁶⁸⁵

In the eighth century, when St. Boniface went to do missionary work among the German and Frisian people, he discovered that tree worship was so widespread, that he decided to cut down an ancient holy tree that had been dedicated to the god *Woden*.⁶⁸⁶ One of the earliest stories passed down, is that he took some of his followers into the woods at Christmas time, and while pointing to heaven, said: "Take this tree into your homes as a sign of your new worship (Christianity). Celebrate (God's) power no more in the forest with shameful rites, but in the sanctity of your homes with laughter and love."⁶⁸⁷ He dedicated a fir tree to Jesus to offset the oak tree, which had been dedicated to the god *Odin*, by the Druids,⁶⁸⁸ from which they tied apples and other items onto the branches.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁰ Haley, Larry. "Sorcerers and Pagans Started Christmas Gift and Mistletoe Customs." *National Enquirer*.

⁶⁸¹ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pgs. 23-24.

⁶⁸² Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 9.

⁶⁸³ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 24.

⁶⁸⁴ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 9.

⁶⁸⁵ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 32.

⁶⁸⁶ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 13.

⁶⁸⁷ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 16.

⁶⁸⁸ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 18.

⁶⁸⁹ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 121.

The tradition and stories of stolen fire is echoed in many cultures, the most notable being the Greek mythology story of *Prometheus*, who took fire from the heavens to give to man.⁶⁹⁰ An examination of these cultures and their traditions; show there is a connection between lightning, burning trees and logs, bonfires, and candles.⁶⁹¹

To Christians, the candle came to symbolize Christ as being the "Light of the World," and is a combination of Roman and Hebrew tradition. In 492, Pope Gelasius said that Christmas was a time for blessing candles in church, because it commemorates the event when Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple, and Simeon said (Luke 22:32) he would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles."⁶⁹²

In the Nordic-Germanic cultures of northern Europe, there is a variation of the burning tree, which was known as the tradition of the Yule log, which was a stump or root that would be removed and pulled into the village on Christmas Eve.⁶⁹³ It had to be set ablaze from a piece of last year's log (so the house would not burn down), it had to begin burning on the first attempt (or you could expect trouble), and it had to be kept burning for 12 hours (to prevent bad luck).⁶⁹⁴ The ashes would be saved, because of their fertility powers, and ability to ward off lightning strikes.⁶⁹⁵

It is believed that the word "yule" comes from the Saxon word *hweol*, meaning "wheel," which may have come from the fact that the log was rolled in after it was cut,⁶⁹⁶ or that the wheel was a pagan symbol for the sun.⁶⁹⁷ However, in Dutch, the word is *joel*, or *jol*, which meant "loud, fun, rambunctious partying," and can be cross-referenced to the Gothic word for the month of December, which is *Juleiss*, and identifies it to be a month of feasting and celebration.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹⁰ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 10.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 42.

⁶⁹² Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 24.

⁶⁹³ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 23.

⁶⁹⁴ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 18.

⁶⁹⁵ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 43.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 43.

⁶⁹⁷ Armstrong, Herbert W. *The Plain Truth About Christmas*. Pasadena, CA: Ambassador College, Worldwide Church of God, 1970, pg. 15.

⁶⁹⁸ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 43.

Another point of reference indicates that the source of the word "yule" stems from *Jul* (or *Jule*), a Scandinavian fertility god.⁶⁹⁹

The Twelve Days of Christmas, which runs from Christmas to Epiphany, is referred to as Yuletide.⁷⁰⁰ In medieval Europe, a giant Christmas candle would burn throughout these twelve days,⁷⁰¹ and came to represent the light that came from Heaven when Jesus was born.⁷⁰² The yule log was replaced by the symbol of the Christmas tree.⁷⁰³

The use of the tree as a Christmas symbol dates back to the 16th century, when it was mentioned in a 1521 report, and because of a painting done in Strasburg in 1601, that shows the "first known" Christmas tree.⁷⁰⁴

According to tradition, Martin Luther, father of the Lutheran religion, was one of the first to decorate a Christmas tree in the early 1600s. One night, while he was out walking, he observed the stars shining down through the branches of the trees, and he came up with the idea of cutting down a tree, and hanging metal holders on its branches to place candles.⁷⁰⁵ The lit candles were to represent the starry sky over Bethlehem, and under the tree, he placed a Nativity scene.⁷⁰⁶

There is a mention of a Christmas tree in England in 1789, and also a story that Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria, brought the first Christmas tree to England, from Germany, in 1840.⁷⁰⁷ The custom had moved to France in 1837, and became more widespread in England in 1844. It was introduced to this country during the American Revolution, because of Hessian soldiers and German immigrants,⁷⁰⁸ but didn't become widespread until 1821, when the tradition was carried here by the Pennsylvania Germans.⁷⁰⁹ The Christmas tree gained wide

⁶⁹⁹ McKenney, Tom C. *Holidays and Holy Days: The Origins and Meaning of Our Favorite Holidays*. Marion, KY: Words for Living Ministries, 1987, pg. 23.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 23.

⁷⁰¹ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 24.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, pg. 31.

⁷⁰³ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 18.

⁷⁰⁴ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 13.

⁷⁰⁵ Ingraham, David A. *Pagan Traditions of the Holidays* (L-825). Oklahoma City, OK: Southwest Radio Church, 1993, pg. 34.

⁷⁰⁶ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 19.

⁷⁰⁷ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 13.

⁷⁰⁸ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 19.

