

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Christmas Celebration: Truth Or Myth?

This topic is presented to answer the many questions that have arisen concerning end time Christian believers taking part in the festivities of the CHRISTMAS SEASON. Is the celebration of Christmas biblical? Does the birth of Jesus really fall on December 25? What about Santa Claus, gift-giving, the Christmas tree, and other tinsels? Are they really biblical?

INTRODUCTION

CHRISTMAS originated from the word “Christ-Mass” which is a Roman Catholic tradition, a special mass performed in celebration of Christ’s birth.

Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Christian Church. It was not celebrated, commemorated, or observed, neither by the apostles nor in the apostolic church — not for at least the first 300 years of church history, after Catholicism took over the first church of Rome which was originally established by Apostle Paul. It was in the year 350 A.D. that Pope Julius-I declared that Christ’s birth should be celebrated on “December 25”. History reveals that the Church at Jerusalem commenced the celebration of Christmas only during 440 A.D., following the leadings of Roman Catholicism.



ANCIENT HISTORY

Ancient history reveals that in past ancient pagan civilizations, it is no coincidence that December 25th was also the birthday of their pagan gods. All of BABYLONIAN and ROMAN FESTIVALS were characterized by 5-7 day celebration periods of unrestrained or orgiastic revelry and licentiousness held between the 17th and the 23rd of December. December is the time of year when days began to lengthen and ancient man was blessed with a “regeneration of nature” and held an annual celebration for it.

Specifically, **December 25th** was the **Victory Festival of the “SUN-God”** in the pagan **Babylonian world**. In the **ancient Roman Empire**, the same celebration can be traced back to the **Roman Festival** called “**Saturnalia**”, which honored Saturn, the harvest god, and Mithras, the god of light. They held the circus during this time of the year. Both festivals were celebrated during or shortly after the **winter solstice**, between the 17th and 23rd of December.

WHAT THE END-TIME MESSENGER SAID ABOUT “CHRISTMAS”

To those of us who believe in this End-Time Message, we all recognize that God sent us a vindicated prophet for this age in order to restore our hearts back to the **FAITH of the Pentecostal Fathers and to the true teaching of the Bible**. And at the same time, he was sent by God to reveal to us **ALL the MYSTERIES** that’s been hidden in the Word according to the prophetic commission he was given as stated in Malachi 4:5-6 and Revelation 10:7. It is therefore from this viewpoint that I want to address this controversial issue on “Christmas”.

The following is an outline of key quotations from the sermons of Rev. William Marrion Branham as pertaining to the celebration of **Christmas**. You must read between the lines.

1. CHRIST POINTED US TO HIS DEATH, NOT TO HIS BIRTH

“Christmas is not mentioned in the entire book of the Bible. Never one time did Jesus refer them to His birth, but to His death.” (SIRS.WE.WOULD.SEE.JESUS JEFF.IN V-3 N-23 61-1224)

2. JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT BORN IN DECEMBER; HE WAS BORN IN APRIL

“It couldn’t have been Christ’s birthday. It just absolutely could not have been. He’d have had to be born in March or April, ‘cause He was the Lamb. And He was a male sheep and born in under the ram, Aries. It had to be. You see? And—and sheep are not born in December anyhow. Sheep are born in the spring. And then another thing, the hills of Judaea now, there’s twenty feet of snow on them. How could the shepherds have been out there?” (WHO.DO.YOU.SAY.THIS.IS?.title PHOENIX.AZ V-6 N-9 64-1227)

“Christmas is not a Protestant holiday. It’s a Catholic day. The 25th of December was months and months before our Lord was born. **Our Lord was born in April. But He wasn’t born in December.** If you’ve been in Judaea in December it’s colder than this, so—you know He wasn’t born in December. And it’s spelled, it’s C-h-r-i-s-t-m-a-s, a mass for Christ. It’s the Christ-mass.” (DIVINE.HEALING.title JEFF.IN V-26 N-10 54-1219M)