⁷⁰⁹ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 17.

acceptance when President Franklin Pierce put one up in the White House in 1856.⁷¹⁰ It was estimated that two-thirds of the country began putting up trees, and its use was so widespread, that President Theodore Roosevelt tried to discourage its use, out of the fear that it was depleting our natural resources.⁷¹¹

When the day was Christianized, the evergreen tree became a symbol of Christ bringing new life to the world after the longest night of winter.⁷¹²

An off-shoot of the tree, is the wreath, and it is a pagan symbol that represents the never-dying sun,⁷¹³ and its orbit.⁷¹⁴

Being that the Christmas tree is nothing more than a pagan symbol, and the representation of a false god, which is actually Satan, it has been suggested that the tree may actually draw demons to it.⁷¹⁵

THE ORIGIN OF SANTA CLAUS

To make the character of Santa Claus palatable, it became a well-known fact that he was based on St. Nicholas.

Nicholas was born in Patera, in Lycia (now known as Turkey), near Myra (now Demre) in 280, the son of well-to-do parents. From a young age, he showed his willingness to lead a Godly life, by attending church regularly, and helping in the services. He was ordained as a priest when he was 19 years old, and spent his days fasting and praying.⁷¹⁶ Because he was so young when he became a church official, he became known as the "Boy Bishop."⁷¹⁷ One legend said that he inherited his wealth, but gave it all to charity.⁷¹⁸

A popular story is told of a nobleman who lost his fortune, and was unable to provide for his three daughters. Nicholas heard that he was going to sell his oldest daughter off. So he tied 300 florins into a handkerchief, and during the night, threw the money into an open window. The household got by for a while, but financial problems surfaced again. And again, Nicholas threw

⁷¹⁰ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 19.

⁷¹¹ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 20.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*, pg. 21.

⁷¹³ Meyer, Jacob O. *Christmas As the Bible Teaches It*. Bethel, PA: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1982, pg. 6.

⁷¹⁴ Armstrong, Garner Ted. "What do Rudolph's Red Nose and Eggnog Have to Do With Christmas?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), December 1970: pg. 29.

⁷¹⁵ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pgs. 11-12.

⁷¹⁶ Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pgs. 9-10.

⁷¹⁷ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 16.

⁷¹⁸ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 631.

money into the window. When the family was down on their luck again, and the third daughter was in jeopardy of being sold off, he threw money into the window again. But this time, the father saw him, and Nicholas swore the man to secrecy. It was only after Nicholas died did he reveal what happened.⁷¹⁹ He later became known as the patron saint of pawnbrokers and bankers in northern Italy. The three golden balls hanging above the door of pawnbroker shops symbolized the three bags of money.⁷²⁰

On the evening before he became the bishop of Myra, witnesses claimed that Jesus appeared to him and gave him a copy of the Holy Scriptures, and that the Virgin Mary gave him a stole.⁷²¹

Diocletian (245 - 313), the eastern Roman emperor from 284 to 305, who claimed to have descended from *Jupiter* and wanted to be worshipped as a god, in 303, ordered all Christian churches and Holy Scriptures to be burned. Those Christians who refused to renounce their faith were tortured, imprisoned, or sold into slavery. It was during this time that Nicholas stood up for his faith, and was imprisoned.⁷²² After Constantine came to power, all the Christians were released, including Nicholas, who was reinstated as Bishop.⁷²³

At the first Council of Nicaea called by Constantine in 325, over 300 Church leaders met together. One matter of discussion was when Easter was to be celebrated. While some preferred the date that the Jews celebrated Passover, others thought it should be on a fixed date, like the Sunday after Passover. But another question, even more decisive, was the question of the divinity of Christ. While most bishops were agreed, one, named Arian, a priest from Alexandria, felt that since Jesus was created by God, he had to be less than God. After an impassioned speech on that point, Nicholas walked up and slapped him in the face.⁷²⁴

He was defrocked, and detained in another wing of the palace, with his hands and feet bound. During the night, Jesus and Mary appeared to him and asked why he was imprisoned. He replied: "Because of my love for you." They freed him, gave him a copy of the Scriptures, and brought him his robe. He read the Bible through the night. When they brought him his meal the next morning, and saw that he had been freed, Constantine ordered that he be released, and apologized to him. The Council ultimately decided in favor of the divinity of Jesus.⁷²⁵

There was a pagan temple in Myra which was dedicated to *Artemis*, a daughter of *Zeus*, who was the goddess of sailors. It was inhabited by a demon. Nicholas despised the Temple so

⁷¹⁹ Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pgs. 10-11.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 20.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 14.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, pg. 39.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, pg. 40.

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, pgs. 32-34.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 35.

much that he destroyed it.⁷²⁶ He ordered the demon to "go to Hell's fire, which has been lit for you by the devil and his crew."⁷²⁷

He died on December 6, 343⁷²⁸ (Or 342,⁷²⁹ or 345, or 352,⁷³⁰ depending on the source), and it was said that he recited Psalm 11 with his dying breath.⁷³¹ Stories about him spread throughout Greece and Russia, where he was chosen as their patron saint. In Russia, he was known as "Nikolai, the wonder worker."⁷³² He also became the patron saint of Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Sicily.⁷³³ More churches were named after him, than were named after the Apostles.⁷³⁴

The first to write about Nicholas, was Methodius, a 9th century patriarch of Constantinople.⁷³⁵ He was canonized around that time,⁷³⁶ and he was made "not only the protector of children but also the patron of parenthood, the fosterer of family fertility."⁷³⁷ The day of his death, December 6th, became St. Nicholas Day on the Roman Catholic calendar.⁷³⁸

In 1087, the remains of Nicholas were stolen from Myra, and showed up at the port of Bari in southern Italy on May 9th. They were hidden in the catacombs of a Dari monastery. In 1089, Pope Urban II appointed a new Archbishop, Elias of Bari, and he was charged with

⁷²⁶ Ibid., pg. 36.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., pg. 40.