“And by the way, Christ wasn’t born on the twenty-fifth day of December either. He couldn’t have been. If you’d ever been in Judaea, the hills are full of snow, worse than it is here: **He (was) born in April when all nature comes forth.** Now, but it’s a tradition. And why—why do we do those things? Because we follow the traditions of men instead of the commandments of God. Then something like that wouldn’t matter, but they just make a commercial day out of it. It’s a disgrace, a shame for them to do such things as that.” (PATMOS.VISION.title JEFF.IN ROJC 69-130 60-1204E)

3. CHRISTMAS ORIGINATED FROM THE ROMAN “SUN-GOD” FESTIVAL

“We celebrate this 25th day of December for the birthday of Christ, but,

of course, anyone knows that it wasn't Christ's birthday. That was the Roman SUN god's birthday, that when the church was converted into, or, brought into Catholicism, was formed at the council at Nicaea. **Instead of it being the sun god's, they made it the Son of God's birthday.** And it was the sun god's birthday, and they just taken the Son of God and made that His birthday, **to blend it in with their pagan tradition. And it's no means at all being Christ's birthday.** He could not been born at that time, because Judaea is about the same on the—on the... high up in the equator as this is, and we—we find out that in Judaea in the wintertime, 25th of December, **she's blizzardly and cold. Shepherds cannot be on the hill,** and many reasons that it couldn't be. And then He was nature born like all other nature, He—He came forth in the spring, **usually when the lambs are born in the spring; and He was the Lamb.** Now, I believe He was born, myself, March, April, or somewhere along in there in the early spring." (WORLD.AGAIN.FALLING.APART.title SHPLAV-17 N-4 63-1127)

"But this being the **25th of December**, why, making it the birthday, **this is the sun god's birthday** (See?), the Roman Baalim, the **sun god.** See? And the sun is just exactly halfway around now. **And from the 20th unto the 25th was when the Roman circus was in celebration of the sun god's birthday.** And the... So they said, "**Well now, to please the—both Christian and pagan, we'll make instead of sun god, the Son of God and the sun god together. So we'll put it all together and make it the same birthday and make it on the 25th.**" So it seemed to please the pagan and the nominal church then, or the first church of Rome was just... It was just all right with them, so they didn't care. **So they made it both sun god and Son of God's birthday.**" (SIRS.WE.WOULD.SEE.JESUS.title JEFF.IN V-3 N-23 61-1224)

"**This was done by the Roman Catholic church** before it become the Catholic church in Rome, about 86, 106, somewhere along in there, or 306, rather. Now, we find out that **the Roman pagans worshipped Jupiter**, which is the **sun god**; and they worshipped **Ashtoreth**, which was the **moon god**, or otherwise the mother of the—the mother of heaven. Well, to bring this down, they said that **Ashtoreth, or god's mother of heaven was no more, and reflected herself in Mary.** So it still remained idolatry, **connecting Christianity to idolatry.** Then also, and they suffered, or worshipped and respected the birthday of their sun god, which was Jupiter. It's when the sun from December the first until December the twenty-fifth." (FALLING.APART.OF.THE.WORLD.title JEFF.IN V-10 N-6 62-1216)

"But then **when Christianity was brought into Romanism and mixed at Nicaea**, then they had the sun god, Jupiter, the sun god of Rome, his birthday was on the—between the—about the twenty-fifth day of December. Because **the Roman circus started on the twenty-first and lasted till the twenty-fifth, which was in celebration of the sun god's birthday.** So blending Romanism paganism to—Christianity, they said, "**Let's make it the Son of God's birthday, and then we can all agree upon it.**" See, it's always been on systems of compromising to the Truth, every time, has always been." (WE.HAVE.SEEN.HIS.STAR.title TUCSON.AZ V-13 N-8 63-1216)