⁷²⁸ Copeland, Kenneth. "St. Nicholas - The Real Gift-Giver." *Believer's Voice of Victory* (Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Inc.), December ?: pg. 16.

⁷²⁹ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 78.

⁷³⁰ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 631.

⁷³¹ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 78.

⁷³² Copeland, Kenneth. "St. Nicholas - The Real Gift-Giver." *Believer's Voice of Victory* (Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Inc.), December ?: pg. 17.

⁷³³ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 78.

⁷³⁴ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 16.

⁷³⁵ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 76.

⁷³⁶ Ibid., pg. 78.

⁷³⁷ Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pg. 53.

⁷³⁸ Copeland, Kenneth. "St. Nicholas - The Real Gift-Giver." *Believer's Voice of Victory* (Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Inc.), December ?: pg. 17.

building a basilica for Saint Nicholas, known as the Church of San Nicola,⁷³⁹ which was completed in 1108.⁷⁴⁰

When Christopher Columbus landed in the West Indies on December 6, 1492, he named the harbor, the Port of St. Nicholas, to honor the man who had also become known as the patron saint of sailors.⁷⁴¹

Now, after reading all of this, you're probably saying to yourself, "What a guy," but, you know what they say, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't, and that's the case here.

On December 24, 1969, the Reuters News Agency in Rome reported that December 6th, was no longer being identified with St. Nicholas on the Catholic Church calendar, but was being "relegated to local devotion."⁷⁴² Martin Ebon wrote in his 1975 book *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*: "There is a very slight possibility— chances are a thousand to one— that the Bishop of Myra never even existed, that not only his miraculous achievements are pious legends but that there never was a Nicholas, born in Patara, who attained the rank of bishop in the town of Myra. When you turn to the super skeptical historians, you discover that his name has not been found in all the listings of those who attended the First Council of Nicaea."⁷⁴³

As the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s spread throughout Europe, which sought to eliminate the veneration of the saints, the memory of Saint Nicholas was kept alive by transferring the gift-giving practices from December 6th to December 25th.⁷⁴⁴

His character took on various names and guises in different societies. A German legend talks about a character named *Knecht Ruprecht*, a man adorned in animal skins or straw, who was sometimes referred to as *Klas* or Joseph. In Mecklenberg, he was known as *ru Klas*. In Brunswick, Hanover, and Holstein, he was called *Klas*, *Klawes*, *Klas Bur*, and *Bullerklas*. In Silesia, he was called Joseph. At times he wore bells, and had a long staff with a bag of ashes at one end, which is why he was sometimes called *Aschenklas*.⁷⁴⁵ He was also referred to as *Weihnachtsmann*,⁷⁴⁶ and *Sankt Nikolaus*.⁷⁴⁷

⁷³⁹ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 631.

⁷⁴⁰ Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pgs. 77-78.

⁷⁴¹ Copeland, Kenneth. "St. Nicholas - The Real Gift-Giver." *Believer's Voice of Victory* (Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Inc.), December ?: pg. 17.

⁷⁴² Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pg. 79.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, pg. 13.

⁷⁴⁴ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 32.

⁷⁴⁵ Barela, John D. "I'm Dreaming of a 'Right' Christmas— Without Santa Claus." *The Christmas Controversy: I'm Dreaming of a "Right" Christmas*. Tulsa, OK: Today, the Bible & You, pg. 16.

⁷⁴⁶ Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pg. 87.

⁷⁴⁷ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 16.

In England, he was known as "Father Christmas," in France he was known as *Pere Noel*,⁷⁴⁸ and in Latin, he was known as *Sanctus Nicolaus*.⁷⁴⁹

In 1626, when the Dutch came to America and established the colony of New Amsterdam (which later became the British colony of New York), they brought with them Saint Nicholas, who was known as *Sinter Claes* or *Sinta Klaas* (Santa Claus), as well as their pagan winter traditions.⁷⁵⁰ They named their first Protestant Church after him— the St. Nicholas Collegiate Church.⁷⁵¹

Mary L. Booth wrote in her 1859 book *History of the City of New York*, that the "Dutch had five national festivals...*Kerstrydt* (Christmas); *Nieuw Jar* (New Year); *Paas* (Passover); *Pinxter* (*Whitsuntide*); and Santa Claus (St. Nicholas)...But Santa Claus Day was the best of all...notable, too, for having been the day sacred to St. Nicholas, the patron saint of New York..."⁷⁵²

In the October, 1954 *New York Historical Society Quarterly*, Dr. Charles W. Jones disagreed with the contention that St. Nicholas was such a revered figure. He said there had been an Amsterdam ordinance that sought to lessen the "superstition and fable of the papacy," by forbidding any gatherings on Saint Nicholas eve. He maintains that he didn't find any "evidence of St. Nicholas in any form— in juveniles or periodicals or diaries— in the period of Dutch rule, or straight through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the year 1773." After brief mentions in 1773 and 1774, there was no mention again until 1793, which prompted him to suggest, that when "New Yorkers resurrected St. Nicholas, they did so because he was anti-British, not because he was pro-Dutch, and he was not to be taken seriously." He believed that the society that was formed and dedicated "to St. Nicholas as a New York symbol, never had Holland in mind at all."⁷⁵³

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, the "Dutch puritans of New Amsterdam, disguised the popish saint as a nordic magician."⁷⁵⁴ Some historians have even claimed that the appearance of Saint Nicholas evolved from the description of the Norse god *Odin* (*Wodin*, *Woden*, *Wotan*, and also *Wuotan*). It would stand to reason, that any homage to him would actually represent worship of a pagan god; however, it is argued that St. Nicholas never became popular in Scandinavia, so that couldn't be possible.⁷⁵⁵ But there are just too many similarities between the two, for there not to be a connection.

⁷⁴⁸ Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pg. 87.

⁷⁴⁹ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 16.

⁷⁵⁰ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pgs. 51-52.

⁷⁵¹ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 17.

⁷⁵² Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pg. 88.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, pgs. 89-91.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 87.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pgs. 87-88.

When Pennsylvania Dutch immigrants came to this country during the 18th century, they brought with them the tradition of *Christkindl* (or *Christkind*), which said that on Christmas Eve, the "Christ Child" would ride a mule carrying presents for children. The English changed his name to "Kris Kringle," and the location of his home at the North Pole, came from Scandinavian and Russian stories about wizards that lived in the north.⁷⁵⁶

The man who did the most to bring recognition to Saint Nicholas, was John Pintard, founder of the New York Historical Society, who included St. Nicholas Day in his 1793 almanac. It was Pintard who had pushed for Washington's Birthday and the Fourth of July to be made into national holidays. Jones said, that since "St. Nicholas had become the patron saint of the city," Pintard "found it very easy to associate St. Nicholas with the Dutch." At the Society's annual banquet in 1809, Washington Irving became a member, and they held their first annual Saint Nicholas dinner in 1810.⁷⁵⁷

In 1809, when Washington Irving (1783-1859) referred to Santa Claus in his *Knickerbocker History of New York*, Dr. Clement Clarke Moore (1779-1863), a professor at the General Theological Seminary in New York⁷⁵⁸ was moved to write his poem, "The Night Before Christmas" in 1822, which portrayed him as an elf-like figure. And then, forty years later, the German-born cartoonist, Thomas Nast (1840-1902) illustrated the poem in 1863 for *Harper's Illustrated Weekly* magazine, and made him look more gnome-like and mysterious.⁷⁵⁹

The line in the poem, "a sleigh full of toys," symbolized his generosity; "the stockings...hung by the chimney with care," came from the tradition of Dutch children placing their shoes in the corner of the chimney on evening of December 6th; and the "sleigh and eight tiny reindeer," was symbolic of the white horse that St. Nicholas rode when he made his rounds in Holland.⁷⁶⁰ The traditional description of St. Nicholas, was of a bearded saint, riding on a white horse, carrying a basket of gifts for children who had been good, including candy and cookies,⁷⁶¹ and a bundle of birch rods for those who had been bad.⁷⁶²

On February 22, 1835, Irving established the St. Nicholas Society, which was a literary society that met on December 6th to pay homage to the Bishop.⁷⁶³ In a speech before the New

⁷⁵⁶ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 18.

⁷⁵⁷ Ebon, Martin. *Saint Nicholas: Life and Legend*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1975, pg. 91.

⁷⁵⁸ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 17.

⁷⁵⁹ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 52.

⁷⁶⁰ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 18.

⁷⁶¹ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 83.

⁷⁶² Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 16.

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, pg. 17.

York Historical Society, Charles Jones said: "Without Washington Irving there would be no Santa Claus."⁷⁶⁴

Another important development to the story of the acceptance of Santa Claus, came on September 21, 1897, when Frances Church, the editorial writer for the *New York Sun*, responded to a letter from 8-year old Virginia O'Hanlon, who was inquiring about the existence of Santa Claus. He said, in his now famous editorial: "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus...Thank God he lives, and he lives forever...(and) he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."⁷⁶⁵

The modern image that we now have of Santa Claus was pretty much molded by the Coca-Cola company. When Coca-Cola was invented, the coca leaf was used, which is the plant from which the drug cocaine is produced. Children were discouraged from drinking it, and because of that, it was illegal to advertise it in a way to appeal to children. They eventually removed the ingredient, and in 1931, to get around the law, they decided to show Santa Claus being served Coke by children. The company contracted artist Haddon Sundblom to redesign Santa, and give him a more appealing appearance. That is where he got his red and white suit—it was the official colors of Coca-Cola.⁷⁶⁶

There is no Santa Claus, and there was no Saint Nicholas— so what were they based on?

At the beginning of the chapter I brought up the shaman, wise man, or medicine man, who was the spiritual teacher of the people, and not only the keeper of the flame, but also the "keeper of all knowledge."⁷⁶⁷ His experience with astronomy enabled him to use his foreknowledge of astronomical events of solstices and the seasons to establish his standing as a supernatural figure who was able to explain those things which were shrouded in mystery.⁷⁶⁸ He was masked during tribal rituals to heighten the superstition that surrounded him,⁷⁶⁹ and is often depicted wearing horns, because he symbolized the god Herne/Pan, who, since ancient times, represented the spirit of the hunt.⁷⁷⁰ The Celts had a horned-god, known as *Cernunnos*, the "horned-hunter of the night," who was a direct descendant of the Herne/Pan tradition, as is the goat head which is used by Satanists to depict the object of their worship.⁷⁷¹

As the domination of the Roman Empire spread to the various Western European cultures, their gods supplanted the Greek, Celtic, and Nordic deities. This assimilation turned *Thor* and *Zeus* into *Jupiter*, *Freyja* turned into *Isis* or *Venus*, and *Woden* became *Mercury* or other sun gods like *Apollo* or *Mithras*. With the advent of Christianity, those gods changed

⁷⁶⁴ Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The Book of Christmas Folklore*. New York, NY: A Continuum Book, The Seabury Press, 1973, pg. 85.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pgs. 93-94.