"Pergamos was invited. All right, they was invited to a feast after the Nicene Council. They was invited to the **feast of Winter Solstice**, which means the sun, **worship of the sun**, which was a pagan god, which fell on December the 21st, the shortest day in the year. And the years... The same time doesn't change till December the 25th. **All heathens celebrated it, the sun god's birthday.** The sun god's birthday was the shortest day in the year, December the 21st. And anyone that ever read the history of the churches know that heathens worshipped on that day. **It was a celebration.** Well, the Romans had—they had the **big games, the Roman circus.** How many seen this here, whatever it was here not long ago, they had, "Ben Hur"? See? Now, the Roman circus; that's what the Romans had on that sun day, in commemoration of the **birthday of the sun god.**"

(PERGAMEAN.CHURCH.AGE.title JEFF.IN ROJC 229-285 60-1207)

4. CHRISTMAS IS NOTHING BUT COMMERCIALISM

"Today, Christmas means a carton of caramels, a carton of Viceroy, a bottle of Four Roses, or Seagram, wrapped up in a pretty Santa Claus paper." (WMB, God's Wrapped Gift - 12/25/60)

"But it's [Christmas] got to be a place where it's a curse to little children. Some little neighbor down the street can have plenty, and the other little fellow don't have nothing, and they look. And the whole thing is altogether wrong. That's all." (The Falling Apart Of The World - 12/16/62)



"And it's all just a myth, and Christ is not in it at all. And the people has turned in to **buying whiskey, and—gambling, and fashions.** And a—a man that... A merchant that can sell his goods through Christmas time can live the rest of the year almost. See? It's such a great holiday, **commercial.** And poor little kids on the street, their parents are not able to—to visit them with a—a present like from Santa Claus, and they walk down the Street, and their little dirty hands and their little red eyes. **I—I just hate to see it come along.** It ought to be a solemn day of worship to God, instead of a **heartache** and a **headache.** And the things that's done, **there's nothing to Christ about that.** But we're right in the midst of all this now." (WHO.DO.YOU.SAY.THIS.IS?.title PHOENIX.AZ V-6 N-9 64-1227)

"Here a few weeks, or even right now, there's reindeers, and Santa Clauses, and—and jingle bells, and all kinds of things hanging up, which is **pagan eremony. It's an article of the Catholic church. People paying great prices and swapping presents and things like that, pagan.** Christmas is a day of worship. And by the way, **Christ wasn't born on the twenty-fifth day of December either.** He couldn't have been. If you'd ever been in Judaea, the hills are full of snow, worse than it is here: He born in April when all nature comes forth. Now, but it's a tradition. And why—why do we do those things? Because we follow the traditions of men instead of the commandments of God. Then something like that wouldn't matter, but **they just make a commercial day out of it. It's a disgrace, a shame for them to do such things as that. A pagan ceremony: when did Santa Claus have anything to do with Jesus? When did the Easter rabbit or a chicken, or colored up with some kind of ink or something, or some kind of little white rabbit have anything to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Don't you see how the commercial world.**" (PATMOS.VISION.title JEFF.IN ROJC 69-130 60-1204E)

"Oh, brother, sister, how nice it would be if each one of you, if each one of us, us, me, **if each one of us could lay aside all this here Christmas tinsel** (See?) **quit all this swapping gifts, one with another, all of this nonsense of the world,** and just take off our pride and lay it down, and stomp the thing under foot, say, "Lord Jesus, guide me to that perfect Light," Watch something supernatural happen. The Holy Spirit will come in a phenomenal way. See?" (WMB, We Have Seen His Star - 12/16/63)

"Say, "I want to follow the Morning Star, Christ. I want to follow and find my Jesus this day. **I want to get away from all this here Christmas tinsel and things, because**

someday it's going to be burnt with unquenchable fire." And all those who are in[tolerating] with it, will be burned with it." (We Have Seen His Star - 12/16/63)