⁷⁶⁶ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pgs. 52-53.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 57.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 60.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 57.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 89.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 78.

names again as *Jupiter* became God, *Apollo* and *Mithras* became Jesus, and *Isis* turned into the Virgin Mary.⁷⁷² The Roman Catholic Church was able to convince the various cultures to give up their Celtic/Nordic/Germanic gods by Christianizing their traditions. However, it was a little different with the people of the "old religion" who lived in the deep forests, and hard-to-reach mountainous areas, that were led by the tribal shaman. This shaman was the physical embodiment of the pagan deities they worshipped, and thus became the target of the Church's campaign against what they perceived as being evil or Satanic.⁷⁷³

The story of Saint Nicholas is actually the fictional blending of two (and possibly even three) saints in the fourth century, the one from Myra, and another in Pinora. In fact, in the 1970s, the Vatican Council II officially stated that there were no Roman Catholic bishops named Nicholas that ever lived, and that they were probably Christianized pagan water gods.⁷⁷⁴ In the areas that were heavily evangelized by the Catholic Church, the pagan god *Wodin* became part of the tradition of Saint Nicholas.⁷⁷⁵

Wodin (or *Odin*), the chief god, or sun god, was part of the Germanic/Nordic religious tradition, which began about 800 BC. This bringer of sunshine and gifts was compared to Jesus because he was hung on the *Yggdrasil*, the Tree of Life and Wisdom, with a raven on each side of him. He was lanced with a spear, and also rose from the dead. In gratitude, sacrificial gifts were to be left for Sleipner, his white horse.⁷⁷⁶

Around Europe, Saint Nicholas was portrayed as a tall, bearded, elderly, white-haired man, usually in the clothing of a bishop, riding a white horse, which mirrored the pagan god *Wodin*.⁷⁷⁷ *Wodin* is a descendant of *Saturn*, the sun god, and Santa is portrayed as coming down the chimney, which associates his actions with fire, and by extension, the sun.⁷⁷⁸ In addition, the Norse goddess *Hertha* was said to materialize in fireplaces, bringing with her good fortune and happiness.⁷⁷⁹ The ability of Santa to know a child's heart and thoughts, to be able to visit every house on one night, are certainly god-like attributes.⁷⁸⁰

A forerunner of Santa can be found in an ancient Carthaginian god— a large bronze idol, with a large fat belly, which was actually an oven, with altar-like arms which were added later. It was here that parents brought their children to be burned as human sacrifices. So, you can see the significance in taking your child to sit on Santa's lap, the human embodiment of a false god.

⁷⁷² Ibid., pg. 71.

⁷⁷³ Ibid., pg. 89.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid., pg. 96.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., pg. 96.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., pg. 89.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., pg. 97.

⁷⁷⁸ "Did You Know?" *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), December 1995: pg. 11.

⁷⁷⁹ Douglas, George William, and Helen Douglas Compton. *The American Book of Days*. New York, NY: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1948, pg. 662.

⁷⁸⁰ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 14.

You are symbolically reenacting an ancient ritual of child sacrifice,⁷⁸¹ and in fact, you are possibly offering up your child as a willing vessel to demonic spirits. Santa also has some elements of the ancient Egyptian god *Bes*, a short, chubby, gnome-like character, who was a patron of children.⁷⁸²

Early in the winter, there was a slaughter of animals after the harvest, because there wasn't enough food to get them all through the winter. This occurred at various times, depending on the climate. In western Europe, this was between November 3rd (the day commemorating Saint Hubert) and the winter solstice. In Holland, it was on December 6th, the feast day which commemorated Saint Nicholas. According to tradition, on that day, the saint rode through the skies on his white horse, with his slave, the Dark Helper, who was used to scare women and children into staying on the straight and narrow path.⁷⁸³

With everything that has been laid out, it is very plain to see that St. Nicholas is nothing more than a Christianization of the Nordic sun god *Woden*, who rode a white horse known as Sleipner, dragging his evil slave Eckhart behind him on a chain, who represents the shaman of the nature-worshipping cultures.⁷⁸⁴

In Great Britain, Oliver Cromwell went after the "old religion" with a vengeance, and Saint Nicholas was nearly forgotten, that is, until he immigrated to America,⁷⁸⁵ and conquered it. Do you think the term "conquer" sounds funny? Here's something that is interesting. A possible connection to Saint Nicholas can be found in Revelation 2:9, where God rebuked the doctrine espoused by the sect known as the *Nicolaitanes* (or *Nicolaitans*). This word can be broken down as *nikos*, (Strong's # 3534) which means "victory"; and "*laos*," (Strong's # 2992) which means "a people." Together— it means a "conqueror of the people." A side note here. The word *nike* (Strong's # 3529) is a root of *Nicolaitanes*, and that is the name of the Greek winged goddess of victory, and also the name of one of the biggest manufacturers of athletic footwear, who adorn their products with the pagan wing symbol.⁷⁸⁶

THE HOLIDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Tradition has it that Christmas was first celebrated in England, in 521, when King Arthur celebrated his victory at York. In the ninth century, Alfred the Great began observing the Twelve Days of Christmas festivities.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., pgs. 14-15.

⁷⁸² Barela, John D. "I'm Dreaming of a 'Right' Christmas— Without Santa Claus." *The Christmas Controversy: I'm Dreaming of a "Right" Christmas*. Tulsa, OK: Today, the Bible & You, pg. 16.

⁷⁸³ Renterghem, Tony van. *When Santa Was A Shaman: The Ancient Origins of Santa Claus & the Christmas Tree*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1995, pg. 97.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid., pgs. 111-112.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid., pg. 103.

⁷⁸⁶ Meyer, Jacob O. *Christmas As the Bible Teaches It*. Bethel, PA: Assemblies of Yahweh, 1982, pg. 7.

⁷⁸⁷ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 14.

When the Protestant reformation movement sought to break away from the oppression of Roman Catholicism, the Puritans, under the leadership of England's Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), in the Roundhead Parliament of 1643, ruled that Christmas, Easter, *Whitsuntide*, and days dedicated to the saints, were illegal.⁷⁸⁸ Christmas was called the "Profane Man's Ranting Day."⁷⁸⁹ The only day that the Puritans observed was the Sabbath.⁷⁹⁰ When Charles II took the throne in 1660, Christmas was again observed,⁷⁹¹ though not to the same extent.⁷⁹²

In 1621, William Bradford forbid the Pilgrims from celebrating the day.⁷⁹³ In Massachusetts, the colonial legislature, echoing the sentiments of most who settled in New England, passed a law on May 11, 1659, that levied a fine on anyone caught observing Christmas.⁷⁹⁴ The law was repealed in 1681, and in 1686, a Christmas service was held in the Boston Town Hall.⁷⁹⁵

The Dutch in New Netherlands (New York) established the Christmas holiday there. To the south, it was accepted by German settlers, and the Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania. But the Quakers at Burlington (NJ), the Puritans and Scotch at Newark (NJ), the Quakers and Welsh in Pennsylvania; as well as the Quakers, Puritans, and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in Maryland, were all against its celebration.⁷⁹⁶ Basically, here in America, from 1620-1750, there was a strong opposition to Christmas, out of the belief that it was a heathen celebration. In fact, Gen. George Washington attacked the Hessians in 1776 on Christmas, to win a pivotal battle during the American Revolutionary War, which goes to show you how much he thought of its religious significance.⁷⁹⁷

In the late 1700s, there was an increased immigration of larger German religious groups, such as the Moravians, Lutherans, and German Reformed, who settled in Pennsylvania,

⁷⁸⁸ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 11.

⁷⁸⁹ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 16.

⁷⁹⁰ Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pg. 46.

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pg. 47.

⁷⁹² Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 14.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, pg. 15.

⁷⁹⁴ "Did You Know?" *The GOOD NEWSletter* (Former Catholics for Christ), December 1995: pg. 9.

⁷⁹⁵ Wernecke, Herbert H. *Christmas Customs Around the World*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1959, pg. 16.

⁷⁹⁶ Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pgs. 52-53.

⁷⁹⁷ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 11.

bringing with them their Christmas customs.⁷⁹⁸ As the Scotch-Irish branched out to the south and the west, they began to celebrate Christmas. The Methodists, who were established in 1765, also celebrated Christmas. However, the Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and Congregationalists remained against it, because they considered it a creation of man.⁷⁹⁹

In 1836, Alabama became the first state to make Christmas a legal holiday,⁸⁰⁰ and it has since become a national holiday, so entrenched in our society, that every aspect of our life is affected in one way or another by this one day.

TO YULE OR NOT TO YULE

When it comes to Christmas, because it is so entrenched in our society, it is the toughest holiday to cut the ties from. Any decision to do that is truly a test of faith. You hold in your hands the means to be able to reeducate your family. Though you may think that you're hurting your children, you're actually going to be helping them, by making Jesus the priority in their life.

When you consider that the tradition of Christmas, as a Christian tradition, was based upon the giving of gifts to the baby Jesus, how can you reconcile the exchanging of gifts to what the Wise Men did? If you want to celebrate Christmas in its truest form, then you should be giving Jesus a gift. Well, you may ask, how can you possibly give Jesus a gift? It's quite simple. Give Him your heart. Matthew 15:8 says: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." An unselfish submission to the King, to do His will, would be the perfect way to honor our Lord, and celebrate His birth, rather than submitting to what the world has turned it into.

It is important to stress, that the celebration of Christmas is a complete fabrication. I have shown that Jesus wasn't born on or even near this day, and in fact, the Bible says nothing about observing it. Yet, we have become so conditioned to participate in this holiday, that it would seem almost un-American not to. But, in observing it, we are continuing a long-standing pagan tradition that has nothing to do with the birth of Jesus. It originated as a pagan festival day, and it is still a pagan festival day. Most churches obviously try to put the emphasis on Jesus, as opposed to Santa Claus, yet get caught up in all the other trappings that also have their roots in pagan tradition. In *The Shocking Truth About Christmas* by Dr. Russell K. Tardo, he writes: "How tragic it is that the Christian church today continues...in the celebration of Christmas...Then they weakly encourage their congregations to 'put Christ back into Christmas.' Christ never was in Christmas, nor will He ever be!"⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁸ Richards, Katherine Lambert. *How Christmas Came to the Sunday Schools: The Observance of Christmas in the Protestant Church Schools of the United States, An Historical Study*. Brooklyn, NY: Gryphon Books, 1971, pg. 54.

⁷⁹⁹ Ibid., pgs. 54, 56.

⁸⁰⁰ YNCA. *The Untold Story of Christmas*. Kingdom City, MO: Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly, 1990, pg. 17.

⁸⁰¹ Tardo, Russell K. *The Shocking Truth About Christmas*. Arabi, LA: Faithful Word Publications, pg. 17.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This book had been in the planning stage for a long time. I had been gathering research material since the early 1970s when I began to see the pagan nature of the holidays. It wasn't until I published a Halloween pamphlet in 1994 that I began to seriously consider writing a book on the subject.

Since I knew that the manner in which the holidays were celebrated, wasn't right, I had taken a negative attitude toward them. My wife said I was just cheap. So, in order to satisfy my own curiosity, and have a basis for my views, I decided to commit myself to this project. So, writing this book was as much of a learning process for me, as it has been for you, in reading it.