"Why, they started buying Christmas present months ago, and what is it but a heathen trait. There's nothing about it godly. Oh, they try to say, "Give gifts, to the wise men." That's just an oasis for a devil's excuse. You want to give something, it's your life to Christ. Don't give to one another; give it to Him. That's what He died for. That's His purpose of coming." (The Falling Apart Of The World - 12/16/62)

5. CHRISTMAS IS A MYTH AND A PAGAN CELEBRATION

"We take the word "Christmas." It's very seldom you ever hear Christ's Name mentioned. You don't hear it mentioned. The lights and tinsel is all on Santa Claus, not on Christ. The people hardly knows what Christmas is really for. They've just paganized it and paganized it till it's all become pagan." (Sirs, We Would See Jesus - 12/24/61)

"Studying on mythology and all these myths, Christmas itself is a myth. It's not nothing real about Christmas. Christmas wasn't even mentioned in the Bible; they never worshipped the birthday of Christ. Wasn't no such a thing. That's a Roman Catholic dogma and not a Christian teaching, no Scripture for it nowhere in the Bible and for the first hundred years after the Bible (See?) nothing of it. It's just a myth. Santa Claus, commercial, everything, the whole thing is wound up into a big conglomeration." (Christianity Versus Idolatry - 12/17/61)

I wish that really the people could understand in this world, what really Christmas is. Now, the first word Christmas is a kind of a Catholic expression. It means "Christ's mass." See? It was ordained or was begin with the Roman church. And Christ was no more born on the twenty-fifth day of December than I was. It's just a complete conglomeration of dogma. That's all there is to it."

(The Falling Apart Of The World - 12/16/62)

"And the people on the streets, with their high-heeled shoes, and they're twisting up and down the streets, and running into stores...And here the other day, my wife was telling me, someone said, "I won't know what to get daddy. Brother's going to get him a quart of whiskey, and the other one said he was going to get him some champagne....." **Celebration of Christmas, pagan, devil-worship.**" (Christianity Versus Idolatry - 12/17/61)



"Today I was thinking of the cathedrals a ringing out, and the bells a tolling, and so forth like that; and people going to the church, and making ready, and the women buying their Easter hats and so forth. What has this come to? My, how I can't understand where a rabbit has anything to do with the resurrection (See? No, sir.), or how a Christmas tree has anything to do with the birth of Christ. It's pagan, friends. We've got off the path somewhere. That's right. But now a real born again man or woman realizes, because there's life within you, tells you that that's wrong. Is that right? [Congregation responds: AMEN!] (WMB, The Cruelty Of Sin - 04/03/53)

"Notice, Eve met hers her fall. And so did the second Eve met hers at Nicaea,

Rome, gave to it a denomination, creed, accepted dogmas instead of the Word; **taken down pagan idols like Jupiter and so forth, and put up Paul and Barnabas.** And took down the sun god and the moon god, Ashtoreth, the moon god, with round kosher on it, and made her being the mother of the sun god which is Jupiter. And **changed the birthday of Jesus from April,** where all nature, where He was born under the ram, 'cause He was a ram, and changed that up to the sun god's birthday in the solar [winter solstice] there.... **the sun god's birthday, not the Son of God.** And every one of us play Santa Claus, and decorate trees, a **heathenism,** and things like that, and then call ourselves Christians? What's the matter with the Christian church?" (Harvest Time - 12/12/64)

6. SANTA CLAUS TAKES AWAY THE GLORY FROM JESUS CHRIST

Santa Claus or the "Father Christmas" is a corruption of the Dutch "Saint Nikolaas." ("Saint Nicholas" was the 4th century Catholic bishop of Myra in Asia Minor, who gave treats to children; he was canonized by the Roman Catholic Church, "regarded as a special friend and protector of children." The red suit comes from the fact that Catholic bishops and cardinals in Italy wear red.) Santa Claus was also known as "Kris Kringle," a corruption of the German "Christ Kindl"—Christ Child.



Santa is the blasphemous substitute for Christ!