I didn't write this book from the standpoint of having a "holier-than-thou" judgmental attitude, because, being that it was an investigatory project, I am also trying to find ways of dealing with the very issues that I am raising. As Christians, we have to live in this world system, and like or not, that means sometimes having to compromise standards set forth by the Bible. Case in point— I make an argument for the Sabbath (Saturday) being applicable today, and not just for Jewish people. And yet, I work on Saturday. Not because I want to, but because I have to do. I do it because I need a job to support my family. It's all part of living in this world system. Is it wrong? Yes. But, I know we serve a just and understanding God, and I know that He is looking at my heart.

But in regard to other holidays, things are more clearly defined. Hopefully, I have presented a convincing argument, and you will be able to see how much we have been deceived. Unfortunately, especially with kids involved, it is very difficult to break that yoke of worldly bondage, because of what kids see themselves as losing. But you must remember what the bottom line is here. When you celebrate these holidays, you are taking part in pagan traditions that have taken the emphasis away from God; so observing them, certainly can not be pleasing to God. You take your children to church, and try to raise them to adhere to a Godly standard, yet, society is intent on sucking it right back out of them.

There needs to be a decision made, as to what you feel comfortable with, what you're convicted of, and how much of a commitment you are willing to make to God. I have presented a couple of ideas, but, it is up to you to take these matters to the Lord in prayer and find out what He wants you to do.

When my first book *Final Warning: A History of the New World Order* was initially published, I could not believe the lack of support from the Christian community. All I did was illustrate how history is unfolding to fulfill the prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. But Christians didn't seem interested. They weren't interested in how terrifyingly close we are to the last days. I think that attitude may stem from churches only wanting their members to know what they want them to know. The Church has become this sanctuary where you can hide, and be safe from the world. Where you can go once a week and hear a real sugary sermon that lacks the substance to feed you spiritually, and to challenge you. The Church has become a shelter in the time of storm. But let me tell you, Jesus is the shelter in the time of storm.

Before I started putting together the manuscript for this book, I said to myself, this will be a nice little informative book. I figured it wouldn't be as controversial as *Final Warning*, which would make it a little easier to pitch it to publishers. But when I was done— I felt differently. I said to myself, people won't want to hear about these things either— it's too much to handle. The ramifications of the points I am raising just dig too deep into people's comfort zones, and threaten the very foundations of societal institutions.

But, I have been obligated by a prophetic mandate to raise the awareness of certain things within the body of Christ, and I am going to be obedient to the Word of the Lord. It is because of false concepts, false idols, false gods, and false religions that paganism has been allowed to permeate every aspect of society, and has caused this nation to turn away from God. The warning in 1 Peter 5:8 is worth repeating: "...your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." He has employed every means necessary to deceive as many people as he can by hiding, distorting, and twisting the truth. Unfortunately, many Christians are among those being deceived, and you can bet that makes Satan happy.

Maybe you think I'm just one of those ultra-conservative fanatical right-wing Christians. Well, I am. Let me tell you how one man handled the same situation in his country.

Josiah became the 16th king of Judah at the age of eight after his father, Amon, was assassinated. Around 622 BC, in the 18th year of his rule, the "book of the law" (also referred to as the "book of the covenant") was discovered during the Temple restoration project. It is believed that this referred to the original Pentateuch (or five books of Moses) that had been placed on the side of the Ark of the Covenant.⁸⁰² He publicly read the laws of Moses and vowed to reinstitute them, and led his people to renew their covenant with God.

In order to bring his nation back to God, he removed all the items from the Temple that was connected to the worship of *Baal*, and *Ashtoreth*; and also the worship of the sun, moon, planets, and any other false gods. He removed them, and he burned them. He killed all the idolatrous priests, destroyed and burned all their altars and holy places. He destroyed the nearby houses of male and female prostitutes who had engaged in sexual rituals connected to idol worship. He killed witches, mediums and all others who dabbled in the occult and destroyed all the accouterments of their practices. You can read all this in the Bible, in the 23rd chapter of 2nd Kings.

King Josiah was indeed very serious about his commitment to God, and it was because of that commitment, that God spared him from the judgment that later fell upon Judah because of their sin. The Bible says that he was unlike any king before or after him, because he "turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might..."

How serious are you with your commitment to God. Are you serious enough to stop ignoring the facts and to listen to the Biblical truth? Ephesians 5:27 says that Jesus is coming back for a Church without spot or wrinkle. Not a Church that is in bondage, and living in deception. Ephesians 5:11 says: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Romans 13:11-12 says: "...now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." And turning to 1 John 1:6-7, it says: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Are you walking in the true light of God, or are you doing the sidestep? Are you where you want to be in your Christian walk? Are you secure in your salvation? If you're not sure. Then you need to get down on your knees and seek God for guidance. You need to read your Bible. You need to find out for yourself, if what I have presented to you is true. Because, only then, will you be able to take action, and to be a witness, not only to those around you, but maybe to your own church.

Even though I have only dealt with the four major holidays, there are other minor holidays and special days that also have pagan origins. It's really hard to believe the extent of it all.

⁸⁰² Dake, Finis Jennings. *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible* (KJV). Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, Inc., 1963, OT, pg. 415.

You're probably asking right now if there is any holiday that's acceptable to celebrate. Well, there is one that for the most part is free of pagan origins, and has pretty much stuck to its original intent. And that is Thanksgiving Day.

On December 4, 1619, the Berkeley colony in the territory of Virginia was the first to "set aside a day to give thanks for their survival" in the new land. The first "official" Thanksgiving observance took place in the Plymouth colony in 1621 to thank God for a good harvest. In George Washington's Thanksgiving Proclamation he said that it is "the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor." This was written in response to a request by the Congress, who wanted him to "recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer."⁸⁰³

Through the years, the country got away from the observance, and forgot to recognize the bountiful blessings that God had provided. On April 30, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of fasting and prayer. He said: "...we have forgotten God! We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us...It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness."⁸⁰⁴ That same year, on October 3rd, he proclaimed the last Thursday in November to be Thanksgiving Day— a day to be set aside to remind us that we need to thank God for providing our needs. A Congressional Act in December, 1941, stipulated that the day is to be observed on the fourth Thursday in November.⁸⁰⁵

Although the observance hasn't been maintained with the same intensity, every year, families get together, all over the country, and pray before partaking of the traditional Thanksgiving feast. They thank God for blessing their families, and pray for him to continue watching over them.

But, don't get too comfortable about that day, because some schools are beginning to change the focus of what Thanksgiving represents by introducing American Indian customs and elements of their culture, under the guise of "history." They put so much emphasis on trying to educate our kids on the dangers of smoking, yet they will dwell on reenactments of passing the peace pipe. And I'll just bet you want your kids to be involved in a pow wow, which was an Indian ceremony which sometimes involves the worship of sacred spirits and the forces of nature.

This country needs to turn back to the God they turned their backs on. And not just at certain times of the year, or in times of national crisis. It's really something, the politicians don't want to put prayer back in the school, but during times of conflict, like Operation: Desert Storm, they're the first ones to be asking the people of this country to pray for the safety of our "boys." We can not be Christians of convenience, serving God only when it's suitable for us, or when we have the time. We need to choose this day who we are going to serve— the God of all creation; or the god of this world (one of the ways Satan is referred to in the Bible). If you want to serve God, you must do it unconditionally, and that means living under His laws, and not just the ones that don't cramp our style.

⁸⁰³ Buehrer, Eric. *Happy Thanksgiving: Talking Turkey About Thanksgiving*. Lake Forest: Gateways to Better Education, 1995, pg. 3.

⁸⁰⁴ Dobson, Dr. James. *Focus on the Family Monthly Membership Letter*, June 1996, pg. 5.

⁸⁰⁵ Walter, Eugene M. "Thanksgiving Day: What Does It Mean To You?" *The Plain Truth* (Worldwide Church of God), November 1969: pg. 40.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:16-17: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?...Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you."

So, you celebrate Christmas by putting up a tree and exchanging presents, trying your best to put as much emphasis on it being the occasion which commemorates the birth of Jesus. And you celebrate Easter with just a little candy for the kids, but you make sure you tell them that you're actually honoring the day when Jesus rose from the dead. Is this a sin? Well, if you interpret the Bible literally, any observance of a pagan celebration that honors a false god is a sin. To tell you what my personal opinion is, is not important, because those who would not agree with it would respond by saying that it is only opinion. However, what I will say is that the celebration of these holidays could cause you to miss out on spiritual blessings.

Jesus said in Matthew 19:29: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Depending on the context you read this in, it could be a very powerful verse. It depends on how you interpret what the word "forsaken" actually means in relationship to the various elements that are named.

The 5th chapter of Genesis, which talks about the lineage of Adam, tells us about Enoch, who "walked with God," literally, as did Adam. However, it is obvious, that it was also spiritually. To reward Enoch for his total dedication and submission to him, God took him off the earth before death came to him. In the 22nd chapter of the apocryphal writings known as the *Second Book of Adam and Eve*, it says: "Thus, because Enoch was in the light of God, he found himself out of the reach of death; until God would have him die."⁸⁰⁶

I believe that by not totally forsaking these pagan holidays, these worldly celebrations, then you are missing out on a blessing from God. Hebrews 11:6 says that God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." You are not seeking him, by pursuing the things of this world. Jesus said in Luke 9:23: "...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." This teaching of self-denial is a recurring theme in the New Testament. It demands that one deny himself, deny the flesh, and deny the things of the world. Romans 12:1-2 tells us that we are to present our "bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God..." and James 4:7 says we are to submit ourselves to God. We don't do that, when we become a slave to the things of this world.

Matthew 6:24 says: "No man can serve two masters..." and by siding with the world as they celebrate pagan holidays, you are honoring the "god of this world" (as Satan is referred to as 2 Corinthians 4:4). Giving this sort of opening to the enemy is certainly enough to be a chink in your spiritual armour (see Ephesians 6:11). James 4:8 says: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." I really like Dakes' commentary on the term "double minded," on James 1:8, He wrote: "This term was used by the Jews of a man who attempted to worship God and still loved the creature; who wished to secure both worlds. He would not give up the world here and yet was loathe to give up heaven— one torn between carnal and spiritual things."⁸⁰⁷

Have you wondered why you just can't seem to get spiritual victory. No matter how many times you are prayed for, or how long you have been in counseling, the peace just doesn't seem to come. Maybe it's because you haven't surrendered all to God. Maybe this seemingly innocent action is the last bastion of Satanic manipulation that's preventing a tremendous moving of God

⁸⁰⁶ *The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden*. World Bible Publishers, Inc., pg. 81.

⁸⁰⁷ Dake, Finis Jennings. *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible* (KJV). Lawrenceville, GA: Dake Bible Sales, Inc., 1963, NT, pg. 260.

in you and your family. As long as Satan knows that he has deceived you enough to keep you in his grip, he knows you will never get everything that God has for you. This could be the thing that is keeping you from getting to that next level in your spiritual life. It could be keeping you from getting that spiritual edge.

Don't be like Lot's wife (Joshua 24:15), and "choose you this day whom ye will serve." I believe that the placing of this kind of sacrifice on God's altar of forgiveness, will do more for your Christian walk than almost anything else you could do, and bring you closer to God, and closer to the blessings that God has for you, and your family.

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