He is routinely given supernatural powers and divine attributes which only GOD has. Think about it. He is made out to be **omniscient** — he knows when every child sleeps, awakes, has been bad or good, and knows exactly what every child wants (cf. Psa. 139:1-4). He is made out to be **omnipresent** — on one night of the year he visits all the "good" children in the world and leaves them gifts, seemingly being everywhere at the same time. He is also made out to be **omnipotent** — he has the power to give to each child exactly what each one wants. Moreover, **Santa Claus** is made out to be a sovereign judge — he answers to no one and no one has authority over him, and when he "comes to town," he comes with a full bag of rewards for those whose behavior has been acceptable in his eyes.

But the **Santa Claus** myth distorts the truth of Christ's birth by subtly blending truth with the myth of Santa Claus. **When Christian parents lie to their children about Santa Claus, they are taking the attention of their children away from God and causing them to focus on a fat man in a red suit with god-like qualities.** All of this teaches the child to believe that, just like Santa, God can be pleased with "good works," done in order to earn His favor. Also, they teach that no matter how bad the child has been, he will still be rewarded by God — just as Santa never failed to bring gifts. Even in homes of professing Christians, Santa Claus has clearly displaced Jesus in the awareness and affections of children, becoming the undisputed spirit, symbol, and **centerpiece** of **Christmas.**

Here are some quotes from Brother Branham's sermons regarding "Santa Claus":

"What's any more of a myth than Santa Claus? Never was such a thing.

Telling children lies, you'll be responsible for it at the day of the judgment. Yes. No wonder people don't know what to do. They just don't want the real thing. They'll take anything artificial, but they don't want the real thing. They don't want the gifts of God. Certainly. They don't want Jesus; that's one thing." (God's Wrapped Gift - 12/25/60)

"It's Christmas. All the tinsel up-and-down the street of **Santa Claus, a German fiction, a Catholic dogma... There's not one ounce of it true. And it takes the place of Jesus Christ, in the hearts of too many Americans. Christmas don't mean Santa Claus.** Christmas means Christ. It's not some man with a pipe in his mouth, and coming down a chimney. Teaching your children such as that, what do you expect them to grow up to be? **Tell them the Truth, not on some fictitious story.** Tell them there's a God of Heaven Who sent His Son, and that's what Christmas means. And He's near coming again." (Where Is He, King Of The Jews? - 12/21/58)

"It's Christmas time; get out these **Santa Clauses** and stuff; away with that **nonsense of commercializing.** Wherever you heard about Santa Claus in the Bible? **It's a Roman mythology;** there's nothing to it at all; there is no such a thing. **Don't teach your children such nonsense as that.**" (Why It Had To Be Shepherds - 12/21/64)

"**Kris Kringle's run over the country.** Who was he? A German, a Catholic saint years ago, an old man went about doing good. **And today it's become almost a worship.** That's right. It's all right to tell the kiddies, or whatever you want to do, as far as I'm concerned. But the thing of it is, it's so easy to fall in that rut on the other side, and push out Christ, the real fundamental thing of Christmas. And man take Kris Kringle instead of real Christmas; that's right, "No room for Him in the inn." (The Deity Of Jesus Christ - 12/25/49)

"I know that we people here do not teach our children of such a myth as **Santa Claus. We do not believe in telling anybody a lie, so you're not going to lie to your children. Such stuff as that, that's mythology to its heights, of such a thing as taking the place of Christ at Christmas.** And Christmas has lost... Christmas is no more a worship; it's a celebration: **drinking, gambling, carousing, just pagan to the limit.** And it's not... And I wanted to... Maybe after Christmas I'll speak again on Christmas (You see?), so that it won't deprive the little... But you can't tell that to little children like that. They see little fellows on Christmas night getting Christmas presents and things like that; they don't understand it. See? They just—they're too little. And we've got to remember them, that they are—that they have things in common. We've got to bring ourself down to remember them little fellows." (CHRISTIANITY.VERSUS.IDOLATRY.title JEFF.IN V-8 N-2 61-1217)

QUESTION: What about a Christmas play in a Holy Ghost church?
ANSWER: Well, if it's about Christ, it might be all right. But if it's about Santa Claus, I don't believe in him. I've grown away from that. I don't believe in Santa Claus at all. See? And some of these little Christmas things they have, **I think is ridiculous.** But I think they've took all Christ out of Christmas and put Santa Claus in it." (Questions And Answers On The Holy Ghost - 12/19/59)

6. THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE REGARDING THE CELEBRATION CHRISTMAS

"Let me make this clear. **I do not believe that Jesus would care what day you worshipped His birthday on** (if it's the 25th, 26th, or whether it's April, May, June, July, or whenever it might be), just so you worship - **you worship Him on any day.** But here's what it is. They have taken the sacredness from Christmas to make it not a Christmas, a worship day, but a celebration. See? You hear people say, "We're going to

celebrate Christmas." That's wrong. We should never celebrate Christmas. Christmas is a day of worship, not a celebration." (Sirs, We Would See Jesus - 12/24/61)

"**God bless you.** Not exactly a "Merry Christmas," but **God's blessings of Christmas be upon you.** May the Christ of Calvary hide you in Himself, and blanket you, and so wrap you and enshroud you in His Word till His Word will be made flesh in you, is my prayer. God bless you." (Sirs, We Would See Jesus - 12/24/61)

"You love each other? [Congregation says "Amen."—Ed.] Turn around and shake hands with each other, say, "God bless you. Christ be with you." **Instead of "Merry Christmas," say, "Christ be with you," as you turn around.** Now don't leave yet, just turn around and say, "Christ be with you." Christ be with you." (DEITY.OF.JESUS.CHRIST.THE.title JEFF.IN V-20 N-12 49-1225)

"On this Christmas eve, Lord, we're grateful for the Gift of God...Though this be some, as we believe in our hearts, some pagan superstition of the day that they have tried to mold it and make it be like a mass - **Christ-mass. But we are not coming in that way of Santa Claus, and Christmas trees, and decorations; but we're coming in the Name of the Lord Jesus to worship the God of heaven** that was made incarnate, flesh like us, and dwelled among us to redeem us, and suffered the reproach of the Name, suffered the reproach of the cross to let a worldly institution put Emmanuel to death, in order that He could bring us to Eternal Life." (Reproach For The Word - 12/23/62)

"And give us the Spirit, **the true Spirit of Christmas. When today that when pagan ceremonies, Christmas trees worshipped, fiction stories of a—a man named Santa Claus, and of our Easter rabbits, and the different fashions that the commercial world has capitalized on, may it be laid aside, God.** Let us enter into Christ the Word, for we asked it in His Name and for His glory. Amen." (WHY.IT.HAD.TO.BE.SHEPHERDS.title TUCSON.AZ V-6 N-15 64-1221)

"So I appreciate your all's prayers. And by God's help and grace, a very **Merry Christmas to every one of you.** Remember my saying; **this is not Santa Claus this is for Jesus.** You see? "**Christmas means Christ.**" And we were riding last night showing the kiddies all the houses decorated and everything, which is awful nice. But I thought, if I ever had on--anything on my house that I ever wanted to write, would be a neon sign: "**Trusting Christ Will Be In Your Christmas.**" That's right. **Put Christ back into Christmas.**" (QUESTIONS.AND.ANSWERS.title JEFF.IN COD 59-1223)

"Now, if you'll bow your heads again, **I want to wish each one of you a very merry Christmas:** May the great **Christmas Present,** the first one and the only and the original and the only one there is, **Jesus Christ,** be afresh in your heart tonight. May the Holy Spirit come to you and bring you ministering gifts and things from God, that you--a gift that you might live a better life." (GOD'S.GIFTS.ALWAYS.FIND.PLACE.title JEFF.IN V-6 N-13 63-1222)